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DETECTIVE CASES

MOJAVE MADNESS

—by BONNIE WHEELER

**THE FLOATING HEAD
IN COFFEE CREEK**

—by BILL CONNORS



ON THE NIGHT of May 22nd, the natives on the Cranford Indian Reserve, twelve miles from the small town of Merritt, British Columbia, Canada, staged a tribal party. At the celebration one of the participants, in blind, drunken frenzy, stabbed his squaw a number of times.

Drunken brawls, in which knives play a prominent part, are not uncommon amongst the Indians of Western Canada, but this particular stabbing affray occasioned one of the most furious and bloodiest hand-to-hand fights between Indians and policemen in the annals of Canadian history. As a result of this encounter, two men were brutally battered to death; one man is suffering from injuries from which he will never completely recover; one Nuaitch Indian is serving a life term in jail; and two Nuaitch Indians were plummets to their deaths on the gallows.

On the morning of May 23rd, other Indians conveyed the injured squaw, a Mrs. Eneas George, to the Merritt hospital for treatment. The woman was in a critical condition, bleeding internally from knife wounds in the stomach. Enquiries upon the part of the authorities disclosed that her husband, Eneas George, had inflicted the wounds.

Provincial Police Constable Percy Carr, and Indian Department Constable Francis Hartley Gisbourne, at once drove out to the reserve in an effort to effect the arrest of Eneas George. They found the cluster of shacks and tepees on the reserve deserted but for aged men and women, young squaws and their children. The younger and able-bodied men, as is the custom of Canadian Indians whenever involved in trouble with the authorities, had all taken to the surrounding bush.

Many years of experience with the natives had acquainted both officers with the habits of their charges. They decided that it was hopeless to try to find their man in the heavily-timbered, mountainous terrain surrounding the reserve, so turned about and drove back to Merritt, agreeing to return to the reserve late that night when, most likely, the young men would come skulking warily back to their homes.

That same evening, Carr and Gisbourne again drove out to the reserve, arriving shortly after eleven o'clock. Leaving their car some distance from the group of dwellings,

The Murder

the officers finished their journey on foot, so as to approach silently.

Never again were they seen alive by white men.

THE NEXT MORNING, May 24th, 1934, the driver of a motor stage

was "just another automobile accident" and that the injured people had been taken to the hospital, he jotted down the license number and description of the car and, on arriving at Merritt, made a full report to the police.



The Death Car: This was journey's end for two valiant policemen who fought a desperate battle against overwhelming odds.

on the Merritt-Spences Bridge Highway sighted a damaged automobile jammed hard against a tree part way down the steep bank leading from the main road down toward where the turbulent Nicola River churned its way. Stopping his bus, the driver slithered down the sharp slope to investigate—and stared aghast at what he saw. The wrecked car was splattered inside and out with recently-spilled human blood. The warm air was heavy with its sickly stench. But there was no trace of the car's one-time occupants.

The bus driver had a close schedule to keep and could not afford to spend much time in further investigation. Concluding that it

The stage driver's terse report galvanized the entire police organization into furious, concerted action, for the wrecked car was at once identified as the government machine used by Constable Gisbourne when engaged upon official business.

Telegraph and telephone wires hummed insistent commands and curt questions. Then, headed by Inspector John Shirras, the police commenced their investigation. Their search and inquiries speedily revealed that, but a few hours before, a terribly grim and murderous hand-to-hand fight had taken place within the confines of the reserve.

The first gruesome clue was a

By
C. V. TENCH

On The Reserve

piece of human scalp and hair, found near the gate leading into the reserve. Inspector Vance, criminologist and analyst attached to the Vancouver City Police Force, identified it as having once belonged to a white man.

Near this grim relic, buried beneath a stack of firewood, the police unearthed a heavy wooden club about four feet in length. It was smothered with hair, bits of skin and blood. Grim-lipped and cold-eyed, dreading, yet anticipating what they would find, the police continued the search.

Leading away from the gate, they discovered the tire tracks of the car used by Constable Gisbourne. The tracks zig-zagged crazily all over the road, suggesting three things: (a) A badly wounded and dazed man trying desperately to drive away from the scene (b) A police driver trying to drive and at the same time ward off the attacks of blood-crazed Indians surging all about the car (c) That an unskilled driver had been at the wheel.

All over the highway, just above where the car went over the bank, were splashes of fresh blood. Down the bank, and leading to the damaged machine, the rocks and brush were bespattered with blood. In one spot crude effort had been made to hide a pool of blood by felling some small trees over the spot.

In the wrecked car itself the investigators found two pairs of handcuffs, a police baton and a service boot. The whole car was a mess of bloody hand marks to which the fingerprint experts devoted their immediate attention.

Leading from the wrecked car toward the river was a strip of flattened, blood-smeared grass, indicating that blood-covered bodies had been dragged over the ground to the river's edge, and thrown into the swiftly running stream.

AT THE RIVER BANK the searchers halted. It was all so obvious, horribly so. And at that particular spot the Nicola is a wild, turbulent river, rushing along at furious haste to empty itself into the wide Thompson River. It is far from easy and

usually impossible to recover corpses from such mountain rivers.

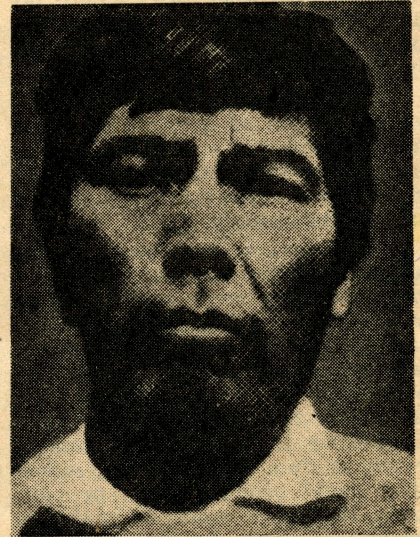
Just the same, organized effort was made at once to search and drag the Nicola River. Hundreds of men were brought from lumber camps to further the search. Their efforts were stimulated by a government offer of one thousand dollars reward for the recovery of one or both bodies.

The police then commenced working backwards from the river. Slowly, painstakingly, beneath a broiling sun and pestered by hordes of flies, they scrutinized every inch of the way back to the reserve. Bit by bit more ghastly evidence was discovered to add strength to their conviction that Carr and Gisbourne had been brutally set upon and killed. Here, a fragment of torn clothing. There, a blood-stained fingerprint or footprint.

AT THE RESERVE the police started a thorough house-to-house search of tepees and shacks, also the woodpiles and corrals. Cunningly-hidden shirts, overalls, caps, clubs and other articles were discovered piece-by-piece. All were blood-stained and were at once turned over to Inspector Vance for analysis.

Watched by sullen-eyed, aged Indian men, squaws and children, the police pursued their grim hunt and then made their most important find. In one shack, huddled beneath a pile of filthy, blood-saturated blankets, they discovered a badly hurt young Indian man. He was unconscious but the officers managed to identify him—in spite of his badly battered and gory face—as Joseph George, one of the three brothers of Eneas George.

In the same house, they discover-



Eneas George: In blind, drunken frenzy he killed, leaving pools of human blood in his wake.

ed a heavy flashlight. It was badly battered and smeared with blood. Evidently it had been used as a weapon.

Next they found an automatic pistol. It was not a service weapon but of much lighter caliber and construction; a pocket-type gun officers occasionally purchase for themselves to avoid carrying a weighty, bulky service pistol.

In silence, the small pistol was examined. One shot only had been fired. The second cartridge in the clip had then jammed.

It was fairly easy then to visualize what must have taken place. Eneas George had resisted arrest and, aided by his three brothers, had savagely attacked Constable

CANADIAN MANHUNTERS meet a gruesome death when primeval savages, aflame with blood lust, resist arrest.

Carr and Gisbourne. One of the officers had drawn his pistol but the weapon had failed him. After the fight, Eneas, Alex and Richardson George had then taken to the bush. Joseph, unconscious and badly hurt, had been hastily hidden beneath the pile of blankets.

At once word was flashed that at all costs Eneas, Alex and Richardson George must be apprehended. Remembering what lengthy hunts had followed other cases where Indian law-breakers had taken to the bush, white settlers co-operated fully with the police.

In barely an hour a hundred-strong cordon of determined white men encircled the reserve. A few hours later the three brothers were sighted, covered by many guns and taken into custody.

So far matters had been reasonably straightforward for the police, but now they were confronted by two difficult problems: The procuring of one or more eye-witnesses who could and would describe exactly what had taken place, and the finding of the remains of Carr and Gisbourne. In spite of the mass of evidence they had collected, unless they could produce both or one body, the police would be unable to prove in a court of law that murder had been done and the whole case would collapse.

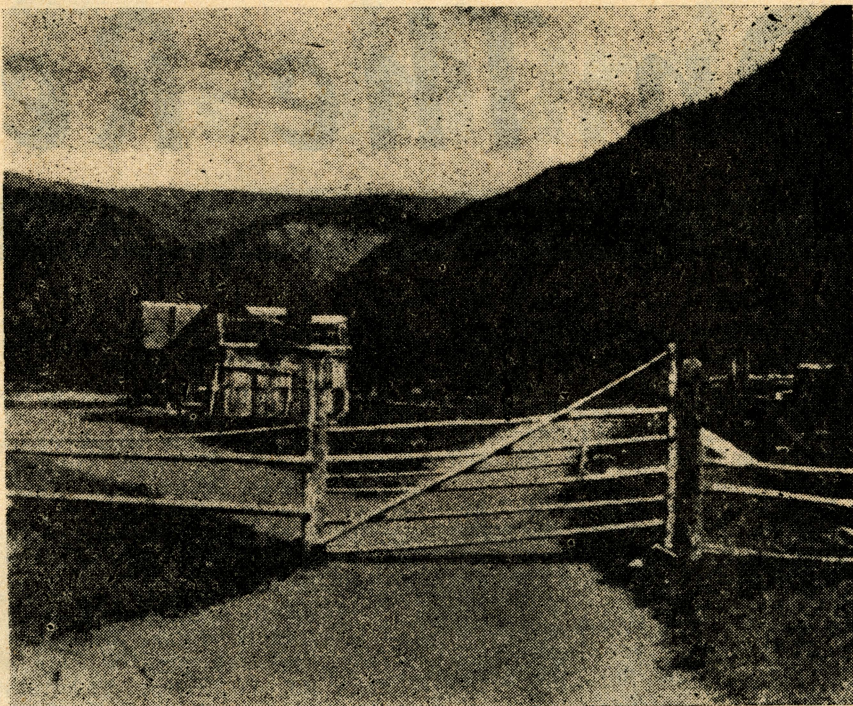
All efforts were now directed to the finding of one or both bodies and the severe grilling of hostile Indians.

Three days later, floating round and round in a whirlpool, a body was sighted. With tremendous difficulty it was recovered. It was the body of Constable Gisbourne and the sight of the corpse caused even hardened police officers to shudder. The face, head, shoulders, arms and hands were well nigh a pulp of welts, contusions and bruises, mute witness to the plucky and terrific fight for life the constable had put up.

Later the coroner's autopsy revealed that no less than nineteen pieces of bone from Constable Gisbourne's shattered skull had entered the brain!

The news of the finding of Constable Gisbourne's body and its condition stirred western Canada as has no other crime of modern times, but it was not until the trial proper when all was revealed that it was possible to reconstruct the brutal crime in all its ghastly detail.

THE TRIAL was heard at Vernon, British Columbia. It opened on June 26 and closed on June 30, 1934. For five long days a shocked and horrified court, counsel, jury



Above is shown the entrance to the Canford Indian Reserve where the bloody death struggle started.

members and spectators listened enthralled as Indian eye-witnesses through the medium of two interpreters—told in gruesome detail all they had seen.

How the police managed to procure Indian eye-witnesses and induced them to give the detailed evidence they did give was not revealed. Also, only three of the brothers were brought to trial. The fourth brother, Joseph, was found to have been rendered stone-deaf by the head wounds he had received in the murderous hand-to-hand fight and, as he could neither read nor write, it was found impossible to communicate with him in any way, therefore it was decreed he was "to be held in a suitable institution indefinitely."

The five day trial revealed that what actually took place at the Canford Indian Reserve on the night of May 23, 1934, was this:

Constables Carr and Gisbourne arrived at the reserve shortly after eleven at night. Not a light showed in any of the buildings and a cloud-obscured moon but intensified the shadows.

From concealment, savage, unseen eyes watched the policemen's every move as they held a hurried, whispered consultation, then, separating, commenced to approach the row of dwellings from opposite directions.

The two constables were about two hundred yards apart out of

sight of each other when, without the slightest warning, four Indians leaped from the shadow cast by a tepee and flung themselves bodily upon Constable Gisbourne.

The startled officer had just time to shout "Carr! Help!" before he was smashed to the dust by a rain of furious blows and the heavy flashlight he carried was wrenched from his hand. Then, whilst one attacker held his hands and another his feet, the other two Indians belabored the prone policeman unmercifully with the heavy wooden clubs they carried.

At top speed, drawing his baton as he ran, Constable Carr raced to the aid of his comrade and hurled himself headlong into the melee of fighting men. A cursing, blood-lusting mob, the four George brothers turned away from Gisbourne and in a body flung themselves upon Carr.

"Stop it, men! It's murder! For God's sake stop it!" Carr gasped as he pluckily fought back with all he had; one lone police officer against four powerful, half-drunk and murder-crazed Indians armed with heavy clubs.

"Stop it, stop it!" Carr pleaded further as he was borne backwards by sheer weight of numbers. "We want only Eneas!"

Savage, guttural curses and a rain of brutal blows was the answer he received.

And then, badly hurt and half blinded by the blood streaming from his head wounds, Gisbourne struggled to his feet. Whirling his hardwood police baton gamely he flung himself into the thick of the battle. But his courage availed him little. He had already taken a terrific beating and was well nigh spent.

Whirling a huge portion of railroad sleeper, Eneas George turned on Gisbourne and smashed a brutal blow on Gisbourne's head. Then followed the sickening scrunch of splintering bone and the plucky constable sagged to the ground. In the words of one Indian eye-witness: "Constable Gisbourne he die then."

His comrade finished and now ringed in by four murder-bent natives, Carr managed to draw the small auto-loading pistol he carried and fire one shot. The bullet went wild. Again he tried to press the trigger but the ineffective weapon had jammed. Hurling it full in the face of one of his attackers, Carr again struck out with his baton. Came a vicious crack and, clutching agonizedly at his head, Joseph George staggered away and then crumpled to the ground. The sight raised the fury of his three brothers to downright intensity.

"He kill our brother! Kill 'im! Kill both policemen!" Richardson George screamed hoarsely as he urged his brothers to even more furious attack. Before that redoubled onslaught Constable Carr was forced to give ground and tried to back his way toward his car.

Dazed and half-blinded by the blood spouting from a score of grievous wounds, Carr somehow managed to reach the machine, clamber inside and start the engine. With the cursing, raving brothers crowding on both running boards he tried to drive away.

But by now the Indians had shed the last veneer of civilization. They were primeval savages aflame with blood-lust and their prey was a badly-hurt white man who could not protect himself.

The car was now moving slowly, zig-zagging all over the road. Suddenly it bumped into a large tree and stopped.

In an instant a pair of brown, clutching hands reached inside the machine and dragged Carr's head through a window. Thus held, Carr was helpless to protect himself from the clubs wielded by the other two brothers. Vicious blows smashed again and again upon his unprotected head then, moaning and almost finished, he was dragged out of the automobile. As he lay help-

less on the ground, the three Indians pounced on their nearly dead victim and beat him fiendishly.

By now the whole reserve was in an uproar. Shadowy figures huddled all about the dwellings. Squaws and children were wailing affrightedly. A few bolder spirits among the younger men approached the scene of the fight.

Breathing gustily, the George brothers then stopped belaboring Carr and held a hasty consultation. With threats and pleas they induced others of their tribe to aid them in endeavoring to conceal all evidence of their brutal crime. In the pitchy darkness followed the ghastly business of loading the remains of Carr and Gisbourne into the police automobile.

None of the Indians helping could drive a car so a team of native ponies was hastily hitched up and, with many natives also pushing, the machine was moved some distance from the reserve.

At a likely spot the death car and its ghastly load was shoved over the edge of the highway. For a few yards the automobile rolled down the steep bank toward the Nicola River, then it jammed against a sizeable tree and stopped.

For over an hour, cursing, sweating Indians sought to dislodge the machine and send it rolling into the water.

Finding their efforts useless, they then dragged the two dead policemen from the car, waded out into the swift stream up to their waists and threw the corpses into the Nicola River.

As the remains of the two policemen were whirled away in the churning current, it is likely the murderers felt reasonably safe, for it is but rarely that the torrential mountain rivers give up the dead.

But in this case the body of Constable Gisbourne was recovered and bore mute evidence to the fiendishness of the killer's attack, and also to the gallant fight he had put up.

SO today one ex-policeman rests quietly in his grave at Kamloops, British Columbia. The remains of Constable Carr are floating around somewhere in a river tumbling riotously through mountain fastnesses.

One Indian, Joseph George, has been rendered deaf for life by injuries received in the fight. Another Indian, Alex George, who was sentenced to imprisonment for life, is slowly dying of tuberculosis in the New Westminster, British Columbia, penitentiary.

Two other Indians, Eneas and Richardson George, went to their deaths on the gallows. All the outcome of murder on the reserve.

—THE END

Constable Percy Carr (left) and Constable Francis Harley Gisbourne were brutally murdered when they tried to arrest the savage killers.

