

POLICE TESTIFY IN MURDER CASE

Defense Asks Directed Verdict of Not Guilty for Lee Dudgeon

White Cloud, May 29. — A "ghost" sat in the Newaygo county court house here today to checkmate Alice and Lee Dudgeon in their fight to free themselves of charges that they murdered Romie Hodell.

To the prosecution the "ghost" is a myth. To the defense, however, the "ghost" is Sergeant John Palmer of the Michigan State police.

The testimony of Palmer and his brother officers, Lieutenants George Karkeet and Ernest Ramsey is the climax of the state's case. It was these three men who were instrumental in obtaining confessions from Lee and his mother from Meda Hodell, the dead man's wife, and from Herman Dudgeon, her brother.

What part the men played in the taking of these confessions is the crux of the three-year-old case. If Presiding Judge Harry J. Dingeman of Detroit should rule that the officers did not use coercive measures or force, or intimidation, the confessions admittedly will stand as most damaging evidence against the graying woman of the swamp lands and her son.

If, however, the confessions should be ruled out by reason of the defense argument that the status of guilt were forced by illegal and intimidatory measures the defense may have scored a victory sufficiently great to free both of the accused.

Ask Acquittal of Lee

Defense attorneys asked for a directed verdict of not guilty for Lee Dudgeon on the ground that there has been introduced no evidence that he had any part in the actual killing and on the further grounds that under Michigan law cannot be held guilty as an accessory for aiding in disposal of the body of a person alleged to have been killed by a near relative.

Win Patterson, deputy sheriff, yesterday swore to the finding of the body. He also was called to the region of the Fulkerson school where a mob took the Dudgeon boys from a thrashing machine and threatened them with death unless they confessed to the killing of Hodell. Patterson took them to Big Rapids, and on the way Lee and Herman Dudgeon voluntarily confessed that Robert Bennett, farm hand, had done the ac-

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POLICE TAKE STAND IN DUDGEON TRIAL

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tual killing and had forced them to assist in hanging up the body.

"Prove It," Lee Said.

Jacob Terwilligar, a neighbor of the Dungeons, stated on the witness stand that on the way to White Cloud, about noon of the day of the murder, Mrs. Alice Dudgeon stopped him and told that Hodell's body had been found hanging in the Terwilligar barn. She also told him that Hodell was the most jealous man she ever saw. She was nervous and excited and said that the killing would be laid to her, he said. Terwilligar went on and got to the barn about the same time the officers arrived from White Cloud and assisted in cutting down the body and loading it into the car, preparatory to bringing it to White Cloud, he said. Hodell's eye was very black and Terwilligar asked Lee Dudgeon how it got to be so. He disclaimed all knowledge of it and Terwilligar took him aside and told him that if he knew anything about how it was done he had better divulge it. Dudgeon replied "By God, they've got to prove I did it first," Terwilligar testified.

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At the afternoon session Arthur J. Butler, Big Rapids attorney acting for Newaygo county, told of taking the statement of Mrs. Alice Dudgeon in the presence of two members of the State Police department. The defense objected to reading any of the confessions into the records, but the court did not sustain them. Mrs. Dudgeon's confession was read, in which she vividly described the killing of Hodell with a rolling pin.

Hearing of the case adjourned at noon today until Monday morning.

Notice to Hear