FICTION FROM THE AFRO ARCHIVES

Killer And The Caught

As the saying goes, "It's better to be a live coward than a dead hero." Sometimes you have no choice in the matter, especially when your own children are involved.

By JAMES H. HILL

She grabbed her children just as the police went charging into the house.

Mrs. Mildred Barnett, at the wonderfully hopeful age of 27, was a reasonably happy woman. She had quit her teaching job a year after her marriage to Herbert Barnett, the bright young architect, who was the first of his race to be taken into the firm of Gale, Runstedt and Son.

She and Herbert had twin girls, April and May, aged six, a new '58 sedan, and their duplex home half paid for. They would have been happy though, if all they'd had was each other. It was like that with them.

Mrs. Barnett was adding something new to her repertoire of achievements that cold November morning when fate fingered her as the candidate for a $2,000 reward—pressure cooker canning.

Any other time she might have been at least mildly suspicious of the tall, shivering man, standing on the Wilson's pavement next door looking up at it as though wondering how to gain entrance.

But she wasn't — not with all the canning she had to do, and the girls to get off to school.

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THEN, TOO, she was expecting somebody to call at the Wilsons, because Lois Wilson had left the key with her when she'd left for work earlier, explaining that the appliance company was going to install some equipment that day.

Mrs. Barnett shuttled between the kitchen and the glassed-in porch three times before she saw the tall man, his lean face ruddy from the cold. She wanted to get rid of the key so that she could continue her work without interruption.

She opened the porch door and called to him: "You from the Rosen Appliance Company? You trying to get in there?"

The tall man's hatless head whipped around suddenly, and for a fleeting moment there was an odd excitement on his face, rendered a bit grotesque by the horn-rimmed glasses he wore.

Then he tried a smile, which came out a grimace as he shuddered from the cold. "Why—yes. The truck'll be along after while."

Mrs. Barnett reached into her apron pocket and brought out a key. "Here," she said, "Mrs. Wilson left this for you. I'm glad you came early."

He came up and got the key, thanked her, and said he hadn't realized it was so cold when he'd left the house this morning.

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AND THAT seemed to be that. Mildred Barnett went back into the kitchen and got busy with pressure cooker and Mason jars, and began to muse about the windfall that had come to her next-door neighbors.

Bob Wilson had collected $1,000 from the Chronicle for supplying information which led to the capture and conviction of a cop killer, named Maxie Weintraub.

Bob's description of the get away couple and three digits of the license number, when the car sped away from dying Patrolman Sydney Weber, resulted in Weintraub's being doomed to the gas chamber, and the tidy reward for Bob Wilson.

The Wilsons, she thought, could convert to oil or gas now, because Bob didn't know the first thing about banking a coal fire.

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FOR A while, Bob had been something of a celebrity around the neighborhood. Then someone remembered what happened to Schuster, the shoe-salesman who had fingered Slick Willie Sutton over in New York, and the talk just sort of died down.

The telephone rang while April and May were chattering happily and eating their lunches. It was Lois Wilson. She wanted to know if the appliance people had arrived.

"They've been and gone," Mrs. Barnett said. "The truck was pulling away when I let the girls in for lunch."

"I know they didn't have any trouble getting in," Lois said. "Bob called me a few minutes ago and told me he left his key with them while he was driving his bread route. Lectured me for imposing on you."

"No trouble at all," Mildred Barnett said. "But you sound like you're coming down with a cold. Better check that in this kind of weather."

Lois said she would. "But the fire went out some time last night and the house was freezing when we left this morning. You know Bob and fires."

"I've heard," Mrs. Barnett said discreetly.

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IT WAS not until after the girls had gone back to the afternoon session of school that two men rang the doorbell.

They came in and stood aside as Mrs. Barnett closed the door, her brown face pinched, expectant. They were big men, wearing topcoats, fedoras, and no gloves, but to Mildred Barnett "policemen" exuded from their every pore.

"Sorry to bother you Ma'am, but we're from police headquarters. We'd like to talk to you."

Mildred Barnett felt a tightening in her stomach, a strange tingling in her scalp. She heard herself saying: "Come in," in a soft, husky voice she scarcely recognized as her own. Had it been the twins—at the boulevard crossing . . .?

"I'M **LIEUTENANT** Detective Glascoe, of homicide," the blocky man said. He nodded toward the thickest, dark-haired, young man beside him, "And this is Sergeant Payne."

Glascoe said: "I don't mean to alarm you, Mrs. Barnett, but we have reason to believe a fugitive killer's at large in this neighborhood, man named Maxie Weintraub."

Mrs. Barnett's mouth popped open. Her eyes dilated. "Why the man next door — Bob Wilson, he—"

"We know," Payne interrupted he wasn't trying to be impolite. Just a policeman's way of getting at facts with a minimum of conversation. "We just came from the Wilsons next door — and the Greens next door to them."

Then Lieutenant Glascoe drew a photo from his pocket, took a gold pencil from another, and drew a pair of crude glasses on the photo's face.

Then he handed it to Mrs. Barnett. "This the man you gave the key to?"

"That's the man. That's the man I gave the key to." She fought back an overpowering wave of sickness.

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A HARDNESS crept into the faces of the policemen. The lieutenant said: "I see," instinctively patting a bulge under his full coat that couldn't have been anything but a gun.

"The glasses belonged to Joe Travels, the guard who was killed at San Carlos cemetery early this morning, when Weintraub persuaded him to let him see his mother's grave before they took him to the deathhouse.

"But why here? Why did he come back here?" Mrs. Barnett wanted to know.

Glascoe smiled grimly, his hand on the doorknob. "Ego," he said. "Criminal ego — designed to put the fear of death into all would-be informers, a twisted kind of martyrdom to the criminal world.

"Besides that, the box score would still be in Weintraub's favor. The gas is no deadlier for three murders than it is for one."

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THEY LEFT then, and Mrs. Barnett watched in fascinated horror as they went down to the black sedan parked in front of the Wilsons. She thought: Suppose they start that gunplay when the children are on the way home from school!

She got back to the enclosed porch in time to see Payne hurry toward the back of the Wilson house through the areaway that separated their house from hers.

She saw Glascoe at the front door, setting himself to hurl his bulk at the closed aperture. Curious faces appeared at the windows of the houses across the street.

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THEN Mildred Barnett's heart climbed up into her throat.

Skipping and chattering, and gleefully playing with a stray mongrel, were April and May, coming home.

Panic seized her. She burst out of the house. No hat, no shawl — just her print dress and house-slippers. She reached the children just before they got to the Greens.

"Children," Mrs. Barnett said, leaning down, putting her arms about them, "we mustn't

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AFRO PATTERNS

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Million Dollar 'Exploitation'

The racists accused Branch Rickey of "exploiting" the colored race when he signed Jackie Robinson.

Pro football owner George Preston Marshall of the Washington Redskins, still maintains that the tan player is being "exploited" by major league baseball.

This summer, colored athletes will earn an estimated $630,000 in big league salaries. Their minor league brothers will be paid approximately $370,000 more, to total a cool million dollars!

Considering the salaries paid colored players since the arrival of Robinson, plus $336,785 earned by them in World Series shares, "exploitation" isn't such a naughty word.

By SAM LACY

When Jackie Robinson was signed by Branch Rickey for the Brooklyn Dodgers organization, Oct. 23, 1945, cries of "exploitation" were shouted from all corners of the baseball world.

The late Clark Griffith of the Washington Senators, and minor league executive W. G. Bramham, were among a host of sports figures who branded the move as "shameful."

The same charges were hurled at Bill Veeck when he took on Satchel Paige in 1948, to help bring Cleveland its first pennant in 28 years.

Rickey and Veeck were partners in the disgraceful crime of "exploiting" colored athletes. Both were accused of showing "a reckless disregard of the welfare of the colored people."

There are some men, like Washington Redskins president George Preston Marshall, who still cling to the "exploitation" bleat, as he did in a recent magazine piece.

But two months from now the 1958 major league baseball season will open. And for the five months thereafter, colored players will be drawing salaries that will total over $700,000.

That kind of "exploitation" isn't hard to take.

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STARTING WITH the $65,000 the San Franciseo Giants will pay Willie Mays, the tan salary scale moves slowly downward until it reaches the estimated $6,000 minimum.

Bearing in mnd that any public, discussion of baseball pay is based on conjecture, it may be assumed that Minnie Minoso will be next to Mays in 1958 earnings.

The Cleveland Indians are expected to reward their dynamic Cuban with a $42,000 stipend.

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LARRY DOBY comes next with $37,000 from the Baltimore Orioles, followed by Hank Aaron's $35,000 from the Milwaukee Braves.

Normally, Roy Campanella would fall next in line with a $32,000 pact with the Los Angeles Dodgers, but the automobile accident of January 28, leaves the geat catcher's status doubtful.

Don Newcombe is figured to be holding a $27,500 contract with the Dodgers, the same amount Ernie Banks may expect from the Chicago Cubs.

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AL SMITH, traded this winter to the Chicago White Sox, and Frank Robinson, winner of "freshman" and "sophomore" honors his first two years with the Cincinnati Redlegs, follow Newk and Banks. They will be paid in the neighborhood of $22,500 for their summer toil.

Junior Gilliam can look for $18,000 from the Dodgers.

In the $15,000 salary class will be Billy Bruton (Braves), Ruben Gomez (Giants), Charley Neal (Dodgers), George Crowe (Redlegs), Harry Simpson and Elston Howard (Yankees), Bob Boyd and Connie Johnson (Orioles), Vic Power (Kansas City Athletics), and Brooks Lawrence (Redlegs).

Just beneath that figure are Sam Jones (Cardinals), Sandy Amoros (Dodgers), Roberto Clemente and Gene Baker (Pittsburgh Pirates).

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THE $10,000 group probably will include Wes Covington (Braves), Hector Lopez (Athletics), Chico Fernandez (Philadelphia Phillies), Felix Mantilla (Braves), and Chuck Harmon (Phillies).

Ranging between $7,500 and $9,000 is Valmy Thomas, who will doubtless be rewarded for his surprising performance after stepping into a Giants' emergency last spring and summer.

With the young catcher in this class will be Earl Battey (White Sox), Juan Pizarro (Braves), Larry Raines (Indians), and John Roseboro, the heir apparent to Campanella's berth with the Dodgers at Los Angeles.

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ROUNDING OUT the payroll as it appears likely to be made up are Bob Thurman (Redlegs), and Joe Durham (Orioles), and Julio Becquer (Senators).

They, along with Ossie Virgil, the Detroit Tigers' first tan acquisition, figure to draw between $6,000 and $7,500.

Running off a rough addition, this totals $630,500 on paper.

It should be remembered, however, that the amount considered here covers only the estimated salaries of the 38 tan players who, judging from their past performances, seem certain of 1958 jobs in the major leagues.

It should be borne in mind that there are young players like Bill White who will be returning to the Giants from the military service.

White was the regular first baseman for the transplanted Polo Grounds when he left for army duty.

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THEN THERE are Outfielder Joe Taylor and Pitcher Frank Barnes, both of whom are being eyed for 1958 use by the Cardinals.

The Redbirds traded for Taylor, which indicates they are more than passingly interested in the Pacific Coast League slugger. And they openly voiced regret over returning Barnes to the American Association last spring, where he went on to attain stardom.

Others like the Indians' Billy Harrell, the Giants' Andre Rodgers and the Pirates' Roman Mejias could break into the picture, hiking the big league payroll some more.

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BUT WAIT. Even if White, Taylor, Barnes et al succeed in raising the '58 payroll to a $700,000-plus figure, that'll still be only part of the picture of tan earnings in baseball.

Colored players have taken part in ten of the eleven World Series that have been contested since Robinson broke into the big leagues in 1947.

Forty - eight shares have gone to them in the October classics of 1947-48-49-51-52-53-54-55-56-57. Only the 1950 series between the Phillies and Yankees failed to include a tan face.

Total World Series earnings amount to $336,785.71.

Considering the shares given to members of second, third and fourth place clubs in the annual flag races, prize monies won by tan major leaguers must total in excess of a half-million dollars.

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JACKIE ROBINSON grossed $200,000 in salary as a 10-year man with the Dodgers.

Larry Doby and Roy Campanella both have ten years of good salaries behind them. Minnie Minoso has eight, Don Newcombe seven, and Sandy Amoros six, to mention a few.

The over - all pay for ten players in the majors must reach a staggering figure. Still, that's not the end of the story.

There are approximately 300 colored hopefuls spread through the minors. That's nearly eight times as many as there are in the American and National leagues.

Naturally, their salaries don't match those of their better-paid brothers, but 300 checks can come pretty close to equalling the total of 38 big league pay days.

The latter will draw an estimated $630,500 this summer. It would be conservative to say that tan minor leaguers will pick up another $370,000.

That totals a cool million dollars — not a bad price for "exploitation."

And if that's "reckless disregard for the welfare of the colored race," here's my plate.

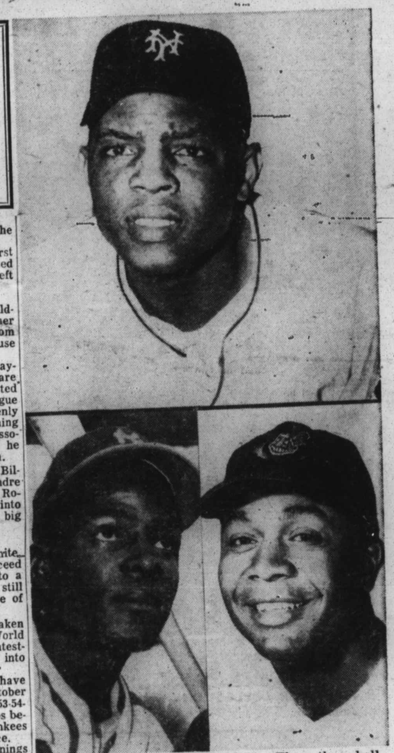
Please pass some more!

Building Security

Of 38 colored players virtually assured job in major league baseball this summer, an overwhelming majority have made good use of their earnings.

Twenty-six own homes. Nine maintain bachelor quarters, and three occupy apartments with their wives.

All 38 own automobiles.



TOPS IN THE PAY BRACKET — These three ball players will earn nearly $150,000 during the 1958 major league campaign. Willie Mays (top) will receive an estimated $65,000 from the San Francisco Giants; Minnie Minoso (bottom left) expects $42,000 from the Cleveland Indians, and Larry Doby looks for $37,000 from the Baltimore Orioles.

Major League Salary Chart

(APPROXIMATE EARNINGS FOR 1958)

Over $60,000	D. Newcombe Dodgers	Harry Simpson Yankees	R. Clemente Pirates	Juan Pizarro Braves
Willie Mays Giants	$25,000 to $16,000	George Crowe Redlegs	Gene Baker Pirates	Valmy Thomas Giants
$60,000 to $36,000	Al Smith White Sox	Elston Howard Yankees	$9,000 to $6,000	Ossie Virgil Tigers
Minnie Minoso Indians	F. Robinson Redlegs	Bob Boyd Orioles	Wes Covington Braves	Larry Raines Indians
Larry Doby Orioles	Jim Gilliam Dodgers	Connie Johnson Orioles	Hector Lopez Athletics	John Roseboro Dodgers
$35,000 to $26,000	$15,000 to $11,000	Sam Jones Cardinals	Chuck Harmon Phillies	Julio Becquer Senators
Hank Aaron Braves	Bill Bruton Braves	Vic Power Athletics	Felix Mantilla Braves	Bob Thurman Redlegs
*R. Campanella Dodgers	Ruben Gomez Giants	B. Lawrence Redlegs	C. Fernandez Phillies	Joe Durham Orioles
Ernie Banks Cubs	Charley Neal Dodgers	Sandy Amoros Dodgers	Earl Battey White Sox	

* Status Uncertain

Killer, The Caught

(Continued from Page 4)

go past the Wilsons yet." She herded them into the area-way that separated the Greens from the Kings, and told them about the bad man in the Wilson house.

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LIEUTENANT GLASCOE turned into the area-way just as the girls began to bombard their mother with questions. He said: "It's all right, Mrs. Barnett. Danger's over."

Mildred Barnett's sigh of relief was the sweetest sensation she'd ever had. "You — got him?". Her tone was incredulous. I didn't hear a single shot."

"We got him all right. We didn't have to shoot. He was upstairs in the Wilsons' living-room." Glascoe smiled at Mrs. Barnett as she herded her two youngsters home.

"You know you're in for a nice piece of change — $2,000 to be exact."

She frowned up at him, shivering from the cold, "I — me?" "We found Weintraub on your tip. This morning the Chronicle offered $2,000 for information leading to Weintraub's apprehension."

Mrs. Barnett shook her head, "And you didn't fire a shot. . . ."

"Didn't have to," Glascoe explained. "The place was like an iceberg, so Weintraub lit the gas heater in the living room and fell asleep."

"Oh, I see."

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GLASCOE cleared his throat. "I don't think you do, altogether, Mrs. Barnett. You see, the appliance people put in a new automatic water heater. We checked, down cellar.

"When they turned off the gas to install it, the gas went out all over the house. So when they turned it on again, sure that nobody was in the house, Weintraub just went on sleeping. My partner's airing out the place now."