

***WE'RE DEAD,
COME ON IN***

WE'RE DEAD, COME ON IN

By Bruce Davis



PELICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY
GRETNA 2005

To my father, the Reverend Richard Davis

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Davis, Bruce, 1950 Nov. 16-
We're dead, come on in / by Bruce Davis.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN-13—978-1-58980-326-8 (alk. paper)
1. Law enforcement—Missouri—Case studies. 2. Law enforcement—Missouri—History—20th century. I. Title.
HV8145.M8D38 2005
364.152'3'0977878—dc22
2005004477



Printed in the United States of America
Published by Pelican Publishing Company, Inc.
1000 Burmaster Street, Gretna, Louisiana 70053

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Preface



Growing up, I knew the names of the famous gangsters who had captured the public imagination in the generation before I was born—”Pretty Boy” Floyd, “Baby Face” Nelson, John Dillinger, Bonnie and Clyde, the Barker Gang, et. al. I would not learn of Harry Young until I was almost fifty years old—and then, only because I stumbled onto a marker outside the Springfield, Missouri, police station and saw the names of all the officers who had died on the same date. I first thought the chiseler must have made a mistake—this can’t be right—I would have surely heard of such a catastrophe—but it was and I hadn’t.

What came to fascinate me most about massacre of January 2, 1932, is the intersection of place and crime. The infamous killers of the Depression-era were migratory creatures, murder on wheels. And while fast cars certainly play a big part in this story, the localized nature of this crime—Ozarks boys trapped at home—offers a unique opportunity to look at the interplay of culture and criminal.

Furthermore, what has previously been written on the subject (and that’s not much) has been so focused on the Young family that the officers themselves are offered as little more than targets in a shooting gallery. One of the images that has driven this telling is that of Sheriff Marcell Hendrix starting the day with a dawn raid on bootleggers, pouring the confiscated liquor onto the street; the day ending with his blood poured out on the linoleum floor of a neighbor’s farm house.

What clinched it for me was trying to drive the route Harry and his brother Jennings would have taken the night of January 2, 1932, leaving Springfield about the time they would have, driving through the night. Even on vastly superior roads, in a vastly superior vehicle, I finally got tired enough that I pulled over into a motel in southern Oklahoma. The point had been made, the story 3-D in my head, insisting that I try to tell it.

What follows is a wild ride. Thanks for making it with me.

A lot of folks helped get this book to the publisher. Many thanks to the Local History and Genealogy staff at the Springfield-Greene County Library, including Sharol Neely, Michael Glenn, and, most particularly, John Rutherford. Frances Goodknight, of Frederick, Oklahoma, has been a huge help, as has been Sherry Adams of Houston, Texas. My initial entrée into the story was Owen Brown's son, Mick; Mick's daughter, Linda Carpenter, has been of invaluable assistance in the production of this manuscript. On the "nuts and bolts" side, I also want to thank Misty Brown, Peggy Thomas, Melissa Dodd, and Warren Harris. Officer Kirk Manlove of the Springfield Police Department opened important doors, including one to Gail DeGeorge at the "Calaboose." Other encouragers of particular note have been Jim Simpson, Mary Frances Davis, Kathleen O'Dell, and my literary cousin, Stephen Davis. But the indispensable person—in this and all that I do—is my sweetie, the Reverend Nancy Eunice Groseclose Davis.

BRUCE DAVIS

The Players



The Posse

Marcell Hendrix—sheriff, son of Daniel and Rosella, husband of Maude, father of Glenn, Merle, and Maxine. Killed.
Wiley Mashburn—deputy sheriff, husband of Maude. Killed.
Tony Oliver—chief of detectives, husband of Maude. Killed.
Sidney Meadows—detective, husband of Lilly. Killed.
Charles Houser—patrolman, husband (?) of Augusta, brother of Fred. Killed.
Ollie Crosswhite—Unemployed, husband of Ethel, father of six, including cop-killer Keith. Killed.
Virgil Johnson—detective. Wounded.
Ben Bilyeu—officer/mayoral bagman. Wounded.
Frank Pike—detective, son of G. C. Pike. Wounded.
Owen Brown—Detective. Escaped without injury.
Ralph E. Wegman—Civilian. Just along for the ride.

The Youngs

Archibald Alexander and wife Elender/Eleanor—the first of the Youngs to settle in the Ozarks. Begat John, A. A. II, et. al, and, finally, James Monroe Young.
James Monroe Young and wife Mary Ellen—begat James David (J.D.) Young.
J. D. Young—married Willie Florence Haguewood. Begat Loretta, Mary Ellen, Jarrett, Oscar, Paul, Jennings, Holly Gladys, Florence Willie, Harry, Lorena, and Vinita. On January 2, 1932, they were living in Wichita, Kansas (Loretta/"Rettie"); Frederick, Oklahoma (Mary Ellen and Holly Gladys); Stuttgart, Arkansas (Jarrett); Houston, Texas (Paul and Florence—see "Texans"); Greene County, Missouri (Oscar and Vinita, the latter with her mother on the family farm north

of Brookline); and without discernable permanent address (Jennings, Harry and Lorena).

Other Young Family Members

Albert Conley—unemployed, married to Lorena.

Natalie Conley—Lorena and Albert's daughter.

Ettie Smith—Jennings Young's mother-in-law.

Mabel Conn Young—wife of Oscar.

Frances Lee O'Dell—Harry's first wife.

Judd Haguewood—brother of Willie Florence Young, uncle to Harry, Jennings and the brood.

Florence Calvert Young (?)—Harry's second wife. See "Texans."

Rescuers

Sam and Otto Herrick—brothers, auto merchants, among the very first at the scene.

Lon Scott—journalist who heard the voice, "uhmmm."

Lee Jones—officer/barber; went with Lon Scott through the cornfield.

Frank Rhodes—reporter who ventured up the dark farm lane.

Cecil McBride—officer who shot at *somebody* and maybe even hit Harry Young.

Lewis Canady—ambulance driver.

Scott Curtis—constable who mass-deputized the mob.

Springfield City Officials

Thomas H. Gideon—mayor, son of Thomas J., nephew of James J, and grandson of William C., (the latter "bushwhacked" in 1863). Convicted in 1930 of violating Federal prohibition law, but still in office on January 2, 1932.

G. C. Pike—chief of police, father of Frank. Sentenced to Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary in 1930.

Henry Waddle—chief of police, son of Ed. Filled the vacancy left by G. C. Pike.

Hansford L. Teaff—deputy police chief; the first to be rolled by the Feds.

Greene County Officials

Dan Nee—prosecuting attorney. Veteran of the Keet kidnapping case and the Great War.

James Hornbostel—assistant prosecuting attorney.

Murray Stone—coroner.

R. E. Hodge—deputy sheriff who was elsewhere in the county and missed the raid at the Young farm. Although the newspapers referred to him as Deputy R. E. Hodge, in the 1930 census he is Earnest R. Hodge.

Frank Willey—jailer, kind with children, tough on wrongdoers.

Maude Hendrix—succeeded her husband in office of sheriff.

Citizens of Greene County

Edson K. Bisby—editor of the *Springfield Daily News & Leader*.

Beth Campbell—reporter whose coverage of the Young women was up close and personal.

Lewis Milton Hale—pastor of First Baptist in Springfield.

Lillard Hendrix—brother of the sheriff and prominent farmer in his own right.

Arch McGregor—business leader. Organizer of the widows and orphans fund.

E. E. E. McJimsey—newspaperman, defeated by Gideon in the mayoral election of 1928.

Clyde Medley—auto dealer whose tip to the police put wheels in motion.

Harry Rogers—another auto dealer. Was missing a Ford Coupe.

W. L. Starne—undertaker, a deeply troubled man.

Other Law Enforcement Officials

Francis “Ted” DeArmond—officer, Springfield Police Department. Killed by Dob Adams, June 18, 1928.

Carl Gailliher—chief of police, Bowling Green, Ohio. Thought it likely “Pretty Boy” Floyd was among the killers at the Young farm.

Mark Noe—constable, Republic, Missouri. Killed by Harry Young, June 2, 1929.

W. K. Webb—among the heroes of the Dob Adams’ fiasco, fired from the Springfield PD in 1929 for opposing Mayor Gideon in the recall election.

Other Missourians of Note

Roscoe Patterson—Senator, who once served as defense attorney for Jennings and Oscar Young.

Tom Pendergast—Kansas City, archetype of machine “boss.”

Albert Reeves—Federal Judge.

Harry Truman—Senator, who was no fan of Judge Albert Reeves.

Criminal Types (in order of infamy)

Charles Floyd—"Pretty Boy."

Fred Barker—Who killed Sheriff Kelly in West Plains and was identified by Ben Bilyeu as among the shooters at the Young farm.

Alvin Karpis—Barker's running mate and accomplice in the murder of Sheriff Kelly.

Jake Fleagle—"The Wolf Of The West."

The 1/27/31 Jailbreak Sextet—Tommie Vaughn, Sam Bass, Howard Walker, William Michaels, and the "Jackson Jellies," Tex Hayes and Bert Oglesby.

Dobb Adams—Husband of Meada (herself no picnic), apprehended by Tony Oliver after killing three, including two women and Officer Ted DeArmond.

Johnny Owen—Preacher's kid, who pulled the trigger that got Keith Crosswhite a life-sentence.

Roscoe Tuter—Harry's first partner in crime, who netted \$6.41 for his efforts.

Oval LaFollette—Harry Young's companion in the carousel that led to the murder of Mark Noe.

Jesse Moore—Known to run with the Young Brothers and number one suspect in aiding their escape.

Texans

H. H. Carroll—farmer who offered to pull a Model A out of his field with mules.

Mrs. A.E. Gaddy—Telephone operator, Streetman, Texas.

A.E. Gaddy Jr.—Who sent a telegram to Springfield.

E.C. Hogan—Good Samaritan, who picked up two wrecked men.

Isaac Levy—Less enthusiastic Samaritan, who feared he might get kidnapped for his efforts.

Florence Willie Young Mackey—Sister of the killers, a solid churchgoing woman.

Florence Calvert Young (or was it Walker?)—Harry's "million dollar baby."

Lily Calvert Shaw—Harry's sister-in-law.

J. L. Tomlinson—Rented his front room to a man named "Wallace."

A. P. Singleton—Housepainter, in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Percy Heard—Chief, Houston Police Department.

Claude Beverly—Detective Lieutenant, Houston P.D.

Harry McCormick—Reporter, not just on the scene, but *in* the scene.
Paul Young—Older brother of the killers; had an alibi.

Oklahomans

Gordon B. Kinder—Druggist, who was open late.

Important Dates

August 10, 1861—The Battle of Wilson’s Creek.

May 10, 1889—Hanging of “Baldknobbers” Dave Walker, Billy Walker and John Mathews outside the Christian County Courthouse in Ozark.

July 10, 1865—James Butler “Wild Bill” Hickok shoots and kills Dave Tutt in downtown Springfield.

April 14, 1906—Fred Coker, Horace Duncan and Will Allen “hanged and roasted” on the Springfield public square.

May 30, 1917—Kidnapping of “Baby” Lloyd Keet.

June 18, 1928—Dob Adams’ triple-murder spree.

October 14, 1930—Jake Fleagle, the “Wolf of the West,” apprehended in Branson shootout.

December 19, 1932—Fred Barker and Alvin Karpis murder Sheriff C. Roy Kelly in West Plains.

Place Names

Don’t confuse Vinita, Oklahoma, and Vinita Young.

Ozark is a town in the Ozarks, the county seat of Christian County.