

# Stalker trailed former lover and shot him to death

"Stalking" is a word used by the news media to describe the behavior of one person unwilling to let another go after a relationship has ended. That could certainly be said of Caroline Payne, who shot her former lover on July 5, 1941.

In July of 1939, Charles Mattingly, an attorney working for the state, left Payne's house in the 400 block of North Lincoln Street for the last time. Payne's friends recalled her behavior after it was apparent that Mattingly was gone for good.

The automobile accident she and the man were in earlier in 1939 had shaken her up. The loss of Mattingly seemed to intensify her separation from reality.

The Bloomington *Evening World* of July 9, 1941, reported that she had ways of getting information about him.

The Bloomington *Telephone* of July 7, 1941, also reported Payne's behavior during that time. "Often for a week or two she seemed better, but then she always had a relapse that started her on the same round of phone calling and auto trips. She spent hundreds of dollars on phone calls (presumably to Mattingly)."



## Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

During the jail interview, Payne was asked if she had ever threatened Mattingly during that time. Her terse reply was, "No."

On July 5, 1941, Mattingly and his young, pregnant wife were in Bloomington visiting friends. What happened during the daylight hours in regard to their visit is not entirely clear. Two accounts emerge from newspaper articles. One is that someone tipped Payne off that Mattingly was in town. The other is that Mattingly and wife drove slowly past Payne's house and Payne saw him point at the house.

On Saturday evening at about 9:45, the Mattinglys were sitting in the kitchen of the Gus and Harry Nickas house in the 700

block of South Walnut Street. Carolyn Payne called a taxi and had it drop her off in that block.

Suddenly, several shots were fired through the window, and Mattingly slumped over onto the table. He is reported to have said, "They (or she) got me." The first word was not entirely clear. One of his horrified companions called for an ambulance.

Meanwhile, a neighbor, having heard the shots, walked out on his front porch. Payne asked if she could use his phone to call a taxi and was told that there was one at the filling station at the corner of First and Walnut streets. She walked there and called for a cab, which returned her to her home on North Lincoln Street.

Doctors Russell DeMotte and J.P. Boulware were unable to save Mattingly. The massive internal bleeding so serious that they could not operate to stop it.

The *Telephone* described the scene at the hospital. "His wife of little more than a year was at the bedside. He was conscious until almost the last minute of life. Asked who shot him, he replied, 'Caroline Payne.'

He went on to say, 'I did not see her,' and said she had threatened his life."

In a small town where everybody knew everybody else's business it didn't take a Secret Service man to deduce that Caroline Payne was the assailant. She was arrested at her home and hustled off to the Monroe County Jail where all concerned awaited word of Mattingly's condition.

Police began to collect evidence — plaster casts of footprints just below the kitchen window of the Nikas house, a bundle of love letters found in her purse and two revolvers, among other things.

Explained the *Telephone*, Mrs. Payne was held in the back room of police headquarters in the jail until news of the death came, then was taken to the women's quarters in the jail."

In another article the newspaper gave its readers the latest developments: "This afternoon in the reception room of the Monroe County Jail Mrs. Caroline Payne appeared before Justice of the Peace Frank Gentry and through her attorney Q. Austin East . . . entered a plea of not guilty . . ."

Next week: The trial.

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