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Death ends battle with J. Edgar

Introduction:

Last month, in part one, E. Haldeman-Julius, firebrand editor of The Girard Press and publisher of the little Blue Books, battled with the strong willed Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, J. Edgar Hoover, fueled by the publishing of a Blue Book highly critical of Hoover and his organization. FBI Special Agent-in-charge Dwight Brantley visited Haldeman-Julius in his Girard newspaper office and secured an agreement that the book would be withdrawn from sale. Yet months passed and Hoover is informed that the Blue Book is still cataloged for sale by Haldeman-Julius. Furious, Hoover directs his aide, Clyde Tolson, to prepare a letter stating the position of the FBI to Haldeman-Julius. This was just another of the incidents, that began in the early '40's, in which Haldeman-Julius Publications was defying Hoover's FBI by distributing contrary literature.

As we left Hoover and Tolson in our last edition, they were preparing to go the Southeast Kansas to confront Haldeman-Julius in person under the guise of the commencement address at Kansas State Teachers' College in Pittsburg, Kansas.

J. Edgar vs. E. Haldeman-Julius, Part 2 By Louie Barney

The attorney pleaded his client's case in a dramatic closing argument to the twelve stone-faced occupants of the jury box. "They (the government) never wanted the money," he intoned. "They just wanted to send him (Haldeman-Julius) over the road. They've got plenty of money. They don't need it. They just wanted to send him where he could never pay it."

It is April, 1951 at the federal courthouse in Ft. Scott, Kansas. Dozens of school children are among the hundreds of people. Emanuel Haldeman-Julius has been
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J. Edgar

pealed to the jury in much the same style as Haldeman-Julius' long-time friend, Clarence Darrow, might have done.

E. Haldeman-Julius sat at the defense table nervously wringing his hands as he listened intently to Doug Hudson's words. There it was. His personal war in a nutshell. He knew his old nemesis, Hoover, was at the core of his present tribulations. He fumbled absentmindedly in his breast pocket as if feeling about for one of his fabled Havana cigars. Alas, old Doc Lightfoot had taken those away when he told him that his heart was wearing out fast. He was afraid his heart might not get him through the next few hours; the next few days. Oh, for just a couple of good puffs, he thought.

Haldeman-Julius' ticker took him through 30 sleepless hours while those 12 apostles of his fate mulled over the facts and foibles of his life. As sleep failed him, the aging publisher let his thoughts drift.

Little more than a week before, the Lee brothers had cleared up the mystery that had led him to this courtroom and to his current dilemma.

Just 24 hours before he went on trial, Haldeman-Julius had heard Pittsburg Police Chief Ralph Beard announce the solution to the notorious break-in at the publishing plant offices February 8, 1948. He had been appalled to learn that two bungling burglars, not well-skilled professionals, had stumbled onto his ancient safe. It had poorly guarded the \$40,000 he had been sav-

ing over time to begin his post-war expansion.

These men had carried their loot north to the Girard Catholic Church. Now, the stress was starting to get to him as he speculated that Sunday night, these rag-tag vagabond thieves were dividing the spoils under the eyes of a 'Catholic God.' Instead of striking down these errant souls who had raped his savings, that vengeful Deity (Haldeman-Julius was not a believer in God) had found a way to avenge all the anti-Catholic literature had spread.

The trial was really getting to him. He tried to shake off these foolish thoughts in fits of restlessness.

But somehow it wasn't right.

*See Letter from
Hoover to E.
Haldeman-Julius,
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The thieving pair were beyond the Statute of Limitations—more than two years from their misdeed. No justice for them.

And now he was before the Bar because he had been honest. He had told the tax people about the 40-grand he had been stashing.

Charles Wheeler, his corporate attorney, said that was the thing to do. Common practice in business, he said. Internal Revenue wouldn't care.

Oh, yeah. But, bulldog Hoover would care.

God had got him.

He watched the jury file into the box.

E. Haldeman-Julius stood upright by his attorney in the tradition of criminal law.

The foreman of the jury read the verdict. Two counts, not guilty; two counts, guilty as charged.

The weight of the world fell on Haldeman-Julius' shoulders. He was now a felon. The mark of Cain upon his forehead. He could almost hear the chuckles turn into gales of laughter as the news reached that regal throne room in Washington, D.C.

J. Edgar Hoover would sleep well tonight. The country was safe for democracy.

No longer upright and erect, Haldeman-Julius was groping to keep his balance as sobs of anguish made his shoulders shake. He could faintly hear Doug Hudson saying something about appeals. Not to worry, justice would prevail.

A Fort Scott Tribune reporter wanted a quote. All he could do for his brother journalist was wave and sigh, then sob some more.

Days turned to a couple of months as the appeal was delayed. June saw the 62nd anniversary of the birth of Haldeman-Julius.

The next day was hot and muggy. Friends gathered around at the farm, reminiscent of the halcyon days of ideas shared among intellectuals and eccentrics, writers and rebels. But, the joy had gone from the encounter for Haldeman-Julius. He felt tired, old and beaten.

The late afternoon hung heavy over the area. Sue, his devoted secretary for years who recently became his wife, went into town for supper. Haldeman-Julius

stayed behind to lounge in the pool and contemplate his fate in his now upside-down world.

Later that evening, a stocky man with a gray Stetson set square on his head and a short stump of a cigar sticking out of the corner of his mouth was comforting a weeping woman near the enclosed pool at the back of the Haldeman-Julius estate.

Sheriff Elmer Kneebone was getting the story slowly, but surely from Sue Haldeman-Julius. E. Haldeman-Julius' lifeless body found floating face up; naked in the pool. The little dog "Squiggles" had been yelping helplessly at the edge. She had somehow managed to pull him out. No breath was left, all signs of life were extinguished with the sun in the west.

The following morning, Dr. W.G. Rinehare had barely finished his autopsy on the remains of E. Haldeman-Julius when the word went over the hot line.

National 7117 was the famous direct line to J. Edgar Hoover, first installed in the gangster days of the thirties to report kidnappings directly to the boss.

As he held the receiver to his ear, Hoover listened intently to every word of the report.

in the identification?" Hoover bristled at any challenge to his logic. "It wouldn't be the first time anyone tried to avoid prison by faking his own death." He waited for the reply.

"So it is certain," Hoover said. "Accidental drowning. No suicide note. Bad heart, you say. Why didn't we know about that? Somebody slipped up there...that's fine, we'll close the file."

J. Edgar Hoover turned the cover on the well-worn file folder that was now inches thick. He opened the top drawer of the huge mahogany desk and withdrew a rubber stamp.

The Chief inked it from a pad and brought it down hard over the words emblazoned on the cover: "OFFICIAL AND CONFIDENTIAL; CLOSED." He laid the file aside.

POSTSCRIPT: During our last story, J. Edgar Hoover had prepared to attend commencement ceremonies at Kansas State Teachers' College.

J. Edgar Hoover never delivered the commencement address to the Class of 1949 at Kansas State Teachers' College.