

# THE MURDERERS OF MARTIN BEGNAUD IN JAIL.

TWO YOUNG FRENCHMEN NAMED  
ERNEST and ALEXIS BLANC.

Our entire population too well remembers the atrocious crime that was perpetrated during the night of April the 22nd 1896 at Scott, and which deprived us of one of the best citizens of that locality, a man admired and respected by all who knew him, this excellent man was Martin Begnaud.

Monster assassins, with barbarous characters, and with hearts blackened in iniquity, with a craving for gold, have robbed from his family a loving brother, a loving son, so much loved by these.

With no pity, and without mercy, the incarnate devils plunged the death instrument 52 times in the body of their poor, helpless victim, and not satisfied with having killed him at the first blow, were frenzied and maddened at the sight of the flowing blood and they were turned into enraged brutes, his blood they must have, and to the last drop.

God be praised however, the murderers are now in the meshes of the law, and swift, summary justice will soon be meted out to the monsters, and the wretches have now but to prepare for death.

This crime has been the source of many conjectures, two men thus far innocent, have lain in Parish dungeons for nine long months, clothing saturated with blood, and an instrument said to answer to the description of that used, it has been asserted had been found among the effects of one of these accused, and with ever so many more et ceteras thereto. Even the grand jury had found a true bill against these two parties. With the lapse of time, every thing connected with the crime became shrouded in mystery, every one seemed to be at sea when all of a sudden, the inscrutable hand of an all just and all wise Providence, guided back to the scene of their crime, the two assassins who had been travelling far and wide over the world.

Friday night last, the 1st of January, two frenchmen, brothers, by name Ernest and Alexis Blanc, arrived at the small station of Scott, and betook themselves to the plantation of Col. A. D. Boudreaux where they had worked last year. These young men having worked together on this plantation, their sudden departure shortly after the assassination raised many doubts against them.

After much vain research to find out their whereabouts, the task of locating them was given up.

Upon leaving the Parish they furnished as pretext that they had received \$50. from their tutor in France, and as theirs was a hard lot at best here, thought to ameliorate their condition by going to New Orleans where they were promised employment by a friend living on Toulouse Street. However, upon inquiry, it was ascertained they had never been to the place indicated.

As above stated, their sudden set off was looked upon as mysterious, and many were the conjectures raised against them.

They not even took the trouble or precaution to sell their share of the crop.

Two or three days prior to their departure these young men called at the office of Dr. Salles to have a day fixed for dental work, remarking that the price was no object to them, and that they wished to have first class work and material. The dentist was somewhat surprised at this mark of liberality on the part of men he knew to be in humble circumstances. However, he made an appointment with them, but the Doctor's clients failed to show up, having the white taken french leave of absence.

Immediately upon arrest, they were separated, one being placed in the Corporation jail, the other in the Parish jail. This took place on Sunday night. The day following, ex-sheriff Campbell, now an Atty at-law Sheriff Broussard, and Sinton Begnaud, called at the Corporation jail for an interview with Alexis Blanc (youngest of the two.)

Campbell propounded the following question: What have you been doing

dreaux?  
First we travelled to New Orleans, then to St. Louis, where we secured some employment in a hotel, from then to Mexico and the West, and we have tramped back here.

How much money did you have on leaving here?  
We had \$50, sent us by two friends, Messieurs Norris and Fevre.

Thereupon, says Campbell, all this is false, we know what you have been all since your departure, we have had news of you weekly, and know what you have been doing, better make a clean breast of this whole matter, tell us how much money you had and with whom divided, how much you still have on hand, and should you do this, we will protect you, and you shall leave this Parish by first train.

Thereupon he fell to thinking, saying of a sudden,—have you seen my brother? Having been answered in the negative, not one word thereafter could he gotten out of him.

Very well says Campbell, we know enough to condemn you, we are willing to grant you more time for reflection, it is now 10:30 o'clock and we will return here by 12 o'clock.

Very well says he, come back.  
At this Sheriff Broussard, Campbell and Begnaud betook themselves to the cell of the elder brother, who was taken out of the jail and brought to the Court House. The same questions were put to him. Give us an account of yourself since your departure. The same answers were made, with the difference that they had been in France.

As for the \$50 we received these of a friend in the 20 and one green bank note of \$10."

Campbell told him that he was lying, and promised him protection in case of a confession on his part.

Tell us where is the money?  
"We have spent it all" blurted out the man.

Since you admit having spent all the money, relate to us how you killed Begnaud?

Being only day laborers on a plantation we had many hours of leisure, and employed this spare time reading. Through the courtesy of Mr. Charles Breaux, a neighbor, we secured the loan of a book treating of the daring deeds of Jesse James. From reading this book originated the idea and our plans for the murder. Seeing how poor we were, and how difficult to otherwise better our situation, we made up our minds to emulate the examples inculcated by the book.

With this determination we set about following as near as possible the precepts therein laid down, and which are to the effect that, as common day laborers, it were hardly possible to arrive at much in this world, less we resorted to the commission of crimes.

For two nights we laid in wait round about the store of Martin Begnaud with the idea to take his money, but met with obstacles on both occasions.

The third night having repaired to the spot again, we found the store closed, with Martin Begnaud in the saloon of his brother only a few steps from his store we could with ease see all that was transpiring in the above saloon while we lay concealed in some tall weeds that grew in the vicinity of the store.

From our place of concealment we could see all such as were leaving the saloon, but Martin Begnaud was the one we waited to see leave. At last this latter was left alone in the saloon with his brother, and was soon on his way to his store. Our intention had been to overtake and walk in with him, but he was in the store ere we could reach the door, which he at once bolted; we feared to have missed our chance again, when one of us said, suppose we ask him for a package of tobacco.

Upon knocking at the door, Begnaud asked who was there, the answer was, Ernest and Alexis Blanc. Begnaud opened the door. As you had just come in we thought likely you might open the door to give us a package of tobacco.

Certainly answered Begnaud laughing and opening wide the door. Come in. The tobacco was near enough to Begnaud he could reach same without turning his back to us. Our intention had been to seize him at this juncture, but he seeing we failed to turn his back thought to again escape us.

It is getting on late says Begnaud justly, and it is about time I put you fellows out the store, as I'm sleepy. He accompanied us to the door, but my brother cast a look of reproach upbraiding our cowardice and I made up my mind to act. Says I, I thought I had forgotten something, we have not had any supper and am hungry, can you let us have a box of sardines? Why of course said Begnaud, come in and you may have all the sardines you please. Again, thought our courage would fail us, I noticed my brother make several futile attempts to attack. While Begnaud was wrapping up the box of sardines, my heart beat wildly, as we walked up and down the store, watching one another. We were nervous and weakened, still we were ready to pounce onto our victim.

At this juncture, my brother picked up a mouse trap and asked Begnaud to explain the mechanism of it, which he did readily, after stepping out from behind the counter. Glancing at my brother, I saw in his eye that he had decided to attack, and we both drew our pistols simultaneously and covered Begnaud, saying, make no outcry or you are a dead man. What do you wish asked Begnaud, in a quiet tone of voice? Your money open your safe at once. Begnaud seemed to think we were joking, but soon made up his mind to the contrary and opened the safe.

While my brother covered him with his pistol, I rifled the safe. I asked for the keys of the drawers but Begnaud answered there was no money. You lie says I, give up the keys at once. Without further parleying we secured a rope with which we tied his hands behind his back. We then ordered him to walk to his bed, and then tied his legs as well. A handkerchief having been placed over his mouth and eyes, again I asked him where are your keys? In a small box to the right, said he through the gag. I found the key and the amount of money obtained was 3,100 and some odd dollars.

I killed Begnaud, my hand trembled. The triangular instrument burned my hand. I shut my eyes, held firmly the instrument, and plunged it into the heart, it went in deep and met with no resistance. A deep sigh or groan was heard, and the poor man keeled over, dead. Again and again, I plunged in the instrument, but he never more moved. We found sacks in the store which we used in carrying away the money.

The instrument used was a three cornered file, found on the premises at Col. Boudreaux, which we sharpened to a keen edge.  
After the crime, the file as well as the box containing the money we secreted under a building in the yard of Col Boudreaux. This box we buried awaiting developments.  
For three weeks we laid our plans for this crime.  
Ballain and Benton having been accused and arrested for the crime, we deemed ourselves safe from all suspicion, and decided to leave the country.

Campbell and Begnaud having apprised Alexis of the confession made by his brother, he also made a full confession, saying he did not care to live longer and that trouble and sorrow had been his only portion since he had taken Begnaud's money.  
Ernest and Alexis have been transported to New Orleans, for safe keeping, and will be tried here this next February.

The file has been found in the place

indicated by the murders. The box also has been recovered and found buried, but suspended in a way the paper money should not suffer from the dampness. The money they carried in belts around their bodies.  
Ernest is 20 years, and Alexis 19 years of age.



Ernest Blanc.

Lake Charles, Jan. 6.—Parish prison inmates are not usually a happy lot but there is one man in the Lake Charles jail to-night, who is congratulating himself and clapping his long slender limbs in pure delight. He is Gustave Ludovic Ballin, arrested on April 24 1896, charged with the atrocious murder of Martin Begnaud in the little town of Scott, near Lafayette, on April 22 of the same year. He has been incarcerated ever since, under this charge, the officers having spirited him away from Lafayette and brought him here to avoid a lynching. Ballin says a copy of The Times Democrat early this morning and read of the capture of the two French peasant boys, Ernest and Alexis Blanc, and of their having confessed to the heinous work of murdering the bachelor storekeeper, Martin Begnaud. He read a little further and saw the account of his own arrest. Then it dawned upon him that he would be free. He threw the paper in the air and he shouted for joy. A smile came over the pale lips that had been almost frozen for nearly one year. At that moment there was a rush at the door and the sound of many feet. Ballin was frightened. He thought it was a mob come to lynch him. But they proved to be his friends. They were twenty of them, and they tied into the corridor shaking hands and congratulating him on his good fortune. When The Times Democrat correspondent arrive he said:  
"Yes I'm glad. I have asserted my innocence, and could not see how they arrested me on such a charge. I was in Carcero the night the crime was committed. Scott and Carcero are miles apart. I was employ by Mr. Guilbeau, in Carcero, and did some oil painting for him. I was arrested on the 24th, two days after the deed and placed in the parish jail, where I was subjected to all the indignities possible. When arrested they searched me and found no weapon, and in order to prove that I did not have any dangerous weapon whatever, I took my captors to my shop and showed my putty knife, which is a flat instrument and could not harm a babe. I have been in jail for nine months now and can hardly realize my good fortune."

Gustave Ballain is a French artist and is 30 years old.

Benton arrived in Lafayette Thursday and Ballin Friday afternoon. Both will be released on bond.

Hon. C. J. Boatner, of Louisiana, has introduced a bill in congress to increase the salaries of members of congress from \$5,000 to \$7,500, and to increase the salary of the speaker of the house from \$8,000 to \$10,000. The bill will probably never become a law. If the representatives of the people who go to Washington can not live on a salary of \$5,000, they had better learn to practice economy, and try to be more in keeping with Jeffersonian simplicity. Tribune.

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CONDITION OF THE—  
**FIRST NATIONAL BANK**  
Lafayette, in the State of Louisiana  
at the close of business.  
DEC. 31th, 1896.

RESOURCES.	
Loans and discounts	74,587.76
Overdrafts	777.35
Bank Building	5,000
Other Real Estate	1,000
Furniture and Furnitures	1,162.55
U. S. Bonds to secure circulation	12,500
Premiums on U. S. Bonds	1,125
U. S. Redemption Fund	564.50
Cash in safe	16,668.60
Cash items	546.75
Due from Banks	39,400.89
	153,476.50
LIABILITIES.	
Capital Stock	50,000
Surplus	4,000
Undivided Profits Net	3,065.85
National Bank notes	11,250
Dividends unpaid	12
Individual Deposits	82,498.79
Certificates of Deposit	5,668.74
	153,476.50

The above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.  
S. R. PARKERSON,  
CASHIER.

**NOTICE.**  
At a meeting of the Directors held Jan. 5th a dividend of Four dollars per share was declared payable Jan. 10th.  
S. R. PARKERSON,  
CASHIER.

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