MRS. VIRGINIA SNOW STEPHEN, Salt Lake teacher, who has become interested in case of Joseph Hillstrom, accused of the murder of J. G. Morrison and son, and who has retained counsel for his defense.



WOMAN RETAINS NEW ATTORNEYS FOR HILLSTROM

Salt Lake Teacher Interests Judge O. N. Hilton of Denver; Says She Represents I. W. W.

HAS NEVER SEEN THE MAN SHE DEFENDS

Accused Slayer of J. G. Morrison Dramatically Discharges His Counsel During Trial.

Sensation after sensation piled up yesterday in the Joseph Hillstrom murder trial before Judge M. L. Ritchie in the district court.

Hillstrom discharged his own attorneys, F. B. Scott and E. D. McDougall, in open court, declaring that they were in league with the district attorney and that he could conduct his own defense better than they. He re-engaged them in the afternoon, and Soren X. Christensen also was entered as associate counsel, representing Judge Hilton of Denver, the famous labor advocate.

Two women entered the case yesterday, each shrouded in mystery, which counsel for the defense could not or would not clear up.

One is Mrs. Virginia Snow Stephen, who is prominent in educational, social and art circles. Mrs. Stephen, who is a daughter of the late President Lorenzo Snow of the Mormon church, has long been connected with the art department of the University of Utah, and stands exceptionally high as an instructor. Mrs. Stephen, it is said, has never seen Hillstrom, but has become so firmly convinced of his innocence that she will endeavor, while taking her vacation in the east, to raise funds for his defense.

Convinced of Innocence.

"The man who wrote the songs and composed the music that Joseph Hillstrom has, simply could not be guilty of so brutal a murder as the killing of the Morrisons," Mrs. Stephen told F. B. Scott, of the defense, before she left for the east.

Discussing the interest that Mrs. Stephen has displayed in the case, Mr. Scott said yesterday:

> Mrs. Stephen came to my office some time ago and talked to me about the Hillstrom case. I did not know her until she introduced herself, but she seemed greatly interested in Hillstrom's defense. She said she had never seen Hillstrom, but that she could not believe the man guilty from what she had read and heard of the case. She appeared eager to render any assistance in her power. She told me that she was going east for her vacation and that she intended raising funds, if possible, while absent to assist Hillstrom in getting his case properly before the courts. At that time, I might add, we did not know that Hillstrom would be called for trial at so early a date.

Suggested Judge Hilton.

> Mrs. Stephen also asked me if I would like to have assistance in the case and I told her I would. Having been informed that she intended stopping in Denver, on her way to the east, I suggested that she might see Judge O. N. Hilton, the noted labor advocate in Denver, who was associated with me in the Sorensen case. That she saw Judge Hilton is evidenced by the telegram which came to Soren X. Christensen today.

Attorney O. N. Hilton, when interviewed in Denver last night regarding the connection of Mrs. Virginia Stephen with the Hillstrom murder case, said:

> I know nothing of Mrs. Stephens further than that she stated to me that she represented the defense committee of the I. W. W. She was anxious, she said, to see that Hillstrom secured justice, and in case he was convicted by a jury in the present trial she wanted to be assured that he would secure a new trial and, if necessary, carry the case to the highest court. I was unable, by reason of other duties, to represent Hillstrom, and recommended Attorney Soren X. Christensen of Salt Lake, who is now conducting Hillstrom's defense.

Telegraph's Attorney.

The telegram to Mr. Christensen, dated from Denver, read:

> Sit in Hillstrom case now on trial in Ritchie's court, saving all exceptions possible with view of taking to supreme court. Judge Hilton makes this request. See letter.
> (Signed) VIRGINIA STEPHEN.

The other woman who appeared in the case yesterday was Hilda Erickson, said to be Hillstrom's sweetheart, and who may or may not be the woman to save whom Hillstrom has declared his willingness to go to his death for a crime he claims to be innocent of.

The woman, fair-haired and blue-eyed,

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MURDER TRIAL IS INTERRUPTED BY SENSATION

Joseph Hillstrom, Accused Slayer of J. G. Morrison, Dramatically Discharges His Attorneys.

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was allowed to confer with Hillstrom during the morning session after Hillstrom had discharged his attorneys. It was said she was largely responsible for the reconciliation that took place.

"I do not know who she is," said Attorney Scott. "Hillstrom will not tell us and he shuts up like a clam when we ask him questions concerning this woman or any other who may have been connected with the case." I do not know whether she is the woman whom Hillstrom says he was with the night of the murder, and over whom he says he became involved in a quarrel and was shot in the breast."

Attorney McDougal said he had heard that the woman was a musician, and that she and Hillstrom worked together on musical compositions.

It was right in the middle of the examination of a witness during the morning session that Hillstrom created a profound sensation by rising and discharging his counsel. Herman Harms, state chemist, was on the stand being examined as to the nature of blood spots found near the store where J. G. Morrison and his son were murdered by the highwaymen.

"There are too many prosecuting attorneys in this case and I am going to get rid of two of them," Hillstrom exclaimed. "Mr. Scott and Mr. McDougall, do you see that door? Get out of that door, I am through with you."

Attorney McDougall began gathering up papers from the table as though to depart. Hillstrom sprang forward and took the papers from the attorney's hand.

"Get out, you are fired," he cried. "These papers belong to the defense and you are no longer counsel for the defense. They are paid for and I will keep them. I can conduct my own defense just as well as it is being done. Mr. Leatherwood is fair and I can get along with him, but I don't want you any more. You can give back the money that has been given you by the defense, too."

McDougall left the courtroom, but Scott stayed and tried to remonstrate with Hillstrom. He told the court that the affair was a complete surprise to him and that he and Mr. McDougall had been on amicable terms with the defendant the night before. "I think he is beside himself," he said.

Hillstrom again broke forth: "Can't I conduct my own case?" he exclaimed, addressing the court. "Can't I examine the witnesses and recall any of them I want?" The court told him he could. "Then I am through with my attorneys and I want them to get out. I will prove a lot of things and I will prove that I was not at the Morrison grocery store that night. You can bring on buckets of blood if you want, but you can't fool me."

At this point the district attorney objected to the accused making a statement of his case and the court ordered Hillstrom to be seated. Hillstrom kept his feet and talked on.

"Bailiff, see that the order of the court is carried out!" exclaimed the court. The bailiff forced Hillstrom into his seat, but he kept on insisting that his attorneys leave the courtroom. The court said he thought the lawyers should remain for a while until the matter could be adjusted, and accordingly he ruled that Scott and McDougall should act as friends of the court and that Hillstrom could do his own cross-examining, if he desired, also.

Examined Witness.

This adjustment having been made, Attorney Scott undertook to examine Herman Harms, state chemist, who was on the stand testifying concerning certain blood samples submitted to him. Scott asked one question, when Hillstrom again interrupted. "Mr. Scott, there's the door; why don't you go?" he said, pointing to the court entrance.

"I am here by order of the court," replied Scott.

"But can't I discharge my own attorneys?" Hillstrom demanded.

"You can," said the court; "but I have asked the attorneys to stay here a while as friends of the court, and they will cross-examine witnesses just as before. You may take part in the proceedings if you desire."

Mr. Scott continued to examine the witness for a short time, and then Hillstrom asked the witness who gave him the blood samples he analyzed. Mr. Harms replied that they had been turned over to him by Detective George Cleveland.

The next witness called was Mrs. Phoebe Seeley, who testified that she and her husband passed the Morrison store the night of the murder just before 10 o'clock and saw Morrison and his two sons in the store. Walking west from West Temple street, she said, they encountered two men walking east who forced her off the sidewalk as they passed. She encountered the two men directly under an arc light, she said, and she turned to look at them.

"Around the taller man's neck was a red handkerchief," she said, "and he wore a soft felt hat."

To questioning by the district attorney, she said that the taller man had a very sharp nose, a peculiarly thin face and very prominent nostrils and a scar on the side of his neck. Hillstrom has all of these.

Mr. McDougall at this point objected to leading questions on the part of the prosecuting attorney. Hillstrom jumped to his feet and challenged McDougall's right to object or to take part in the trial. "Who is counsel for defense here, anyway?" he exclaimed. He subsided and the district attorney proceeded.

Mrs. Seeley testified further that Hillstrom was of about the same height as the man she saw the night of the murder, that his nose was strikingly similar, that the scar on his neck was the same and that he looked very much like the same man.

Mr. Scott made another objection and precipitated another outbreak from Hillstrom.

Turning to the court, Mr. Scott declared that he did not understand his own status in the case and he asked for a recess in order to allow him to attempt to come to an understanding with the defendant. The jury was dismissed in order to allow a discussion of the peculiar situation.

Hillstrom was the first to address the court. "My counsel seem to insist on sticking to this case after they have been fired," he said.

The court then remarked that from something said by the attorneys earlier he gathered that there was some question about the prisoner's insanity.

The district attorney then interrupted with the exclamation that if the defense was trying to palm off an insanity farce he would be ready to meet them at their own game. "We will have the best experts obtainable here to ascertain his sanity," he said.

This insinuation met with instant denial by Attorneys Scott and McDougall.

"You had a long secret conference with the defendant last night, did you not?" asked the district attorney.

"Yes, we consulted him, but we never dreamed of framing up an insanity defense, and I am deeply surprised that the district attorney would make such an insinuation."

"I am not insinuating anything," replied Mr. Leatherwood, "but I have some well-defined ideas and you will get them later."

"Then you will retract?" said Scott.

"I will retract nothing and I will meet any insanity dodge that may be put up," answered Leatherwood.

"There is no insanity about it," declared Hillstrom. "I have good reason for being dissatisfied with the attorneys and for getting rid of them."

Recess Is Taken.

A recess was taken at this juncture and Hillstrom, his attorneys and two friends of the defendant, said to be I. W. W. members, went into conference in the judge's chambers. A moment later a woman was ushered in. She was said to be Hilda Olsen, a sweetheart of Hillstrom's. Her appearance created a furore in view of the story told by Hillstrom that he received his wound in a fight over a woman and that he would not reveal her name. Others said that the woman was not the one in question, but that this one had been called in in an attempt to have Hillstrom come to an understanding with his attorneys.

After the conference, the attorneys announced that they had failed to come to an understanding. They said they were willing to serve as appointees of the court if Hillstrom had no further objection. Hillstrom offered no further objection and the case proceeded to the noon recess and at the afternoon session Attorney Christensen was entered as counsel for the defense.

Owing to the furore caused by Hillstrom's summary dismissal of his attorneys, only two witnesses were examined at the morning session, those being Chemist Harms and Mrs. Seeley.

Chemist Harms identified blood samples given him by police officers as being mammalian blood, but he declined to say whether it was human blood. This blood was scraped from the sidewalk near the scene of the murder and is presumed to be the blood of one of the robbers who was wounded.

Understanding Reached.

When the trial was resumed at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, Attorney McDougall informed the court that an understanding had been reached between Hillstrom and the attorneys and that he and Mrs. Scott would continue in the case. Mr. Christensen also introduced himself, and, by consent of all, was entered as associate counsel.

It was learned that during the noon recess Hillstrom took all the papers in the possession of his attorneys and spent nearly two hours scanning them in his cell. After doing so, he told the attorneys that he was convinced that his suspicions that they were treacherous to him were ill-founded and he wished to retain them as his counsel.

But three witnesses were examined during the afternoon session.

Margaret Davis, who resides in the vicinity of the Morrison store, told of passing the store shortly before the murder and of meeting two men in the near vicinity. One was taller than the other and wore a red sweater, she said. The other wore a cap. She thought the defendant resembled the taller of the men, but she was not positive.

Mrs. Lucy Williams, also a neighbor of the Morrisons, testified concerning blood spots she saw near the store the day following the murder.

Mrs. Vera Hansen, who lives across the road from the Morrison store, told of hearing the shots fired and of rushing out to her front gate in time to see two men run out of the store. She said that one of them exclaimed, "Oh, God," as though in great pain, and as he ran he clutched with both hands at his breast and stooped over as though hurt.

This testimony was in proof of the state's contention that the taller of the two robbers, alleged to have been Hillstrom, was shot in the breast in the fight in the grocery store. Hillstrom had a gunshot wound in the breast dressed by a doctor in Murray a few hours after the murder. It was this that led to his arrest.