

# TESTIMONY IN THE HOBBS BRIBERY CASE

MISS PLUNKETT MAKES A SENATORIAL WITNESS AGAINST STATE SENATOR HOBBS.

## POSES AS FRIEND COMPELLED TO TESTIFY

Says "It Was Over My Phone That Hobbs Telephoned to Castleman."

Vicksburg, Miss., Dec. 27.—"It was over my phone that Hobbs telephoned Castleman. Hobbs told me he was in this fight to the death. I was afraid Hobbs would shoot the governor. Hobbs said they 'got' him."

With these damaging statements delivered from the witness stand by Miss Mattie Plunkett, librarian at the Mississippi State Library, the State in the opinion of the prosecuting attorneys, greatly strengthened its case against Senator Hobbs.

This witness had been his confidential friend and advisor, and she was corroborating the testimony of the Governor of the State.

Shortly after 8 p. m. the State closed its case and the defense announced that Senator Hobbs and Mayor Sweb, J. Taylor, of Jackson, would be called Monday and the summing up would then be started.

The day had moved along smoothly for the defense and it was expected that the testimony of Lieutenant Governor Bilbo had added it materially. It had been rumored about that Governor Brewer was sending a train load of witnesses, and quite a number of them came. They testified to the good character of Steve Castleman, the Belmont man, who Agie Hobbs solicited and received a bribe from him, and another trainload, more or less was on hand to testify that Castleman's reputation for truth and veracity was not good in the community in which he lives.

By common consent the defendant had had the better of the argument, and it was expected that the State could hope for a "hung jury." The attorneys for the defense and the accused senator were jubilant; they had made out a strong case.

Hobbs Flashed as the Trial Went On.

When just as the shades of evening were deepening and the lawyers had to draw into the circle of electric light from above their table, like a bolt from the blue, Miss Plunkett whisked down the aisle and took the witness stand.

The most tensely dramatic situation in the trial was at hand, and, unexpectedly, this was felt by the best informed spectators in the courtroom. As the state librarian swore to tell the truth—the whole truth—the silence was absolute.

A jurymen stirred in his seat. A representative of the people of three counties of the State of Mississippi was on trial, charged with accepting a bribe. The governor of the state had taken the stand against him, and the lieutenant governor, jointly accused, had attempted to save the world. Now, his friend and confident was pointing the accusing finger.

Not two feet away from the woman in the case sat the accused legislator, flushed to the roots of his sparse black hair, and with his keen, piercing eyes glued on the twelve men in whom his fate is locked. It was the first time he had showed emotion.

Minister Proved Defense Witness.

The one woman in Mississippi, who could affectively support the indictments against him, was baring the alleged secrets to the jury and a crowded courtroom.

A few minutes before he sat un-moved, while the friend of his youth, classmate and former companion pilloried him before the world. Now, in the sacred traditions treasured up in Mississippi college had been cast to the wind when Rev. Homer H. Webb, a Baptist minister from Hattiesburg, told the jury the senator had talked of the county bill and the use of money even before the legislature of 1912 met.

Close upon the heels of this came the woman who had said he had told her all, and asked her to intercede with the governor in his behalf and whom, she claimed, he threatened with a pistol.

Backed against the wall, according to her testimony, thrown out by his alleged false friends, it was to Miss Plunkett Hobbs looked for sympathy and advice. She gave it freely and then aired both sides on the state world.

Miss Plunkett has been a librarian for the past fourteen years. She is said to know more about Mississippi politics than anyone else in the state. About her has been welded one of the bitterest political fights of recent times. Miss Plunkett is the unofficial "Bunt" of Mississippi, and, it is said by Bilbo adherents, she has been a "putting the strings" during the present administration.

Her Story Backs Up the Governor's.

The story told by Miss Plunkett corroborated the governor's with the exception of his statement that she

had informed him Hobbs was going to run away. She explained this discrepancy by saying the governor had misunderstood her. She meant Hobbs was about to leave Jackson.

Beginning by informing the jury and the world in general that she was the best friend the accused senator had, and that "she would rather die than have to tell it all," Miss Plunkett plunged into a thrilling narrative of Mississippi politics of the past year or two.

She knew Senator Hobbs was in a "fix," although he had not told her just what it was. She wanted to patch it up in order to do her friend a good turn, and spare Mississippi another scandal. Pressure had been brought to bear upon her to keep out of the trial. Some one who was in the courtroom when she was testifying, she said, had warned her to keep her mouth shut.

Last Sunday, the day after the trial began, she declared that Senator Hobbs had come to her home in Jackson, and pleaded and then threatened, displaying a pistol. But her hand was forced and, reluctantly, she was "blurted it all out."

The name of Miss Mattie Plunkett was called just before 5 p. m. A middle-aged woman, medium height, of the build usually described as muscular, with sharp, clear-cut face and quick-moving falcon eyes behind her rimless spectacles, took the witness stand. She was not apparently disturbed by anything she might have confured up as an ordeal, as the average woman does in similar situations. She was mistress of the situation and nobody knew it better than she did.

Swears Hobbs Asked Her to "See" Brewer.

"Do you know Senator Hobbs?" she was asked.

"Yes," came the quick reply, with a fleeting glance toward the senator on her right.

"Tell the jury if you made any engagement with Governor Brewer to meet Senator Hobbs Thanksgiving day, last."

"I asked the governor," Miss Plunkett began, "if he'd seen him. The governor had been sick and could not see Hobbs. The senator did not press me that day to arrange an interview, but later I saw the governor and he still was ill. I blurted out, 'Hobbs wants to talk to you.' The governor began to say: 'If he thinks Bilbo—the governor said, 'No, it isn't that, I told him. They have kicked him out down here at the 'Issue Office.' He wants to see you.'"

"Hobbs had told me they kicked him out. He said it was some Meridian influence," added Miss Plunkett.

"What article was it they wanted to publish that you told the governor about?"

"The one Robertson (a Jackson newspaper correspondent) wanted to publish about the Castleman matter."

Hobbs "Threatened" to Tell the Truth.

"What effect, Miss Plunkett, did Hobbs say the article would have?"

"That it would throw the blame on him."

"What did Hobbs say then?"

"That he would come out in the picture and tell the truth, threatening them."

"Threatening to tell the truth?"

"Yes."

"Did you make any engagements with Brewer?"

"Yes, I told Hobbs the governor would see him," answered Miss Plunkett.

"I had told the governor I wished he would see Hobbs before he gets away, and I meant just out of town. The governor misunderstood. You know how easy these things happen. Hobbs was just going to leave Jackson. I also told Governor Brewer Hobbs was afraid the office was 'wired.' The governor said there are no wires here, and he talked in a most kindly way about it, and said to bring him up."

"Threatened to tell the truth?"

"Yes."



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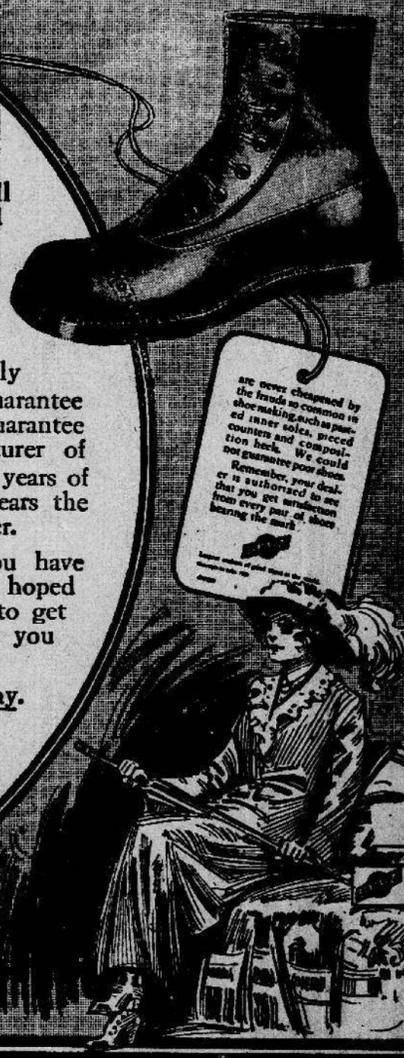
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confidence, and I'd rather die than tell it."

"Did he tell you about the meeting in Vicksburg?"

"Yes."

Urged to Tell All She Knew.

"He never made any secret about it?" Mr. Cassidy asked.

"No."

"Did he convey in any way that he was guilty?"

"Mr. Cassidy, he did not have to. I knew behind it."

"Did he make any statement to you?"

"I think he said they got him, or he got his foot in it. I didn't think he said anything about Bilbo."

"That is all he said from which you have drawn your conclusions?"

"Well, he (with a nod of her head to Senator Hobbs, whose ears were fiery red) wouldn't want me to tell it."

"Tell it, Miss Mattie," urged the district attorney.

Witness Forced to Tell a Minute.

"Did Hobbs ever threaten you?"

Displayed Pistol to Her, She Says.

"He said they just chopped off little heads like mine comin' and goin'."

"The second time I thought so. I told Mr. Taylor that Hobbs showed me his pistol twice. And all the time I was his friend and was ready to stand by him."

At this juncture the witness had to pause for breath. She reached out for a newspaper with which she fanned herself nervously during the remainder of her testimony.

"Did Senator Hobbs ever threaten you?" continued Attorney Cassidy.

"He told me how his friend would tear up my salary."

"Any personal violence?"

Good Thing Mayor Came, She Declares.

"No; only the pistol. I wouldn't want more than a pistol after me."

"When Mr. Taylor came to your home, how long did he stay?"

"A good while, and I want to say that he was fair and square as could be. He was perfectly lovely to me. It was a good thing he came in."

"This concluded the testimony offered by the state in rebuttal, and after waiting the coming of another witness for half an hour the state announced, when he arrived, that they would close.

As Miss Plunkett was leaving the courtroom she leaned over Lieutenant Governor Bilbo, who had heard her story, and said in a stage whisper:

state elections on the same day. The senatorial election campaign would keep Vardaman busy.

Judge Powell was called by the state as soon as the defense had closed its case.

He was not permitted to address the jury, but he told the court that Bilbo had solicited his good offices in the matter of effecting the arrangement between Bilbo and Brewer for their mutual advantage. He denied the proffer of his automobile for Bilbo to ride to the place of meeting.

"Mr. Cassidy, he did not refuse to refuse because 'no redneck refuses a chance to ride in an automobile.'"

Increased at this statement from Powell, Lieutenant Governor Bilbo gave out this statement during the noon recess:

"Having just heard Judge Powell testify to an infamous political lie, I have this to say: that it is patent on its face, which every man, woman and child in Mississippi knows, that Senator Vardaman and myself have been political friends ever since I have been in the public eye, and that there could be no reason on earth for me to think that Senator Vardaman dislikes me."

Replying to Lieutenant Governor Bilbo's card in regard to my testimony. Of course, I expected Bilbo to deny what I said in regard to his double dealing. I never knew a criminal yet who would own up to his rascality when he was caught red-handed. What I stated was the truth and Bilbo knows it.

"He knows that Senator Vardaman has never had any use for him since he claimed to have been bribed by Duncanson, and yet did not turn over the money to the Legislative caucus when he knew that such a course would have elected Vardaman on the next ballot."

"He knows that Vardaman knows that when he defeated the Appellate Court bill, in the last Legislature, which Vardaman had endorsed, that on the night after the defeat of the bill he had a wine supper and gloried over the defeat of the White Chief."

"I was one of Senator Vardaman's campaign advisors. Introduced him at his last speaking in the campaign, have always been and am now his supporter and intimate friend, and think I know his feelings in the matter."

"I have sent better men than Bilbo to the penitentiary when I was judge, and I am not disturbed by his foul-mouthed vituperations."

Lieutenant Governor Bilbo, when shown Judge Powell's acrimonious reply, made the following addition to his statement:

"Brewer's graft agent, Judge Powell, in reply to my charge that he lied when he stated today that I was ever unfriendly to Senator Vardaman or was such a fool as to desire a combination with Brewer, who has been dead politically since the Legislature of 1912, pretends conclusively that he is not only a liar but one of the dirty conspirators to destroy Bilbo in Mississippi politics."

"Powell knows when I am Governor of Mississippi I will cut off his graft. I will answer his specific charges later. I am too busy just now digging political graves and preparing for the funeral of Brewer, Powell and his whole damned political family."

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Reduces Rate and Increases Weight For New Year.

Packages Up to Twenty and Fifty Will Now Be Cared For.

Effective Jan. 1, 1914, the reduced postage rates and increased weight limit on parcel post packages will be inaugurated throughout the country.

Where formerly shippers were restricted to 11-pound packages, the limit in the weight has now been raised to 20 and 50 pounds, the latter sized packages being admitted as fourth-class mail matter in the first and second zones. In order that the public might become acquainted with the new rates, Postmaster A. J. Leonard, of New Orleans, caused the following circular to be printed:

Local Rate—Five cents for the first pound and 1 cent for each additional two pounds or fraction thereof.

First and Second Zones—Five cents for the first pound and 1 cent for each additional pound or fraction thereof.

LITTLE BLACK BANDITS.

New Orleans, Dec. 31.—When Sergeant William Anderson and Officer Fudger, of the Twelfth Precinct, led two colored boys, one 9 years old, the other, 10 years, into the Juvenile Court late yesterday evening, a confession came from one of them that it was their gang that had taken Mrs. Bernard Joseph's purse containing a check for \$1,000 and \$35 in cash.

The boys, Gus Griffin, 2318 Josephine, and James Casler, 2704 Josephine, were held under bond for trial before Judge Andrew H. Wilson.

Of the money in the purse the sum of \$7.50 was recovered. The rest had been spent by the quartet of little negroes; the two boys caught having purchased velocipedes with their share of the money. The police have the names of the boys' companions, and their arrest was expected last night.

Mrs. Joseph Claimed her purse was snatched while she was standing in Kellers' Market, at St. Andrew and South Robertson streets, that it was their gang that they found it in the market. The officers believe otherwise.

UNFAIR TO THE DRUGGIST.

The Old Joke About "Something Just as Good" Doesn't Apply to This Drug Store.

You have probably heard dozens of times the old story that a drug store was a place to "get something just as good." There is at least one druggist in the world that you can't say this about.

It is certain that an inferior article will never be substituted for a guaranteed one by City Drug Store. Take for instance a safe, reliable remedy for constipation and liver trouble, Dodson's Liver Tonic. This marvelous vegetable liquid has proved so satisfactory a liver stimulant and reliever of biliousness, and to entirely take the place of calomel without any danger of restriction of habits or diet, that there are dozens of preparations springing up with imitations of its claims.

But Dodson's Liver Tonic's guarantee to do all that is claimed for it, and if you are not satisfied with it, City Drug Store will hand your money back with a smile. Any person going to this store for a bottle of Dodson's Liver Tonic will be sure of getting a large bottle of this genuine remedy in exchange for his half dollar.—Advertisement.

TWO SCALDED WHEN ENGINE EXPLODES.

Lake Charles, Dec. 31.—Two men were terribly scalded and two more were a distance of probably fifty feet, when the engine of extra train No. 248 exploded on the Kansas City Southern Railroad, twenty-five miles north of Lake Charles, at 8:50 o'clock last night. The cause of the explosion is not known, but an investigation is being made by the railway officials today. The two injured men are Conductor R. L. Williams and Head Brakeman Glen F. Thompson. Engineer D. L. Stone and Fireman Charles Harrell were thrown a great distance and considerably shaken up, but not injured.

AN IDEA OF A WOMAN'S LAXATIVE.

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