

0. DILLINGER BODY ON DISPLAY - Story Preface

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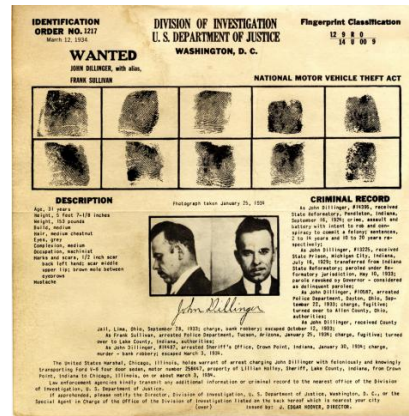
6. MELVIN PURVIS

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The Bureau of Investigation had issued a "Wanted" poster for John Dillinger. After he was killed, at Chicago's Biograph Theater, the poster was marked: "CANCELLED." image online via the FBI.

At the Cook County morgue, where Dillinger's body was taken after officials at the Alexian Brothers Hospital refused to admit a dead man, officials allowed the public to view the gangster's remains:

At the morgue hordes of the curious began arriving that night, and all day Monday the procession continued - thousands upon thousands of them - until the doors of this house of the dead were finally closed at midnight ... There on the cold slab of the morgue lay the outlaw's body, partly covered with a sheet, his face torn with wounds. They passed before him - the men gaping with open mouths, the women shuddering and covering their eyes, or emitting short hysterical screams. (Dillinger: The Untold Story, by G. Russell Girardin, William J. Helmer and Rick Mattix, pages 227-228.)

Johnnie's father learned about the shooting death of his son from a reporter who visited Mr. Dillinger later that night. Keen to bury his boy at home, John Sr. chose a spot in the Dillinger family plot at Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis. It's estimated a crowd of five thousand watched the burial.

A much smaller group of people observed the end of Pete Pierpont. Captured in Tucson, with Dillinger (in January of 1934), Pierpont attempted a jail break (after he was transferred to Lima, Ohio to stand trial for the murder of Sheriff Jess Sauber). His plan, to get away with a gun made from soap, was a failure.

Still recovering from the bullets which stopped his escape, Pierpont was executed on October 17, 1934. Prison officials had to carry him to the electric chair.

Melvin Purvis became an overnight media sensation. Hoover wanted the bureau to get the credit and was furious when reporters cared more about talking to Purvis than anyone else. Things got even worse when Mel was involved in taking down "Pretty Boy Floyd" (in October of 1934) and told reporters (the following month) he would hunt down Baby-Face Nelson.

Demoting Purvis to menial jobs thereafter, Hoover caused "Little Mel" to leave the bureau. When he left, his friends gave him a gun. He was cleaning that weapon when it discharged on the 29th of February, 1960. His death was considered a suicide, although the Purvis family has always disputed that finding.

Hoover, still alive at the time, sent no condolences. Mel's wife sent a note to the director, including these words:

We are honored that you ignored Melvin's death. Your jealousy hurt him very much but until the end I think he loved you.

Inspector Sam Cowley, who mopped-up details of the Dillinger ambush (and made sure that the Bureau's files were documented), died four months later following a fatal shoot-out with Baby-Face Nelson. (The links are the actual FBI documents.) Special Agent Ed Hollis (who fired one of the shots at Dillinger) also died in the Nelson gunfight. Both men left wives and young children.

Ana Sage collected \$5,000 of the \$10,000 Dillinger reward. The other half was split between Captain O'Neil and Detective Zarkovich (of the East Chicago, Indiana police department). Although Purvis tried to help Ana avoid deportation, she was sent back to Romania where she died, of liver failure, in 1947.

After Billie Frechette finished her time at the Milan prison, she toured for awhile in a Dillinger-family theatrical road show called "Crime Doesn't Pay." Married three times, she died of cancer in 1969.

Dillinger himself seemed to regret the life he led—at least that's what he told his father, in 1933. Before he escaped from the Allen County jail (in Lima, Ohio), he wrote these words:

I know I have been a big disappointment to you but I guess I did too much time, for where I went in a carefree boy, I came out bitter toward everything in general ... if I had gotten off more leniently when I made my first mistake this would never have happened.

That "first mistake" was stealing about fifty dollars from a grocer (after assaulting him)—for which Dillinger served nine years in prison. It could have been worse, since his actual sentence was ten-to-twenty years.

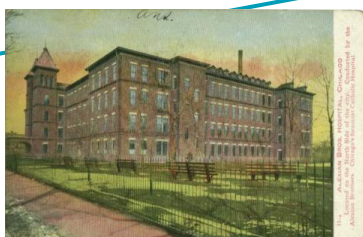
See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/DILLINGER-BODY-ON-DISPLAY-Public-Enemies)

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Media Stream



Dillinger - Alexian Brothers Hospital

Vintage postcard online, courtesy [Chicago Postcards](#).

Information about Dillinger's death pronouncement, courtesy FBI.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Dillinger-Alexian-Brothers-Hospital>



Dillinger Body - Cook County Morgue

Photo online, courtesy FBI.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Dillinger-Body-Cook-County-Morgue>



Dillinger - Facial Injury at Death

Photo online, courtesy FBI.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Dillinger-Facial-Injury-at-Death>



Dillinger Body - Public Viewing at Morgue

Photo online, courtesy FBI.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Dillinger-Body-Public-Viewing-at-Morgue>

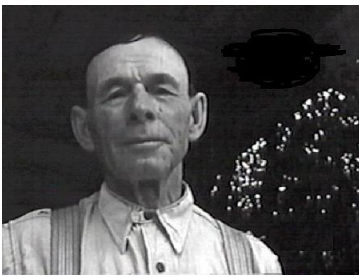


Dillinger's Body - Sent Home in a Wicker Basket

AP Photo, online courtesy U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Dillinger-s-Body-Sent-Home-in-a-Wicker-Basket>



John Dillinger, Sr.

Photo online, courtesy FBI.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/John-Dillinger-Sr.>



Dillinger - Funeral Crowd

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Dillinger - Grave Site of John Dillinger

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Dillinger Family Plot - Crown Hill Cemetery

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Crown Hill Cemetery - Dillinger Family Graves

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Harry Pete Pierpont - The Electric Chair

Photo online, courtesy the Ohio Department of Corrections.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Harry-Pete-Pierpont-The-Electric-Chair>



Ed Hollis - Fired Shot at Dillinger

Photo and information about Special Agent Hollis, online courtesy FBI.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Ed-Hollis-Fired-Shot-at-Dillinger>



Anna Sage - Questioned after Dillinger Death

AP Photo, online courtesy U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Anna-Sage-Questioned-after-Dillinger-Death>



Melvin Purvis - Congratulated on Dillinger Capture

AP Photo, online courtesy U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Melvin-Purvis-Congratulated-on-Dillinger-Capture>



Purvis and Hoover - After Dillinger's Death

AP Photo, online courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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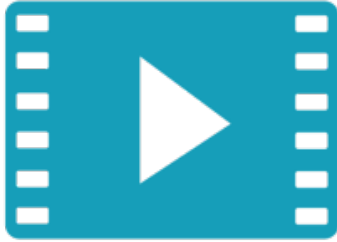


Anna Sage - Deported to Romania

AP Photo, online courtesy U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Anna-Sage-Deported-to-Romania>



Dillinger - Shot Dead by the Feds

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