

The Case of the Airport Killing

“At 8 a.m. on Monday, March 4, 1968, you were drinking coffee in a rear booth in the Sandwich Shop at the airport?” asked the district attorney.

“I was,” answered McCarthy, the murder defendant.

“And you didn’t see the man in the booth across the aisle – not five feet from you – stabbed to death?”

“No, I was reading the local morning newspaper.”

“The cashier remembers you. You were in an awful hurry. You gave her a half-dollar payment of a 15-cent check, and you didn’t wait for your change.”

“I had to catch a plane.”

“You were aware of the time, but you didn’t notice the man in the next booth was dead – with a knife sticking out of his chest?”

“I might have seen him, but I never looked directly at him.”

“You didn’t hear him order eggs and coffee?”

“I might have. I don’t remember. I was busy reading the New York Stock Exchange listings. I own some shares.”

“How long did that take you?”

“A couple of minutes. Then I read the market news. There was a long article forecasting steel prospects for next year. After I finished reading the article, I noticed the time. I had less than two minutes to catch my plane to Los Angeles.”

In the rear of the courtroom, Dr. Haledjian leaned over and whispered to Inspector Winters: “if he isn’t convicted of murder, he’ll draw a stiff sentence for perjury!”

How come?

The Case of the Lincoln Letter

“It might be genuine,” murmured Dr. Fry, chief of the crime lab.

Inspector Winters peered through a magnifying glass at the ragged sheet of foolscap. He read the writing, from which part had been torn:

“... in Gettysburg at the Wills home facing the public square. Bands blared, serenading whomever spoke. I begged to be excused. The crowd was little pleased. The band played the national anthem and moved on to Seward’s...” “

The last sentence ran into a tear. However, the signature was unmarred – “A. Lincoln.”

"It might be worth tens of thousands of dollars," said Dr. Fry.

"For an incomplete letter of President Lincoln's?"

"Look at the reverse side," advised Dr. Fry.

The inspector released a low whistle of astonishment. On the other side of the sheet was scrawled a partial draft of the Gettysburg address!

"I found it by accident in the old Bible my sister keeps in the attic," said Sy "The Weasel" McCloskey.

"Wasn't that where you found the counterfeit tens last year?" put the inspector sarcastically.

Dr. Fry interrupted. "I'll run some chemical tests on the paper. It'll take a couple of days."

"The paper turned out to be the right age," a surprised Inspector Winters reported to Dr. Haledjian. "I'll wager you'll never guess the value of that one little sheet!"

"About 10 cents – to a police museum," replied Haledjian. "It's obviously a forgery."

What was the weasel's error?

The Case of the Missing Fingerprints

A young farmer, responding to a radio bulletin describing the stolen car used by four masked men in the holdup of First National Bank, reported that the car had been abandoned near his farm. The four occupants had fled in such haste that they left the four doors wide open.

Shortly after Inspector Winters and Dr. Haledjian reached the scene, another patrol car arrived. Out stepped a hefty man, who said, "I'm Carlson, fingerprints. Headquarters sent me. Can I start?"

The Inspector nodded, and Carlson opened his kit and began dusting the steering wheel of the getaway car.

"It looks like the robbers tried to elude capture by taking the back roads," said the inspector. "They lost their way, ran out of gas, and fled on foot."

More police arrived, and the inspector went off to direct a search of the surrounding area. Haledjian was examining the ground for clues when Carlson finished.

"I've found several prints on the front of the hood and on the gas cap," he said. "They probably belong to the real owner or a gas station attendant. The rest are smudged."

"Too bad," muttered Haledjian. His brows knitted thoughtfully as he watched Carlson open the door of his patrol car and climb in.

Suddenly Haledjian shouted to one of the officers, "Stop that man!"

Why?