



The elegant interior of The Wise Ash Lounge & Speakeasy.

Mr. William A. Mays Performs His Civic Duty Sits on Jury Hearing Armed Robbery Case

Mr. William A. Mays, editor and proprietor of the *National Police Gazette* and author of *The Plot To Assassinate Barack Obama*, this past month was selected to be a member of the jury for a criminal trial in Broome County court. The case involved the home invasion and armed robbery of the residents of a home on Binghamton's West Side. If you're guessing this was a gang of thugs forcing their way into one of the posh houses around Leroy and Crestmont Streets and helping themselves to valuable jewels and bundles of cash hidden inside safes, you'd be half right. A gang of thugs they were, but their target was one of the dilapidated former single-family homes north of Main Street that has been divided up into apartments. And the main victim was himself engaged in criminal activity. In fact, every witness produced during the trial, but one, had a rap sheet longer than the list of questions on the standard GRE exam—two of them had to be transported, in shackles, from the various correctional institutions in which they now reside. The only witness who had not been convicted of a crime was a pregnant teenage girl.

And therein lay the problem for the jury. Ordinarily, a crime committed by one criminal against another is never known by the general public. Such things are dealt with within the milieu in which they occur, and the police are almost never called. The only reason they were in this case was that the building's landlord—himself with a sketchy past, but tired of such disturbances in his building—dialed 911, shoved the phone into the victim's hand and made him talk to the dispatcher. However, the crimes of one criminal group against another are generally considered the type of internecine warfare that police pour few resources into, unless they spill over and affect the public at large. Let them rob each other, just not the little old lady on her way home from bingo at St. James's. So no crime-scene investigation was conducted. No finger prints were lifted, no DNA secured, no nothing. Then the witnesses disappeared. The only person offering a statement to police who arrived at the scene was the main victim. The landlord who'd dialed 911 did not speak to police until much later, even though he'd claim he'd been directly

confronted by the defendant and threatened with a gun. The teenage girl, who'd been in the apartment and roughed up by the perpetrators, disappeared for reasons that don't need to be detailed here, though the defense attorney feigned ignorance and pressed the question anyway—much to the annoyance of the witnesses involved. Oh, and no one even knew of the existence of this witness until the night before the trial was to begin.

The *pièce de résistance* came in the form of the man who'd already been convicted for his part in the robbery. This was a man with nothing to gain and everything to lose, but the district attorney's office—as they are so deft at doing—managed to have him over a barrel. His only play during his testimony was to try to sabotage his own credibility to the best of his ability. As it turned out he was not just being asked to rat on his accomplice, but to rat on the father of his girlfriend—the girlfriend, by the way, being the third member of the gang who kept watch at the building's front door and scared the daylight out of another witness so hapless all he could say at trial was that both male perpetrators were wearing masks and he couldn't identify anybody. So the man already convicted put on a show that, if it had been during a shoot for *Law and Order*, would have had the director yelling "cut" every 15 seconds. Out of the 20 minutes this witness provided testimony 17 consisted of total silence, while the remaining 3 contained every conceivable contradiction to the statement given a minute earlier. Respite from tortured hemming and hawing and requests to "take the fifth" or return to his cell came in the form of silently raping the pretty, young blond assistant district attorney with his eyes. The defense attorney, seeing where this was going, asked the witness point blank if he'd even committed the crime in question, to which he replied no, he hadn't—even though he'd previously pled guilty to it and had admitted doing it at the start of his testimony.

So the case went to the jury, whose sole job boiled down to separating the wheat from the chaff. And when that was done, the wheat that remained was enough to convict on all counts. His civic duty complete, Mr. Mays returned to work at this great journal, where truth and accuracy require a far less strenuous effort to decipher.

Meet Your Police Gazette Staff!



Poetry Editor Ivan L. Fail, USMC, ret., FBOP, ret.

Ivan's opinions have frequently appeared on page 2 of the print edition, but to read his poetry—which tends to be too long for print's limited space—visit PoliceGazette.US/EccentricTantrums_IvanFail.html. The monthly limerick is a pet project of Editor & Proprietor William A. Mays, so don't blame Ivan for those!



CARL FEIGENBAUM.

Executed at Sing Sing for a Brutal Murder and Believed to have been the London Jack-the-Ripper.

See "From the Morgue" on page 6.