

10/29/71

Dear Larry,

The Foreman clips are interesting. After reading them I am even more left with the question I asked you by phone, how does an apparently petty crook afford a Foreman for his defense? And with all the competent locals, some of whom may have a bit of heart with the prosecutor's office, why should a punk reach out to Houston for his attorney?

If you have a friendly contact with anyone in that office, could you express any idle curiosity to him and ask this question? And whether he knows of any other similar cases where local punks had such eminent defense counsel as Percy the Great? It might lead to some info and perhaps another case or two not in your oeuvre. Jim has received his set, we have discussed this by phone and will in person. When he is here I will show him what I have obtained from another source and city, where the great one lost a case a law-school grad who had not taken his bars should have won, where the man was obviously innocent and the later volunteer defense got a reversal and an acquittal - and solved the crime by coming up with mob guilties. In that case the present DJ had no interest in the proof of guilt, didn't answer repeated letters, etc. So they were a bit less than off on a law-and-order kick.

There is separate interest in John Groth, then 21, involved in the robbery that led to a killing. To me that is an uncommon name, although it may be common out there. So, I find myself wondering if he could be related to Danny.

I have a quote from PF somewhere saying he charges \$250 an hour. Can the guys in these clips pay that kind of money? It seems unlikely, doesn't it? Especially since your good local criminal lawyers undoubtedly don't think of such a fee.

So, among the strange questions I find myself asking without answers is the kinds of sentences his guilty clients got, compared with what they might have gotten from, say copying a plea, which a good local attorney might have urged. In turn, this leads to wonder about whether someone who might have paid this kind of fee had any interest in the silence of those neatly found guilty, with their mouths closed.

Thanks much,

Harold Weisberg

as His Aids in Robbery

State's attorney's police said yesterday that Vito Zaccagnini, 22, of 517 Mulford av., has confessed that he and two other men participated in the robbery of John Onesto, 72, of



Onesto's shoe repair shop at 2103 Taylor st. a year ago, which resulted in Onesto's death.



He identified the other two men, who are sought, as John Groth, 21, of 2103 Litwack av., and Chris Lisallo, 20, of 2933 Wells st.

Zaccagnini told Sgt. Nicholas Disteldorf of the state's attorney's police that he planned the robbery after he had learned in casual conversation with Onesto's grandson, Tino, that Onesto was planning a trip back to his native Italy, and that the shoemaker had saved a considerable sum of money to defray the expenses of the trip.

Tells How He Met Accomplices
He said that after this, he approached Joseph Barbaro, 22, of 2222 N. Austin Blvd., and suggested that Barbaro join him in robbing Onesto. Barbaro declined, Zaccagnini told police, but put him in touch with Groth and Lisallo.

Lisallo
The night of the robbery, police quoted Zaccagnini as saying, he remained across the street while

him by sight, and he did not want to go in the shop until Onesto had been bound and blindfolded.

He entered the shop a few minutes later after receiving a signal from one of the others, Zaccagnini said, and found Onesto on the floor, his arms and legs bound, a piece of tape over his eyes, and a towel over his mouth. Groth and Lisallo were ransacking the place, he said, searching for money.

Zaccagnini told police that all he received from the robbery was 13 silver dollars. He said he did not know how much Groth and Lisallo obtained. After the robbery, Onesto's son, James, told police that \$750 had been taken. Also missing were three watches.

Left Victim Alive, He Says

Zaccagnini said Onesto was still alive when he and Groth and Lisallo left the shop. Police said that Onesto suffered from bronchial trouble, and that the gag apparently helped cause his death. After the robbery, Zaccagnini said, he went with Groth and Lisallo to a washroom in the veterans administration building at 366 W. Adams st., where the other two gave him \$10, and offered him a watch, which he refused.

Zaccagnini was arrested after Barbaro, under lie detector questioning, gave police his name. Barbaro also is held, but without charge.

Zaccagnini told police that one of the stolen watches was thrown in the river at the Adams st. bridge. An effort will be made to recover the watch. Zaccagnini said he met Barbaro when both were students in the Chicago Barber college at 568 W. Madison st.

Last night, police and Assistant State's Atty. Edward Finnegan accompanied Zaccagnini to the Taylor st. shop where Onesto was robbed—now occupied by a lunchroom—and Zaccagnini showed them how the crime was committed.