Last Rites For N. J. Murder Victims

5th victim from Philly; detectives hunt clues

By Bob Queen

NEWARK, N.J. — Hundreds of spectators filed by the four caskets at Whigham's Funeral Home last Monday night at the viewing, and on Tuesday afternoon, four generations of a Newark family were buried in Woodland Cemetery, the victims of one of the bloodiest and most baffling mass murders in the city's history.

A HELPING HAND — Robert Page, center, weeps openly Tuesday following funeral services in Newark, N.J. for his wife Mabel, his daughter Bertha and two other persons — all victims in a mysterious five person slaying. Page discovered the bodies in a two-story Newark dwelling. A fifth victim was buried in Philadelphia, Pa. Assisting Page is his grandson, Robert Faulk, and an unidentified woman.

(UPI Telephoto)

While an enlarged squadron of 25 detectives under Capt. Rocco Paradiso weren't hiding the fact they were up against a "tough one", surviving relatives of the mother, daughter, granddaughter and great-grandson, wept openly.

They were visibly shocked by the tragedy which hit Thursday, July 5, when their relatives were found stabbed and beaten to death in their home at 587 S. 12th St.

There were tears in Philadelphia, Pa., too, nearly 100 miles away, at the Perry Funeral Home, for still a 5th victim, Mrs. Romona Russell King, 18, a bride of two weeks, who was killed in the massacre while visiting the family.

Mrs. King's husband, David, was notified of his wife's death while visiting in Dillon, S.C.

The victim resided at 527 W. Turner St., in Philadelphia and was the daughter of John E. and Nancy Russell.

Buried in Newark, were the S. 12th St. victims, Mrs. Mabel Page, 56, of 581 S. 12th St., of whom police received a strange report that she had been seen running toward her daughter's home at 587, around 1 p.m. The observation has not been officially verified.

Mrs. Page is survived by her husband, Robert, who discovered the bodies when he gained entrance with a ladder into the second floor; and four brothers, Edward, Casper, Elbert and James Mace.

Her only daughter, Mrs. Bertha Faulks, was found dead beside her in the S. 12th St. living room. Her granddaughter Mrs. Alberta Faulks and her great-grandson, Jerry, 6, found dead upstairs, reduced her survivors to a tragic few.

Mrs. Alberta Faulks is survived by a daughter, Felicia.

As the tragic weekend drew to a close, Newark Homicide chief, Paradiso, seated at this desk at an unusually late hour Saturday, openly admitted that in all of his many years in the bureau, he was stumped.

"I hate to say it", he told the AFRO, "but right now I have no ideas, no theories, no suspects."

Also at their desks were most of the squad's personnel, seldom observed in such numbers on a late Saturday afternoon. They were part of over two-dozen detectives assigned to try and unravel one of the most bloody multiple crimes, possibly in the city's history.

Autopsies performed on Friday by Dr. Edward Murray, Essex County Medical examiner, however, dispelled one rumor that had created a bizarre element to the mass slayings — his findings revealed that all of the five victims had been stabbed with either a knife or sharp-edged instrument.

The other story, referred to by Assistant Essex County Prosecutor Anthony Mautone as "unfounded", was that the victims had been stabbed with the sharpened end of a broomstick.

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Posing another question for the busy detectives who had, as of late Saturday, interrogated over 100 relatives, neighbors, friends and acquaintances, was the actual time of the slayings.

It was apparently around 1 p.m., or possibly a little later when a woman friend, whose name has not been disclosed, went to the S. 12th St. residence to pick up her two children, ages 2 and 3, that she had left there early in the morning to reportedly spend the time with Alberta Faulk's son, Jerry, 6, who was found dead on the second floor.

It was allegedly her inability to get a response to the bell that prompted Robert Page, 63, of nearby 581 S. 12th St., to gain entry to the second floor with a ladder.

Mr. and Mrs. Page are the parents of Mrs. Bertha Faulks, who was found brutally stabbed and slashed in the living room with her mother.

The mystery was compounded by the apparent absence of a struggle, that valuables such as a sum of money in an open container were intact, and other valuable objects ordinarily the objectives of thieves were untouched.

But the pure viciousness of the mass attack in which either the various family members attempted to flee their assailant, or were caught in separate rooms, was revealed in the autopsies.

Mrs. Romona Russell King, of Philadelphia, described as "extremely attractive," had been visiting the family. Her body was found near the kitchen stove. She had been stabbed repeatedly. Mrs. King and her husband, David, also of Philadelphia, had been married two weeks. The killer apparently vented his rage upon Mrs. Page with 12 stab wounds and with 19 inflicted upon her daughter, Mrs. Faulks.

The examiner found approximately a total of 62 stab wounds among the five victims. Six-year-old, Jerry, had been stabbed six times.

Detectives were baffled too, that the other two children belonging to the friend who left them there that morning, were unharmed. Neighbors said that one of the children was screaming on a second floor porch roof.

Neither child has been able to offer any clues to the slayer.

The oldest child, 3, screams when any attempt has been made to find an answer through almost unintelligible baby talk. The only theory advanced by homicide detectives is that the killer was aware that the children couldn't offer any identification, with this factor resulting in the devil of six-year-old Jerry.

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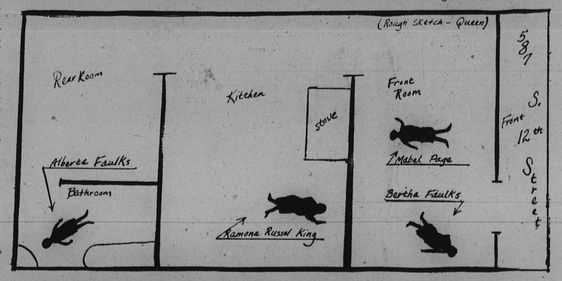
The Rev. Chester Graham, pastor of the Christ Healing Temple Church, on the second floor at Clinton Ave. and Hunterdon St., still in a state of shock while seated in police headquarters, described both Mrs. Page and her daughter as faithful members of his church for 11 years.

He had seen them both at the Tuesday night services, and had just driven up to the S. 12th St., residence when he learned of the tragedy.

He said that at various times, other members of the family attended services at the Clinton and Hunterdon Church.

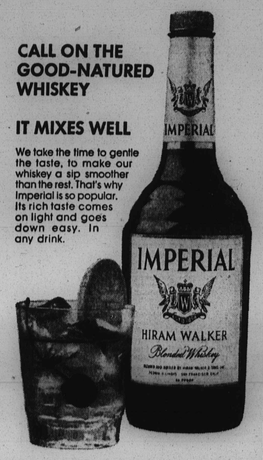
Newark homicide detectives, in an appeal to all churches in the south and west wards on Sunday, for any assistance in the case, also listed a special phone number where all information would be handled in full confidence. 201-733-6280.

LOCAL POET—Carrington Bonner's first book "Our Day Is Coming" is scheduled to appear on city bookstands soon. The boow is a volume of poems and short essays. The author is a graduate of Forest Park High School



HOUSE OF CARNAGE—In the above sketch taken from just a rough sketch of the residence at 587 S. 12th St., Newark, and not claimed as a fully accurate drawing of the interior, the figures provide just an idea as to the manner in which the bodies were strewn throughout the first floor following what was termed up until late last weekend as a "total mystery" by Newark homicide police. Not shown in the sketch, but found similarly slain in a second floor room was Jerry Faulks, age 6, son of one of the victims, Alberta Faulks.

(Sketch by Bob Queen)



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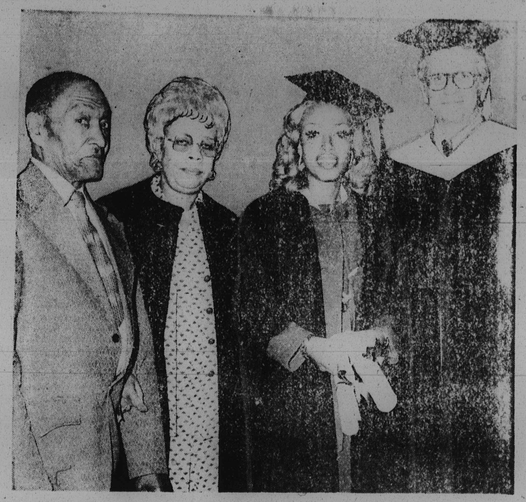

OUTSTANDING GRAD was Miss Rosetta Stith who received two master's of education degrees. Her parents (left) are Mr. and Mrs. Elijah Stith. Right is Dr. Gilbert Schiffmay.

PROUD MOTHER was Mrs. Christine Keno shown with her daughter, Miss Grenda Keno.

MR. AND MRS. Edward Adams and son, Eddie Jr. and Mrs. Grace Adams, mother, were all excited about his diploma.

BALTIMORE POLICE OFFICER Vernion May and daughter, Kimberly, were on hand to see Mrs. May, wife and mother graduate. Also delighted was her mother, Mrs. Charles Harper.

MR. AND MRS. John Woodland got together after she officially received her degree.

MASTER'S DEGREES were earned by George S. Ricks and Mrs. Frances Woods Peck, daughter of Mrs. Frances Murphy, AFRO publisher.

NEW BREED of graduates, walking in line without caps and gowns, according to their wishes, are Albert Robinson and Carroll Phillips. Graduate behind them wore a T-shirt under his gown.

AAC library summer happenings

Cool off and get acquainted with many good programs being offered in the libraries this summer. There will be several pet shows and a variety of craft programs throughout the system.

Kids will be making key chains, kites, vases, terrariums — and how about some crazy pasta sculpting?

Two branches will be offering craft programs specifically designed for teenagers.

The Homemakers Club of Odenton will give instructions in knitting and crocheting for the third consecutive summer. At North County it will be origami, making puppets, collages, posters and prints.

Some story hours will be held outdoors during the summer months. Bedtime stories (in pajamas) will be scheduled in the evening for a windup of the day for little ones at Linthicum.

YoYo's are the "in" thing and all ages can be seen swinging them as they walk down the street. In response to this popular activity Brooklyn will be hosting a Yo-Yo contest. Sparky and the Annapolis Fire Department will be visiting one of the branches — fire truck, ambulance and all.

These, and many other delights await the kids — The popular Read-Aloud groups, clubs, hobbies, puppets, puppet workshops, nature study — Each branch has something secial to offer. Registration is required in some, so call the branch near you.

There's plenty for adults, too. So come in, cool off and get acquainted with the many services — all free — For more information call 263-2653.