

Bullets and bottles flew in the summer of 1921

It could be called a fluke. Three men in a brand new Studebaker touring car were up to no good in Bloomington on Aug. 1, 1921.

The unforeseen event began to unfold when the police were alerted to look for "a bum that was beating his way north on No. 4" (a Monon train). Policeman Henry Knight had spotted his quarry at the Monon station and chased him to the vicinity of Campbell's restaurant.

But suddenly Knight lost interest in the bum when he saw the Studebaker and its occupants. It was 1:30 in the morning, and the occupants said they were looking for a garage where they could buy gas. Somehow that didn't ring true in a town where the sidewalks were rolled up about 10 p.m.

Police officers are paid to be more curious than the average individual, and Knight was no exception. He noticed that the back seat was covered with canvas. Standing close to the car, he could smell whiskey.



LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

The *Evening World* of Aug. 3 described what happened after Knight stepped up to the car's running board. "Seeing possible arrest, the driver suddenly started and hurled the policeman to the ground, the latter sitting up in the street in front of the Harris Grand (theater) and firing bullets into the rear wheels of the car."

The Studebaker sped up Walnut Street, its occupants tossing out bags loaded with pint bottles of a brown liquid. Many of the bottles smashed, spilling their contents on the street. Any alcohol-starved spectators would have sighed.

Knight called for the police car. "Knight knew it wouldn't do to leave the bottled goods

along the road and returned to pick it up and brought it back to headquarters and got Scott Davis and continued the chase," explained the *Evening World* of Aug. 2.

Meanwhile, the Studebaker had turned from Walnut Street to Kinser Pike. The driver paused at the farm of Frank Wylie to change the flattened rear tires.

That's where Knight and Scott caught up with the fleeing trio. The gave their names as Walter Shrader, Roy D. Cox and Aden T. Baker, all of St. Joseph, Mo. Naturally they objected to the policemen's interference.

Knight and Scott discovered that one of the prisoners had a gun and another had some bullets in his pocket. Continued the *Evening World*, "The officers believe that this man threw his revolver away. Later the revolver of the third man was found in his grip at police headquarters."

The prisoners had their day in the court of pro tem Judge J.E. Darby. Though they professed to be legitimate businessmen, that

must have raised some eyebrows. Their defense attorney, Robert G. Miller, argued that the three were prominent businessmen in St. Joseph and had no arrest record.

What were they doing with all those pints of whiskey during prohibition? Well, they said they bought them in New Albany and planned to take them to a camp in Michigan. Miller argued that the defendants should not be sent to prison.

The verdict left them \$540 poorer. Whichever one owned the Studebaker also lost that investment. Reported the newspaper, "Under the law, Sheriff Walter Peterson will take charge of it and sell it to the highest bidder, giving proceeds of the sale to the school fund. This is a state law and is enforced against owners of all cars who use them to transport booze."

Then there was the loss of the trio's cargo. Its resale price was estimated at \$2,000.

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