

BOMB ATTACK IN DARKNESS

Automobile Drives Up to Lawler House, Drops Explosive and Escapes

HOUSE BURSTS INTO FLAMES

Mr. Lawler Saves His Wife at Great Risk—Child Rescued by Neighbors.

SEE REVENGE AS MOTIVE

Dynamiters, Convicted by Mr. Lawler Several Years Ago, Believed to Have Set Bombs.

Special to The New York Times.

LOS ANGELES, Cal., Aug. 3.—The home of Oscar Lawler, former Assistant United States Attorney General, and former United States District Attorney for Southern California, was destroyed in revenge early this morning by two bombs. Mr. Lawler, and his wife and their five-year-old son were seriously burned in the fire which followed. Mr. Lawler may not recover.

The person or persons who committed the crime are believed to have driven up in front of the house in an automobile, placed the bombs, and fled. The explosion followed immediately.

The house burst into flames with Mr. Lawler, his wife and one child trapped within. William Lacy, an iron master, and Ed Pulford, who were driving past the house, seized a ladder and rescued Oscar Lawler, Jr., 5 years old.

Mr. Lawler dragged his wife to a window and in the midst of flames lowered her from an upper story to an awning over a window on the ground floor after a vain attempt to save his young son, and, badly burned, he himself leaped to the ground.

Revenge on the part of an ex-convict, a Red terrorist sent to the penitentiary in connection with industrial warfare in the Middle West some years ago, is believed to be the motive for the explosion.

The name of this ex-convict has been supplied to the police and a nation-wide search by State, county, city, and Federal officers is in progress in the hope of unearthing every clew that may give further information on this phase of the crime.

In less than three hours after the two explosions, United States Attorney J. Robert O'Connor, District Attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine, Agent of the Department of Justice Keep, and Chief of Police George K. Home and their deputies started the investigation that uncovered the first real clues.

Find Fragments of Bombs.

The most important of these was the discovery of the fragments of the bombs used, together with the remnants of the two gasoline tanks which furnished the uncontrollable flames. These vital bits of evidence were found after every detective in the city had been detailed by Chief Home to the task of searching the vicinity of the grounds and furnished the authorities with the first definite information about the nature of the infernal machines used.

The bombs, according to the experts that made the primary investigation, were charged with nitroglycerine. They were made of pieces of four-inch steel pipe, six inches long, threaded on both ends, standard thread, with a pipe cap screwed on at each end. The explosive was fired by detonating caps sunk into the caps.

The bombs were placed directly under the sleeping porch where Mr. and Mrs. Lawler were sleeping. The force of the detonation did not do much damage to the house, but the gasoline hurled into every part of the house turned the entire structure into an inferno in less than two minutes.

Aside from establishing the probable motive and the exact type of the bombs used, the first day's investigation brought out these points:

1. That two, or probably three, men were used in the plot.
2. That the time of the explosion was a few minutes after 2:30 in the morning.
3. That the assassin or group of terrorists used an automobile in their escape from the vicinity, and that the crime was planned several days ago, and probably postponed for a better opportunity to carry out the destruction.

Witnesses of the explosion and those who reported seeing and hearing the man or men just before and after the explosions differ in many respects, and the police announce that many of the points at the present time believed to have a bearing on the case may have to be dismissed later on.

The stories of the neighbors, who rushed to the rescue work and succeeded in saving the lives of Oscar Lawler, Jr., 5 years old, and his nurse, Miss Bessie Mills, after Mr. and Mrs. Lawler were trapped in the bedroom on the second floor, furnished a dramatic account of the sudden tragedy.

The first explosion came a minute or two after 2:30 A. M. It was followed in less than a minute, according to the latest reports, by another one, and then

the burst of flames. Mr. and Mrs. Lawler were on the sleeping porch directly over the pergola entrance, where the bombs were placed. The youngest child, Oscar, Jr., and his nurse were asleep on the back porch on the second floor.

Attempt to Save Child.

The first thought of the mother and father, who were thrown from their beds by the first explosion, was the safety of the little boy. As they swung open the door leading into the hall toward the back porch, the flames which had been thrown to the second floor swept into the room and drove both victims back into the room. The mother, after twice attempting to reach her son, fainted from the heat and smoke.

As her limp body fell to the floor, Lawler, according to his story to the surgeons at the receiving hospital, seized her and rushed toward his only means for escape, the three windows fronting New Hampshire Avenue. It was a twenty-foot drop.

Reaching far out from the window and with the flames striking his body from beneath, Lawler managed to lower his wife over the window until it was but a short drop to the awning below. He dropped her to the awning, and from there she rolled to the ground, ten feet further.

The father dashed back into the room.

It was less than a minute before he again appeared in the front window. Driven by the scorching flames, which had burned great patches in his shoulders, head, and arms, Lawler dove out of the window head first. How he escaped a fractured skull is a miracle to the physicians. He was picked up and carried to an ambulance, calling for his children.

"I tried to save my baby. I tried to reach him, but the fire was too hot and the roof was falling in," he said later while the police ambulance was rushing him to the hospital.

"Oh God, oh God, how could any man do a thing like that," he moaned.

At first it was feared that Charles Lawler, 17 years old, and Jane, 15 years old, were in the house when the explosion occurred, and many rushed madly around the burning structure in an effort to do something to help them.

Suddenly there was a commotion at the door. A tall man carrying a curly-headed boy of 5 snugly in his arms, pushed his way into the house and cried:

"Oscar, Oscar, the boy is safe."

The father caught sight of the child. His burned arms shot upward. He stood and trembled.

"Oh, thank God. Now I can die," was all that he could say, and then he collapsed.

The rescue of the child and his nurse was fully as dramatic as the futile attempt on the part of the parents to reach them through the burning building.

After the first explosion William Lacy of 3,200 Wilshire Boulevard rushed toward the burning building. Another man, whose name was reported to the police as E. Pulford, stopped the automobile he was driving and also rushed into the yard. He and Mr. Lacy made their way toward the rear of the house, where the nurse and the child, trapped on the second story, were calling for help.

Lacy and Pulford and George Knight of the Nick Harris detectives found a ladder and raised it against the burning building. They climbed up and tore the wire screen, lifting the two figures through the small opening.

See Revenge As Motive For Crime.

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 3. (Associated Press.)—Revenge for the part he played in the prosecution of a group of dynamiters in the Middle West several years ago was assigned by the police here as the probable motive for an attempt on the life of Oscar Lawler, former Assistant Attorney General of the United States, today.

City, State, and Federal authorities held a conference tonight and perfected plans for a systematic search which they hope will lead to arrests. It was disclosed that there were three explosions. The contents of the two cans of liquid are believed to have exploded after the bomb.

The Lawler home was a large brick and frame structure in the fashionable Wilshire district in the west part of the city.

Mr. and Mrs. Lawler were sleeping on a porch in the south side of the house, opening from a second floor room and screened from the street by an angle of the building. Miss Bessie Mills, a nurse, and Oscar Lawler, Jr., were sleeping on a porch at the rear, or east end, of the house.

When the explosion came a sheet of flame rushed up the side of the house directly below the porch occupied by the

Lawlers and cut off escape toward the outside. Mr. Lawler and his wife went into the house and tried to make their way to their son. They were cut off by smoke and flame. Mrs. Lawler fainted. Mr. Lawler carried her through flames to the front of the house and dropped her to an awning over the front window, whence she rolled to the ground. He then leaped after her. The young son and the nurse were rescued by neighbors. Another son and daughter were away from home.

Physicians attending Mr. Lawler and his wife announced tonight his chances for recovery were about even. Mrs. Lawler, they said, would recover.

Two other Lawler children, Charles and Jane, were visiting at the ranch of Dan Murphy, the oil producer, at Pebbly Beach.

Oscar Lawler, who was born at Marshalltown, Iowa, in 1875, was admitted to the practice of law in California in 1896, and became a member of the law firm of Lawler, Allen & Van Dyke in Los Angeles. He served as United States Attorney in the Southern District of California from 1905 to 1907, succeeding his close friend and associate Frank Flint, who was elected to the United States Senate.

On May 1, 1909 he was appointed First Assistant Attorney General of the United States, and served two years, when he resigned and returned to the practice of law in California. He served as Major and Judge Advocate General of the National Guard of California. He is noted in California as an orator.