

KANSAS CITY C.J. - P. & S. Thurs. Apr. 6, 1950

Those gangster killings in Kansas City are the biggest ^{underworld} headlines since the days of Scarface Al Capone, ~~the~~ the St. Valentine's Day massacre, and the melodrama of Dillinger and the G-Men. They are more sensational, in fact, than any of these -- involving as they do, high politics -- national politics.

The ~~big~~ story of the two big-shots of the Kansas City mob, now wiped out by murder, has angles that ^{reach to top levels in Washington,} ~~bring mention of names at the top level.~~

This morning, about four a.m., a taxi driver, intending to have a bite to eat in a nearby lunchroom, parked his car on Truman Street, ^a Kansas City - ~~thorofare~~ ^(last year) which last year was re-named after the President of the United States. On the street stood the First District Democratic Club, headquarters of the political organization controlling ~~Kansas City's~~ riverfront districts, and a power in the city and the state. ^H The taxi driver, passing the Political Club ~~house,~~ ~~heard something that struck him as curious - the sound~~ ~~of water running inside for the First District~~ ^{Saw} from under the door.

~~Democratic Club was dark -- closed for the night.~~

Wondering about this, ~~the taxi man~~ ^{he} called a couple of police officers -- and, they investigated. They found the ~~front~~ ^{club house} door unlocked -- and when they went in and switched on the lights, they saw a man sprawled ~~right in~~ ^{near} the door -- shot to death. Immediately they recognized him -- Charles Gargotta, a prominent figure in the underworld -- chief lieutenant of the political boss who ran the First District Democratic Club. Which made the murdered gangster important indeed, as the boss, Charles Binaggio, was a top figure in the politics of city and state. ~~Who controlled the Northside vote along the river.~~

The two policemen, investigating further, went to the rear of the club, where the ~~business~~ business of politics was transacted, ~~And~~ there they saw Binaggio. He was sitting ^(at) ~~in~~ the reception desk, his usual place, transacting the business of votes and political deals. ~~He sat~~ ^{There he sat --} stark and rigid -- shot to death.

On the wall behind him was a large, gilt-framed portrait of President Truman. On another wall, another picture of the President and one of the Governor of Missouri - all symbolizing the big-time politics transacted in the political club. Oddly - the running water the taxi driver had seen ~~XXXXXXXX~~ came from a cheap hotel above the club, where nobody heard the shots.

3 The crime had occurred hours earlier, about midnight. Four bullets put into Binaggio's head, with powder marks - fired at short range. Henchman, Gargotta, had likewise been shot four times - once, however, without powder marks, from long range.

Obviously, he had been trying to escape, but had been felled as he reached the front door, and then - three more shots at close range. *Both victims were unarmed.*

The killer, or killers appear to have been talking to the boss and then - the pistol fire. The police recalled that this, with different circumstances, was a duplication of what happened to Binaggio's ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ predecessor, Johnny Lazia →

sixteen years ago -- and that points to some of the most notorious events in the ~~history~~^{record} of shady politics.

It goes back to the old Pendergast Machine, which long ran Kansas City, ~~finally sinking into flagrant misdeeds and evil days.~~ In his hey-day, boss Tom Pendergast did one thing that ~~gives~~ gives him a place in honorable history. It was he who befriended a local county judge, dealing with road building -- Harry Truman. ~~and~~ With Pendergast's support, Harry Truman was elected to the Senate -- later to become President.

But then, Tom Pendergast fell into ^{evil} ways ~~and in~~ that would eventually send him to prison, ~~and, / the~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ scandals ^{that} ~~they~~ weave about him, (one) ~~the~~ name is prominent -- Johnny Lazia. ^{He was the} ~~his individual held~~ gangster-political power in the shabby northside district down toward the riverfront. There lived ~~the~~ foreign colonies -- especially Italian^s, who had long been victimized by the old time black hand, and were preyed upon by the ~~by~~ ^{by} Johnny Lazia ruled this area politically

and became a partner ~~in~~ in the Pendergast Machine --
~~the underworld in city politics. He became the~~
^{the} number ~~one~~ two man, ~~lord of gangsters and eminent~~
~~in political affairs.~~

About this time, early in the nineteen
thirties, occurred -- the Union Station Massacre,
which startled the nation. Gangster guns cut down
police officers in a desperate attempt to rescue one
of those public enemies number one of that ~~era~~.
Frank Nash was known ^{the then active mob} as the brains of ~~the~~ ^{mob} of bank
robbers. He was arrested, and was being taken from
one train to another in Kansas City. ^{FF} The underworld
decided to rescue him, and it is said that Johnny Lazia,
so prominent in the political machine, provided the
gunmen, ~~including one~~ ^{two} of them ~~was~~ ^{one} Pretty Boy Floyd,
headline desperado of those days. The attempted
rescue took place outside the Union Station, and
turned into an orgy of shooting. When the victims
were counted, they were found to include -- Frank Nash,
killed in the effort to set him free.

Later, Pretty Boy Floyd was cornered and killed by the F.B.I. -- then called the G-Men. And in Kansas City, the opinion was that Johnny Lazia had over-reached himself -- in criminal boldness. The Pendergast lieutenant ^{He} was involved in gangster ~~feuds~~ feuds, and ~~he~~ ^{he} got his -- in 1934, When, in front of the sumptuous apartment house where he lived, he was cut down by machine gun fire. [#] His funeral was a wonder of those days -- a mile long. Formost in the procession was the City Manager, H. F. McElroy. Also prominent among the mourners, was a snappily dressed young hoodlum.-- ~~His~~ ^{His} name -- Charles Binaggio. Nobody suspected it, but he, in time, was to ~~seize~~ ~~seize~~ seize power as the successor to the murdered big-shot.

All these events were followed by the downfall of the Kansas City machine -- Boss Tom Pendergast ~~was~~ put on trial and sent to prison. His place was taken by his nephew, Jimmy, who planned to reconstruct the political organization along clean and decent lines.

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But now, in competition, rose Binaggio -- as boss of the Northside, along the river. He led a revolt against Jimmy Pendergast, and split the organization. In partnership with two other politicians, Binaggio ~~split the organization and~~ ^{able} ~~was~~ ^{about} to elect a number of his candidates to city office. ^{PP} He backed the election of Governor Forrest Smith two years ago -- hoping to procure an open season for gambling. But the governor, who had promised to keep the lid on gambling, ^{was true to} ~~kept~~ his word ^{— though} -- [^] Binaggio made repeated trips to the state capitol, and even sat in ^{on the} legislative caucus. ~~But~~ ~~seemed to get nowhere.~~ He went to Washington, trying to pull wires. But President Truman, who always expressed his gratitude toward the old boss, Tom Pendergast -- supported ^{nephew} Jimmy in the effort to establish a clean political organization in Kansas City. ^{The President} ~~He~~ would never ~~even~~ see Binaggio.

Last autumn, Collier's Magazine printed a story about the Kansas City underworld boss, in which the following was stated: "So powerful has Binaggio

become, that democratic aspirants have little chance to win an election without his approval. Officials of his choosing control the city and county taxing power. The Kansas City Police Department trembles at what he might do! " Said Collier's.

FOLLOW KANSAS CITY

The article summarized in the following portentous terms: "Kansas City faces something more than a mere revival of Pendergastism -- evil as that was. It is ~~not~~ caught in a new pattern of ~~leadership~~ ^{leadership} -- a pattern of open underworld domination of party machinery."

The writer of the article quoted Binaggio as telling him that he ~~was~~ helped choose a candidate for the Senate of the United States. Which takes us to proceedings in Congress this afternoon. Congressman Dewey Short of Missouri charged that ~~politicians~~ the Kansas City killings had political motives -- connected with the race for the Senate. He says that Binaggio was: "bumped off" because he was backing a certain candidate for the Democratic Senatorial nomination.

Powerful indeed -- and it took ^{more} than political measures to overthrow him. His downfall -- gangster guns at midnight.

LATTIMORE

Owen Lattimore cleared!

In Washington, Owen Lattimore had his say today -- and it was most emphatic. He repeated all the angry denials he has been making at stops on his way home from Afghanistan, ~~he denies he is a Communist, a spy, and that he has had nothing much to do with United States Policy toward China. He repeated his bitter denials denunciation of Senator McCarthy of Wisconsin~~ ^{He} declared that McCarthy is a "willing tool" of a Chinese Nationalist cabal in Washington.

Owen Lattimore spoke of what he described as a "bitter and fanatical group" seeking all-out American support for the Chinese Nationalist on Formosa. (They, said he, are the power behind McCarthy's charges of disloyalty in the State Department. Which, of course, would include various republicans, who, all along, have advocated American aid for Generalissimo Chiang-Kai-Chek against the Chinese reds.)

Lattimore defied McCarthy to repeat his charges -- without benefit of Congressional immunity. Step out from under that shelter, and call Lattimore

a Communist -- and Lattimore will sue for ^{libel} ~~libel~~ and slander. To this, the senator replies that he will not renounce Congressional immunity -- unless the loyalty/ files on Lattimore are made public.

To back up his denials, Owen Lattimore presented impressive testimony from eminent college professors and writers, vouching for his loyalty and patriotism. Among his supporters, was a figure that brought a dash of color into the senate hearing room -- a red-robed Lama from outer Mongolia. (That land of Mongolia, like Tibet, on the roof of the world, has the Lamaistic form of Buddhism -- with abbots and monasteries, and ~~figures~~ "living Buddhas".)

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Today, at the hearing, sat the living Buddha ^{ha-} -- Dilowa Nutukhutu, a fugitive from Communism, whom Owen Lattimore brought to this country from Mongolia.

Last summer, I heard in Tibet, ^{and} while passing through the Far East, that this living Buddha had come to America. In fact -- that several reincarnations

LATTIMORE - 3

- 2 younger lamas -
of Buddahs were in this country. To which an interesting explanation was added. -- The High Lama, Dilona Hutukhutu, brought here by Owen Lattimore, was represented as believing that the Communists were going to wipe out Buddhism in Mongolia. This, of course, would include Tibet -- if the Reds got that *more remote* country. So, if the Lama form of Buddhism were to be obliterated in Asia, this living Buddha *he* thought that he should come to the United States, and continue it here. Gaining converts -- so that his ancient mystical faith might not disappear from the world.

Such was the story I heard -- ~~the~~ curious comment on the red-robed Lama, a patch of color in the senate *committee* room today. →

FOLLOW LATTIMORE

The hearing ended with a committee statement
-- exonerating ^{Owen} Lattimore. Chairman Senator Tydings
of Maryland told the Far Eastern expert that a summary
of his loaylty file put him - in Tydings words:
"completely in the clear".

BERGMAN

The poor old State Department, having plenty of trouble already, is presented with still another problem. Somewhere in a department office, there is a trophy, an Oscar -- which Secretary of State Dean Acheson is required to present to Ingrid Bergman. Yes, that same Swedish movie actress in the scandal with Rossellini.

— in Madrid,
Over in Spain, a motion picture magazine made the award - and the request. And asked for - large, if not spectacular, news photographs of the presentation.

So what to do? Imagine a blast of publicity



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That native son Nelson!

picturing the American Secretary of State presenting the Spanish oscar to La Bergman, with Rosselini at her side -- and maybe the baby in her arms.

The State Department was embarrassed no end, but one official thought of a way out -- Why not turn the whole thing over to the movie industry -- to Eric Johnson, head of the Motion Picture Industries of America. But Eric Johnson's office ^{(said :-} ~~was not enthusiastic~~ either. "Oh no," ~~the reply came back,~~ ^{Q-O - no! At the State} ~~this is the~~ State Department's baby." So, ^{at} ~~the~~ last report, the Ingrid Bergman trophy was tucked away somewhere at the State Department. Too hot to handle -- as hot as Stromboli. ^{That} ~~the~~ Spanish oscar!

And here in his native habitat is that native son - Nelson!

FOLLOW KANSAS CITY

The latest -- In Washington Congressman Dewey Short of Missouri charges that the Kansas City killings had political motives. He says that Binaggio was "bumped off" because he was backing a certain candidate for the Democratic nomination for the Senate.

REX Wreck

A series of disasters reported from abroad.

A ship wreck in a river in Portugal, a railroad accident in Spain, and worst of all -- a hundred and ten people perished or are missing after a train crowded with vacationists plunged into a river. The ~~REX~~ locomotive, two baggage cars, and a string of crowded coaches plunged into the swollen stream when the bridge collapsed.