

# RAGSDALE ALLEGES AN OFFER OF \$200

Swore to Frank Affidavit Involving Conley in W. J. Burns's Presence, He Says.

## DETECTIVE MAKES DENIAL

Doesn't Know Pastor, He Asserts—How Affidavit Was Made—Frank Issues New Statement.

Special to The New York Times.

ATLANTA, Ga., April 30.—To-day's developments in regard to the Rev. C. B. Ragsdale, the Baptist preacher who made an affidavit for Leo Frank's attorneys that he heard the negro Conley confess to murdering Mary Phagan, have been of such a sensational character as to throw into the background the fact that to-morrow will probably witness the conclusion of the hearing on the extraordinary motion for a new trial, when the fate of the man convicted of slaying the girl will be left in the hands of Judge Ben. H. Hill.

The committee of six appointed by the Plum Street Baptist Church, of which Mr. Ragsdale is pastor, to investigate the alleged signing of a false affidavit by him, made their report to the church to-day in conference. In the report were charges of the offer of money, and the names of Detective W. J. Burns and several lawyers were mentioned.

The report declared that the committee had gone to the home of their pastor and he had admitted to them that he was guilty of swearing falsely in the matter, and thereupon tendered his resignation.

The committee also reported that Mr. Ragsdale stated to them that the affidavit was obtained from him in a moment of pressing temptation upon an offer of \$200 in the presence of his lawyer, Col. Arthur Thurman, and Detective William J. Burns, Detective Tedder, and R. L. Barber, and that he did not realize what he was doing. But, continued the report, when he did realize what he was doing he went to Solicitor Hugh Dorsey and told him of the affair. He did not tell the committee who offered him the money. He said this conference took place in Col. Thurman's office. Several of the members testified that Mr. Ragsdale had not possessed his full mental powers since he was attacked by apoplexy some time ago, and that his family had often spoken of spells that he suffered, during which he was not at himself. The pastor is about 60 years old and has a grown-up family.

The publication of the report brought denials from the men mentioned in it as present when he accepted \$200 to make his affidavit.

Another development was the report that members of the Board of Police Commissioners were planning to introduce, at their next meeting, a resolution to revoke the license to do business in Atlanta held by the William J. Burns National Detective Agency on the ground that several conditions on which the license was granted had not been complied with.

Mr. Burns, now in Chattanooga, denounced as an "unmitigated lie" the statement of Mr. Ragsdale to members of his church that \$200 was offered to him in the presence of the detective and others to make his affidavit. Mr. Burns was enroute to Oklahoma when he heard of Mr. Ragsdale's story and got off at Chattanooga, from which he telephoned to the Atlanta Journal.

"Ragsdale is an unmitigated liar," he said, "and I never saw the man in my life."

"Just as soon as I heard of his outrageous story I decided to come back to Atlanta and I will be there on the first train. All I know about his affidavit is that he came to our office and Mr. Lehon conducted him to the office of Attorney Rosser. I have never seen the man."

### Denies Money Offer.

Arthur Thurman, the lawyer who was charged by Ragsdale with being present when the alleged \$200 offer was made and accepted, characterizes the preacher as a liar and perjurer.

It was charged by Ragsdale that Thurman threatened him with criminal action on a business deal if he did not make the affidavit and this the attorney denies.

"Several months ago Ragsdale, who has been coming to my office frequently," said Mr. Thurman, "told me this story which was embodied in his affidavit. He said then that he did not want it made public until he could find R. L. Barber, who had left town, in order that the story might be corroborated by him."

"While I didn't take much stock in the story, I communicated with Dr. B. Wildauer. About three weeks ago the Burns people started working on it."

"Last Thursday, C. W. Tedder dropped into my office. About that time Ragsdale and Barber, with whom I had an engagement, came in. Then Ragsdale told the story to Tedder. Later I took him and Barber to the Burns office, where we met Mr. Lehon, and he took the two men over to the offices of Frank's attorneys."

"The story that he offered money is ridiculous. As to the story that I threatened him because of a business transaction, I can only say that it, too, is utterly false. In April, 1913, Ragsdale sold to the Rev. J. W. Foster (who was in the limelight when arrested recently with his affinity, a Mrs. Ruth Dean) a saw mill, a grist mill, and a cotton gin and land at Holly Springs, Cherokee County. More than two months later Foster sold the property to me, and I assumed a \$500 machinery mortgage on it. The transaction was perfectly regular, and there was nothing criminal in it, for Foster knew that it was incumbered when he bought it from Ragsdale, and I knew that it was incumbered when I bought it from Foster."

The attorney showed the two deeds to the property, and in both of them the debt was mentioned.

C. W. Tedder admitted meeting Ragsdale and Barber in Thurman's office, but emphatically denied that he heard money offered to the preacher, and also declared that so far as he knew Detective Burns had never seen the preacher. He also denied that, acting in the interest of Smith or any one else he "planted" the Ragsdale-Barber matter in an effort to trap Burns or other agents of the defense.

This is the story Tedder tells: "I had heard four months ago that a Baptist minister, a client of Arthur Thurman's, had a story to tell in connection with the Frank case. I had been searching unsuccessfully for the preacher until last Thursday, when I was in Thurman's office, and this fellow Ragsdale came in. I asked Thurman if he was the Baptist preacher, and on receiving an affirmative reply I tried to pump him. He got wise and walked out of the office."

"Half an hour later I heard he had made an affidavit to the defense in the offices of Attorney Rosser. He came back to Thurman's office, where he then talked to me. He told me about the affidavit. He said he had the matter on his conscience for a long time, but hesitated to speak because he didn't want to get mixed up in the case. He told me, however, that he had read a newspaper story about Frank in the Tower, gripping the bars of his cell and proclaiming his innocence, and that he decided then to tell the story."

Tedder said further that after his first conversation with the preacher Thurman took Ragsdale and Barber down to the Burns office, where they met Dan S. Lehon of the Burns forces, and he took them to the office of Attorney Rosser, where the affidavits were made.

This is borne out by a statement made by Detective Burns before he left the city. Mr. Burns then told reporters that he did not see Ragsdale. He was informed, he said, by Lehon, his aid, that Ragsdale would make an affidavit, and he instructed Lehon to take the preacher to the offices of the attorney.

### How Affidavits Were Made.

Luther Z. Rosser, leading counsel for Frank, explained his connection with the Ragsdale affidavit, and told how Ragsdale and Barber were brought to

his office. Rosser said: "When they came in with the Burns agent," he said, "I was absent, and my partner, Mr. Brandon, who is not especially familiar with the case, commenced an interview."

"I was summoned from the court and relieved him of the task. I put both men through a very vigorous cross-examination, and was particular to ask the names of his associates, and he named several of the most prominent men in the city."

"The affidavits were dictated almost in the language of the two men. Then I had a notary public, a young man named Callahan, who is with another law firm in the city, summoned to the office to take the affidavits."

"I was in an adjoining office dictating the amendment when the two men swore to the affidavits, but Mr. Callahan, I understand, read every word to them before the affidavits were signed."

"Mr. Ragsdale told how reluctant he had been to enter the case, and how he hoped to avoid publicity. I had never seen him or Barber before they walked into the office. I had heard, however, various vague rumors to the effect that some person could give the sort of testimony that Ragsdale did in the affidavit. Long before the men came into the office I had given up hope of securing the evidence."

F. P. Callahan, a notary public in the office of Smith, Hammond & Smith, was the man before whom the affidavits of Ragsdale and Barber were sworn.

"Burns was not there, neither was Tedder," said Callahan. "I read the affidavits over to the men word for word. I was unusually cautious because of the many mix-ups that have come in the Frank case."

"I asked each of them if they understood everything that was contained in the affidavits and if every statement was the truth. Then they raised their right hands and swore to the truth of the affidavits."

"The affidavits were taken in the private office of L. Z. Rosser on the seventh floor of this building. There were present when the minister and his companion swore to the affidavits, Dan Lehon, John K. Tippet, a stenographer for the Rosser-Brandon firm, and myself. Mr. Rosser was in the building, but not in his private office at the swearing of the men. Stiles Hopkins, erroneously reported to have been the notary public before whom the affidavits were taken, was not present."

Tippet said that the two men came to Mr. Rosser's office and professed to have information of value to Frank. They were questioned closely by the lawyer, who was impressed by the fact that Ragsdale was a minister and that he gave high references as to his probity and good standing.

After Mr. Rosser had the essential details of their story he dictated affidavits to Tippet who transcribed them on the typewriter. They were then read to the two men and Callahan was called in and again went over the affidavits with the men.

At the Ragsdale home more efforts were made to shield the pastor, who was forced to resign his charge as a result of the sensation. No one has been allowed to see the minister. In fact, every statement published about Ragsdale's mysterious connection with the case has been made through third parties. An astonishing veil of mystery has been thrown about the entire affair.

### Hint of a Police Plant.

One strange aspect of this development is that C. C. Tedder, who is involved in the Ragsdale charges, is attached to the office of William M. Smith, attorney for Jim Conley and a close friend of Chief of Detectives Lanford. He denied to-day that the alleged money offer was a police "plant," and that he had helped to induce Ragsdale to make the affidavit telling of the alleged Conley confession.

The son, W. A. Ragsdale, said to-day that his father's mental condition was not sound. He was inclined to believe that money was offered, and said that threats to expose a land deal in which the minister was concerned had evidently figured in the alleged effort to make him swear falsely.

Solicitor Dorsey refused to comment other than to say that "this whole matter will be shown up and the parties responsible will be dealt with."

In Court House circles it is rumored that the new Grand Jury to be chosen next week, will be asked by Solicitor Dorsey to investigate the case.

Solicitor Dorsey will appear before Judge Hill to-morrow morning, when the hearing for a retrial for Frank will be resumed, and will begin his fight to baffle the move of the convicted man's attorneys.

A strong fight will be made to have Judge Hill revoke the order he gave Frank's defense cancelling the amendment to the motion presented last Friday, by which the Ragsdale affidavit was taken out of the record.

It is reported that Mr. Dorsey has obtained an affidavit from Anna Maud Carter, the negro woman who made an affidavit for the defense swearing that Conley, while she was in prison with him, confessed to murdering Mary Phagan to her.

It is known that the negress has made an affidavit to the detectives at Police Headquarters who have been investigating the Frank case. This document, it is said, was attested by her on the day before she made the "Conley confession" affidavit.

### Another Appeal by Frank.

Stating that the people of Atlanta and of Georgia have too great a love of justice to want to see him hanged on the evidence of a negro, Leo M. Frank gave out the following signed statement to-day:

To the people of Atlanta: I have been advised not to make further appeal for justice to the people, but I cannot bring myself to believe that the people would deny me the small privilege of pleading my case before them.

I am told there are many people who do not hesitate to say that I ought to be hanged, whether I had a fair trial or not, or whether I am guilty or not; but I cannot bring myself to believe they represent a majority.

I have had no trial in the Court House—only the pretense of one. The question put up to the jury in my case was not "Is Leo M. Frank guilty?" but it was "Whose life shall it be—Frank's or yours?" and they decided accordingly.

I do not so much blame the courts and jurors for denying me justice and a fair trial. It is the people themselves who are responsible. It is they who have compelled the Judges and the jurors to decide as they have. I feel that I have a right to appeal to the people, because they are the last court of this State, higher and more powerful than all the other courts.

Was there ever a case in a Georgia Court House when the jury rejected the testimony of eight good white women in favor of the word of a degraded negro? Conley not only contradicted me, but also Miss Corinthia Hall, Mrs. Emma Clarke Freeman, Mrs. J. A. White, Miss Rebecca Carson, Miss Helen Kerns, Miss May Pick, Miss Dora Small, and Miss Julia Fuss.

It was a part of Conley's monstrous lie that after he had carried the dead body to the basement he and I were talking in my office and were interrupted by the appearance of Miss Corinthia Hall and Mrs. Emma Clarke Freeman at about twenty minutes past one. Now, these ladies were on the stand and swore unequivocally that they left the factory for the last time that day at 11:45 A. M., or, in other words, an hour and thirty-five minutes before the hour given by Conley, and they furthermore swore that when they left there remained in the factory Arthur White, Mrs. White, Mrs. May Barrett, Mrs. Barrett's daughter, Henry Denham, the stenographer, and myself. Now, why should the jury take the negro's word in preference to that of these white women on a simple question of fact? There was no chance for a mistake on their part. It was a square issue between them and the negro, their oath against his oath. And if Conley was lying on this point how can any part of his story be believed for a moment?

Then take Miss Helen Kern's testimony. She testified that at 1:10 P. M. she saw me at the corner of Whitehall and Alabama Streets, the very moment when Conley swore he was helping me dispose of the body.

Miss Rebecca Carson testified: "On Monday morning I said to Jim Conley, 'Where were you on Saturday? Were you in the factory?' He said: 'I was so drunk I don't know where I was or what I did.' I also overheard a conversation that he had with my mother when he said: 'Mr. Frank is just as innocent as an angel.'"

Conley testified: "I didn't tell Miss Carson on Monday that I was drunk all day Saturday. I didn't see her at all on Monday. I don't remember telling Miss Carson on May 1 that Mr. Frank was innocent."

Miss Mary Firk testified: "I talked with Jim Conley Monday morning after the murder. I accused him of the murder. He took his broom and

walked right out of the office, and I have never seen him since."

Conley testified: "I didn't have any conversation with Miss Mary Firk on April 28, and she didn't say that I committed the crime, and I didn't shoot out of the metal room after she said that."

Miss Dora Small testified: "I saw Jim Conley Tuesday. He was worrying me to get money from me to buy a newspaper, and he often would come and ask me for copies of the paper before I got through reading them. They were extras. He would even get two of the same edition. He would take it and run over there and sit on a box by the elevator and read it. He told me Mr. Frank is just as innocent as you are."

Conley testified: "I didn't ask Miss Small on Monday what the extra had in it, and I didn't say Mr. Frank is just as innocent as you are."

Miss Julia Fuss testified: "I talked with Jim Conley Wednesday morning after the murder. He was sweeping around there, and asked me to see the newspaper. He told me he believed Mr. Frank was just as innocent as the angels from heaven."

Conley testified: "I didn't ask Miss Fuss on Wednesday for an extra. I didn't tell her that I thought Mr. Frank was as innocent as the angels in heaven."

I say to the people of Atlanta that if the jury had not been intimidated by the fear of death and been left free to express its convictions it would never have rejected the testimony of these eight white women in favor of that of a negro. Let it be admitted that most of these ladies were in the employ of the National Pencil Factory, would that circumstance make the word of a negro more reliable than theirs and more worthy to be believed by twelve white men, a negro who was trying to save his own neck? No wonder Judge Roan declared he was not convinced of my guilt.

LEO M. FRANK.