

LEONARD SHAKESPEARE

THE MURDER OF CONSTABLE LEONARD SHAKESPEARE RESEARCHED & WRITTEN BY JACK TEMPLEMAN



Friday, July 18, 1969, was a nice summer evening and the windows were open in the St. Boniface Police Station as the shift change started for cars 93 and 94. The crews retiring and coming on heard Constable Walter RUDNICK dispatch a burglar alarm to car 95, Constables Len SHAKESPEARE and Lyn GILES. Car 92, with Detective Sergeant Cam BIRD and Detective Bob THOMPSON, were still patrolling and acknowledged the message and offered to back up the regular patrol car.

The call was received at 10:53 pm for White's Loco-Mart Store at 390 Provencher Ave. (at DesMeurons). This store had been broken into the previous night and a large number of cigarettes were stolen but that had occurred during the night. This alarm was not unusual as it was shortly after closing and the manager had set off the alarm on other occasions going back into the store. It was not unusual that the manager left in a taxi as was the case this night so on the arrival of the cruiser the scene was not out of the ordinary except on that night there were several people in and around the taxi. As the cruiser pulled up a bit ahead and parallel to the taxi the officers realized they were right in the middle of an armed robbery.

The culprits in this offence consisted of three local criminals and a man from Vancouver. The general rule of thumb for locals at that time was to run if the police arrived. It was almost like a game and there was a certain amount of respect on both sides. There might be a bit of rough stuff if the bad guy lost the foot race but it was expected.

The locals involved were Daniel CRAIB, 36 years old, Clarence PRINCE aka James Spence, 29 years old, and Lawrence HEWITT aka Yewish, 29 years old. The outsider was Clifford Wicket LURVEY aka Tallman or Price, 52 years. LURVEY was wanted in B.C. on Break Enter and Theft charges and had a lengthy record in both Canada and the U.S.A. He had only been in Winnipeg a short time and was already active in break-ins. One B& E was at 885 Elm Street where one of the guns used in this hold-up had been stolen.

No one ever said the average criminal was too smart and these four were no exception. They planned the robbery of the Loco-Mart because there was generally a lot of money on hand on Friday nights. Even though they were spot-checked near the scene less than an hour before they went ahead with their plan.

At 10:15 pm, car 94 with Constables Don CARRETTE and Denis ROBERT, spot-checked a red and white 57 Buick, license JA988, on Des Meurons at Goulet after following it from Hamal

Leonard Shakespeare

Street. The four occupants identified themselves as Lawrence HEWITT (driver), Roy Clifford Tallman (LURVEY -registered owner), and passengers, James SPENCE (PRINCE) and Daniel CRAIB. HEWITT claimed he was test driving the car with the intention of buying it. He also stated they were on their way to the Marion Hotel for a beer.

Soon after the spot-check the car returned to the area of the Loco-Mart and was parked on an empty lot on DesMeurons at Cathedrale. Neighbours heard a noise outside and saw a man picking up a hubcap. The left front tire went flat and the man had covered the front license with wet mud before he left the scene. The driver (HEWITT) was scared off either by the sound of shots or seeing car 92 rushing by the intersection en route to assist at the Loco-Mart. HEWITT later claimed he left the others and went to the St. Charles Hotel and even claimed to have spoken to the special duty constable there. Constable A. IBBOTT knew HEWITT and recalled speaking to him but placed the time at 11:30 p.m. well after the robbery. The auto was found shortly after midnight by Winnipeg Police Department Motorcycle Constable Rob DONNELLY.

At about 10:40 pm the store manager, Robert ESSON and assistant manager Garry FRIES closed the store and called for a Duffy's taxi. When driver James GIBBONS pulled up they carried out their groceries and set the alarm. The groceries were placed in the left rear of the taxi and ESSON sat in front while FRIES sat in the rear.

GIBBONS just started moving forward intending to circle around when two armed and masked men ran to the cab from the corner of the building and forced him to stop. The man with the black automatic revolver (PRINCE) went to the passenger door and confronted ESSON while the man with the silver revolver (LURVEY) climbed into the left rear on top of the groceries. PRINCE demanded the store money and was told it had

been deposited earlier in the evening. He then asked if there was any money in the store and was told there was some in the safe. ESSON was ordered out of the taxi but moved slowly and was struck on the head by LURVEY.

PRINCE forced ESSON back into the store which set off the alarm. Although ESSON was made to turn off the alarm he knew the police would be called and it would only be a matter of minutes before they arrived. He stalled as long as he could but finally opened the safe when PRINCE got nervous and angry. PRINCE grabbed the Royal Bank money bags containing some \$4,000.00 and they both headed back out to the taxi.

During this time CRAIB had been standing look-out near the garbage container close to the railway tracks and LURVEY was guarding FRIES and GIBBONS. When PRINCE came out of the store FRIES and GIBBONS were ordered out of the taxi and told to walk down the side of the store. LURVEY was just ripping out the cab microphone when car 95 pulled onto the lot and headed towards the store. Someone yelled 'the cops' and PRINCE ran to the west side of the store dropping the money bags as he ran. His gun and mask were also found behind the store later. PRINCE crossed the railway tracks and got to DesMeurons and disappeared but CRAIB ran behind the store into the bush on the Seine River. The money bags were found by Winnipeg Police Department Detectives Norm SIGURDSON and Ron McGARRY, the mask by Constable Al SMYTH and the gun by three Winnipeg Tribune photographers the next day. The photographers notified police without hesitation and pointed out the gun (old-style co-operation).



Cst. Len Shakespeare

While the locals were doing the usual thing LURVEY had no intention of running or being arrested. When the cruiser pulled up Constable Len SHAKESPEARE got out of the driver's side and started towards the front of the taxi only to be met by a

Leonard Shakespeare

bullet fired by LURVEY. SHAKESPEARE managed to fire two rounds before he went down. The bullet had struck his left shoulder and passed through with little damage but LURVEY came around the taxi and fired another bullet into the injured Constable again striking him in the left shoulder, but this time the bullet angled down and across tearing the pulmonary artery and entering both lungs causing him to bleed to death very quickly.

Constable Lyn GILES got out of the passenger side of the cruiser and started to go around the back of the car as the gunfire started. He managed to get back and open the door to reach his radio and yell for assistance as LURVEY ran past the injured officer towards the cruiser car. GILES moved to the rear of the cruiser and LURVEY rounded the front and fired a couple of shots at him with one glancing off the fender. Then suddenly LURVEY's gun made a clicking sound and LURVEY turned to run south along the railway track. GILES had fired all his ammunition and disregarding his own safety ran after LURVEY.

GILES tackled LURVEY as he crossed the tracks behind the old CN station and they wrestled on the ground. LURVEY shoved the gun at GILES and the clicking sound was heard again as he tried to shoot the officer. GILES struck LURVEY on the forehead with his service revolver and then pinned his gun-hand down and yelled for assistance.

When GILES yelled for assistance the officers in the station could hear the radio and at the same time hear the popping of the guns through the open windows. The station cleared in seconds with cars going back out carrying four officers each.

Car 92 also heard the call for assistance and was fast approaching north of DesMeurons. Cam BIRD slowed opposite the CN station so Bob THOMPSON could go across the tracks to the scene and he drove around to Provencher. As

THOMPSON got out he heard GILES yelling again and saw the men fighting on the ground. THOMPSON ran and stepped on LURVEY's hand which still held the gun and the fight ended. Constable Louie LABERGE had arrived from the station and ran to assist. LURVEY was handcuffed and the stocking mask was removed as well as a pair of gloves. The gun contained 4 expended shells and 1 live round that misfired.

LURVEY gave the name of Clifford Price and was placed in a cruiser. Constables CARRETTE and ROBERT attended and identified the prisoner as the same 'Tallman' who had been spot-checked in auto JA988 and the search for the car and the other three men began.

LURVEY was conveyed to St. Boniface Station and then to St. Boniface Hospital for treatment of his head injury. He consented to a blood-alcohol test which later showed results of 'non-detectable alcohol content.' When LURVEY was returned to the police station a number of pills were found on him along with part of a hacksaw blade in his shoe.

Policeman Slain; 2 Men In Custody

*Shots From Taxi At Store Fell St. Boniface Constable,
Miss Another; Search For Suspect Goes On All Night*

CRAIB had taken refuge on the riverbank, but the area was soon flooded with policemen from forces all around who came to offer help. A search was conducted in the wet grass, but the underbrush made it difficult and with all the policemen bumping into each other the situation became dangerous. Several times when a suspicious movement was heard a barrage of gunshots sounded and then everything went quiet. CRAIB swam across the river at one point getting out near the Belgium Cemetery only to be met by more gunfire including a few rounds from Constable Dennis TOYNE who was not far away. CRAIB swam back to the west side. It was decided to pull all the policemen up and keep the area sealed until

Leonard Shakespeare

daylight when an organized search could be carried out.

Shortly after 5:00 am and just before dawn CRAIB was spotted crawling across a path and RCMP Constable Mike McMAHON opened up with a 12 gauge shotgun chopping trees and everything along the path. A call went out for all officers to hold fire and RCMP Corporal GEDDES and his dog 'TIBER', RCMP Constable MCMAHON and St. Boniface Patrol Sergeant Jack TEMPLEMAN went down the path. Within minutes TIBER picked up a scent and lead to the right only a short distance where CRAIB was found laying on his back with his hands under him as the dog was just out of reach. MCMAHON held the shotgun on him while TEMPLEMAN rolled him over and handcuffed him. CRAIB was then assisted along the riverbank and other officers came down and he has carried up the bank. His feet did not touch the ground until he was placed in a nearby cruiser to be taken to the St. Boniface Station. He was soaked from his river crossings.

The search for HEWITT and PRINCE carried on over the next two days with Winnipeg Detectives hitting every know criminal haunt. On Saturday, July 19th, HEWITT surrendered at the St. Boniface Station after lawyer Mel MEYERS arranged for his safety with Inspector Elmer NORDAL. HEWITT brought along his girlfriend, Joyce LAVELLE for an alibi, but he was detained.

On Sunday, July 20th, lawyer Mel MEYERS again arranged safe conduct with Inspector NORDAL so he could bring in PRINCE. PRINCE also brought along his girlfriend, Joanne McKENZIE for his alibi, but soon joined the others in the cells.

The four men went to trial on capitol murder charges which at that time allowed for execution in the case of police or prison guard murders. On March 12, 1970, LURVEY was convicted of capitol murder and sentenced to hang. The other three

were convicted of non-capitol murder and sentenced to life, which meant 10 years before parole. LURVEY's execution was delayed by appeals and in keeping with the government policy of the time, his sentence was commuted to life on Dec. 23, 1970. LURVEY died on December 30, 1978, at Princess Elizabeth Hospital.

The other three served their ten years and were paroled. HEWITT managed to get a government grant of over \$1000.00 to start up an auto wrecking/scrap yard to employ ex-convicts. He established his business on Nicholas Street not far from the murder scene. He was later charged with possessing stolen autos and parts at the scrap yard.

Len SHAKESPEARE was born in Brandon but raised in St. James. He joined the St. Boniface Police Department on October 10, 1966. He was survived by his wife, Marion, two and a half-year-old son, and 3-month-old daughter. Mrs. SHAKESPEARE received insurance benefits of some \$21,000.00 and a combined Workman's Compensation and Canada Pension Plan pension of \$166.00 for herself and \$61.00 for the children until they were sixteen.

800 Attend Funeral For Policeman

The funeral for Constable SHAKESPEARE was held on Tuesday, July 22nd at Desjardins Funeral Chapel, 357 DesMeurons Avenue, with burial in Chapel Lawn Cemetery. Pallbearers were St. Boniface Constables Lyn GILES, Bob THOMPSON, Barry BOYD, Al SMYTH, Walter RUDNICK and Wilf LAST. This was one of the first police funerals which saw representatives from distant cities as well as every local department, RCMP and Railway Police. Sixty officers from the various forces formed the Honour Guard.

Winnipeg Police officers took over the St. Boniface patrol cars during the funeral so that every St. Boniface officer could attend. The funeral was led through St. Boniface, Winnipeg and St. James by St. Boniface Motorcycle Officers with the other departments assisting the huge cartage.