

Two Detectives Admit 'Horseplay' in Slaying

Reporter Fatally Wounded as Long Beach Officers Stalk Each Other With Pistols

Two Long Beach detectives admitted that "horseplay" with loaded guns led to the death of reporter William B. Hunter, Long Beach Police Chief William J. Mooney said Friday.

Mooney said the two detectives were playfully stalking one another in the police station hall, then tumbled into the press room.

Det. Creighton Wiggins, Jr. dropped his gun and it discharged when he tried to catch it in mid-air, Mooney said.

Reporter Hit

The 38-caliber slug smashed into the chest of Hunter, 35, as he sat with his feet propped on his desk.

Mooney said he turned the investigation of the shooting over to the district attorney Friday because of "discrepancies" in the stories of Wiggins and Errol F. Greenleaf, 32, Wiggins' partner.

Both detectives were relieved of duty pending outcome of the investigation.

Mooney said there were two earlier versions of the incident.

One had Wiggins' gun

discharging when it fell from his holster and struck the floor.

The second account was that he dislodged his gun while taking off his coat and it fired when he picked it up to reholster it.

The fatal shooting occurred early Thursday. Hunter was night police reporter with the Long Beach Independent.

Dep. Dist. Atty. Manley Bowler said his Bureau of Investigation will give polygraph tests to the detectives at 8 a.m. Monday in an attempt to see what actually happened.

Inquest Planned

He said it still appears to have been an accident.

But authorities pointed out the third version could lead to charges of involuntary manslaughter.

Bowler said an inquest has been set for 9:30 a.m. May 4 in the Long Beach County Bldg.

The investigation was turned over to Dep. Dist. Atty. Lynn Compton, who was assigned two investigators to help.

Wiggins is the son of a Long Beach police inspector.