

## Alfred Cropley (1869-1933) & Margaret Cropley (1870-1941)

### Prisoner Record:

No. 25807

Name: Cropley, Alfred

AKA: Alfred Smith, Alfred Crossley, Wm Donough, Albert Cole.

Height	5ft 9½
Complexion	Fresh
Hair	Brown
Eyes	Blue
Date of Birth	1868
Native Place	Victoria
Trade	Brickmaker
Religion	Ch of Eng
Read & Write	Both

Offence	Date	Sentence
Armed with an offensive weapon with intent to commit felony	10-02-1893	6 moths hard labor
Assault	22-02-1893	3 months H. L. cumulative
Vagrancy	21-12-1893	12 months
Assaulting a female	04-05-1895	6 months
Idle and disorderly	11-05-1895	12 months cum.
Vagrancy	12-04-1899	12 months
Robbery in company	15-02-1901	5 years
Endeavoring to impose	27-06-1906	12 months
Housebreaking (3 charges)	01-03-1908	5 years H. L.

### Prisoner Record (damaged):

No. 6246

Name: Cropley, Margaret,

AKA: Margaret Lynch, Maggie Anderson, Margaret Anderson, Elizabeth Anderson, Margaret Skully.

Height	5ft ?
Complexion	Fresh
Hair	Brown
Eyes	Blue
Date of Birth	1869
Native Place	Carlton
Trade	Servant
Religion	R. Cath
Read & Write	Both

Offence	Date	Sentence	Name
Obscene Language	24-08-1887	fine or 7 days	
Insulting Behaviour	22-10-1887	fine or 7 days	Margaret Lynch
Insulting Behaviour	26-12-1887	fine or 3 days	Margaret Skully
Obscene Language	10-03-1888	fine or 1 month	
Insulting Behaviour	02-10-1888	fine or 14 days	Maggie Anderson
Larceny	15-10-1888	3 days	Margaret Anderson
Obscene Language	11-05-1892	fine or 2 months	
Sol. Prostitution	24-08-1892	fine or 7 days	Margaret Cropley
Insulting Behaviour	31-01-1893	fine or 7 days	Elizabeth Anderson
Riotous Behaviour	25-03-1893	7 days	Margaret Lynch
Larceny	29-08-1893	14 days hard labour	
Obscene Language	04-11-1899	£10 or 3 months	
Breaking Panes	04-11-1899	27/- or 14 days	
Drunk &	06-05-1915	40/- or 14 days	

### Independent (Footscray, Vic.) Saturday 14 May 1892 p 2 Article

At the local court on Wednesday morning, two young females whose ages were 21 and 22 years' respectively, and named Jessie Charles and Margaret Cropley were charged with using obscene language the previous evening, about ten o'clock. They were using very vile language in Anderson street to some larrikins, and when

Constable Harris came to Constable Conn's assistance, a very large crowd estimated at over a hundred persons had collected. The females were arrested, both being under the influence of liquor, and they treated the constables to a choice assortment of Billingsgate expressions. In the meantime Senior-Constable Rushford arrived, and the prisoners were removed to the watch-house, one of them having to be carried all the way. They were each fined £5 or two months' imprisonment, and as the fines were not paid went to gaol.

#### **The Age (Melbourne) Saturday 4 February 1893 p 8 Article**

##### **FATAL BLOW FROM A CONSTABLE'S BATON.**

The man Henry Cousins, who was knocked down on Wednesday last by Constable Spillane when Cousins was, as the constable alleges, making an assault upon him, died in the Melbourne Hospital yesterday afternoon from the results of the injuries he received. He was insensible when he was admitted to the hospital, and never recovered consciousness. A post mortem examination will be made in the course of to-day, and an inquest will be held on Monday next.

Warrants were issued yesterday for the arrest of the three men who were with Cousins at the time of the fracas. Constables M'Donnell and M'Evilly assisted Constable Spillane to trace and arrest the offenders. They succeeded in effecting the arrest of Henry Cropley, aged 23, of no occupation, who lives with his mother at Victoria-street, West Brunswick. The charge preferred against Cropley is that of using threatening language, and it will also be alleged against him that he was the one who carried the sling shot, whilst it was Cousins who used the belt. Cropley was arrested at the house of the deceased man, Cousins, 75 Cambridge-street, Collingwood.

#### **The Argus (Melbourne) Tuesday 7 February 1893 p 7 Article**

##### **THE DEATH OF HENRY COUZENS.**

##### **THE INQUEST. VERDICT OF JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDE.**

Dr. Youl, the city coroner, held an inquest at the Melbourne Hospital yesterday as to the circumstances of the death of Henry Couzens, who died in the hospital on Friday from injuries to his head. Mr. Gaunson watched the case on behalf of Constable Spillane. The following evidence was taken :—

Johanna Couzens, wife of the deceased, said he was 25 years of age and a dealer by occupation. They had four children. Deceased was sober on leaving home after tea on the 1st inst., having been at work all day. He had been hawking fruit.

Dr. R. A. Buntine, of the Melbourne Hospital staff, stated that the deceased was unconscious when admitted, and died rather suddenly on Friday last. The cause of death was fracture of the skull, which was exceptionally thin. There were several marks on the skull, results either of different blows or of falling on a rough uneven surface. There was one mark on the back of the head that looked like the result of a fall. The other four looked like baton marks. In his opinion the blow of the baton started the main fracture, and the fall in the gutter completed it.

Nelly Brocchi, general servant, said she heard Constable Spillane order two men away from Spring-street. They refused to go, and challenged him to fight. They afterwards followed him down Little Lonsdale-street. One of the men had something in his hand, which he held behind his back.

John Putnam Glenister, licensee of the South Australian Club Hotel, Spring-street, said he turned the deceased, a woman named Gorry, and a man named Cropley out of his hotel. They were all the worse for liquor. Later on he saw Constable Spillane move the men away from his door after much trouble. They came back, and witness said to Spillane, " These men mean to smash you." The deceased struck at Spillane with a broad leather belt having a heavy buckle, and Spillane made a backhand blow with the baton, striking the deceased on the side of the head. The deceased staggered from the blow, and fell backwards on to his head in the gutter. The prisoner Cropley had something in a handkerchief, which he held beneath his coat. Deceased was unconscious, and witness sent him to the Hospital.

Ah Hin, a Chinese cabinetmaker, gave similar evidence, and Constables McEvilly and McDonnell, who arrested Cropley, deposed that he saw the deceased use his belt to Spillane. He had threatened to kill him.

Constable Spillane stated that when threatened he went in search of another constable. When he first spoke to the two men the deceased drew his belt and threatened to split witness's head. Cropley at the same time picked something out of the gutter, and tied it in a handkerchief, saying, " Let's go for the — ; he isn't game to come up." Glenister's statement as to what took place afterwards was absolutely correct. The deceased held

the belt over his shoulder in the act of striking when witness struck him with the baton. He went to handcuff the deceased afterwards, not believing then that he was seriously hurt.

Alfred Cropley, in custody, having expressed a wish to give evidence, said he was a brickmaker in Albert-street, West Melbourne, and was with Couzens on the afternoon of the 1st inst. They had five drinks each before meeting Spillane. Couzens drew his belt from behind his back, and as he did so the constable struck him with the baton, and knocked him down.

The CORONER, in reviewing the evidence, said he considered that the police were marvellously gentle, considering the treatment they were subjected to by larrikins, and the light punishment inflicted when offenders of that class were brought before the justices. These light punishments simply led finally to such occurrences as the one in this case. This man had a wonderfully thin skull, and had the constable not struck him it was evident that he would have struck the constable, and a blow with the belt produced would have simply meant the holding of an inquest on Spillane instead of on Couzens. The constable was legally justified in striking him as he did, altogether apart from the fact that he was a representative of the law, and they could find no other verdict, he thought, than that it was a justifiable act.

The jury found that Couzens died from the effects of a blow from a baton, and that the case was one of justifiable homicide.

### **The Age (Melbourne) Saturday 11 February 1893 p 8 Article**

#### **THE ATTACK ON CONSTABLE SPILLANE.**

Alfred Cropley was charged at the City Court yesterday with using threatening words to Constable Spillane, and carrying an offensive weapon. Cropley was a companion of the man Cousins, who died recently from the effects of a blow from Spillane's baton, and the present charge arose out of the same occurrence. Cropley is alleged to have picked up a piece of road metal and tied it in a handkerchief, threatening to assault the constable. After the fracas Cropley escaped, but was arrested next day. Accused denied that he carried a sling shot.

On the list of previous convictions, numbering nine, being read out, prisoner emphatically stated that he had only been twice convicted, and Mr. Panton adjourned the case to the afternoon to allow of further inquiries being made. It was ascertained that a mistake had been made in certain records of convictions, and prisoner was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for carrying the dangerous weapon, being dismissed on the other charge.

### **The Coburg Leader (Vic.) Wednesday 1 March 1893**

A rescue was attempted whilst Constable Austin was arresting Hegarty, lately deceased, for creating a dis- in a house in Merri-street. The officer was struggling with his prisoner when a man named Fahey came to Austin's assistance and at the same time Alfred Cropley, a crony of the deceased attempted to balance matters by striking Fahey. Constable Austin and Fahley swore positively to Cropley's share in the fracas, and a batch of Cropley's relatives swore just as emphatically that the accused was lying drunk at his mother's home at the time of the disturbance. Cropley, who is undergoing a sentence of six months for carrying an offensive weapon. arising out of the disturbance in which a larrikin named Cousins lost his life, pleaded guilty to previous convictions, and was sentenced to six months imprisonment without the option of a fine and ordered to pay 15s. costs.

### **Mercury and Weekly Courier (Vic.) Thursday 31 August 1893 p 3 Article**

#### **STEALING A COAT.**

A young woman named Margaret Lynch was sent to gaol for 14 days for stealing an overcoat from Samuel Rosenwax, a pawnbroker, and pledging it with another pawnbroker named T. J. Candy.

### **Mercury and Weekly Courier (Vic.) Friday 29 December 1893 p 3 Article**

#### **DISORDERLY CHARACTERS.**

A disreputable herd were sentenced as follows: Alfred Smith alias Cropley, his wife, Margaret Cropley, and Robert Dunbar, twelve months each; a man named Oliver, one month, and a girl named O'Neil was discharged to the custody of her mother.



**Mount Alexander Mail (Vic.) Monday 6 May 1895 p 3 Article**

Alfred Cropley, who has been living on the prostitution of his wife, and who inflicted an ugly wound over her eye, has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment and bound over to keep the peace for another six in two sureties of L50 each.

**The Age (Melbourne) Friday 4 November 1898 p 9 Article**

OBSCENE LANGUAGE.

At the Carlton court on Wednesday, Alfred Cropley was charged with using obscene language to Mrs. Brotherton, licensee of the Victoria Hotel, Bouverie-street, on 3rd September. Complainant stated that accused, accompanied by two other men, visited her hotel, made use of filthy language, and when remonstrated with attempted to assault complainant. The other two men were arrested and subsequently punished, but accused escaped. Accused denied the offence, and said he did not remember being in the hotel at all. The warrant had been issued for over two months, and during the whole time he had been about Melbourne. The bench sentenced accused to three months' imprisonment, in default of payment of a fine of £5.

### **The Age (Melbourne) Friday 9 November 1900 p 6 Article**

THE DEATH OF JAMES VANCE.

THREE ADDITIONAL ARRESTS.

Yesterday, Detective Sergeant Dungey and Detectives Hawkins and Coonan arrested at North Melbourne James O'Shannessey, 32, laborer; Moss Smith, 18, marine stores collector, and Alfred Cropley, 32, laborer, on a charge wilfully murdering James Vance in Queen-street on Monday night. The two men already under arrest on the charge are John Dowdle, 19, baker; and Henry Johnson, 19, laborer, also residents of North Melbourne. The detectives state that they have additional evidence which will show that either four or five of the prisoners were in the yard of the boarding house when the attack was made on Vance, causing the injuries which resulted in his death on the following day, and that they will be able to prove that deceased was robbed of his money, Vance spent a great part of his life as a farm laborer in Victoria, principally in the Kilmore district, where one land owner employed him for nearly 13 years. He is not known to have any relatives in Australia. When he left Sugarloaf Creek with the young man Herbert Williams last Thursday to see the Cup he had— a cheque for £4, which he afterwards cashed. Up to the time he was stunned he had spent £1 4/6. The sum of 15/6 was found in his coat pocket, and he had a calico bag which contained the balance of £2. The detectives are in possession of information that he was robbed of the latter sum. Williams, who was present when Vance was knocked down, and was himself kicked violently in the stomach, states that the reason why he can positively identify Johnson as the man who assaulted him is that a light shining out of a window of the house gave a perfectly clear view of his features. Shouts which he uttered caused some of the lodgers to open their windows, but the thieves had then accomplished their work and run off.

The five prisoners, who stand remanded, were present at the Morgue yesterday, when the inquest on the body of James Vance was opened.

Dr. Mollison deposed to having made the post-mortem examination. Deceased was 5 feet 7 inches high and about 65 years old on the scalp, above the right ear, there was a contused, lacerated wound 2 inches long and three-quarters of an inch wide in the widest part. The skull was bruised and fractured down to the base, and the brain was much bruised and injured. Death was due to the brain injuries.

John Bruce, barman at the Hibernian Hotel, identified deceased as a man who was at the hotel on Monday night, and left at 10.15. Witness did not know his name, and had not seen him before, but was positive as to his identity..

Herbert Williams, farm laborer, of Sugarloaf Creek, Broadford, gave formal evidence as to identification of the body. He had known deceased about two months. The inquest was adjourned till the 27th inst.

Four of the prisoners listened to the proceedings with seeming indifference, but Johnson wept bitterly. His mother, who was present at the inquest, kissed him as he left the Morgue.

The three men last arrested — James O'Shannessey, Alfred Cropley, and Moss Smith— were charged at the City Court yesterday with the wilful murder of James Vance. Sergeant Detective Dungey applied for a remand until 13th inst. The application was granted.

### **The Age (Melbourne) Wednesday 28 November 1900 p 8 Article**

FATAL STREET ATTACK.

THE DEATH OF JAMES VANCE. CUP VISITOR ROBBED AND FATALLY MALTREATED.

Additional particulars were elicited before Mr. Morrison, coroner, at the Morgue yesterday with respect to James Vance, an elderly man, a resident of Broadford, who came to Melbourne to witness the race for the Melbourne Cup, and who died in the Melbourne Hospital some weeks ago as the result of injuries alleged to have been inflicted in an assault by larrikins in Queen-street. Five young men, John James Dowdie, Henry



Johnson, Alfred Cropley, Moss Smith and James O'Shannessy, were , present at the inquest in custody, on suspicion of having occasioned the death. Sub-Inspector Beck appeared for the police. Dowdle was represented by Mr. Gillow, Johnson by Mr. A. E. Jones, Cropley by Mr. L. F. S. Robinson, Smith by Mr. Kane and O'Shannessy by Mr. Lonie.

Further evidence was given by Dr. Mollison, who had made the post mortem. He said that the wounds in Vance's head could have been caused by a fall on a rough surface, a kick, or a blow with a blunt instrument. A fall from steps about 2 feet high would be sufficient to cause fracture and bruising of the brain. The scalp wound looked as though it had been caused by a rougher sort of violence than a fall, but Dr. Mollison could not be positive on the point. He did not, however, consider that all the injuries were the result of one fall or one act of violence.

Constable William Roche gave evidence to the same effect as already published as to his having, whilst on duty near the Titles Office at 10.50 on the night of 5th November, heard a scream, seemingly from the direction of Lonsdale-street. He saw four men run from a right of way between the Council Club Hotel and a boarding house. They ran towards Little Lonsdale-street, but on seeing him, turned and made down Lonsdale-street, and were lost sight of near Elizabeth-street. In the right of way Vance was picked up.

Evidence was given by Detective Sergeant Dungey as to the arrests of the alleged assailants. When he told them that Vance was dead, Johnson called out requesting that he should be let out of his cell. He asked whether it was true, and said, "Well, I never touched the old man or Williams (the young man, a friend of deceased, who was in deceased's company). I don't see why I should suffer for older men than me. I want to tell the truth." He made a statement afterwards, to the effect that he and the other men had drinks at the expense of the old man. Vance received 18/ change, and was advised to stay in the hotel and have a sleep. He and Williams went out, however, and were followed by the five others. Eventually they walked down the right of way. Johnson followed Vance and Williams into a yard, passing them and going into an outhouse. When he came out, the other men were "swarming round" Williams. A calico bag was hanging out of one of Vance's pockets. This Johnson took, and left the yard, where O'Shannessy remained. A few seconds later O'Shannessy followed.

The calico bag contained 18/, which was afterwards apportioned among the men. On being confronted with Johnson, the man O'Shannessy said, "It's not true. I was not with any of them after we were in the hotel." Dowdle, on the other hand, admitted the truth of the statement, and made one on his own account in very similar terms, saying that whilst standing in the lane he heard "Bruno" Williams call out, "Oh. Jim! Oh, Jim!" Afterwards he ran to the corner of Little Lonsdale and Elizabeth streets, where he was rejoined by the others.

Evidence with regard to the occurrence was also given by the young man Herbert Williams, who had come to Melbourne with Vance, and the inquest was adjourned until to-morrow.

### **The Age (Melbourne) Thursday 13 December 1900 p 6 Article**

#### **THE DEATH OF JAMES VANCE.**

#### **MURDER CHARGE WITHDRAWN.**

#### **THE LAW ON THE QUESTION EXPLAINED.**

The hearing of the case against five young men, who were charged with the wilful murder of James Vance on 6th November last, was continued in the Criminal Court yesterday, before Mr. Justice Williams. The accused were James O'Shannessy, Alfred Cropley, Moss Smith, John James Dowdle and Henry E. V. Johnson. Mr. Finlayson prosecuted for the Crown, Mr. Gaunson appeared for O'Shannessy, Mr. Paul for Cropley, Mr. Maxwell for Smith, Mr. Barrett for Dowdle and Mr. Wolf Fink for Johnson.

The preceding day, on the conclusion of the case for the Crown, Mr. Gaunson submitted that a case of murder had not been made out against accused, and the Crown prosecutor undertook to make a statement with regard to the further prosecution of the charge when the court resumed on the following day.

On the court opening yesterday morning, the Crown prosecutor said he had consulted the Attorney-General, and had been directed to enter a nolle prosequi on the presentment of wilful murder.

Mr. Justice Williams, after recapitulating what had taken place the previous evening before the rising of the court, said the prosecutor for the Crown had on that occasion recognised the difficulty of proceeding with the presentment of the case as one of murder. In this he (Mr. Justice Williams) had concurred. The law of murder, as he conceived it, was that if a party of men were engaged in committing felony, and caused death by any act

of violence which was either concerted, prearranged, or done at the moment with the consent of the others, then, if there was no intention to cause death, that would be murder. To apply that principle to the present case, he would say that if these five persons had agreed amongst themselves that in the event of the old man offering resistance they would use violence, not intending to kill him, but merely to use violence to overcome his resistance and get away with his money, and if in the course of robbing him one of them inflicted on him a blow which caused his death, though not intending that it should have that effect; or if one of them gave him a violent push which threw him down and caused a fracture of his skull from which he died, they would all be guilty of murder, if they had arranged beforehand that they were going to rob him, and would use violence if he resisted, and they must all take the consequences of that act. Again, if at the time of the robbery, when the man was making some resistance to one of their number, the others shouted out "Stouch him!" or "Throw him to the ground!" and one of them in accordance with that request did "stouch" him in the eye or throw him down so as to cause his death, they would all be guilty of murder, because that act of violence would have been done with the assent or consent of the others. If, however, the law went beyond that it should shock commonsense. If these five men had arranged to rob the old man of his money, and if after robbing him one of their number, without the knowledge and consent of the others, or without previous arrangement on their part, gave him a violent shove into the yard, causing him to fall and lose his life, then certainly the other four would not be guilty of murder. The prisoners could not be found guilty on conjecture. The difficulty here was as to whether the fall was the result of an accident, through the old man stumbling over the board across the bottom of the gate, or the result of a push or a violent blow. Did the old man trip over the board that was in the gateway and plunge violently into the yard and then stagger about and fall down the steps leading into the second yard? If the evidence was perfectly clear that one of these five men did give the old man a violent push over the bit of wood at the bottom of the gate, how was the jury to say which man did it? And if the jury knew that, how could they say, except by inference, that he committed the act with the consent of, or by the exhortation or preconcerted arrangement with, the others? In these circumstances the Crown could not but enter a nolle prosequi on the charge of murder.

The jury was then discharged.

The prisoner John James Dowdle was released. The other prisoners, O'Shannessy, Cropley, Smith and Johnson, were presented on a charge of assault and robbery. The prisoner Johnson, when asked to plead said "I am guilty of taking some of the money." The Crown prosecutor said that he could not accept that statement as a plea of guilty. The four accused were remanded until the February sittings of the Supreme Court. They were each allowed bail in two sureties of £50, or one of £100, and each themselves in a like amount, the bondsmen to be approved by the police.

### **The Age (Melbourne) Thursday 21 February 1901 p 6 Article**

#### **THE DEATH OF JAMES VANCE**

##### **A QUESTION OF DIET.**

At the Criminal Court yesterday, before Mr. Justice Hood, four young men named Alfred Cropley, Moss Smith, James O'Shannessy and H. E. V. Johnson, were charged with having on the night of 5th November assaulted and robbed an old man named James Vance. Owing to injuries sustained through falling, or otherwise, Vance died two days afterwards. The four accused, with another man, were subsequently apprehended and arraigned on a more serious charge, but this broke down, and the five were acquitted. In the proceedings yesterday Mr. Finlayson, K.C., prosecuted for the Crown, and the accused O'Shannessy was defended by Mr. Gammon, and Smith by Mr. Kane. The other two were undefended.

The facts, as they have been already published, were briefly outlined by the Crown prosecutor. James Vance, accompanied by a younger man named Herbert Williams, arrived in Melbourne from Bradford on 5th November, and in the evening visited several hotels, becoming, as the bulk of the evidence showed, somewhat the worse for drink. Later in the evening, while in the yard of the boarding house where he intended to remain for the night, Vance either fell, or was thrown down, and a bag containing his money was stolen. The contention of the Crown was that the four accused were with Vance shortly before he was injured, and that they were responsible for the robbery.

Evidence was given by several witnesses bearing out the Crown prosecutor's opening statement. When Detective Dungey appeared to give evidence he was cross examined at some length by the accused Johnson, a youth of apparently not more than 18 or nineteen years of age. Accused, addressing the detective as

"Dungey," asked if it was not a fact that he had endeavored to get him (Johnson) to give evidence by promising immunity from further proceedings.

Witness (with indignation): I treated you all the same, and that is all the thanks I get for it. (Laughter.)

Prisoner: Did you ask me to make a statement and say that you would get me out of a charge of wilful murder if I made it? — I did not.

Prisoner (laughing and advancing to wards the bars of the dock): Did you bring pancakes in to me? (Laughter, during which the reply of the detective was inaudible.)

Prisoner (addressing his Honor): He asked me to make that statement, and when I had made it I found it was going to be used in evidence against me.

Detective Dungey: I didn't do anything of the kind.

Prisoner (to the witness) : Didn't you ask me to say that I had made that statement of my own free will?— I did nothing of the kind.

The next witness called was Detective Coonan, and he was cross examined by Mr. Gaunson.

Mr. Gaunson: Is it usual to feed prisoners charged with murder upon pancakes?—(After some hesitation): That depends. (Laughter.)

If it has been said here that Dungey fed any prisoner on pancakes, would that be according to the regular course of diet?—The only place where I have seen it done is at the Morgue. (Laughter.)

At the Morgue! What do you mean?—Occasionally when people have to wait there.

The Court adjourned till to-day.

### **The Age (Melbourne,) Friday 22 February 1901 p 7 Article**

#### **THE VANCE ASSAULT CASE.**

#### **FOUR MEN CONVICTED.**

At the Criminal Court yesterday, before Mr. Justice Hood, four young men, named Alfred Cropley, Moss Smith, James O'Shannessy and H. V. Johnson, were further charged with having on the night of 5th November assaulted and robbed an old man named James Vance. Owing to injuries sustained through falling, or otherwise, Vance died two days afterwards. In the proceedings yesterday Mr. Finlayson, K.C., prosecuted for the Crown, and the accused O'Shannessy was defended by Mr. Gaunson, and Smith by Mr. Kane. The other two were undefended.

After the case for the Crown had been concluded, Cropley and Johnson gave evidence on their own behalf. The latter, when asked if the confession he gave to Detective Dungey was true, said, "Dungey put me up to it."

Mr. Gaunson, for the defence, said some thing about the conduct of the press, by whom he declared men were found guilty and "done to death before they were convicted." If the judges could only put the men who wrote these accounts into gaol, it would, Mr. Gaunson thought, be a proper thing to do.

Mr. Justice Hood, in the course of his summing up, remarked that a great deal of irrelevant matter had been introduced, such as the remarks about the conduct of the press. There was more evidence, he said, against Johnson, and less against O'Shannessy, than against any of the others. As to Dowdle, who had given important evidence, he was a man of such a kind that he would, according to his own confession, sponge upon a prostitute for a drink. That was his own description of himself. At the same time the vilest of men might be speaking the truth, and it was for the jury to say whether Dowdle was telling the truth in this instance. It was important to notice that the confession signed by Johnson, and witnessed by a justice of the peace, was almost exactly identical with the story told by Dowdle. He (Mr. Justice Hood) had had some experience of police and detectives, and knew that there were black sheep among them, as there were in every class, but the jury were now asked by counsel to believe that Detective Dungey had concocted the whole of this story, and that the prisoner Johnson had signed it, knowing it to be a mass of lies. The allegation was a serious one to make against anyone, and it was for the jury to say whether they believed Dungey had got the confession in such circumstances. It had been said by the counsel for the defence that Dungey knew everything about the case, but he did not know everything when that confession was signed. Another fact, was that the witness Williams, who was in Vance's company at the time of the robbery, positively identified Johnson, while he could not identify any others of the accused. As against Smith and Cropley, his Honor went on to say, the evidence was a



little weaker; that was to say, there was not so much of it. There was Dowdle's positive statement that these men were in company with Vance on the night of the robbery, but the jury had to take this in conjunction with the other evidence before depriving Smith and Cropley of their liberty. There was nothing to connect O'Shannessy with the crime except Dowdle's statement, and the evidence of the Bruces that he (O'Shannessy) followed Vance out of the hotel. There was nothing improper or irregular, his Honor went on to say, in the action of the Crown in asking one of a number of accused persons if he was willing to turn informer.

The jury, after a short retirement, brought in a verdict of guilty against all of the accused.

His Honor remarked that he agreed with the verdict of the jury, and characterised the crime as a deliberate, cruel and cowardly one. He sentenced O'Shannessy and Cropley, both of whom had admitted previous convictions, to five years' imprisonment each, and Smith and Johnson to two years' imprisonment each, and directed that each of the prisoners should serve six periods of four days each in solitary confinement.



#### **The Age (Melbourne) Monday 23 July 1906 p 6 Article**

##### **TAKING DOWN A BOOKMAKER.**

##### **ALLEGED "TICKET FAKERS" ARRESTED.**

Two well known racecourse "guns", Alfred Smith and Charles Rouse, were on Saturday apprehended at Caulfield racecourse while endeavoring to perform the extraordinarily difficult operation of "taking down" a "flat" bookmaker.

Detectives Howard and Manning, knowing that quite a number of bookmakers had recently been imposed upon and looked of cash by means of forged tickets, laid themselves out to catch the offenders. On Saturday morning they observed Smith and Rouse get into a cab to go to Caulfield. The detectives followed, and kept the "guns" under surveillance. When Regret had won the Hurdle Race Smith rushed to a bookmaker and presented a ticket market Regret, £4. This ticket had been faked in a hurry, the forgery was gross and palpable, and the bookmaker indignantly refused to pay. Instead he began to look about for a policeman, and Smith bolted. Manning, however, chased and caught him, and, taking him back to the bookmaker, questioned him. He at first said he had backed Regret with the bookmaker, and then said he had made a mistake — it was another bookmaker. He was then arrested. Another ticket, marked "Clipper, 7/, No. 508," was found in possession of the prisoners. This was taken out with another bookmaker genuinely, who found it followed "No. 507, Clipper, £7." Howard went in search of Rouse, and found him with an ink pad and a tablet of papers in his possession. Both men were then charged with "conspiring to defraud."

The modus operandi of ticket fakers is to stand close by a reputable bookmaker till a good big bet in pounds is made, say £20 to £2 Abstract, No. 507." The faker then jumps in for the next ticket and takes 20/ to 2/ on the same horse, No. 508. This ticket is then altered by one man by means of a rubber stamp and the erasure of the figure eight to 507, and the man who made the big bet is shadowed by the other man till the race is run. If the horse wins the "gun" enthusiastically congratulates him as a fellow winner and detains him to have a drink on the strength of their mutual luck. Meanwhile the forged ticket is presented and paid, for it is almost impossible in the rush to detect it. and the bookmaker has to pay out again when the fraud is discovered on presentation of the right ticket.

### **The Age (Melbourne) Saturday 28 July 1906 p 15 Article**

A RACECOURSE EPISODE.

PASSING A "FAKED" BETTING TICKET.

The sequel to the arrest of the men Alfred Smith and Charles Rouse at the Caulfield racecourse on Saturday was their appearance at Caulfield court yesterday, charged with conspiring together to defraud James Roberts, of Richmond, of the sum of £4.

Sergeant Jordan, who prosecuted, said the police desired to withdraw the charge. After consultation the bench agreed, and the case was struck out.

Smith was then charged with endeavoring to impose on James Roberts, bookmaker, at Caulfield racecourse on 21st July by means of false representations.

Mr. Sonnenberg drew the attention of the bench to the treatment of Rouse. He said it was contrary to law and justice. Rouse had been arrested on Saturday, and locked up till Monday, when he obtained bail. He had no official notification that the charge against him had been withdrawn. If he had not obtained bail he would have been in gaol the whole week, and then found that no proceedings were to be taken against him. Whatever he might be, a man should not be subjected to such treatment. He asked for costs against the police.

Detective Manning: I gave Rouse notice of withdrawal on Monday.

Mr. Sonnenberg: He instructed me, and paid his fee on Wednesday.

The bench refused the application.

James Roberts, bookmaker, said defendant came to him with a betting ticket at Caulfield racecourse flat on Saturday, The ticket had markings on it for £3 to £1 odds against Regret. Witness knew it was a forgery, and told defendant so. Defendant ran away. The ticket presented was marked "349," whereas the lowest number given out by witness that day had been 442. The ticket was a clumsy representation. The pencil marking was like his. It gave the first three letters of the horse's name, and the amount of the bet.

An interesting discussion centred round the alleged "faked" ticket, which was produced with other betting tickets. Sergeant Jordan explained to an unenlightened bench that most betting tickets were the same in color and size. But this forgery is not titled the same as the proper ticket," remarked Dr. Cole, P.M. Mr. Jabez Treadwell, manager of Trendwell and Co., printers, said on 15th May last his firm printed 999 betting tickets with "C. Allen" stamped on the back. The cards were paid for and taken away. The forged ticket produced was evidently one of these. The name "Allen" had been erased from the back, and "Jim Roberts" had been stamped on the front. The ticket was an evident forgery, the printing differing in type and style from Roberts's cards.

In detailing the story of accused's arrest, Detective Manning said accused first said he had made a £3 to £1 bet with Roberts on Regret, and then varied this with a statement that he gave a man named Beggs 10/ as half of the money for the bet with Roberts. Beggs went away and brought the ticket to him (accused).

For the defence, Mr. Sonnenberg held that false representation must take some actual effect upon the man to whom the representation was made before it could be called false. Smith had made no actual request for the money. He merely held out his hand. No one had been imposed on. Mr. Justice Cussen had ruled that there must be actual imposition upon somebody before such a charge could be upheld. Mr. Justice Hodges had also ruled that it must be proved to the hilt that the representations were false before any man could be convicted.

Dr. Cole over-ruled the objections, on the ground that it was permissible to take all the surroundings into consideration.

In his evidence. Smith adhered to his statement that the ticket had been given to him by the man Beggs.

The bench found accused guilty.

Mr. Sonnenberg: I appeal for a lenient sentence. This man is just out of gaol. He found himself without money, and with no chance of getting work. Every man's hand was against him. Moreover, he has not been the master mind in this transaction. He is the dupe.

A list of previous convictions was read, including one sentence of five years in 1901 for assault and robbery.

Dr. Cole, in sentencing accused to twelve months' imprisonment, said that personally he did not take a serious view of the offence. The man, however, was one of those from whom society should be protected.

Bail in one surety of £50 was allowed in view of an appeal.

#### **The Age (Melbourne) Friday 27 March 1908 p 8 Article**

##### **HOTEL THIEVES COMMITTED FOR TRIAL**

The sequel to a series of robberies from hotels in various suburbs took place on Tuesday at the Coburg court, when Alfred Cropley, 39, and James Barnes, 24, were brought up on two charges of burglary and stealing spirits. The first case was that in which the Commercial Hotel, Sydney road, Coburg, had been broken into. Mary Ann Regan, the licensee, swore to four bottles of spirits, four boxes of cigars and cigarettes, a bottle of wine and 1/10 in cash being stolen. Edward Bushine, licensee of the Union Service. Club Hotel, Gertrude-street, Fitzroy, identified accused as being the men from whom he had purchased the spirits produced in court at 4/ per bottle. Detective Hawkins testified to the arrest of accused on 16th inst. When Barnes saw Bushine he said, "You cow, I'll kill you when I get out. If it was not for men like you there would not be so many thieves.

Accused both pleaded guilty, and were committed for trial.

Similar evidence was given in the case of thefts from the Corner Hotel, Coburg, from which goods to the value of £3 had been stolen on 14th inst. Accused pleaded guilty on this charge also, and were committed for trial.



#### **The Argus (Melbourne) Saturday 4 April 1908 p 20 Article**

##### **SENTENCES IN GENERAL SESSIONS.**

The April calendar of the General Sessions was concluded yesterday, when a number of prisoners were sentenced by Judge Box.

HOUSEBREAKING.



James Barnes aged 27, station hand and Alfred Cropley, aged 39, labourer who had pleaded guilty to two charges of housebreaking were called up. Barnes asked for leniency on the ground that he had 14 months, of back remissions, which he would now have to make up. Cropley, against whom there were twelve previous convictions, asked for another chance.

Judge Box said that Barnes would be sentenced to five years on each count concurrent. "As for you Cropley," his Honour continued, "against you there are 12 convictions, robbery in company amongst them, and you ask for a chance. You also will receive five years on each count to which you have pleaded guilty"





**Port Melbourne Standard (Vic.) Saturday 6 March 1915 p 2 Article**

A CARLTON VISITOR.

Wearing a downcast look, Margaret Cropley, who said she resided at 20 Earl street, Carlton, pleaded guilty at the local court on Monday, when charged with using obscene language on the 2nd inst. Constable Walsh said he found defendant in a drunken state on the foreshore shortly after 4 o'clock in the afternoon. She first promised to go back to Carlton, but changing her mind took up a position against a fence and abused the constable in obscene terms. Beyond stating that her husband was away in the country, no attempt was made to explain away her conduct. Mr. Testro, the presiding magistrate, fined her £2 with the alternative of 14 days.

**Sources:**

- Public Records Office Victoria
- Trove – National Library of Australia