


—AP WIREPHOTO.
WILLIAM E.
THORESEN III

GUN COLLECTOR SHOT; WIFE HELD

Ironic Court Reversal at
Time of Death

By STEVE MOORE

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — Wealthy young William E. Thoresen III, who spent a fortune collecting tons of guns, fast cars and toy trains, was shot to death Wednesday in his home in a fashionable Fresno area.

His widow, Louise, 33, was booked at Fresno County Jail for investigation of murder.

She had been questioned by police for several hours after reporting the shooting and being treated at a hospital for unspecified injuries.

Almost as Thoresen, who was 32, died at 8:50 a.m. in St. Agnes Hospital, the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco announced reversal of the Thoresens' convictions for interstate shipment of firearms.

The Thoresens had learned of the decision Tuesday, the day it

was made.

Police Capt. A.J. Bilbo said the couple had been quarreling shortly before Mrs. Thoresen ran across the street to the home of an attorney, W.J. McDermott, and reported the shooting.

NUDE ON FLOOR

Police said they found Thoresen nude on the floor of his second-story bedroom with "two or three" chest wounds from a .38-caliber pistol.

Prosecution of the Thoresens followed a federal raid in 1967 on their San Francisco mansion.

Some 77 tons of arms, including machine guns, an antitank gun and other large weapons and munitions, were seized in the house and in storage warehouses in Oakland. Thoresens insisted he was merely an avid collector.

When he was convicted in March 1969, Thoresen told the U.S. District Court he had spent more than \$500,000 on guns but was giving up the hobby to collect toy trains.

He claimed he had spent most of a fortune once estimated at \$70 million, saying the money was from his grandfather's trust. His father, William E. Thoresen II, headed the Great Western Steel Co. of Chicago.

JAMMED WITH BOXES

Apparently young Thoresen had not given up collecting, for police said his Fresno home was jammed with hundreds of large boxes.

"The place is like a warehouse, with boxes and wooden crates stacked all over, exclaimed an officer.

Police did not immediately open them, and said there were no clues to the contents.

The couple's son, Michael, 8, had gone to school at Heaton Elementary School.

The Thoresens had started divorce proceedings while living in Phoenix, Ariz., last year, but in November they moved to Fresno. They had lived here since.