

# Who Plunged the Long Blade Into the Rich Lover's Wife?

## Perplexing Puzzle of the 6-Inch Stab

### That Wiped Out the Victim Before Her Husband's Eyes



**CHEERFUL SMILE**  
Irma Loucks, the Viracious Stenographer, Who Admitted Sharing a Love Nest with the Infatuated Capitalist. She Was Charged with Helping to Kill Her Wedded Rival, Mrs. Bowles.



**WHAT DOES HIS FACE SAY?**  
Characteristic Camera-Portrait of Nelson C. Bowles, 34, Millionaire Capitalist, of Portland, Ore. Following the Wounding of His Wife, a Coroner's Jury Inculpated Him, with Irma Loucks, His Former Secretary, in Mrs. Bowles' Death.



**DEATH CAME QUICKLY**  
The Late Mrs. Leone Bowles, 33, First Declared to Have Stabbed Herself Fatally with a Jagged-Edged Bread Knife, Then Thought to Have Been Attacked.

**VENDETTA WEAPON**  
Long Corsican Knife Which Figured in a Tragedy on the South Coast of France. Recently, Strongly Resembling the Bowles Mystery. Note the Vengeful Inscription, Which, Translated, Reads: "I hope that my wound (i. e. the wound I inflict) will prove mortal." Engraved on the Blade. A Beautiful Young Fishergirl Was Found Stabbed to Death with This Menacing Knife.

affiliation with her husband, and that the thought of divorce was repugnant to her.

On the other hand, there were pronounced factors in the case that pointed elsewhere. Dr. Paul B. Cooper, a relative by marriage of Bowles, had been called to attend Mrs. Bowles at Miss Loucks's East Side apartment—placidly described by the Portland papers as a love nest. He told police, at first, that he had been phoned for by his kinsman about twenty minutes before the wound's effect proved fatal and that he had ordered an ambulance before she died.

**M**ISCHANCE, suicide—or murder? In nearly every stabbing case investigating detectives are faced with three contingencies: did the victim knife himself by accident or design, or was he knifed by another person?

The case of pretty, refined Mrs. Leone Bowles, of Portland, Oregon, was particularly baffling in this regard. Mrs. Bowles, of social prominence and mother of two children, died as the result of a wound, in the presence of her husband, Nelson C. Bowles, millionaire capitalist, and his admitted sweetheart, Miss Irma Loucks.

The circumstances suggested suicide. Bowles and Irma told how Mrs. Bowles had snatched up a bread knife with a jagged edge and plunged it into her chest at a curious angle. But a coroner's jury later returned a verdict that the unfortunate woman had perished of "a knife wound made with murderous intent by Irma Loucks or Nelson C. Bowles, or both." They were accordingly charged with the crime and lodged, bailless, in jail.

But—the suicide theory persisted in certain minds. It was shown conclusively that Mrs. Bowles, because of domestic discord, had been miserably unhappy; that she had entertained, perhaps futilely, hopes of a lasting recon-

But later he changed his story so radically that suspicions were directed toward the millionaire and his girlfriend. This time Dr. Cooper declared that he had arrived two or three minutes before his patient succumbed and that the ambulance was not called until twenty minutes after her death!

He furthermore admitted that he, Bowles and Miss Loucks held a "rehearsal" in the kitchen, to perfect themselves for the forthcoming and inevitable quizzing by the investigators. This was an extraordinary statement. And Dr. Cooper, whose standing, professionally, is high, was reproved by County Coroner Earl Smith, for having permitted Mrs. Bowles's body to be removed to the undertaker's before the authorities were enabled to scrutinize it on the death scene.

Cooper's altered account of his connection with the tragedy threw suspicion upon that given by Bowles and Miss Loucks. The latter's story was as follows: Mrs. Bowles knocked at her door at ten o'clock on the Wednesday of her death. She demanded admission. But before her reluctant hostess would consent to let her in, Miss Loucks

phoned Bowles. "Your wife is here," she said. "Better come 'round."

While she was awaiting entry, the wife went to the kitchen door. There she was finally admitted. A few minutes later, Bowles arrived. The three of them entered the living room and began to discuss, apparently not angrily, the distressing triangular situation that had arisen among them. Mrs. Bowles, in Miss Loucks's version, had timidly referred to possible divorce, but her husband had interrupted her. That wouldn't be necessary, he asserted, since he and Irma had decided that their fascinating friendship must end.

While this conversation was proceeding, Mrs. Bowles, complaining of acute thirst, requested a drink of water. Her husband rose, went to the kitchen, and returned with a tumbler full. After a few minutes, the wife again asked for water. This time she was directed to the kitchen. (It was Bowles's contention that Mrs. Bowles was suffering from a malady that made her perpetually thirsty. Actually it was shown that, at the time of her death, the young woman was in exceptionally fine health.)

What was described as "a slight moan" came from the kitchen. Bowles and Irma rushed in, the man catching Mrs. Bowles in his arms as she slumped forward. He then removed the knife from the wound and tossed it lightly into the bedroom, the bleeding wound was stanching with a towel, and Dr. Cooper was sent for.

When the authorities arrived, little could be done to reconstruct the actual death scene. The knife had been washed

—though no one could be found to admit doing this—and there were but trivial traces of blood on the premises. In most cases of self-stabbing the effusion from artery or vein is pronounced.

A day elapsed and several relatives of the dead woman arrived from Yakima, Washington. Their eyes bespoke indignant fire. All, from Mrs. Bowles's brothers, E. W. and L. G. Cronkhite, and parents, Mr. and Mrs. O. B. Cronkhite, to Mrs. Emma Glover, demanded further investigation.

To the complex problem awaiting unraveling, Karl Herbring was able to contribute something. As Mrs. Bowles's attorney, he had come to regard her as "a splendid woman," and her whole concern had been for her children and home. She was deeply devoted to her daughters, Sally, 7, and Patsy, 5, he asserted. Herbring added that divorce had been discussed; that Mrs. Bowles had complained to him of Miss Loucks, and that the two women had met and conversed by phone frequently.

Last November things had brightened for the distraught matron. Bowles had returned after a month's absence. She still loved him. She craved no divorce. At a dinner party the night before the tragedy she had talked of the happier times before the "other woman" had entered upon the scene. She frankly admitted longing for a reconciliation.

On two occasions, she once confided in her lawyer, she had made attempts on her life to see what her husband's reaction might be. One gleam from these warring statements a sense of inconsistency in the victim's mind, yet nothing more incongruous than might occur to any sensitive

**Dotted Line Indicates Exact Depth to Which the Bread Knife Penetrated Mrs. Bowles' Body—6 Inches. This Suggests a Blow of Tremendous Force, Uncommon in Suicide Cases.**

woman in a painful situation. Scientific attention was turned on the technique of Mrs. Bowles's stabbing. Dr. Frank B. Menne, who performed the autopsy, was authority for the statement that the wound had taken effect in the left side of the chest between the second and third ribs. It had continued, to a depth of six inches, through the pulmonary artery, entering



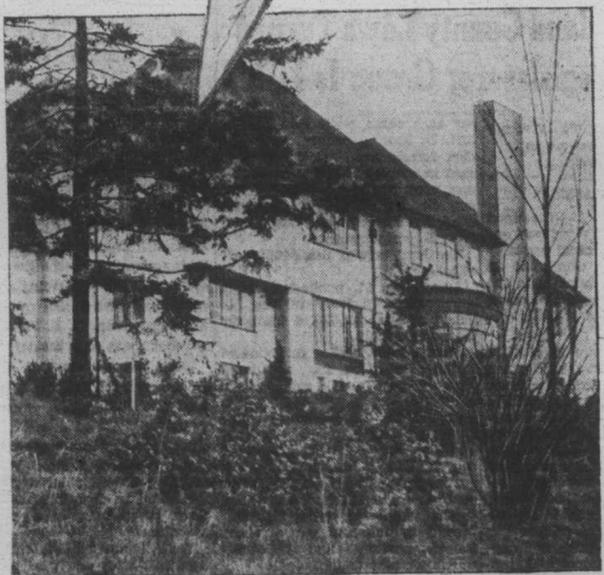
**CHANGED HIS TUNE**  
Dr. Paul B. Cooper, Related to Bowles by Marriage. The Physician's Conflicting Statements About Mrs. Bowles' Death Led to Further Investigation and the Lodging of a Murder Charge Against Bowles and His Inamorata.

the lung. Though this constituted an uncommonly deep stab, Dr. Menne said it could have been self-inflicted.

By a most unusual coincidence, only a few weeks before the Bowles tragedy, an almost precisely similar occurrence had taken place in southern France. A young fishergirl, living near the coast city of Toulon, had been found on the beach stabbed to death. Her former lover, a sailor, and a second girl, with whom he had become involved, reported finding the body. The dead girl, they agreed, had stabbed herself through the left breast with a long, pointed vendetta knife that had been in her family for years, the clan being of Corsican blood. But investigation tended to show that the girl was not a suicide and that the wound had been inflicted by another person or persons. The evidence on which the youth and his new inamorata were held was flimsy and they were set free, after a verdict of "Not proven."

A close-up of the actual vendetta knife is reproduced above. In the Bowles case, the issue was confused by various cross-currents and conflicting opinions as to the characters and relationship of the accused man and woman. Although Bowles at first asserted he had spent a few nights previous to his wife's death at his luxurious country estate on the Washougal River, in Washington, later he admitted he had been occupying the love nest, Miss Loucks, at one time married to a man named Paris, but now a divorcee, is a former private secretary to Bowles. She was dismissed, it is said, at Mrs. Bowles's request. She was fond of parties and dancing, in contradistinction to Mrs. Bowles's quiet domesticity. Though only twenty-eight, the titan stenographer cannot touch the dead woman for beauty, despite the latter's thirty-three years.

Shortly before the Grand Jury was due to convene, the Bowles mystery was still in a highly conjectural state, despite the verdict of the coroner's jury. And, irrespective of what may ensue, Portland residents will ask each other for many months: "Who really did plunge that long blade into the rich lover's hapless wife?"



**LOVED HER HOME**  
The Bowles Residence, in Portland, Where the Wife Lived with the Two Little Daughters She Adored, Until the Morning of Her Doom. Her Husband Also Maintained a Suburban Estate.

## HUMAN MECHANICS

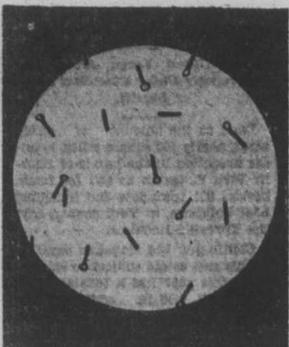
### How Lockjaw Is Sometimes Caused by a Slight Injury

By HERBERT L. HERSCHENSOHN  
(Physician and Surgeon).

**L**OCKJAW is the common name given to the disease called tetanus. It occurs as the result of an injury in which a germ, the tetanus bacillus, gains entrance into the body. It is prevalent all over the world, but is especially frequent in the tropics.

The tetanus bacillus normally exists in the intestines of horses and many other herbivorous animals. For that reason these germs are present in great numbers in soil which is cultivated and manured. Because they cannot live in the presence of oxygen they thrive particularly well below the surface of the ground. The bacilli are shaped like little rods. At one end is a ball-like swelling making each germ look like a drum-stick. This swelling is a spore, or seed, which is extremely resistant to the action of powerful antiseptics. It may remain dormant for a great many years and then, having found suitable conditions, develop into virulent tetanus bacilli. The spores may exist anywhere, even on slivers of wood, which accounts for the occurrence of lockjaw following such a trivial accident as a splinter in the finger.

The germs do not travel in the body



Above is a Microscopic View of the Tetanus Bacilli, the Germs That Cause the Dreaded Lockjaw or Tetanus. Note the Round Swellings at the Ends Which Are Highly Resistant and May Lie Dormant for Years.

but remain wherever they entered. Within a few days there is usually some evidence of an infection with the formation of pus. Sometimes the wound appears clean. In other instances the wound may be so slight that it is passed unnoticed. The tetanus

bacilli give off a poison that extends to the nerves that control the action of the muscles. This poison travels on and on until it reaches the spinal cord which it then ascends.

It takes about a week or two before symptoms of tetanus appear, sometimes several months. This period depends upon the rapidity with which the poison makes headway. The first symptoms which attract attention are a slight sore throat with some difficulty in swallowing and a rather stiff neck. Later severe spasms seize the individual gripping his body as if in a vise. The pain is excruciating. The teeth become tightly clenched making it impossible to open the mouth to talk, eat, or even to breathe. The lips become stretched over the teeth in such a hideous manner that a ghastly smile is formed. The eyes are half closed and the forehead wrinkled. The head is thrown back. The entire body may be bent backward to such a degree that if the individual is lying on the floor, only the heels and back of the head support the entire weight. The muscles of the abdomen become very tense and hard, in some instances actually splitting. A peculiarity of this disease is the fact that these spasms occur not only spontaneously, but are provoked by sudden noises or slight movements of the body.

Infants can become victims of tetanus when the navels are improperly treated and taken care of immediately following birth. The mortality is high, over eighty per cent succumbing within a few days.