Why Was Edna Slain, Was it Robbery, Sex?

By RALPH MATTHEWS

Why did Edna Crump, pretty, vivacious and friendly dancer, have to meet a tragic death?

Why is Elwood T. Hughes, a student and son of a prominent Norfolk, Va., family, facing charges of murder of the girl he swears he never saw before in his life?

The only answers are that the fates which shape our destinies were out for blood Saturday night and brought these two combustible personalities together just at the right moment to keep a rendezvous with death.

The signs of the bitter and violent struggle evidenced in the alley in the rear of the 600 block of Columbia Rd., where the model's lifeless body was found, show that she put up a terrific battle to live.

Could Protect Herself Ordinarily

Statuesque, athletic, a crack swimmer and supple, rhythmical dancer in excellent physical condition, Edna was credited with being quite able to protect herself against the average male. She was accepted by all who knew her as a jolly good fellow, carefree and gregarious.

That is why those who knew her best are resigned to the belief that fate had stacked the deck against her on Saturday night.

She was drawn almost magnetically to the spot where she was scheduled to die as surely as if death had taken her by the hand and guided her, step by step.

What was she doing in the Kenyon Grill, a spot far removed from her usual habitat around Seventh and T Sts.

She had dropped into the Chinese laundry operated by her sister, Mrs. Marcella Brown, a few doors from the grill, just as Marcella looked at the clock.

"Gee, it's nearly closing time at the Kenyon Grill," said Marcella, "and I have a uniform for one of the waitresses. She may need it tomorrow. I'll drop it past."

"Go along with her," whispered the Fates, inching Edna closer to her doom.

"Wait, I'll go with you," echoed Edna, fitting the action to the word."

He, Too, Was 'Lured' to Grill

Elwood Hughes, practically a newcomer to Washington, had also been "lured" to the Kenyon Grill through no reason he could explain. He lived many blocks away, on Rhode Island Ave. But there he was, waiting like an element in a test tube, destined to become a factor to this experiment in tragedy.

Marcella completed her business and started toward the car, where her husband was waiting to carry her and Edna home.

But Edna could not leave. A force greater than herself held her back. "I think I'll stick around until they close. It'll only be a few minutes," said Edna, dropping upon a stool beside a police officer she recognized.

Marcella left hesitatingly, but was certain Edna would be O.K. Nobody would harm her; she was just a big, friendly, jolly kid. The officer good-naturedly tossed a dime for their two cups of coffee and also left—and Edna was there alone among strangers.

But **nobody remained** strangers long around Edna Crump, **not even Hughes,** who was drinking quietly with two male companions in a booth.

Fates Steer Edna to Booth

The impatient Fates—watching the clock, mindful of the preparation to close up for the night—tugged at Edna Crump and steered her toward the booth where the young men were drinking.

"Give a friend a drink," said Edna.

"Help yourself," said Elwood.

"Sure, help yourself," chimed in the others.

Contact was made. Here was just the right combination. The play was cast now to set the scene for the final act.

They were both a little groggy as they reached the street as the lights were dimmed in the grill. Normally, they would have parted company, each going his own way, but the plot was written different.

Suddenly Edna recalled that she had four dollars to deliver to a friend in a Pyramid club on Columbia Rd. They might have walked directly on a brightly lighted street.

"Why not take a short cut?" whispered the Fates. "It's closer through the alley on Irving St."

Trio' Takes Short Cut

Answering that impulse, Edna and Elwood, two perfect strangers, walked along. Behind them, in ever quickening pace, walked a third party — silently, stealthily — the ugly shadow of death. The trio moved closer and closer to the appointed place—a blind alley possessing only an entrance but no exit.

What happened in those last horrible minutes nobody knows. Elwood, dazed and groggy, awoke in his home the next day to find his hands blood-stained and a woman's watch in his possession. He says his mind was a blank.

Edna, her fists clenched, her body nude and rain-soaked, was found the next morning in a gateway in the alley.

A motorist parking his car that night had seen a man and a girl fighting in the alley.

"These lovers," he shrugged, "always fighting, hah! He went on about his business. Had he been more curious he might have interferred, but the drama wasn't written that way.

The great conspiracy between destiny and death was revealed with the rising sun. The timing was perfect, the actors were well-cast, the setting was ideal—but for Edna Crump, who always wanted to be an actress, there were no curtain calls.

Robbery or Sex?

Was this a motiveless slaying, perpetrated only to satisfy the lust of the gods?

Two motives are possible—robbery and sex. Here's how the characters of the two principals fit these patterns.

ROBBERY—Edna had a weakness for exaggeration which both provoked and amused her friends. Under the influence a few drinks, Edna's version of the amount of Pyramid money she was delivering could have easily grown from $4 to $400.

Elwood was on probation for housebreaking, according to police records.

SEX—Edna was a voluptuous curvaceous model with a come-hither look in her eyes, a twist to her hips, a witty tongue and a penchant for ad-libbing the latest slang, which might easily have been mistaken by a stranger for an invitation to intimacy.

Elwood, according to police records, was accused in Norfolk of assault with intent to commit criminal assault, and served 60 days.

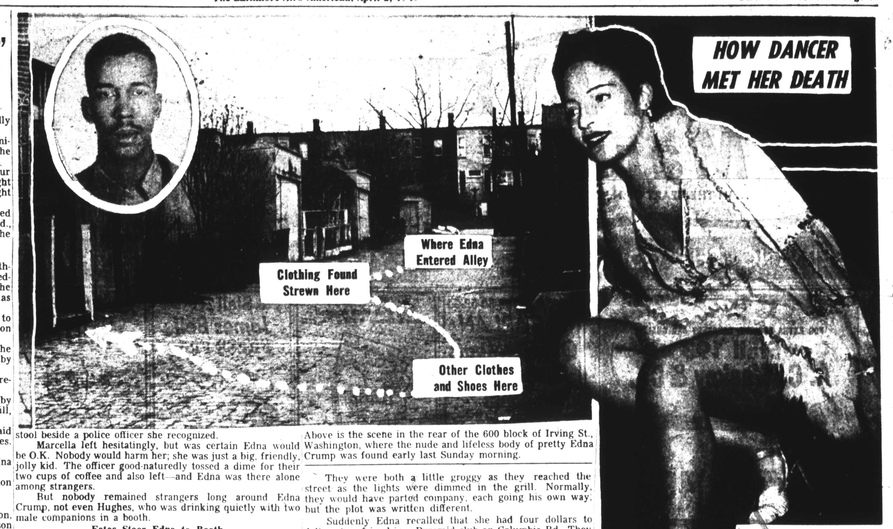
Robbery or rape? Who knows?

Elwood T. Hughes, who, police believe, strangled Miss Crump, had been permitted, the Howard authority asserted, to register for the spring quarter on the strength of a transcript from West Virginia State, which showed that he was "a student in good standing."

Hughes's District residence is Norfolk, Va.

Hughes completed his registration on March 22 and his certificate of eligibility as a veteran was sent to the Veterans Administration for processing.

Hughes listed at 57 R St. N.W., the home of the Rev. I. F. Hughes. His native home is 1927 Oaklawn St., Norfolk, Va.



Above is the scene in the rear of the 600 block of Irving St., Washington, where the nude and lifeless body of pretty Edna Crump was found early last Sunday morning.

The suspect held in the strangling of Miss Edna Crump is "technically" not a student at Howard University, a spokesman of the institution declared on Wednesday.

WILLARD ALLEN TALKS TO VA. UNION STUDENTS

Willard W. Allen, grand master of the Masons and realtor, on Wednesday addressed an assembly of Virginia Union University students in Richmond on "Your Career in a Challenging World."

LUKE PHILLIPS, Jr.

Dining Car Waiter Switched to Calvert Years Ago

CHICAGO, Ill.—Luke Phillips, of Chicago, dining car waiter, is another who has "stayed switched" to Calvert for years. "Calvert Reserve is the blend I'm happy to recommend" he says. "It's smoother—worth switching folks to."

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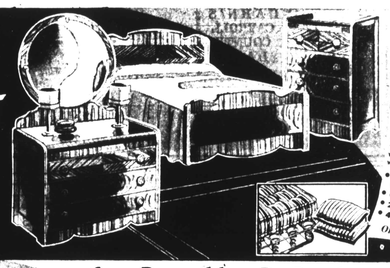

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OPINION

Supreme Bench Rule 904 and the Constitution

An editor of the Baltimore Afro-American was sentenced last Friday to three months in prison and the paper fined $400,000 for contempt of court in connection with a Mirror article on a murder case.

The paper had played up a story concerning a man named John Hasby, a factory executive. It called him a vampire and said he had committed several murders.

Hasby had given the police information of any information which might prejudice the trial of a defendant.

Here is where our Baltimore Supreme Bench got its idea for Rule 904. One or two of our judges did some studying in England not long ago and they came back with English ideas about the contempt of court concept.

Unlike the English and the American systems are altogether different.

But since our good judges have returned from their English sojourn, they have made frequent attempts to force the English system upon Baltimoreans.

In this connection, we are extremely happy to know that the Baltimore Sun has asked permission to file a brief in opposition to Rule 904.

Maybe the Hearst papers will wake up too and ask to be heard.

Our Constitution says, in the First Amendment, that the freedom of the press shall not be abridged in this country and that no laws may be passed abridging this freedom.

If a newspaper in this country prints an article stating that a man has committed several murders, it cannot be punished for contempt because of the Constitutional prohibition.

In the famous California case our Supreme Court has upheld the California Supreme Court in a similar decision.

The high court pointed out that certainly no judge can be influenced by a newspaper article and that if he is not mature and experienced enough to be guided simply by the evidence he is not qualified to be a judge.

The same thing about jurymen. Prospective jurors are always asked whether they have read newspapers about the case and whether they can give the accused a fair trial.

If they say no, then they are not accepted as jurymen.

In the California case, a trial judge committed the trial of a case to be asked to wait two weeks or two months after a case is over before it is allowed to be tried. Our Supreme Court said there is no reason that they should be spared citizens at a time when it would do the most good, that is, while the trial is in progress.

Two weeks ago a delegation of citizens was ready to go to the Legislature on this question. But it was decided that the case strategy would be to let Morgan College present its case.

Since that time any number of citizens and organizations have communicated their views to the Governor and to the Legislature.

Every alert citizen in Maryland knows this to be true.

All of our citizens ought to know as Mr. Gosnell very well single citizen like Mr. Gosnell can write to the House of Delegates or Senator from his district.

The sooner the better. Letters and telegrams to be sent to the members of the State Legislature.

Everybody who thinks seriously about this question ought to join in.

Public Education Is the Business of Every Citizen

The apparent refusal of Gov. W. Preston Lane and members of the State Legislature to be guided by the desires of colored people in Maryland is the business of every alert citizen.

It appears however, that there are those among us who are inclined to think it only the business of certain citizens.

All of our citizens ought to know as Mr. Gosnell very well the fact that Judge Morris Soper asked the Legislature to be heard, there would have been no opinion of the colored citizens of Maryland transmitted to the Legislature on the question of the meeting at the Masonic Temple on Dec. 17, 1948, where Dr. Annie Cookman Veditz, president of Morgan State College and Princess Anne College, addressed the problem.

Mr. Gosnell also should have known that the resolutions adopted at that time were communicated to the Legislature and the Governor.

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Why Speedway Case Appeal Must be Made

Mrs. Mitchell Replies to City Engineer on Minorities' Rights

Baltimore City Traffic Engineer Wilbur Lanie, speaking before a meeting of the Northwestern City Improvement Association, said that Negroes moving into Druid Hill Ave. and McCulloh St. are responsible for the increase in traffic violations and accidents in the area.

Mr. Murphy, notified in court that the increase in traffic violations and accidents in the area is due to the increase in one-way streets in the area.

Mr. Murphy said that the City Council passed the one-way ordinances because of the danger created by the officials of the city who wanted to speed up traffic in the area.

The daily press has reported that 80% of the people on St. Paul St. are for one-way streets. The daily press has reported that 80% of the people on Druid Hill Ave. and McCulloh St. are against one-way streets.

Mr. Murphy admitted on the witness stand that the interests of the people who live on Druid Hill Ave. and McCulloh St. are being sacrificed for the benefit of the people who live on St. Paul St.

Mr. Murphy admitted on the witness stand that the interests of the people who live on Druid Hill Ave. and McCulloh St. are being sacrificed for the benefit of the people who live on Calvert St., Charles St., Cathedral St., Mt. Royal Ave., Preston St., Madison Ave., Mt. Lake Terrace, Eutaw Place, Linden Ave., Reisterstown Rd., Park Heights Ave., Pimlico Rd., Belvedere Ave., Cold Spring Lane, Northern Parkway, Coldspring Ave., Hillsdale Rd., Hillsdale Ave., Greenmount Ave., Harford Rd., Harford Ave., Belair Rd., Belair Ave., Erdman Ave., Moravia Rd., Moravia Ave., Loch Raven Blvd., Loch Raven Ave., Gorsuch Ave., Cold Sp