



Starkweather drawing, made in prison cell, may be wishful thinking. His art work showed some talent, teachers say, although he never took lessons. His parents urged him to attend art school. Starkweather says now he wishes he had studied art, but says his real ambition was to run a chicken farm.



Starkweather scoreboard: seven days of terror

In seven days last year, Charles Starkweather, 19, and slim Carl Ann Fugate, 14, left a bloody trail from Lincoln, Neb., to Casper, Wyo. When they finally were captured, the box score stood: 10 dead (six shootings, two stabbings, one beating and one combination stabbing-shooting).

After their capture, Starkweather also confessed killing a service station attendant, Robert Colvert, two months before.

The trail began at Carl's home in a Lincoln suburb. Apparently because they forbade him to see Carl further, Starkweather shot her stepfather, Marion Bartlett, and her mother, Velda. Also brutally beaten to death was Carl's 2½-year-old stepsister, Betty Jean.

Charles hid the bodies in outbuildings, fled to the farm of August Meyer, a Starkweather family friend, shot him. Escaping, his car got stuck in a mud road. When teenagers Robert Jensen and Carol King offered help, Jensen was shot, Carl shot and stabbed. The pair fled back to

Lincoln, holed up in the fashionable home of businessman Lauer Ward. Ward was shot, his wife and their maid stabbed.

On the run again, Carl and Charles reached Douglas, Wyo. Shoe salesman Merle Collison, shot as he slept in his car, was the last victim. Moments later, Charles and Carl were captured.

Both Charles and Carl were tried for the murder of Jensen. Carl said she was a hostage, had no part in the murders. She was convicted, sentenced to life, now is appealing. Charles, sentenced to die, has appealed twice unsuccessfully.

Today, Starkweather sits in an 8-by-12 death-row cell in Nebraska State Penitentiary. Warden Joseph Bovey and Deputy John Greenholtz post guards around the clock. The cell is sparsely furnished; even his glasses are taken away at night. He leaves only for visiting hours, reads a good deal, sketches, talks to the chaplain, reads the Bible. Scheduled to die March 27, his sole hope now is a last-ditch reprieve.

and suggested we choose up teams to play kick soccer. At the end of picking the teams there was just one boy that wasn't picked yet. And that boy was a redhead, bowlegged kid. That boy was I.

Mrs. Mott asked, "Would it be all right with you, Charles, if you would act as a substitute? Would you like that?" I wanted to play kick soccer as well as any other boy. Now that I wasn't going to get to play, my heart droop and sadden, so I slipped out of sight and sat down on the top step of the basement steps.

That was one of the first of my black moods. I sat there and said to myself that someday I'd pay them all back. An overwhelming sense of outrage grew in my mind for a revenge upon the world and its human race.

Back in the classroom, I again had the sandbox all to myself. Finally Mrs. Mott asked me to play somewhere else so others could use the sandbox. When I went to the playhouse, everybody left. Then Mrs. Mott suggested I leave there, too. I never went near either of them again. Finally she brought me watercolor paints and suggested I make my mother a picture. While I was painting I did not pay much attention to others and I finished the painting just as we were ready to go home at the end of the morning.

After I had walked two or three blocks on my way home, I heard giggles and laughter behind me. I glance back over my shoulder and there they were, a half dozen girls and boys making wisecracks about my bowlegs and hair and speech. I could hear them imitating my speech as I kept walking.

The Chorus Begins

I stopped as I came to the next corner and then I heard it for the first time:

"The bowlegged, redhead woodpecker!
"The bowlegged, redhead woodpecker!"

A car went by. Another was proceeding from the opposite direction, and I stood waiting for it to pass. By this time every one of the youngsters joined in with the first boy:

"The bowlegged, redhead woodpecker!
"The bowlegged, redhead woodpecker!"

All at once the boy that seem to be the leader took a couple of steps forward and gave a hardy shove that sent me into the street. The automobile's tires squealed. The car came to a full stop not more than a few feet away. As I got up off the street, the boy that

shoved me said, "What happened, bowlegs? Won't those bowlegs hold you up?"

Then he slipped up behind me and jerked the rolled-up paper from my hand. It was the painting that I had made for Mom.

They all gathered around and started making wisecracks. My blood was getting steam up and I had a desire to team into them with fists or a stick, brick, stone or anything to beat their lousy brains out. But Mom had told me the day before not to fight so I dismissed the idea.

Then, as the laughter and giggling began, the leader jeered, "You can't even draw," and tore the painting into little pieces.

I gripped my jaw to keep from crying out loud. But it didn't keep the tears from creeping from my eyes and rolling down my cheeks. And then they started in:

"The bowlegged, redhead woodpecker is a cry baby."

"The bowlegged, redhead woodpecker is a cry baby."

At that, I turned toward home and ran as fast as my bowlegs would carry me.

That night, Dad phoned someone, I think the prin-

Continued on page 13

NEWSPAPERARCHIVE

Long Beach Independent, March 15, 1959, Pg. 134, Long Beach, California, US

<https://newspaperarchive.com/long-beach-independent-mar-15-1959-p-134/>