

JUN 11 1970 Thoresen Is Shot Dead-- Wife Held

By SPENCER
From Our Correspondent

Fresno
William Ernst Thoresen, 44, the mysterious man whose mysterious disappearance and death in Fresno, Calif., last year, died here yesterday. He was shot in the chest by a sharpshooter who fired from a car. The widow, Mrs. Thoresen, was taken to a hospital but officials wouldn't

Police Chief Henry R. Morton said Thoresen died of "several" pistol shots into his chest at about 8:14 a.m. during a domestic squabble in the second floor master bedroom of the nomadic couple's latest home here. A .38-caliber pistol was used, Morton said.

The shooting occurred less than a day after a Federal court ordered new evidence which could overturn the couple's conviction for interstate gun shipment.

Thoresen's bizarre gun gathering hobby — he never carried a gun — came to light when officers raided his San Francisco mansion and several Bay Area storage centers and toted up 77 tons of arms and ammunition in April, 1967.

Thoresen valued the collection at \$500,000.

Mystery continued to shadow him, even in death. Investigating officers said yesterday his swank home here was "like a warehouse — unopened boxes and crates all over the place."

No immediate attempt was made to learn the contents.

Thoresen was the son of the president of Chicago-based Great Western Steel Company. He was a tall man, a natty dresser described by his wife in 1967 as "good looking, intelligent and well read."

He stumbled, though, on the Bay Area.

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Mrs. Thoresen, a...
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July last No...
the couple lived...
followed him to...
friends said, and...
seemingly couldn't...
been better."

Neighbors described the Thoresens as "Quiet and friendly."
Police said Mrs. Thoresen crossed the street to a neighbor's home at about 8:14 p.m. yesterday and cried, "Bill!"

HOSPITAL
Neighbors said they found him naked on his bed. He was pronounced dead at St. James Hospital at 8:55 p.m. after resuscitation efforts failed.



WILLIAM ERNST THORESEN
Shooting victim

The couple's 8-year-old son, Mike, was attending a nearby public school when the shooting occurred. Neighbors gave him temporary shelter.

Attorney John H. Westover of Phoenix, who represented Thoresen on the arms shipment case appeal, said he advised him of the favorable turn of events Tuesday afternoon.

He seemed pleased," Westover said.

said he had had no contact from Thoresen and that the couple had any new troubles.

RULES
The Ninth District Court of Appeals ruled Tuesday there were sufficient questions about the legality of search and seizure of Thoresen's property to warrant a new hearing on whether the evidence should be suppressed.

The government's entire case could be in jeopardy if Judge Frederick G. H. Stone for the unanimous panel, if the initial seizure at issue is found illegal. That involves Thoresen's attachment in New York in January, 1967.

The other search and seizure at issue came in the follow-up raids in San Francisco.

Among the weaponry confiscated was a 25-mm wheel-mounted cannon, two 20-mm anti-aircraft guns a 37-mm cannon, 17 machine guns, 30 tons of rifles, shotguns, hand guns, submachine guns, bazookas and flamethrowers; 667,778 rounds of ammunition and 1790 parachute flares. Federal officials have cached the arms and ammunition in military

Thoresen said he had been a gun collector since his youth. He was once a guest of the Green Berets at Fort Bragg, N.C., a fact which caused speculation he was collecting the arsenal for some military or paramilitary use.

Federal authorities said they could find no evidence that he was an agent of paramilitary groups, American security organizations or a foreign agent.

Thoresen said during his trial, held at Fresno because of publicity given his arrest in the Bay Area, that he had changed hobbies and was collecting model railroads.

Thoresen was sentenced to six months in jail and fined \$4000. His wife was fined \$4000 and placed on probation. All sentences were held in abeyance, though, during the lengthy appeal.

The couple retained their mansion at 2901 Broadway in San Francisco. They had tried to sell it at one time, but their agent, Fred Braun, said yesterday they had decided to sell it only if they could find another San Francisco home.