

SF CHRONICLE

10 NOV 70

# Wife Tells of Murder Plot By Thoresen

By Charles Howe  
Chronicle Correspondent

Fresno

The late William E. Thoresen III was described by his wife as an insane monster who hired a man to murder his brother and then, a year later, killed the assassin in his Pacific Heights home in San Francisco.

Louise Thoresen, the gun czar's wife who is accused of pumping five bullets into his back here on June 10, said Thoresen, heir to a Chicago steel fortune of \$1 million, told her of the death of his brother, Richard, on the last night of his life.

Under questioning by Kenneth De Vaney, her attorney, Mrs. Thoresen said her husband hired a thug named Dale Stoddard, who killed Richard Thoresen in Chicago on Sept. 21, 1965.

### MONEY

As a result of Richard's death, Thoresen received \$510,000 in stocks, Louise received \$100,000 and their 8-year-old son Michael received \$20,000.

Her voice breaking and sometimes in tears, Mrs. Thoresen told a shocked courtroom packed with 100 spectators that her late husband told of his brother's murder when she begged him to seek psychiatric help.

"If they get me in there (a mental institution) and use any of those truth drugs on me, they'll never let me out," she said he told her.

Richard Thoresen was found shot to death in a car, a wound in his right temple. He was left handed. Police have reopened the case after originally ruling it suicide.

### DEMAND

Stoddard, she said gasping heavily, died a year later. She said Thoresen told her that Stoddard came to their Pacific Heights home and demanded more money for the job when she was out of the house.

"William said he remem-

See Back Page

### From Page 1

bered that this was the man who killed his brother. He told me: 'I hit him on the head with the hammer . . . there was blood all over the kitchen . . . I finally got a gun to put him out of his misery.' "

Mrs. Thoresen broke into harsh, guttural cries as she sat on the witness stand.

"Oh God, Oh God, Oh God . . ." she moaned. The court was temporarily recessed.

### BREAKDOWN

She broke down later when she described how she killed her husband. "I wanted him to be alive . . . I wanted him to be alive . . . he began to roll over . . . I fired the gun . . ." The court was again temporarily recessed.

Early yesterday, as the defense began its case, attorney De Vaney said he would introduce evidence indicating Thoresen washed Stoddard's body after killing him, wrapped it in a weighted sleeping bag and dumped it into the Pacific Ocean sometime in mid-1966.

De Vaney also said he would produce witnesses showing that Thoresen:

- Offered Joe Hinajose, a friend, \$250,000 to kill his parents, the wealthy Mr. and Mrs. William E. Thoresen II.

- Offered three different men various sums of money to kill Louise Thoresen. One of these men as also to kidnap her, stage a bogus "sex

orgy" somewhere in the desert and then photograph the proceedings.

- Asked a fellow prisoner in a San Francisco jail to help him commit suicide.

- Fabricated an elaborate plot to bomb Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, perhaps injuring 100 people, and then demand \$2.5 million on pain of another bombing.

- Concocted a plot to kidnap the child of a debtor and "snuff one child" if the man did not make good on his bills.

- Assaulted one of his many attorneys badly enough to send the man to the hospital.

- Attacked his wife with instruments including an electrical cattle prod, boxing gloves, a leather riding crop and, shortly before his death, attempted to plunge a big steel knife into her vagina.

- Asked two men at various times to burn down the family mansion at 2801 Broadway in San Francisco.

With as much composure as she could muster, Mrs. Thoresen, still handsome after five months in prison, said of her husband: "He was insane . . ."

### 'HELL'

She described her last year with Thoresen as "a living hell" that included being hounded by private detectives when she attempted to flee, attempts to compel her to take suicidal doses of sleeping pills and Thoresen's paranoiac belief that she was having an affair with Hinajose, a mutual acquaintance.

Mrs. Thoresen said she did spend some six weeks living at Hinajose's place last year after Thoresen beat her so badly she was forced to go to the hospital.

But she denied she was ever intimate with him. Nevertheless, she testified that Thoresen this year sent an ex-felon, one Harold Bell, from Fresno to San Francisco to kill Hinajose.

"I've done a stupid thing," she said Thoresen told her after realizing Hinajose's murder might be traced to him. The alleged assassination was called off, she said,

after Thoresen was able to get Bell on the telephone in the nick of time.

### BARBITURATES

Heavy doses of barbiturates and a bad conscience over his brother's murder began to weigh on her husband's mind until he became suicidally nihilistic, she said.

Thoresen had her write six bogus suicide letters in which she announced she was going to kill herself with sleeping pills.

The Thoresens' strange life began in the mid-1960s when Thoresen, with an unexplained penchant bordering on a mania, began buying up tons of munitions ranging from cannon to machine guns.

He and his wife were convicted on Federal gun charges here in 1969: their conviction had been sent back for review from a higher court a day before his death.

Mrs. Thoresen said that news of what amounted to a reprieve hardly mattered to her husband; that he had been alternately drugged on barbiturates and crazed with blind rages for months.

### BEATINGS

Without provocation, she said, he would beat her with his fists, usually in the kitchen or the bedroom, "but always quietly, everything was done in a whisper."

With a morbid sense of decency, Thoresen usually closed the door to their son's bedroom before he began his silent assaults.

When De Vaney asked her why she did not contact the police, she said: "Because who would believe me . . . and if he got out he would come after me."

Moreover, she said that at one point Thoresen had threatened to wipe out his entire family.

"I was so terrified . . . I had reached the conclusion he would carry out his threats . . . I was unable to think . . . I knew if I ran many people would be killed and with their lives in my hand I couldn't go anywhere."