

# Murder Most Foul

Athenaeum Open Meeting - May 4, 2006  
Presenters - William Turner and Mark Schweizer

## Cast

William Turner (Historian)  
Mark Schweizer (writer of detective fiction -  
always seen clattering away at an old typewriter)

Judge Lazarus Cornpone .... George Byars (Pres.-Athenaeum)  
Clarabell Cornpone ..... Liz Schweizer  
Judge Obadiah Ornnason ..... Ron Buck  
Buttercup Ornnason ..... Lindsey Gilkey  
Senator H.R. Willis ..... Fred May  
Rich Singleton ..... Chris Gilkey  
Lauralei Singleton ..... Sarah Cavanah  
Kilroy Walgreen ..... Duncan Cavanah  
Jake Lakota ..... Chris Schweizer

## Dress

Clarabell Cornpone - cigarette, red scarf  
Judge Obidiah Ornnason - hat, red tie, suit  
Buttercup Ornnason - hat  
Senator H.R. Willis - suit, hat,  
Rich Singleton - red tie, hat, suit  
Lauralei Singleton - hat  
Kilroy Walgreen - hat, shirt, black tie  
Jake Lakota - hat, cigar, trench coat

**FINAL DRAFT**

## The Game is Afoot

William: This is a story based in fact. Embellished? Of course...but the truth is out there. And it's your job this evening to discover the truth. All the people you will meet tonight were members (or wives of members) in the Athenaeum Society. The names, dates and locations have been changed because the people involved have family members still living in town, but rest assured, like any small town, Hoptown, Kentucky has its share of dirty little secrets.

Mark: It was the Spring of 1992 and the occasion was Clarabell Cornpone's 96th birthday party. As she leaned over to blow out the candles on her cake and thought back on her long, long life, the children she'd given birth to, the man she had married and then sadly buried, she thought to herself, well no matter what - at least I've grown old with dignity - then the nursing home attendant pointed out that her breasts were dipping in the trifle bowl again.

She smiled and thought back - not for the first time, but perhaps the last - on her husband, Judge Lazarus Cornpone.

William: Judge Lazarus Cornpone was a descendant of the illustrious Cornpones, one of whom - Jethro - served in the Revolutionary War. The judge was born in Hoptown in 1887, the son of an attorney Eaton Mie Cornpone, who was noted for his keen wit and natural ability, whatever that means. Judge Cornpone, so called for his service as city judge, attended North College and graduated from Circle College with a degree in law. In 1916 when Poncho Villa brought his troubles from Mexico, the judge was dispatched to the Texas border and quelled the uprising in no time flat. Upon his return to Hoptown he married Clarabell Bovine, the daughter of an illustrious city commissioner. They had two children, as far as we know. The judge became a local celebrity by serving as announcer on the news radio station WTIF. For a number of years his classic Sunday school lessons were broadcast over the airwaves.

It was in January of 1936, a cold month by all accounts - when many residents of Hoptown went to their mailboxes and opened the most bizarre letter they'd ever received or ever would receive. In this fantastic missive was the strangest tale ever told by a dying man.

He writes "On the 3rd day of July, I slipped in a bathtub while taking a shower bath at the Kentucky Hotel, in Louisville, Kentucky. Automatically, I caught at the rubber curtain about the tub, but it failed to hold and I fell striking the left side of my back with great force."

He went on to say that the doctor had decided that it was his sacro-iliac joint that was causing his continued discomfort. Within a few months, he was dead. But although it was 1936 and people didn't speak aloud of such things, the whisperers were having a field day. Most of the town knew what happened despite the rambling letter describing his injury and hospital stay (complete with vivid descriptions of bizarre garden-hose enemas, proctoscopic piping, hand-pumps and other atrocities perpetrated on him by the medical staff). Judge Cornpone had been shot. The bullet had gone through his kidney, turned south and had lodged itself next to the poor judge's prostate. It turned out to be a fatal shot. But no one was talking. No one was arrested. There was no trial. It was a mystery worthy of a hard-boiled detective novel.

Mark:

It was a dark and stormy night; dark, because the sun had just set like a giant flaming hen squatting upon her unkempt nest that was the gritty suburban streets of Hoptown; stormy, because the weather had rolled in like an angry fat man driving his Rascal into a Ryan's Steak House and then finding out that the "all you can eat" dessert bar had an out-of-order frozen yogurt machine. Suddenly, a shot rang out, as shots are want to do. No, I decided. Not a shot. Just the backfire of a too old car with bad gas, a problem that, after supper here at the Holiday Inn, I could easily identify with.

I sat in my chair, my feet up on the desk, the rain from my shoes dripping onto the blotter, mixing with the dried ink and swirling into what looked like the "naked trapeze girl with a top hat" on the Rorschach test--a test which, at this point in time, I'm not sure I could have passed with a C minus. I had a drink. Then another. If I had put away the second the way I had the first, I probably wouldn't have heard the rap on the door. "C'mon in," I grumbled. It had been a bad day.

She came in like a centipede with 98 missing legs - then winked and gave me a smile cute enough to shoot, stuff and hang over the fireplace. Attractive? Sure. But though I wasn't interested, a sawbuck is a sawbuck and that's what it'd cost her to bend my ear. I lit up a cigar in anticipation.

Clarabell: I'm Clarabell.

Mark: She had a hungry look, the kind you get from not eating for a few days.

Clarabell: It's my husband. I think he's having an affair.

Mark: She snapped her gum like it was punctuation--a misplaced period at the beginning of a sentence or perhaps a colon, although a colon is generally used after a complete statement in order to introduce one or more directly related ideas, such as a series of directions, a list, or a quotation or other comment illustrating or explaining the statement, so it was more like a period.

Jake: You want I should look into it? You might not like what I find out.

Clarabell: Yeah. I really need to know. If he's cheating on me, I just might kill him. I have a gun, you know. *[pulls a gun out of her purse]*

Jake: Put that thing away!

Clarabell: If he IS cheating, he'll be sorry *[stand there for the biography]*

William: Clarabell Bovine Cornpone, long-suffering wife of the judge and Buttercup's best friend, was born in Hoptown the year Hotel Latham was built. Her father - Josiah J. Bovine - was the town slop collector; hence she really married up, that is, unless she happened to fall in a barrel. Clarabell attended Hawkinsmith Grammar School and matriculated at Clay Street High School, located on Walnut Street. She was active in the Ladies Aide Society and was the ramrod of the local Republican Women. Clarabell passed from this life at the age of ninety-eight. Clarabell was always tolerant of her husband's wandering eye, but in the winter of 1936, it was obvious to everyone in town that Judge Cornpone was having an affair.

Mark: Clarabell had an hourglass figure with an extra twenty minutes thrown in for good measure. She walked toward her husband, her dress billowing in the wind -- not a calm and predictable billows like the sea, but more like the billowing of a mildewed shower curtain in a cheap motel where you have to dance around to avoid touching it while trying to rinse off the soap. She puckered up like Melanie Griffith on Free Collagen Day at the Beverly Hills Nip-'n-Tuck.

Clarabell: [To George --who stands up] We've been married for ten years, you rat! I can't believe you were sleeping with my best friend.

*[Shoots him and exits. George falls down again.]*



to know who did it. I walked down the street, my hat pulled low, my collar pulled high, my hands stuffed into the pockets of my trench, and headed for Latham's. I had to think. Something was gnawing at my brain; gnawing like one of those tiny carpet beetles that crawls inside your ear when you're asleep and lays a hundred thousand eggs and when they hatch, you decide to become a TV Evangelist--it was like that, but with less bad singing.

My mind wandered back to how it all started. I was walking the streets, streets that exuded a smell that was stale--stale as day-old flop sweat on a stool pigeon. I had a good nose, a strong Roman nose, a nose that knows, and noses certainly ran in my family - especially when walking the streets. Other families could see trouble coming. Our family smelled.

I needed answers and I needed them pronto. A little bird told me I smelled a rat, and when I smell a rat, there's usually a red herring around. Also rats.

*[Enter Rich again]*

Jake: You Rich Singleton?

Rich: Who wants to know?

Jake: Listen, Bub. You can talk to me or we can take it downtown.

Rich: Who do you think you're talking to? I'm a lawyer. I've got nothing to say to you. *[starts to walk off]*

Jake: I went by your house last night. There wasn't nobody home. I know you were in Louisville. I guess you wouldn't mind if I ask your wife where she was.

Rich: You stay away from her.

Jake: Funny thing. Last night, I saw her truck outside Judge Cornpone's office. But I suppose you could call it a "plumbing emergency."

Rich: That's about enough out of you.

*[slugs Jake - who rubs his jaw thoughtfully]*

Mark: I ran my hand over my jaw. Yeah. He hit like a girl or maybe a history teacher and I could take a punch like the homecoming queen at the Sub-Deb Christmas party. I narrowed my eyes and gave him a half-smile like one of those cats who looks as though it knows something, but in reality is just a dumb animal with the brain the size of a large walnut -- the smile, most probably a little gas from eating some dead lizard--the knowing look, a product of an over anthropomorphizing culture.

Rich: *[to George]*  
Judge, I believe you've been sleeping with my wife!

George: Not again.  
*Rich shoots George like at the beginning.*  
*George falls over again and Rich leaves.*

William: The Hoptown bar has among its members both past and present some outstanding attorneys. However, listed at the bottom of such list would be Rich Singleton. He never aspired for public office, thus never served. He never appeared in a courtroom; in fact, it is not known if he ever hung up his shingle. Rich was birthed the year the dastardly Spaniards blew up The Maine. His total education consisted of three years at Beverly Academy with his principal job: that of cleaning out the outhouse. In time, fate led him to Lauralei Sidebottom, Hoptown's only female plumber and a beautiful young woman who had more intelligence in a split second than he had in his entire life. It is obvious that he brought to the marriage that which only a special kind of woman would enjoy.

Mark: It was a Friday--not a T.G.I.F. Friday where you don't get anything done because you're too excited about the opening of fishing season and you've got a new rod from Orvis sitting on the davenport, three fresh-tied flies, and a tub of night crawlers wriggly enough to be lawyers running for public office--but rather that kind of Friday that you dread to see come to an end, knowing that your sister-in-law has four tickets to the UHA Spring Musical and one of them has your name written all over it.



HINT BELL RINGS

Buttercup: Now, honey. I know you don't like to go out on a Saturday night, but we've been invited over for supper and a nice evening. And Clarabell is my best friend. [straightens up his collar] Why aren't you wearing your good suit?

Ornnason: It's at the cleaners. I spilled some wine on it last Sunday during communion. Listen, I don't much care for Judge Cornpone. He has a reputation for being a little too forward with the ladies. I don't like the way he looks at you.

Buttercup: I'm sure that's just idle talk by jealous rivals. You know there's speculation of him running for the Senate?

Ornnason: Yes, I heard that as well. He'll have to go up against Senator Willis, though. I don't know how he could beat him.

Buttercup: Maybe he could find a way. Wouldn't that be something? Clarabell - a senator's wife.



HINT BELL RINGS

Mark: That would be something indeed. Our current Senator didn't have a wife. In fact, it was whispered by more than a few that he was light in his loafers - that he had quite a bit of bounce in his brogans, some skip in his saddle-oxfords, a little twirl in his tapshoes and preferred to, as some might so delicately put it, "dance at the other end of the ballroom."

I sat in my office, looking out the window, watching the sun disappear behind the city skyline like a giant orange-yellow yolk being slowly consumed by a determined egg-sucking weasel. Nothing made sense. Finding the killer was going to be about as easy as Jonah finding that white whale and I was as tired as a Streisand arrangement.

William: Judge Obnoxious Obadiah Ornnason, the illustrious judge in this scenario and a native of Smellytown, passed from this life in 1964 at the age of four score and two. He graduated from Hoptown High School and from Houseless College. He was admitted to the bar as World War I broke out. The U.S. Marines took him in during the Great War, and he was discharged as a Corporal. The offices of city prosecutor, county attorney, city attorney, and county judge honored his brilliance. During the Roaring Twenties he hooked up through marriage with Miss Buttercup Hooligan whose father was pastor of the New Providence Church of Christ. The pastor did not approve of his son-in-law, because a short time before Obadiah tied the knot with young Buttercup, the love-stuck lawyer delivered an expostulation on the value and assets of being ungodly. Needless to say, the old minister blew a circuit.

Mark: She swayed delightfully up to the judge like a Polynesian palm tree on a couple of good-looking stumps, her Miss-Middle-America walk defined by her high-heels, a little grace, a lot of practice, and the taffeta clinging to her curves like plastic wrap and rustling like a cockroach in a sugar-bowl.

Buttercup: Judge...

Mark: ...she said in a voice so husky that it could have pulled a dogsled.

Buttercup: Judge. Why did you do it? Why did you tell Clarabell about us? Now I'm afraid my marriage is over. [*shoots George again*]

## TIME TO OPEN CLUES

William: Well, my friends, the groundwork has been laid. Not all of our suspects have been introduced, but you have their pictures and their descriptions on your table. And more - much more - will be revealed in the drama yet to come. Now it is time for you to do some sleuthing on your own. Time to use those magnificent brains which have become the hallmark of the Athenaeum Society. DON'T OPEN THESE YET! but in the folder on your table, you'll find five clues. Yes, they have to be deciphered, but you didn't think you'd get away without thinking this evening, did you? Each table has the same clues, so guard them carefully. When you've assembled these clues as well as the clues from the mystery unfolding before you, the murderer will be revealed.

Remember - there are even more clues pointing to the killer in the next Act of our drama - but when your table thinks it has the answer, fill out your "Accusation Card" and bring it to the secretary. He'll put the time on your answer. The first correct answer wins...but there's more. When you fill out your "Accusation Card", also put the answers to the clue-puzzles - if you can manage them. Each correct answer is worth 5 minutes of bonus time. You may turn in your Accusation Cards anytime. Don't be shy. We'll just keep right on going.

And, of course, fabulous prizes will be awarded upon the completion of the mystery. We'll give you 15 minutes to complete the puzzles in the envelope, assemble the clues you can, and get ready for Part 2! Ready? Open your envelopes!

[15 minute break for unscrambling]

## Part 2

Bob:

It's time to bring our meeting back to order. I'm sure you all have a good idea who the murderer is.

Lauralei:

Judge, I can't believe you're two-timing me with another woman. And it's not even your wife!

*[shoots George]*

Mark:

Yes, Judge Cornpone was as dead as that dead duck people are always talking about -- you know, the lame one that tried to cross the road - and this was going to be the biggest frame-up since the Energizer Bunny was charged with battery. I was looking for suspects and I saw a bunch of them standing on the courthouse steps. I moved in like a yuppie into Deepwood -- or maybe into loft apartments on Main Street; not one of those cheap, city-built lofts in Paducah converted from old run-down warehouses, but nice ones designed by lesbian architects with hyphenated last names.

*[Enter Jake, Kilroy, Rich and Senator Willis]*

Jake:

Hello, boys. I guess you're wondering why I asked you all here this evening.

Kilroy:

Hey. I know you. You're that private eye.

Jake:

Jake Lakota. I've got a couple of questions.

Rich:

I told you before, I'm not talking to a gumshoe.

Jake:

Oh, you'll talk all right, or I'll go straight to the feds. Maybe they'd like to know about you and Senator Willis running that poker game from the back of Kilroy's drugstore.

Senator:

Now let's not get ahead of ourselves, Jake. I'm sure we can come to an understanding.

Jake:

Hey, as far as I'm concerned, it's a victimless crime. But, of course, the tax-man might want to know why he wasn't

informed. And, of course, he'll be very interested in you as well, Kilroy. There's a lot of drugs going out of your store. Drugs that aren't on no perscription pad.

Kilroy: Oh man! I told you this would happen!

Rich: Shut up, you idiot.

Senator: So Jake, how can we help you?

Jake: I'm just looking for some information.

Mark: Senator Willis was as slick as a broken egg on a linoleum floor and as polished as a Granny Smith apple that had been spit on and rubbed to a gleaming finish on the tail of a very clean shirt. I could tell he was scared. As scared as a bad writer in a room full of English Majors.

Jake: Did any of you boys you get the letter?

Kilroy: What letter?

Jake: You know what letter. Cornpone's letter! Don't act smart with me!

Rich: Yeah, we got the letter. Weirdest thing I ever read.

Senator: I think he was trying to be funny. But everybody knew what happened. He was shot.

Kilroy: Sure took a long time for him to die.

Rich: Maybe the killer didn't have the guts to finish him off. Maybe he was just sendin' him a message.

Senator: Oh, I think he got the message all right.

Jake: Wait a minute. You guys know who did it?



HINT BELL RINGS

Rich: 'Course we do. Everybody does. You need a hint, flatfoot? You'll never catch the killer puffing on that cheroot. The killer don't smoke.

William: The last character in this presentation is Kilroy Walgreen, the town's crafty druggist, well in over his head. Born in Hoptown in 1887, eleventh of twelve children of a carriage and wagon maker, he suffered a bout with smallpox before graduation from Liberty Street School. Studying pharmacy by correspondence, he worked at Liggins Drug Store and later became a long-time employee at Papers Drug Store. Married at twenty-three on the front steps of Bethel Male College to Lena Johnson, Walgreen made and sold homemade ice cream. He operated a soda fountain and, finally, in a drugstore he made a real name for himself by developing a cough syrup--Golden Pyrex of the Pine--and a lip salve guaranteed to wither cold sores.

*[Kilroy walks up to George]*

Kilroy: Listen, Judge. I've done some bad stuff in my life and I know you can have my license pulled, but you gotta stop blackmailing me! I can't keep giving you morphine from the pharmacy. It's too much. They'll find out and I'm the one that'll go to jail. I'm bound to get caught!

*[pulls out gun and shoots George]*

Mark: How much graft does it take to become a State Senator in Western Kentucky in 1936? Answer: How much you got? And once a political supporter becomes a liability, what then? I walked down to the corner and turned right, then right again, left, then right, right, straight, right, straight and a quick left. The wind slapped me in the mug like a petulant floozy. Then it threw its drink in my face, kissed me hard on the mouth, slapped me again, kissed me once more, showed me a good time, gave me the clap, stole my wallet and banged open the door of the restaurant just as I walked up -- It was one heck of a wind and I oughta know. I saw 'em - all three of them - sitting like birds on a wire, or chickens on stoop, or maybe pigeons on a stool. I took the next booth and blended in like a midget-nun at a penguin convention.

Senator: Look, you two. Cornpone knows about this whole set-up. He's got to be kept quiet.

Rich: The poker game? It's no big deal. Everybody does it.



Senator: Not just the poker game. The poker game is just the beginning. The train is making daily stops through Hoptown going back and forth to Chicago. We'll be moving so much cash through this town, you won't believe it. I didn't go to all the trouble to get that railroad money approved for nothing!

Lauralei: So what's the deal with Judge Cornpone?

Senator: He knows too much. Look. There are bound to be some minor arrests and we need a friendly judge. I tried to cut him in - talk sense to him - but he's decided to take the high road. I'll do what I need to do.

Mark: His voice was wheezing like a broken accordion in a Lutheran nursing home dance band. I needed to think, but it was a Thursday night and, as the rain bounced off my hat with a plink-plink like someone playing a Bach invention on a three-note piano gone flat, I remembered the Athenaeum Society meeting and knew there'd be no thinking - not for a while anyway.

William: In the annals of Christian County history, no individual has dared approach the heights of sleazy, nefarious, insufferable magnitude of Senator H.R. Willis. The Senator was hatched at Durgin, just over the ridge from Humdurgan the year that Booth was shot in a barn. He mastered eight grades, passed the state bar exam with a dozen mint juleps, and completed his legal education out behind a two-holer at Gobblers Knob. Never having married, he went to the Kentucky State Senate convinced that the high salary would be ample means of support for his gambling habit. As a member of the Senate this great contribution from the county of Christian became noted for his talent of taking and winning support from both sides of every issue, talking out of all three sides of his mouth at the same time. Thus he was dubbed the honorable title of Senator "Bothsides" Willis.

Know the answer yet? Need one more clue? Here's a free one. There's a clue taped under one of the chairs at your table. Feel free to take a minute to find it.

Senator: *[To George]* Hey Judge! You should learn to keep your big mouth shut! *[shoots George - again]*

Mark:

I came to and looked around the banquet room. The Athenaeum meeting was over and it went just about as usual. I peeled my body off the alcohol-soaked carpet, spat the cigarette butts out of my mouth, licked my lips with a tongue that tasted like a rat that had been lightly sauteed in lighter fluid, and after struggling to my feet, decided that the next time Howard Willen challenged me to an vodka-drinking contest, I wouldn't wear suede shoes.

William:

Who had a motive? Just about everyone. Judge Cornpone was sleeping with Buttercup Ornnason and had apparently confessed the deed to Clarabell. He'd also danced the "Tango D'Amore" with Lauralei Singleton - but Rich Singleton and Senator Willis had another motive. As partners in a racketeering venture, one, or both of them needed to silence the judge.

Kilroy was being blackmailed by Judge Cornpone to provide him with morphine but, as you might suppose, the judge had other addictions as well.

Is that everyone? Not quite.

Ornnason: Judge Cornpone! You sir, are a blackguard and a reprobate!

I believe you are having an illicit affair with my wife.

*[shoots George]*

William:

Now That's everyone. Only one thing is sure. Lazarus Cornpone was shot and no one was ever held accountable. Who did it? The clues are all out there - either presented to you or included in the envelopes. You now have ten minutes to think about your clues and consider your decision. Remember - when your table has come up with the answer - if you haven't already - bring it up to the secretary and he'll put the time on it for you. We'll be back in ten minutes with the solution to our mystery.

Bob Cope:

We'll take a 10 minute consideration period. And you can turn in your solutions.

## Part 3 - The Mystery Solved

Bob Cope:

[Call the meeting back to order]. If you haven't turned in your solutions to the murder, now is the time.

William:

The time has come, ladies and gentlemen, to reveal the actual facts in the case and expose, after these sixty long years, the killer of Judge Cornpone.

In actual fact, although we've changed the names and the dates, Judge Cornpone was shot just once. As we mentioned before, the bullet entered his kidney, turned in a southerly direction, and entered the judge's prostate region. The judge was admitted to the hospital, not once, but twice within the next six-months. We don't know if a medical operation was performed. We DO know that after the judge's death, there was no autopsy. The immediate cause of death signed by the coroner on the death certificate reads:

*Carcinoma of left kidney and lower genital and urinary tracts - metastasized to glands of wall and duct.*

The most amazing facet of this story is the letter. Although most of the town was aware of what had transpired, Judge Cornpone - perhaps in some desperate attempt to save what was left of his reputation, composed a 1000 word letter describing his fall in a bathtub at the Kentucky Hotel in Louisville and his subsequent injury and treatment.

This letter went out to some of the most prominent citizens in Hoptown and I have numerous copies of it. It's clear that the judge was trying to be funny in this letter while still explaining his injury away.

The letter goes into great and graphic detail - for five and a half pages to be exact - on the judge's hospital experience concerning certain practices relative to the invasion of his lower GI tract. Practices which - even in 1936 - would seem to be a bit far-fetched. He describes garden hoses, ladders, nurses chortling with glee, doctors in miner's caps, two-inch iron pipes, forty-watt light bulbs, and a specialist who had made his way through medical school working in a large garage fixing defective exhaust pipes.

The letter finishes thusly:

*However, out of all this welter of sickness and the confusion incident to my trouble, a brilliant star has arisen, to cheer and comfort. I have discovered people have hearts of gold. I have always believed that people were good, thoughtful and kind, and now I know it. I have been showered with every attention and thoughtful consideration. Gifts*

have poured in to make me comfortable. My sick room has been a bower of flowers. The sweetness of their perfume has cheered and blessed me, but I have been saddened by it, too. When I think of the opportunities I have wasted to bring a little sunshine and happiness into the life of my fellowman.

All in all it has been an unusual and wonderful experience. But I confess I have had enough of it. You will have to excuse the general letter but I have not yet acquired strength enough to write individually. With much love to you and trusting to see you before long when I am able to return to my business, I beg to remain,

Yours very truly,

Judge Obadiah Cornpone

Here ends the letter.

Mark: I had the all clues and I knew the answer. It was as obvious as a really fast turtle in a regular turtle race.

Clarabell: So who did it? You solve the case yet.

Mark: I had taken up with Clarabell and her old man hadn't even been in the ground for a week. What could I say? She was a dame with a come-hither look and gams till Advent. I looked out the window. It was still a dark and stormy night--actually not all that dark, but more dusky or maybe cloudy, and to say "stormy" may be overstating things a bit, although the sidewalks were still wettish and smelled of ozone, and, truth be told, characterizing the time as night is a stretch as it was more in the late, late afternoon because I think Oprah was still on. I'd called them all to Latham's -- all the suspects that is -- and I expected trouble. Suddenly the door of the bar banged open and Senator Willis strode in like a storm-trooper in a light drizzle.

Senator: Freeze!

Mark: ...he yelled, dropping into his shooting stance and brandishing a heater the size of a loaf of bread--not white bread, sliced and packaged in a see-through plastic bag and tasting vaguely like paste; but rather, one of those loafs of dark rye, or maybe pumpernickel, oblong in shape and slightly smaller, although infinitely heavier than the white, complete with caraway seeds that provided a delightful texture as well as a mélange of flavors when your teeth happened to crunch down on one by accident, or maybe on purpose, and surprised you (maybe in the good kind of way) by their unexpected presence.

Ornnason: YOU freeze!

Mark: called Judge Ornnason, his dainty, judicial hand clutching a snub-nosed .38.

Rich: "Freeze!"

Mark: ...commanded Rich, leaping out of the walk-in freezer, a revolver in his shivering hand and Lauralei in tow; she, at least, obeying his command, seeing as her lips were now a bluish color and she couldn't blink.

Buttercup: You ALL freeze!

Mark: ...barked Buttercup, suddenly popping up from behind the bar like a perfectly toasted English muffin and sweeping her sawed-off shotgun across the counter like a butter knife ready to spread raspberry death across the open-faced sandwich that was the Latham Bar and Grill.

Kilroy: "Everybody freeze!"

Mark: ...shouted Kilroy, turning down the thermostat to thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit because thirty-two degrees Celsius would really have felt more like early summer in the Catskills.

Jake: Is that everyone?

Mark: ...I asked, lighting a stogy and giving it a puff.

William: From his Obituary: Judge Lazarus Cornpone, 45 years old, a Hoptown attorney died early this afternoon at his home on Barrow Street after an illness of several months. He was brought home nearly two weeks ago after treatment in hospitals in Russelville and Louisville failed to improve his condition.

His funeral will be Sunday at 3:00 PM. Burial will take place at Hopewell Cemetery. Services are to be conducted by I.M. Wright, pastor of Third Baptist Church.

Judge Cornpone's courtroom speeches, like his after dinner speeches, had become legend in the community. He served as

city judge from 1924 to 1932 and was a recognized leader of the Republican Party.

He was a Second Lt. of the National Guard during the border trouble with Mexico in 1916 and entered the service with the outbreak of the World War a year later. He was promoted to Captain in the infantry, serving with the 35th and 68th companies of the second division. He remained overseas until April 1919 and was one of the original group who organized the American Legion in Paris.

Judge Cornpone was an active member of Third Baptist Church and the Atheneum Society. His Sunday School lessons were heard by thousands of listeners during the days of the radio station WTIF.

Mark: I'd let them dangle long enough. It was time to spill the beans. The clues were all there and I was going to pull them together like a two cousins in a Kentucky hay loft.

Jake: Listen up. I know who did it.

Kilroy: We don't want any trouble. We'll give you two grand to keep quiet.

Mark: I had no problem with that. Two grand would buy a lot of stogies and I never liked Judge Cornpone anyway.

Lauralei: But how did you know who did it?

Mark: It was crystal clear. As clear as one of those windows in a Windex commercial where the Lauralei, who might have played the housewife, singing and dancing her way to a spotless shine, neither sang nor danced, but instead proded me with poking questions I was only too happy to answer.

Lauralei: Huh?

Mark: There were twelve important clues. Some from the puzzles - some from the play. Here they are - in no particular order.

The killer sleeps on a foam pillow.

Judge Ornnason was drinking wine during communion.

Kilroy is a recovering alcoholic.

The killer is married to a Baptist.

Lauralei raises chickens.

The killer is wearing a hat.

Mrs. Ornnason collects artificial limbs.

Rich Singleton often has cocktails with the killer.

Senator Willis is gay.

A person who is not the killer is wearing a red tie.

The killer doesn't smoke — AND

The killer suffers from acrotomophilia.

Clarabell: Acrotomophilia? What the heck is that?

Jake: An amputee fetish.

Clarabell: Yikes! But who did it?

Mark: It's simple. The killer sleeps on a foam pillow? Why? - allergic to feathers. If Lauralei raise chickens, she's not allergic to feathers and probably neither is her husband, Rich. It wasn't them. Rich Singleton often has cocktails with the killer. Kilroy is a recovering alcoholic - so it's not him. Also Rich has cocktails in public - he's NOT Baptist, so it's not Lauralei - but we've already ruled her out anyway. The red tie excludes one of these - Clarabell, Judge Ornnason, Rich Singleton - but not all. The lack-of-a-hat and the cigarette excludes Clarabell. Judge Ornnason spilled wine on his suit at communion - he's definitely NOT a Baptist and the killer is married to one. So it's not Buttercup. The cigar excludes Jake.

At this point the only two it could be is Senator Willis or Judge Ornnason.

If you knew what acrotomophilia was, you'd know that since Mrs. Ornnason collected artificial limbs, it was probably one of them.

That and the fact that Senator Willis is gay and therefore not married to a Baptist - only leaves one.

*[Everyone looks at Judge Ornnason]*

William: Yes, it's true. The two couples - the Cornpone's and the Ornnasons - were close friends, so close in fact that the city judge began to probe the floral scent of the county judge's lily-pad. All went well until Judge Ornnason came home early one night in a high state of inebriation, only to discover Judge Cornpone exploring said lily-pad from a horizontal position.



When this rather unique discovery was made, Judge Ornnason drew, from his pocket, a loaded member, otherwise known as a pistol, and proceeded therefore to release, to discharge, and to expose the contents of said member.

The contents of said member upon release proceeded to enter the body of the judge and must have created quite a shock, as men of his stature are not accustomed to experiencing.

The wounded judge was admitted to the hospital in due time and six months later went to his reward where all good Sunday School teachers go when they are caught in bed with another man's wife and thereby receive a puncture of their persons.

Mark: It was another case solved. No one went to jail, but I got my two large. I'd had worse days. And this was the end of the Unsolved Murder of 1936.

*The End*

George: → We will take our break and then resume our meeting with the comments, rebuttals and the awarding of prizes.

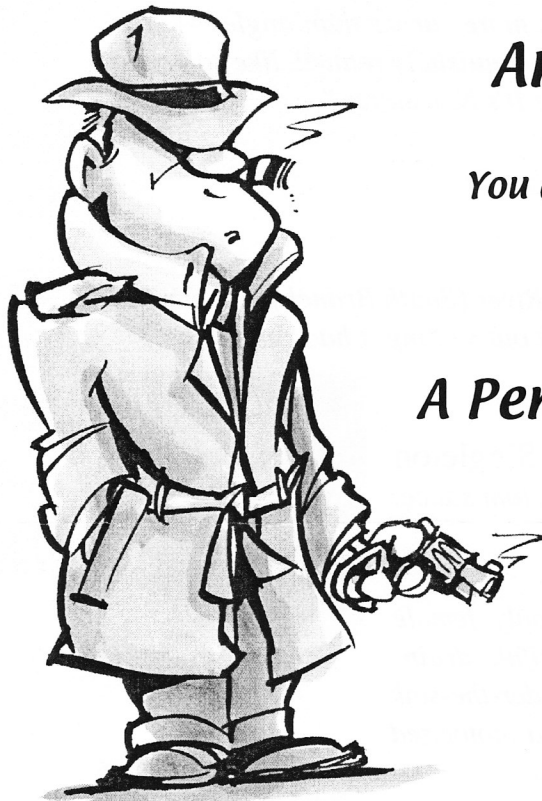
***A lot of you are thinking - what could be more fun than listening to two academic papers during the Athenaeum Society Open Meeting?***

- *A root canal?*
- *A public reading of Longfellow's "Hiawatha?"*
- *A sermon that ends "and now I'd like to conclude with these fourteen points from the book of Leviticus?"*

***We'll tell you what...***

## ***A Murder Mystery Dinner!***

***presented by Dr. William T. Turner, BA, MA, PhD, SCI  
and Dr. Mark Schweizer, BM, MM, DMA, FICCM***



***An evening of roscoes, twists,  
and red herrings.***

***You discover the clues! You figure out the puzzles!  
You solve the murder!***

***What to Bring:  
A Pencil. Your gigantesous brain pans.  
You'll need them.***

***Murder Most Foul  
The Unsolved Hopkinsville  
Murder of 1936***

***It's Almost ~~Historical!~~ Hysterical!***

***May 4th – 6:30 pm – Send in your reservations soon.***

***... the biggest frame-up since the Energizer Bunny was charged with battery.***

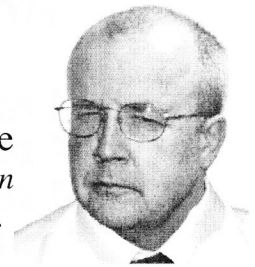
# Murder Most Foul

Athenaeum Open Meeting

## The Suspects

Judge Lazarus Cornpone

*The city judge with an eye for the ladies and a predilection for lying like the Bill Clinton Memorial Presidential Rug.*



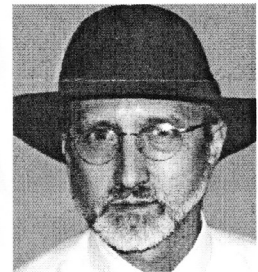
Clarabell Cornpone

*Long-suffering wife of the city judge. A real looker whose options were as thin as a tapeworm on Ash Wednesday.*



Judge Obadiah Ornnason

*The county judge - stern and flinty as a bottle of Brevard Winery Chablis*



Buttercup Ornnason

*Judge Ornnason's wife. A red-head with more curves than angles — the dishy organist at First Baptist Church — exquisitely refined, like someone who can tell butter from "I Can't Believe It's Not Butter."*



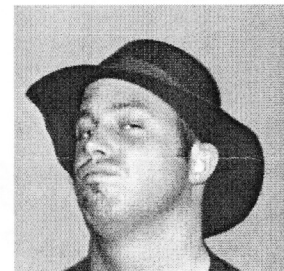
Senator H.R. Willis

*A public official as crooked as the Little River (South Branch) with a mind like a steel trap — one that had been left out so long it had rusted shut.*



Rich Singleton

*A lawyer - slimey as pearl onions in clam sauce.*



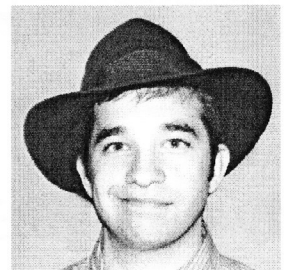
Lauralei Singleton

*Rich Singleton's wife and Hoptown's only female plumber — a dame with long, beautiful, drain-clogging hair and more curves than an under-the-sink water trap. She moves with the ease of a motorized toilet snake through a four-inch sewer line.*



Kilroy Walgreen

*The town apothecary. A man whose morals sway like a dandelion in the gentle breeze or an oscillating electric fan set on medium.*



Jake Lakota

*A hard-boiled private eye with a hat, a stogy and something to prove.*

