

The July 1926 murder of crusading journalist Donald Ring Mellett, the editor of the Canton, Ohio, *Daily News*, was one of the most publicized crimes in the 1920s. In 1925 Mellett had discovered widespread corruption within the Canton police force and embarked on an anti-vice, anti-corruption editorial campaign, targeting, among others, the Canton police chief. Hill was reported to have asked Ohio's governor to initiate an investigation of the corruption, a detail not reflected in Hill's account.

Local underworld figures and at least one Canton police officer hired Patrick McDermott, an ex-con from Pennsylvania, to silence Mellett. Mellett was gunned down outside his home. As the story goes, gunmen were also lying in wait for Hill, but a fortuitous automotive breakdown kept him out of their way. On July 17, the *New York Times* reported in an article titled "More Death Threats Follow the Slaying of Canton Editor" that the citizens of Canton "are terror-stricken by threats of further killings by the rulers of the gamblers, bootleggers and other criminals." As recounted by Hill, after hearing of Mellett's murder and receiving an anonymous warning to get out of town, he fled to West Virginia. In large part due to the work of a private detective hired by the Stark County prosecutor, McDermott, two local gangsters, and a former police detective were ultimately convicted of Mellett's murder.

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