

EXHIBIT A

Chicago Tribune Article  
March 21, 1960

sons, some witnesses and some suspects, will be examined on the polygraph.

Neither Warren nor Chief Morris would say how many of these were actual suspects. Warren admitted to reporters that authorities had no one under surveillance at this time, altho he said they were "running continuous checks on a number of persons."

All of the lie-test candidates live in the Starved Rock area.

Schaich's report covered mainly the twine which was found around the wrists of Mrs. Murphy and Mrs. Oetting. This was 20-strand twine, used for tying parcels, deep freeze packages, and meat in butcher shops, he said.

#### More Twine Found

He reported that another piece of twine was found near the mouth of the cave in St. Louis canyon. This was a 20-strand length, tied with a "granny knot" [a mistied

square knot] to a piece of 10-strand twine. Twine on the wrists of the women also had several knots at the end, he reported.

One important factor in Schaich's report was that the twine on the wrists of two of the victims appeared to have been cut. One segment appeared to be severed with a sharp knife, and another segment appeared to have been sawed and then pulled apart.

Both Warren and Morris speculated from this that the women might have been tied together at one time and then the bonds cut apart. They said the fact that the twine on their wrists was loose indicated they might have worked out of their severed bonds.

#### Fingernail Clews

Warren and Morris said that Schaich has not yet analyzed fingernail scrapings

# EXHIBIT B

March 1960  
Handwritten Notes

Meeting of 3-20-60  
Packing up

7:00 P.M.

1. notify Staff & Chief
2. take handwritten statement, have Dr. look at  $\Delta$  by  $\Delta$
3. take photos showing no dress.
3. Turn over to S/A for ct. rep. statement
4. re-enact crime at scene - movies by Bennett
5. take by Sexton or Doetsch for arrangement
6. take to Krueger for psycho exam.
7. take  $\Delta$  to motel or hotel

### Schrick

#### A - Murphy

Cord around wrist

had hair was  
taken from all 3  
ladies

twine not

Cord

~~hair around wrist of~~  
no tension on cord -  
no marks around wrist  
cord loose  
cord could have gone  
around both wrists  
cord ends were cut  
20 strand twine

#### B - Lindquist

pieces of  
Cord were found

rubber baby B in  
blood. This was  
2 different sizes of  
cord, knitted together  
20 strand + 10 strand  
same type of twine

#### C - Qatting

Cord around wrist

hair around hand of C.  
2 small splinters of wood  
in hair towards crown but  
to left.

no tension on cord - no marks  
on wrist.

Cord could have gone around  
both wrists.

Cord ends were cut - ~~was~~

20 strand twine

hair found on hand could have  
~~been~~ come from hand of any of the  
women.

# EXHIBIT C

Glen Comatti  
Criminal Trial Testimony

GLEN COMATTI,

called as a witness for the People, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY

MR. RACCUGLIA:

Q Would you state your name, please?

A Glen Comatti.

Q And where do you reside, sir?

A Oglesby.

Q And what is your business or occupation?

A Chef at Starved Rock Lodge.

Q How long have you been so employed, sir?

A At the lodge?

Q Yes.

A Ten, eleven years.

Q Now, Mr. Comatti, I direct your attention to the month of March, 1960, and ask you whether or not you have an independent recollection of working during that month?

A Yes, sir, I worked.

Q Now, I direct your attention to the 15th

of March, 1960, which would be a Tuesday, and ask you whether or not you have an independent recollection of working on that day?

A Yes, sir, I worked.

Q Now, Mr. Comatti, do you have any other duties in conjunction with your duties as chef?

A I do all the ordering, buying.

Q And you are somewhat of a superior in the kitchen, is that correct?

A Yes, sir.

Q And how many chefs do you have?

A At the time I had two with me.

Q I see. And they designated you as the head chef, is that correct?

A That is correct.

Q Now, Mr. Comatti, in your duties as chef, you stated that you also did the buying and selling.

Did you or -- was it under your direction to order string for the lodge?

A Yes, sir, I ordered the string.

Q And was that personally, sir?

A Yes, sir, unless it is ordered on a day off that I am not there, and then I leave a notice

that it will be ordered.

Q Now, is the string that you order an integral part of your kitchen?

A Yes, sir.

Q And what is it used for?

A Well, that there in general almost everything.

Q I see.

Now, where would this string be located, sir, in the kitchen area?

A Well, I have it, a ball kept in a can hanging right by the meat block at all times, and then there is a box in the back where all the string is kept.

Q And would that be accessible to anyone in the kitchen?

A Anyone in the kitchen.

Q Is there a certain kind of string that you order, Mr. Comatti?

A Well, at the time that this here -- I had two kinds of string.

Q I see.

A A 12- and a 20-ply.



Q Are you quite familiar with the appearance of the string you used?

A Yes, sir.

Q Do you use it frequently in your job?

A Almost every day.

Q Now, Mr. Comatti, I hand you what has been marked as People's Exhibit No. 74 for identification.

A Yes, sir.

Q And I will ask that you examine this.

MR. MC NAMARA: Now, your Honor, I am going to object to this.

There is an improper foundation.

This man is not an expert.

THE WITNESS: This is similar to the string we used.

THE COURT: Just a minute.

MR. RACCUGLIA: Just a minute, Mr. Comatti.

THE COURT: Just a minute, just a minute.

What was that question?

(Pending question read by the reporter.)

THE COURT: Well, that is no question.

You asked him to examine it.

MR. RACCUGLIA: I showed him People's Exhibit No. 74 for identification, and I asked him to examine it.

THE COURT: Well, the objection will be overruled to that. He may examine it.

MR. RACCUGLIA: Q Now, Mr. Comatti, have you examined People's Exhibit No. 74 for identification?

A Yes.

Q I ask you whether or not you have ever seen string similar to this in the kitchen at the lodge?

MR. MC NAMARA: Now, I object to that, your Honor.

MR. RACCUGLIA: Your Honor, if I might say a word, this man is in charge of ordering all of the string at the lodge.

He is the fellow that handles it frequently in his duties.

We are not asking him to give an expert opinion as to the strain or stress of the string. However, I think that even as a layman

he is qualified to compare this cord with the cord that they had at the lodge.

Furthermore, it would be the only way that we could get that to the jury.

MR. MC NAMARA: Well, now, let me say something as to your getting it to the jury.

Your Honor, this string is apparently an integral part of their case. They have had it examined by the Sheriff, who testified that it came off the wrist of the dead woman.

It is common knowledge that the defendant worked at Starved Rock Lodge, and I am certainly going to object strenuously to letting them put a man on to testify that this piece of common, ordinary string, of which I am sure there are probably 2,000 varieties, I am not going to let my defendant be tied up on such flimsy evidence.

I strenuously object.

MR. RACCUGLIA: Well, I strenuously object to his remarks to the Court which are prejudicial to the jury.

MR. MC NAMARA: If they want to bring in an

expert to compare the two kinds of string, that is another matter.

MR. RACCUGLIA: Now, Judge --

MR. RICHARDSON: Judge --

THE COURT: Are you finished?

I will hear one at a time.

Are you finished?

MR. MC NAMARA: I am for the time being.

MR. RICHARDSON: Your Honor --

MR. RACCUGLIA: Judge, the defense counsel is attacking this question solely on the credibility of the testimony that is being extracted from this witness, no legal reasoning whatsoever. He is invading and asking the Court to invade the purview of the jury.

It is within the jury's province.

He can testify that this cord is similar, the same as the cord that came from the kitchen at the lodge.

Whether this is flimsy evidence or substantial evidence is not a ground for objection.

It is up to these twelve people

sitting here in the jury box to determine that particular point, whether it is good or bad, and I believe that he has a right legally to state whether or not it is similar.

His objection is that it is not -- it is flimsy, but that is no legal objection, your Honor. That is a conclusion on the part of the defense counsel.

THE COURT: My ruling will be that the witness may answer.

I think that the question goes to the weight of the evidence or rather, the objection goes to the weight of the evidence rather than to its admissibility.

MR. RACCUGLIA: Thank you, your Honor.

THE COURT: Read the question back, and you may answer the question.

(Pending question read by  
the reporter.)

THE COURT: You may answer.

THE WITNESS: A Yes, sir.

MR. RACCUGLIA: Q Mr. Comatti, do you know  
Chester Otto Weger?

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY

MR. MC NAMARA:

Q Mr. Comatti, you stated that this string was similar to what is used down there?

A That is right.

Q But you can't of your own knowledge say that this is the same string that came from your kitchen, can you?

A No.

Q In fact, it is very common string, isn't it?

A Well, I don't know about that.

Q Well, now, in your experience as a buyer, wouldn't you say that this is a very common type of string?

A Yes.

Q It is?

A It is.

Q And it can be obtained almost any place, can't it?

A I buy from a couple or three different companies.

# EXHIBIT D

Edward Werhand  
Criminal Trial Testimony

THE COURT: Good morning.

THE JURY: Good morning, Judge.

MR. RICHARDSON: Good morning, your Honor.

MR. RACCUGLIA: Good morning, your Honor.

MR. MC NAMARA: Good morning, sir.

THE COURT: All your next witness.

MR. RACCUGLIA: The People will call Mr.  
Werhand.

THE CLERK: Raise your right hand, please.

(Witness duly sworn.)

EDWARD F. WERHAND,

called as a witness for the People, having been  
first duly sworn, was examined and testified as  
follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY

MR. RACCUGLIA:

Q Would you state your name, please?

A Edward F. Werhand.

Q And where do you reside, Mr. Werhand?

A 9701 South Hamlin Avenue, Evergreen Park,  
Illinois.

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Q And what is your business or occupation?

A I am office manager for the B. A. Railton Company, wholesale grocers of Chicago.

Q What do your duties consist of, sir?

A I am office manager and in charge of accounting for the company.

Q Now, Mr. Werhand, I direct your attention to the year 1959 and ask you whether or not you had occasion to receive orders from Mr. Nicholas Spiros at the Starved Rock State Park?

A Yes, we did.

Q Now, do you have an independent recollection of the date of those orders?

A A varied amount of dates, but the one I have in mind particularly is September 14th.

Q And that would be 1959?

A 1959, yes, sir.

Q Do you have an independent recollection of what that order consisted of?

A It consisted of four or five varied items with the addition of some twine which was also on that order.

Q Do you know the nature of the twine?

A 20-pound-weight twine, half-pound balls.

Q I see.

Now, did you have occasion to receive or fill an order for Mr. Spiros subsequent to September 14th, 1959?

A Yes.

Q And would you state that date?

A Well, we had orders, many orders from Mr. Spiros for various items including twine prior to September the 14th.

Q Well, subsequent to --

A Subsequent, yes. Subsequent to September 14th, also.

Q Now, would you have occasion to, in the interim period from September 14th, 1959, until March 14th, 1959, did you have occasion to in your filling of orders, send Mr. Spiros additional twine?

A Not to my knowledge, sir.

Q Then to the best of your knowledge, the order on September 14th, 1959, would be the only time that you included twine in your order up to

March 14th?

A Yes, sir.

Q Now, Mr. Werhand, do you manufacture your own twine?

A No, we purchase our twine.

We act as a distributor only.

Q I see. And who did you purchase your twine from?

A From a J. L. Duggan Company in Chicago.

MR. RACCUGLIA: I see.

You may cross examine.

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY

MR. MC NAMARA:

Q Now how many different kinds of twine do you list for sale?

A We have perhaps three different types of twine. They come in various sizes, however, but it is practically the same twine.

Q Can you just tell us what the difference might be, if any?

A They do come in half-pound balls, one-pound

balls, and two and a half pound cones, but it would be the same 20-weight cotton twine.

Q Would you say this was your best seller?

A No. No, we are not in the twine business. We handle this merely as a convenience for our customers.

Q And do you have any sort of a catalog that you have of your various products that you offer for sale listed in it?

A No, we have no catalog, only through our sales representatives.

Q Are you in a position to furnish any kind of twine that might be requested of you?

A No, we don't carry that varied a stock. We only have perhaps two or three different kinds of twine in our whole stock.

As I say we are not basically in the twine business. We are a wholesale grocer and we only handle twine as a convenience.

Q As a sideline; however groceries is your main occupation?

A That is right.

Q And is there anything particularly

unusual about this particular 20-pound twine?

A No, sir.

MR. MC NAMARA: I have no further questions.

THE COURT: That is all.

Thank you, Mr. Werhand.

(Witness excused.)

MR. RACCUGLIA: The people will call J. L. Duggan.

THE COURT: Duggan?

MR. RACCUGLIA: Yes.

THE CLERK: Raise your right hand, please.

(Witness duly sworn.)

# EXHIBIT E

James Duggan  
Criminal Trial Testimony

MR. RACCUGLIA: The People will call J. L. Duggan.

THE COURT: Duggan?

MR. RACCUGLIA: Yes.

THE CLERK: Raise your right hand, please.

(Witness duly sworn.)

**JAMES L. DUGGAN,**

called as a witness for the People, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY

MR. RACCUGLIA:

Q Would you state your name, please?

A My name is James L. Duggan.

Q And where do you reside, Mr. Duggan?

A 518 South East Avenue, Oak Park.

Q And what is your business or occupation, sir?

A I am in the cordage business.

Q Pardon?

A The cordage business; J. L. Duggan is the name and our business is, we sell twine, ropes and yarns.

Q I see. Now, I direct your attention to the year 1959, and ask you whether or not you had occasion to fill any orders for the B. A. Railton Company?

A In January of 1959 we ordered our mill to ship 200 pounds of 20-ply cotton twine in half-pound balls to B. A. Railton.

Q And I didn't get the name of that twine. What do they call that?

A 20-ply cotton twine.

Q 20-ply cotton twine?

A Yes, sir.

Q Now, do you manufacture your own twine, sir?

A No, we are distributors for several mills.

Q I see.

Could you state in particular



where you received the twine that you shipped  
to Railton Company, if you know?

A It came from January & Wood, in Maysville,  
Kentucky.

MR. RACCUGLIA: You may cross examine.

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY

MR. MC NAMARA:

Q How many different manufacturers do you buy from, Mr. Duggan?

A Of this particular item?

Q Yes.

A Just January & Wood.

Q And you just sell to distributors, is that right?

A We are a distributor and we sell to wholesalers. We sell it to places like Railton or industrial accounts such as Sears, Roebuck.

Q Large distributors?

A That is right.

Q You wouldn't sell to an individual meat market or anything like that?

A No, no.

Q Unless they were a large user?

A That is right, yes.

MR. MC NAMARA: I have no further questions.

THE COURT: That is all, Mr. Duggan.

Thank you.

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# EXHIBIT F

Craig Armstrong  
Criminal Trial Testimony

CRAIG ARMSTRONG,

called as a witness for the Defendant, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY

MR. MC NAMARA:

Q Will you state your name, please?

A Craig M. Armstrong.

Q And what is your occupation?

A I am a lawyer.

Q Have you formerly held any official jobs for LaSalle County?

A Yes, sir, I was First Assistant State's Attorney from September 1, 1958, to December 1, 1960.

Q You know the defendant, Chester Otto Weger, here?

A Yes, sir, I do.

Q Calling your attention to September 28, 1960, --

A What date was that? Was that Tuesday or Wednesday?

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razor that he usually shaved with, and he said, "Yes."

I also looked through all the drawers and all the cupboards in the kitchen, and also through the doors and shelves in the cupboards, and I looked for string.

I found several pieces of string. Most of it was a very fine cord like you have -- you might have small packages wrapped with. None of it would be 20-ply cord which was what I was looking for.

And in one bedroom I found a blanket with some string on it. I took that string and I counted the cord. It was 12-ply cord, and I asked him where he got the cord, and he said it belonged to his uncle, and the blanket had been used as a seat cover on a car.

There were four pieces of cord on the blanket, and then I was trying to pull off one of the cords, and Chester came to me and helped, and pulled the cords off.

I had talked to him that night about string tricks, and he told me, "Yes," and

EXHIBIT G

Peter Ferracuti  
Editorial

## COMMENTARY

# No doubt that Weger is guilty

And 3 local men  
deserve the  
credit

By **PETTER F. FERRACUTI**  
COMMENTARY

As a former assistant state's attorney, I remain firmly convinced that Chester Weger did commit the unspeakable crimes resulting in the deaths



Ferracuti

of three women at Starved Rock State Park in March 1960. At the time of the murders I was assigned to prosecute major criminal cases involving the La Salle County State's Attorney's office. Indelibly I remember the call on March 15, 1960, informing me the bodies of three murdered women were found within a recessed opening in a cliff at the base of St. Louis Canyon.

I immediately went to Hulse Funeral Home where the bodies were side by side on gurneys. I recall vividly in one corner of the room a blood-encrusted limb that in thawing was creating a puddle of obvious red blood and snow melt. There was apparent a bloody hand print embedded upon the silk stocking that covered the upper thigh of one of the women. My first thought was whether that print could identify the murderer. As it turned out, there was no technology then capable of doing that.

Within hours there followed a crush of big city newspaper reporters. Because these murders involved prominent wives of Borg Warner executives, there also descended upon La Salle County the FBI, the Illinois State Police, and the Illinois Bureau of Investigation, volunteering to assist in solving this crime.

Several months passed in 1960 without any progress. Finally, newspaper reporters and all outside investigative agencies left, convinced the crime would remain unsolved.

Unquestionably, State's Attorney Harland Warren and two La Salle County Sheriff's department deputies, the late William Dummitt and the late Wayne Hess, by their persistence together, solved this crime where the FBI, the State Police and the FBI had failed.

I recall Harland, in an analytical way, observing there was actually only one piece of evidence foreign to the crime scene, obviously brought there by the murderer, that being the beige butcher's twine used to bind the women's wrists with nautical knots. This became the primary focus of their investigation.

To the naked eye, the twine appeared to be the kind used practically everywhere, but under microscope the twine had embedded colored fragments of other dyed twine, otherwise not visible. The inquiry now was to determine who manufactured such colored twine. We ultimately found a plant in Kentucky and one of its customers was in fact Starved Rock Lodge, where the same butcher's twine was used in the dining room kitchen.

The investigation turned toward kitchen employees, one of whom was Chester Weger.

To ensure reliability, John Reid, pioneer inventor of the lie detector test, was asked by Harland to test several kitchen employees. After Chester was tested, the lie detector operator came out of the room and advised, "I believe we have the murderer."

There was nothing but circumstantial evidence and the lie test could not be used as evidence. However, now we could focus our limited resources on this suspect.

Other evidence included a torn-up letter located on one of the trails above St. Louis Canyon. When reconstructed it revealed the writer to be a woman Marine from California, the letter being addressed to Weger. Weger had also been in the Marines stationed in California and, of course, Marines are taught nautical knots.

Other information was gathered, including the statement of a fellow dishwasher at the Lodge who remembered kidding Chester at the time of the murders about scratches on his face, only suggesting he must have been careless shaving.

Harland had determined to run for re-election for La Salle County state's attorney in November 1960. His opponent was attorney Robert Richardson, a former FBI agent, who used his background to suggest he was better qualified to solve this crime.

By late fall of 1960 considerable circumstantial evidence had been compiled, strongly pointing to Weger, and it was obvious that an arrest before the election would practically ensure the re-election of Warren. But arresting Weger before the election might suggest he was being made a scapegoat to ensure Harland's re-election. We therefore opted to arrest Chester after the election, hoping he might confess, ensuring the conviction. Unfortunately, Harland lost the election.

During the lame duck period following Warren's defeat, the plan was to confront Chester with several pieces of circumstantial evidence, followed ultimately by his Marine girlfriend and lastly his mother. The plan was to arrest Chester about 6 p.m. at an early date after the election, and transport him to the courthouse into the presence of an official court reporter, Josephine Thompson,

along with the two deputies only.

Harland and I were in an office across the street above the old Ottawa Savings and Loan. We communicated by telephone with the deputies as the interrogation proceeded throughout the evening. Dr. Rex Taggart was standing by to do an immediate physical exam of Chester if he confessed, to negate that any physical force was used.

The interrogation continued without success until after midnight when the last two steps of the plan were in place. Ultimately, it was Chester's mother who implored him to confess.

In confessions one looks for knowledge no one else could possibly know except the murderer himself. Chester explained that he had moved the bodies into a hidden position under a cliff crevice at St. Louis Canyon because he had seen a red airplane flying over and thought they might see the bodies. The deputies checked logs of surrounding airports and determined that local contractor Homer Chabonneau had in fact been flying his red airplane over Starved Rock at the time of the murders.

This was the single fact that irrefutably convicted Chester, though he later attempted to recant his confession.

Chester unquestionably was the murderer and his voluntary confession was a true statement of the encounter.

Only Harland Warren, the late William Dummitt and the late Wayne Hess solved this crime and thereby ensured the conviction of Weger. Ironically, the successor State's Attorney

Robert Richardson, had it all laid out for him at the time of the trial by three individuals who had never been FBI agents, and Warren had sacrificed a certain re-election by postponing the arrest of Weger to catch a murderer.