

WOMEN WIELD KNIVES IN 3 KILLINGS; TWO WOMEN'S 'MAN-WIFE' LOVE ENDS

Slaying Caused by Jealousy

A five-year 'man-wife' love relationship between two women came to an abrupt end last Wednesday night when the "husband," Miss Ruth Mae Foster, 28, in a frenzy, assertedly stabbed her "wife" to death with a keen-edged sandwich knife.

In a sudden flare-up of fatal slashings, two other women were charged with murder.

Miss Mary Talliver, 35, of 1250 East 8th street, was booked for murder in the butcher-knife slaying of Cuba McCaskill, 47, of the same address.

Mrs. Nina Mae Graves, 33, of 919 East 8th street, is also accused of wielding a butcher-knife as a death weapon. Her husband, Eihelbert Graves, 62, was cut up during a quarrel Saturday, May 22, and died at Los Angeles County hospital on Monday.

CHARGED WITH MURDER

In the unconventional love relationship between Miss Foster and her "mate," 48-year-old Mrs. Virginia Louise Ford, was killed at 4454 1/2 South Arroyo boulevard, the home the two occupied together with four of the dead woman's six children.

Miss Foster, held in jail and officially charged with murder, was to appear for her preliminary hearing at 9:45 a.m. today (Thursday).

Police reported that the accused, after hacking away wildly at her companion, slicing the flesh from her shoulder, thrusting into her intestines and piercing her chest in the region of the heart, telephoned the authorities and surrendered to them voluntarily.

Miss Foster's attorney, Walter L. Gordon, Jr., stated that his client will base her defense on the contention that jealousy coupled with the emotional upset brought about by this unusual type of love rendered her temporarily insane.

NEW 'GIRL FRIEND'

The deceased and Miss Foster assertedly lived together for the past five years as "man and wife." Previously Mrs. Ford lived with her husband, Lawrence "Flying Ford" Ford, a member of the dancing

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group, "Rhythm Maniacs," now performing in the East.

Police reported that Miss Foster told them that about two weeks before the fatal stabbing, the older woman met some girl named "Bernice," planned to have her move into the house as her new "girl friend," and told Miss Foster to leave.

Miss Foster also said, according to the police, that she procured a sharp knife from the cafe where she worked as a sandwich girl, and hid it under her pillow.

GRABBED KNIFE

On the night of the killing, Miss Foster said she was arguing with Mrs. Ford when the phone rang. Mrs. Ford refused to answer. Asked why, she reportedly said she didn't want to answer. The two women continued to argue.

It was at this point, police stated, that Miss Foster said she grabbed the knife and began cutting.

The stabbed woman staggered from the bedroom to the living-room, where she fell dead, the report said.

Mrs. Ford's son, aged 20, and a daughter, 13, hearing the screams, rushed to the scene. They are said to have scuffled with Miss Foster in an attempt to wrest the knife from her. Both received minor cuts. Miss Foster also was cut, but managed to retain control of the weapon.

TAUNTED HER

She wrenched herself free, and ran to the home of friends, from where she telephoned the police, made an appointment to meet them on a nearby street corner, and kept the appointment.

Police said that the knife has not been turned over to them, and that Miss Foster claimed that she did not know what had happened to it.

Mrs. Ford, according to Atty Gordon, had taunted the younger woman on the night of the fatal attack, reportedly stating during the heated argument that preceded the killing, "Bernice has money, and you don't," adding, "I love you, honey, but things can't go on this way."

The coroner's inquest last Friday, May 21, termed the killing a homicide and held Mrs. Ford to answer. The death, the coroner reported, was caused by hemorrhage due to wounds penetrating the left artery in the region of the heart.

FIRST ASSOCIATION

They found that the wounds were "inflicted by a knife in the hands of Ruth Foster during an argument presumably over unnatural sex relations."

According to Atty Gordon, Miss Foster claims that she was 23 when she first met Mrs. Ford in 1943, and was working in a barbecue stand at 42nd and Central avenue. Up to that time, she said, she had never been associated with any other woman on the basis of her later friendship with the deceased.

One day five years ago, she said, Mrs. Ford sent another woman to her to tell her that she "liked her very much," and subsequently she met Mrs. Ford and went to live in her home. Ford assertedly was living there at the time.

BOTH PAID COURT

Miss Foster claimed that in the beginning both Ford and Mrs. Ford paid court to her, but that after about six months Ford became jealous and demanded that his wife choose between him and the younger woman, Gordon stated. Ford reportedly moved out at that time.

In the killing of Cuba McCaskill at a little after 4 o'clock last Saturday afternoon, Miss Talliver told police that she interceded in a quarrel between the victim and his wife, Jane Humphrey. Miss Talliver, in custody and officially charged with murder, reportedly said, "Cuba was

beating his wife and I was trying to stop him. He threw a bottle at me."

She then, according to the report, grabbed a butcher knife from the sink drain-board and stabbed him. He died within a few minutes.

THREAT CLAIMED

In the other weekend butcher-knife killing, Mrs. Graves informed police that her elderly husband attacked her and threatened to kill her. In her statement in the record she said, "He pulled a .38 revolver with a pearl handle on me and said he was going to kill me. Then I picked up a knife and stabbed him two or three times."

Police reported that they did not find the revolver referred to. Mrs. Graves was arrested and booked on the charge of assault with a deadly weapon. When Graves died two days later, the charge was changed to one of murder.