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HERE'S HOW
TO FIND
THE
GIRLS' BODIES



***A Mother's Tragedy:
Janna Didn't Run Away, She Was Murdered***

by JOSEPH L. KOENIG

HERE'S HOW TO FIND THE GIRLS' BODIES

An anonymous letter leading to the corpses of two missing coeds still left police to find their decapitated heads

■ "Gentlemen," the first letter began, "I have some information on the whereabouts of the bodies of the two missing West Virginia University coeds . . . Follow directions very carefully to the nth degree and you cannot fail to find them."

"Proceed 25 miles directly south from the southern line of Morgantown. This will bring you to a weeded forest land. Enter into the forest exactly one mile. There are the bodies. Will reveal myself when the bodies are located."

The second letter, too, was signed only with a triangle and postmarked Cumberland, Md. Dated April 10, 1970, it reached the office of West Virginia Governor Arch Moore about a week after the first.

"If you re-read my first letter carefully," its author insisted, "you will see the directions were specific—direct south from the city—meaning the southern limits of Morgantown, W. Va.—straight 25 miles—you will come to a forest woodland—enter in one mile—fanning out you will locate the bodies of the girls covered with brush—look carefully. The animals are now on the move."

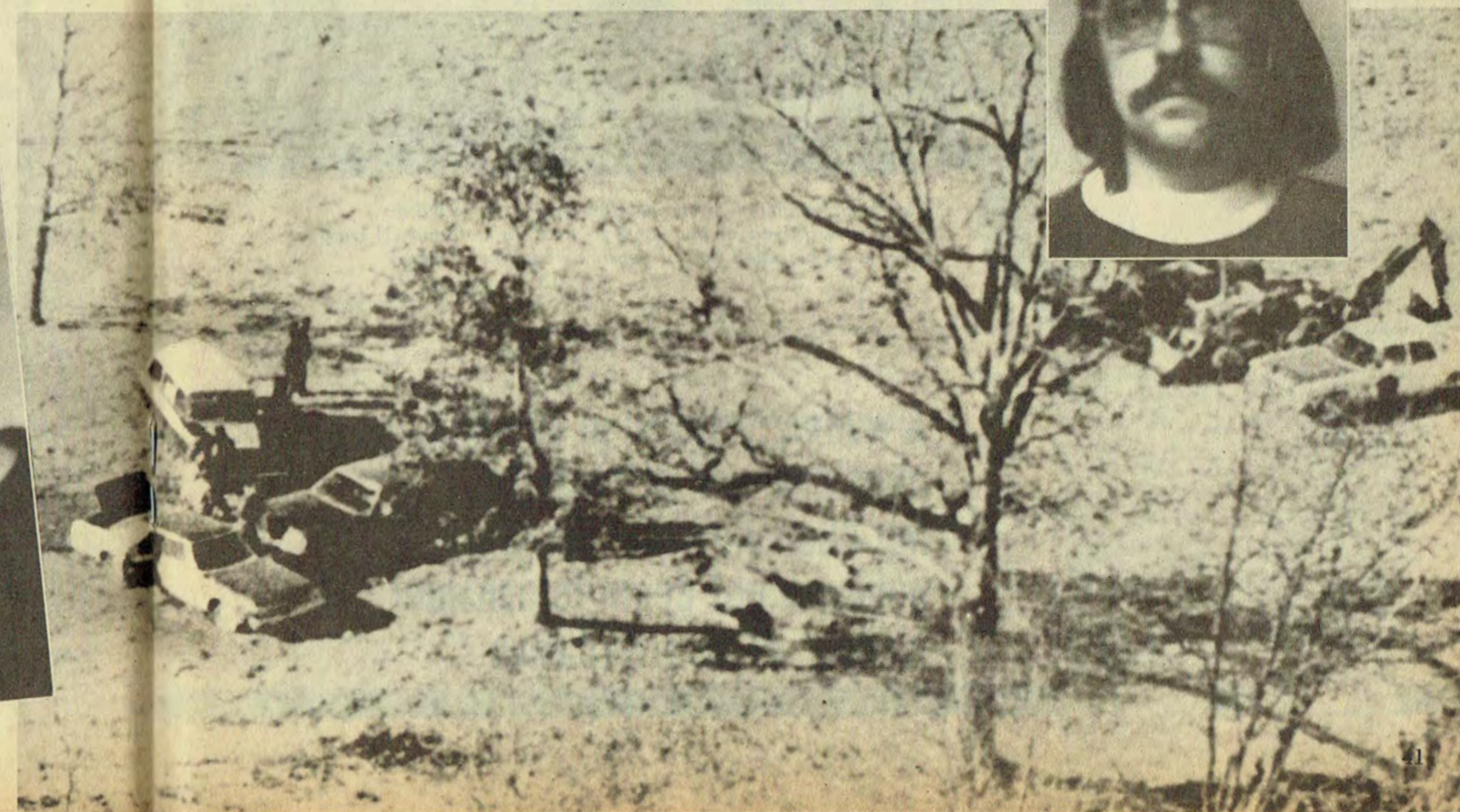
"Do hope this will help you out as to exact location. Will still identify myself when the bodies are located."

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National guardsmen and crew from ambulance joined to carry the remains of Mared Malarik (L) and Karen Ferrell from wooded area.

Working on directions from suspect (R), police began search of a Point Marion farm in hopes of finding the skulls of the two girls despite passage of year.



Pressure had been mounting on authorities to find Karen Ferrell of Quinwood, W. Va., and Mared Malarik of Kinnelon, N.J., ever since the 19-year-old West Virginia University coeds vanished three months earlier, on the Sunday afternoon of January 18, 1970, while hitchhiking back to campus after attending a movie in Morgantown. In all that time, nothing had been heard from the girls. Little more had been done to find them by the authorities.

Even the discovery of Mared Malarik's purse at the side of U.S. 119 on March 1 had prompted little interest in the startling missing persons case. But things began changing late in March when Governor Moore was presented with a petition bearing the signatures of 734 UWV students and faculty members requesting him to call in the FBI to aid in the investigation. Nevertheless, although two units of the West Virginia National Guard provided 100 men for the search and a helicopter combed Monongalia County from the air, five friends of the missing girls complained to newsmen on April 6, that:

"The investigation, even though rather thorough, is inadequate because it has been 79 days since the girls have been missing and nothing substantial has turned up."

Now the anonymous letters made it impossible to ignore the case any longer. Early in April, Morgantown and state police — assisted by National Guardsmen—combed the woods south of Morgantown determined to find the vanished coeds.

Their efforts were unavailing until Monday, April 13, when a group of volunteer searchers under the direction of Morgantown Police Sergeant John Mize discovered a pair of sunglasses which quickly were identified as belonging to Mared Malarik. In the next couple of days, a container of pills prescribed for the girl by a Morgantown dentist, as well as a shoulder-strap purse belonging to Karen Ferrell, also turned up. And, on Wednesday, the searchers found personal items belonging to both girls strewn along County Road 76. However, it was not until Thursday, April 16, that the first major discovery was reported.

Early that afternoon, a small boy was playing in his grandmother's Hammond, W. Va., home when his attention was drawn to a piece of brown paper blowing across a few awnings which were being installed over the windows. At his relative's urging, the child picked up the paper and showed it to her.

Immediately she recognized it as a

driver's license. Although it had become discolored through lengthy exposure to the elements, the name of Karen Ferrell was still visible. News of the unexpected find was relayed to the searchers in the vicinity.

The report triggered a rush of volunteers to the area. But other searchers continued to work the sites they had staked out earlier in the day. As darkness approached, state police under the command of Captain Walter F. Bowley were checking out a small ravine about 100 yards from a dirt road near the abandoned Weirton Mine off County Road 76—an area with a local reputation as a lovers lane.

Trooper R. I. Cunningham waded into the thick underbrush, dug away a few rocks and bushes heaped over a pair of logs lying near each other—and then signaled frantically for assistance. The long search was over, although another was just about to get underway.

Entombed in the makeshift crypt which Cunningham had uncovered were the skeletal remains of what appeared to have been two young women. One of the bodies, police reported, was nude; the other clothed. Although both corpses were too decomposed to possibly determine if they had been sexually molested, one thing was clear. Both victims had been horribly mutilated by their slayer, suffering decapitation either before or shortly after death.

Immediately, police and more than 100 guardsmen were assigned to cordon off and secure the area where the bodies were found. Not long after, the remains—still minus the heads—were removed to University Hospital for autopsies.

"**ONLY** a maniac could have done this," said William Bowers, the Monongalia County coroner.

"The bodies probably were dumped here during the winter," an investigator said. "The place is so out of the way and the terrain is so rough that a car couldn't make it over the dirt road except in extremely dry or, more likely, freezing weather."

Coroner Bowers explained that he believed both girls had thrown from their kidnaper's car the various personal effects found earlier in the week as they sped along the rural road leading to the burial site.

"They started to throw their pocket-books and things so somebody could trail them," Bowers said. "They were saying by signals, 'Here I am. Follow me.' They were scared."

The Monongalia County coroner went on to say that the girls' killer

might well have been either a madman or someone stoned on drugs.

"LSD sends you on this trip and you can't quit whatever crosses your mind," he said.

"Whoever wrote that letter," Bowers added, "was the one who did it. They found everything they said he'd find. He told them where to go."

Informed at the state house in Charleston of the grim find, Governor Moore announced that state police "have instructions to handle this as a murder case.

"Of course," he pointed out, "there are some reports that we've got to receive before certain aspects can be confirmed to us." He added that searchers had been instructed to accelerate their efforts in the hunt for the coeds' heads.

Despite a mammoth effort, the skulls were not found during the next six days. On Wednesday, April 22, officials received some advice on where to hunt from a thoroughly unexpected, although usually reliable source.

"I have delayed writing another letter in hopes you would conclude more information by this time concerning the findings of the bodies," the third anonymous letter stated. "Since this has not happened, I will send along another clue while your men are still in the area.

"The heads can be found from the position of the bodies by striking out 10 degrees S.W. for the first head and approximately 10 degrees S.E. for the second—roughly 1 mile. You are already 7/10 of that mile. They are within the mine entrance—if you can call it an "entrance" considering its condition. They are buried not over 1 ft. in depth.

"The ones responsible for the murders," the informant went on, "scattered some of the girls' personal effects over the general area creating a pattern of confusion making it difficult for you to pin-point any exact location.

"My first two letters triggered your intensive search—don't give up now."

State police spent five days at the Weirton Mine area, searching for the murdered girls' heads. But after firemen laboriously siphoned 50,000 gallons of water from an abandoned shaft in a final futile effort at finding the remains, Sergeant Robert L. Mazingo announced that his men would halt the search in the "immediate area" less than a mile from the worked out mine where the bodies were discovered.

The search, he added, had been designed to locate the coeds' heads, "some footwear still missing" and any other objects foreign to the rugged terrain.

"We did not discover any new evidence," he said, "but we are continuing our investigation. That will be

the story from now on in—until it is brought to a successful conclusion.”

That same day it was announced that security had been tightened at West Virginia University because of a growing fear among residents of the girls' dormitories, especially Westchester Hall, where the slain coeds had lived.

“Many of the girls are very, very frightened,” commented the dean of women at WVU. “We’re doing our best to help them be realistic and not panic.”

She added that officials had been combatting rumors that an unknown man had obtained a key to every room in the dorm and that other girls had disappeared from the school.

In Charleston, Governor Moore told newsmen that he was dismayed that “the rumor mill is operating to this extent.

“Those rumors are without any foundation whatsoever,” he said. The police, he added, would continue “a very aggressive investigation into all suggested suspects.”

Although the governor refused to amplify his remarks, reporters learned that two men had been charged with kidnaping a pair of coeds from the campus on March 16 and driving them five miles outside of Morgantown. The girls reportedly had escaped unharmed after one of them struck her captor over the head with a bottle.

The suspects, a 22-year-old West-

over, W. Va., man and a 19-year-old Morgantown youth, were remanded to the Monongalia County jail after failing to post \$20,000 bond. A few days later, though, the charges were dismissed by Justice of the Peace William H. Bowers after the two coeds admitted that they willingly had entered the suspects' car.

On Tuesday, April 28, WVU students marched on the Morgantown city council to protest what they considered weak safety standards at the state school. In addition to tighter security, the marchers also demanded that the city ban hitchhiking and that state legislators create a detective agency within the department of public safety.

“We’re trying to make sure no more tragedies happen on campus,” said the vice-president of the newly formed Committee for Evaluation of Student Safety. “Effective security is lacking in Morgantown. There is poor bus scheduling and inadequate street lighting. Buses run only until 6 P.M., and there is no service to Westchester Hall, where the murdered girls lived.”

On April 28, it was announced that West Virginia state police were cooperating with their New Jersey counterparts in the year-old probe of the slaying of two girls in the Atlantic City area which bore a marked resemblance to the Morgantown murders. New Jersey State Police Lieutenant James Brennan, in charge of the Atlantic City investigation, told newsmen that he re-

cently had been asked for information about a traveling rock'n roll band which may have come from New Jersey and which was in the Morgantown area when the two coeds disappeared there on January 18.

Despite some apparent similarities, Brennan was quick to point out, there was nothing to link the West Virginia killings with the June 2, 1969, double murder at Absecon, N.J. The two bodies found just off the Garden State Parkway were stabbed, rather than decapitated. Later, Sergeant Mazingo revealed that the rock band sought for questioning in New Jersey was not under investigation in West Virginia and that none of its members were considered suspects in the Ferrell-Malarik case.

There were no new developments in the double murder probe the remainder of that spring. The case would have faded completely out of the headlines that summer had not the author of the three anonymous letters decided to make his identity known.

ANGERED by a statement from Sergeant Mazingo that whoever had written the letters obtained most of his information from a careful reading of the newspapers, the mysterious author came forward and publically identified himself as a 38-year-old Braddock Road, Cumberland, Md., believer in psychic science. Prior to moving into the LaVale, Md., area in April, with an elderly follower, he had practiced psychic science in Somerset, Pa.

In a letter to a Maryland newspaper in September of 1970, the psychic stated his claim for part of a \$2500 reward allegedly offered for information leading to the missing girls. He explained that he had obtained his information in a series of private seances conducted in a darkened room at the conclusion of a short, religious-like ceremony.

Subjects wishing to communicate with the spirit world, he explained, were asked to sing a hymn. Then the psychic was asked a number of questions which he claimed to answer through the spirit of a little Chinese girl dead for many years. The psychic tape-recorded the entire seance and gave the subject copies of the tape itself.

It was the psychic's contention that the West Virginia state police were unwilling to give him the credit he deserved for finding the two bodies because:

“They do not want to admit they needed aid in locating the coeds. Is it so terrible to ask for help?”

“We refused to pass along to West Virginia state police four tape record-

ings which contain information on the coed case.

“After the publicity-hungry states attorney in Morgantown released information to the newspaper,” the psychic wrote on September 15, 1970, “we held back the recordings. By revealing information so soon he upsets his own case and still does not have one quarter of the story. This case is extremely serious and more bizarre than one can imagine when the complete truth is known.”

Over the next three years, little was heard from the LaVale psychic. In fact, other than the periodic debunking of regular false confessions to the double slaying, the Malarik-Ferrell case remained out of the newspapers. Late in 1973, however, shortly before moving to a southern state, the psychic again contacted newsmen to report his theory that the girls' murderers had moved their heads from the Morgantown area after wide publicity was given to the case. He went on to say that the heads were being used in a “Black Magic” ritual conducted in a dilapidated farm building not far from where the bodies had been found.

The skulls, he said, had been placed on a pair of pedestals between which the “high priest” conducted services. Standing guard at the rituals were two young men who, he claimed, actually had performed the slayings. The psychic described them as a young black and a very blond white man with glassy blue eyes.

Informed of the psychic's remarks, police discounted them with some unprintable remarks of their own.

EXCEPT for the familiar false confessions, there was little else to report on the case the following two years. It was not until late 1975 that the next break in the probe reached the ears of investigators from a very unexpected source.

Early that winter, two prisoners at the Camden County jail in Camden, N.J., began having trouble sleeping. One of the men, bothered by constant nightmares, spent most of each evening babbling in his sleep. The other, with little to do but listen to his fellow convict's moaning, did just that.

The man's nocturnal crying always concerned the same subject—or so it seemed to the sleepless prisoner. Guilt was wracking his conscience over a murder, or more precisely a double murder, which the convict apparently had committed some years earlier. Seeing some profit for himself in the other prisoner's grief, the man in the adjacent cell reported what he had heard to his jailers.

Soon after, officials paid a visit to

the nightmare-stricken prisoner and asked him if he wanted to speak about what was troubling him. Thirty-six-year-old Eugene Paul Clawson of Point Marion, Pa., indicated that he would be grateful to do just that. In fact, he was so glad for the opportunity to speak that, after he was done, he signed a 35-page confession to the 1970 slayings of Karen Ferrell and Mared Malarik. And on Friday, January 16, 1976, under heavy police guard, he traveled from New Jersey to the Morgantown area to assist investigators in the hunt for the girls' still-missing skulls.

In a telephone press conference held at 3 o'clock that same afternoon, Governor Moore announced that a prisoner whom he refused to identify, but who had been convicted of a sex-related crime in another state, had confessed to the long-baffling slayings. Acting on information supplied by the suspect, a machete believed to have been used to decapitate his two victims had been found in a relative's house.

State police reported that the suspect, who originally was from Pittsburgh, had signed a statement which coincided with what investigators already knew to be the facts in the case. He also had told officials that they could find the missing heads in the vicinity of Point Marion, Pa.—a sleepy borough on the state line about 14 miles north of Morgantown, where he had played as a child. He also reportedly had told police that a revolver which he had used to kill the girls would be found with the heads.

Monongalia County Prosecutor David Solomon, on Saturday, reported to newsmen that police had told him that Clawson knew details about the case “that only the murderer could know.” Police, he pointed out, had not disclosed that a locket and necklace mentioned in the alleged confession had been missing since the murders took place. Solomon added that the State Police Criminal Identification Bureau was probing a rock crevice near Point Marion, Pa., where Clawson said the girls' heads were hidden, and he confirmed that human hair already had been recovered from the search area.

Although, according to Solomon, Morgantown Police Officer James McCabe, who had spoken with Clawson, did not doubt the authenticity of the confession, “I'd want to see the skulls before making a charge.”

Solomon went on to say that if West Virginia charges were filed they would come only after New Jersey officials were finished with Clawson. Reportedly, the suspect was being held under \$100,000 bond in the Garden State following his April, 1974, indictment

by a Camden County grand jury on 15 charges stemming from an alleged attack on a teenaged boy. Among the charges against Clawson were possession of a deadly weapon, assault with intent to kill, assault with a deadly weapon, kidnaping, abduction for immoral purposes, armed abduction, armed kidnaping, lewdness, sodomy, armed sodomy, assault with intent to rape and carnal abuses.

“The guy has a rap sheet five pages long,” Prosecutor Solomon said. “New Jersey wants him first.”

ASKED about the alleged confession, Solomon said it indicated that after their abduction the coeds were driven from University Avenue in Morgantown, where they had been hitching, to an isolated area seven miles out of town. Once they got into the car, he added, they probably were held at gunpoint.

“Everything was done to the girls that conceivably could have been done to a human being,” Prosecutor Solomon said. “It must have been a hell of a night.”

Solomon reported that he had been told by investigators that each of the coeds had been raped in the back seat of the car while the other was handcuffed in the front seat and that the girls had been forced to perform unnatural sex acts with one another while their killer watched.

The confession also reportedly indicated that after one of the girls was shot in the head, the other—while pleading for her life—was the first to be decapitated with a machete. The confession, Solomon reiterated, provided details about the construction of the grave which only the killer could have known.

Neither the gun nor handcuffs used in the slayings had been found, Solomon said. Other sources said that they might well be found with their missing heads.

Monongalia County's prosecutor added that it was doubtful that the author of the confession ever would be tried for the slayings—if all the details were true—because the perversions outlined in the statement could only have been carried out by someone so insane that he was “an animal . . .”

“He's mentally incompetent—a real wacko who's probably unable to stand trial.”

Officials also reported to newsmen that Eugene Paul Clawson had passed a lie detector test given to determine whether he was telling the truth in his alleged confession. The examination reportedly had been administered in Pennsylvania shortly after he was temporarily released from the Camden



“I don't know what you're complaining about—me and Bruno got to walk back in this.”

lockup to show West Virginia police where he had left the girls' heads.

Other evidence corroborating his story, according to police, included Clawson's account of stealing a car in Pittsburgh shortly after the slayings. The time of the theft and the site from which the car was stolen reportedly matched police reports filed at the time. Although the car since had been recovered by investigators, it had gone through so many owners in the intervening six years that investigators believed that it would be of little evidentiary value.

"I'm reasonably sure that [Clawson] is the individual that committed the crime," Prosecutor Solomon told newsmen. "His 35-page confession indicated many facts that only the murderer would know... Finding those heads would be absolutely conclusive evidence that Clawson is the killer."

To do just that about two dozen West Virginia and Pennsylvania state police officers, joined by Morgantown lawmen, were searching the suspected burial site—a 100-foot deep crevice located on a hill honeycombed with worked-out coal mines and not far from a Point Marion farm where Clawson had played as a child. Officers already had put in a call for a backhoe and high intensity lights to expedite the search of the narrow space.

On Monday, January 19, a video camera so sensitive that it could relay the image "of the label of a beer bottle more than 60 feet underwater" was lowered into the crevice. Also employed was a metal detector to hunt for the death gun.

"THAT crevice is about 100 feet deep," one of the searchers said, "and I wouldn't be surprised if it took days and days to find what we're looking for. And there are so many abandoned mine shafts in the area that, if the camera fails to locate the skulls, it just wouldn't do any good for us to start digging up the place.

"But what really worries me is that some animals might have dragged the skulls away from the crevice. We found some hair in an animal nest in a burrow quite a distance away from where we're looking today."

That afternoon, a laboratory expert reported that the hair found in the nest had come from the heads of two females. It was impossible to determine, though, if the women were Mared Malarik and Karen Ferrell.

The next day, Tuesday, January 20, Lieutenant Scott Neely, director of the CID in South Charleston, announced that four miners had been hired to assist the investigators combing the Point Marion area. However, on Wed-

nesday, Sergeant William Mitchell, heading the search effort from the Morgantown barracks, discounted the report that the miners had been hired as "ridiculous" and added that four state mine inspectors had been dispatched to the scene.

"The way it looks now," Mitchell said, "we should be in there sometime Thursday." He added that his men had received excellent cooperation from every state agency he had contacted, but that he was disturbed by "a number of erroneous reports coming out of here.

"To begin with," he said, "state police, along with Morgantown city police, recommended that Governor Moore make the announcement of Eugene Paul Clawson's confession to get everybody off our backs, so we could work.

"I am under no gag rule and I'm free to talk to anybody I want to and say anything I want to about this investigation."

Mitchell added that he was particularly distressed by reports that New Jersey officials were upset with the action of their West Virginia colleagues.

"I have talked with officials at Camden, N.J., almost every day," he said. "We have had nothing but the best relations with those people."

Mitchell also said that he was unhappy about Prosecutor Solomon's release of the details of Clawson's confession.

"It's a shame the families of the two victims learned this through the newspapers," he said. "We were trying our best to protect those people from further emotional injury."

Mitchell also went on to say that the video camera and ultra sensitive metal detector brought to the death site so far had been of little value to investigators.

In Point Marion, meanwhile, police said that Eugene Paul Clawson was a graduate of the local high school and had been arrested once in their jurisdiction for disorderly conduct. "But there is nothing on our records which makes it appear he was capable of something like this."

"He was a loner," a Point Marion man said, "about whom people knew little."

On Tuesday, February 17, after a whole month of searching, troopers abandoned their effort at the rock crevice near Point Marion.

"If the skulls were over there," said a state police spokesman, "they've either decayed into dust or were eaten by rodents. Experts tell us that rodents go for the calcium present in skulls.

"We're going to be directing our ef-

orts, now, toward a laboratory analysis of the hair specimens we found that first Friday in an animal nest near the top of the crevice."

Nearly three weeks later, on Monday, March 1, police announced that examination of the 58 strands of hair showed them to have come from two persons. Because bleach and dye were found on some of the strands, it was assumed that the hair was of female origin.

That same day, Prosecutor Solomon told newsmen that, pending a final written report by state police, evidence probably would be presented to a grand jury in the next few weeks.

"I think we're going to run with it," Solomon said following a briefing by investigating officers. "We've got sufficient evidence to go to the grand jury."

It was not before Thursday, April 8, that the Monongalia County grand jury, sitting in Morgantown, indicted Eugene Paul Clawson on two counts of murder. Prosecutor Solomon told newsmen that the suspect, who by then had pleaded guilty to nine of the 15 counts facing him in New Jersey, had indicated that he would waive extradition to West Virginia. Should he change his mind, Solomon added, proceedings would be initiated at once to return him to Morgantown.

Clawson was brought back to West Virginia later that spring and ordered to the West Virginia University medical school for psychiatric testing. Subsequently, he was sent to Weston, W. Va., for additional examination, but on Saturday, June 4, he was returned to the Monongalia County jail in Morgantown when officials at Weston said that they did not have adequate personnel to conduct the necessary examinations.

"Clawson will be transferred to Weston after we communicate with the hospital regarding the diagnostic examination," Solomon said on Tuesday, June 8. More information, he added, was needed to determine whether Clawson was competent to stand trial and had been mentally competent at the time of the slayings.

The suspect, Solomon added, was unusual mentally—a fact which might result in his being found incompetent to stand trial. Should that be the case, he said, Clawson might never be tried for the double murder and would instead be returned to New Jersey to serve time on the charges facing him there. In the meantime, Monongalia Circuit Court Judge Marvin R. Kiger granted a continuance to the October term of the court to allow Clawson's attorney more time to prepare his case for the defense. ■