

GIRLS GUILTY OF MURDER

Jury Rejects Plea Of Insanity

INDEFINITE TERM OF DETENTION

Pauline Yvonne Parker, aged 16, and Juliet Marion Hulme, aged 15 years and 10 months, were found guilty by a jury in the Supreme Court on Saturday on a charge of murdering Honora Mary Parker, mother of the accused Parker, at Christchurch on June 22.

Mr Justice Adams sentenced both accused to detention during Her Majesty's pleasure; both accused being under the age of 18.

The jury reached their decision after a retirement of two hours and a quarter.

His Honour's summing up took an hour and 20 minutes.

When the foreman gave the unanimous verdict of the jury, a man in the public gallery upstairs stood up and called out: "Your Honour, I object." The Court crier called: "Silence," and the man was quickly hustled out of the gallery by the police.

The two accused stood impassively in the dock from the time the jury returned with their verdict until after sentence was passed. At one stage Parker looked across at Hulme, whispered something and they both smiled.

There were about 125 persons present on Saturday, the sixth day of the trial. Some waited a considerable time outside the Court to see the girls leave the building but were disappointed.

After the verdict had been announced his Honour said counsel would recall that he had drawn their attention to the fact that the question of the accuseds' age might arise. Counsel submitted that there was evidence of the age of each accused.

His Honour then put it to the jury to rule on as a question of fact, and the foreman said they were all satisfied that each accused was under the age of 18. His Honour added to the record his own decision that they were both under 18.

His Honour conveyed to the jury the thanks of their country for their long and careful attention to the troublesome case with which they had had to deal for six days and which had meant enforced absence from their homes. It was usual to grant exemption from jury service for a period after such a case, he said, but, as he knew many citizens were glad to serve their country in such a way, he would not give a direction that all be exempted. Each member of the jury who desired exemption should inform the Registrar and a direction would be given that each such juror be exempt from jury service for three years.

The Crown Prosecutor (Mr A. W. Brown), and with him Mr P. T. Mahon, appeared for the Crown. Parker was represented by Dr. A. L. Haslam and Mr J. A. Wicks, and Hulme was represented by Mr T. A. Gresson and Mr B. McClelland.

Both accused pleaded not guilty and the defence was a plea of insanity.

All the evidence was completed on Friday. On Saturday counsel for the defence and the Crown addressed the jury and his Honour summed up.

COUNSEL FOR PARKER

"This long and arduous trial is drawing now to a close and defence counsel will try to assist you in coming to a conclusion," said Dr. Haslam, addressing the jury. "If in doing we omit facts which may seem important to you it is not because we do not think them important. It is because we think most of the facts will be clearly in your mind and we wish to save your time by not traversing them at length.

"You have had to listen to a great deal of evidence of an unsavoury and repulsive nature, unfortunately," said Dr. Haslam. "But it was necessary as we have got to ascertain the state of these young people's minds. It was not forward for the purpose of shocking you.

"May I suggest that you may have formed a dislike—it would be understandable if you had—to a great deal done and said by the accused," said Dr. Haslam. "But your job as members of the jury is a judicial one and you should not allow yourselves to be influenced by any preconceived ideas. I earnestly ask you to approach the evidence and your decision as impartially and dispassionately as you can.

Onus on Defence

"The fact of the killing is not disputed and I will not refer to it in detail for the honor of it will still be vivid in the minds of you all. The defence undertakes to show you that the girls were insane at the time of their act to such an extent as the law will excuse them for what they did," said Dr. Haslam. "The duty is on us, the defence, to prove to you that the girls are insane and we accept that onus. In this, it is not a matter of counting heads. It is not sufficient that you say the defence called two doctors but the Crown called three, so the medical evidence is in favour of the Crown. You must weigh up the medical evidence for both sides. You must test its credibility and its cogency. If we have satisfied you that the girls were insane when they committed the crime we are entitled to the verdict.

"Now what are the facts? We have the evidence that in their childhood both girls suffered from ill health and had more than their share of misfortune," said Dr. Haslam. "They met at school in 1952, two lonely, withdrawn girls. Both families welcomed the friendship which they thought would benefit both girls. Early in the friendship, but how early has not been determined, it began to be intense; there has been a reference to them going into the country for a bike ride and becoming so ecstatic and exalted that they stripped off some of their clothing and danced, and that they went home without some of their clothing."

"It is obvious from Parker's diaries that from its early stages this friendship assumed such an intensity that the position became alarming. The diaries show that, and they also show the steady deterioration of the minds and of their mental condition," said counsel. "You have heard the defence doctors speak of what has been termed 'the Port Levy revelation' of April, 1953, and Parker says—and remember she was then about 14 years of age—that they had a vision of the fourth world, which seems to mean so much to them, and that they had an extra part of the brain which revealed it to them. This key to the fourth world was also the key in the hands of the defence doctors which enabled them to find what they escaped the doctors called by the Crown."

"Then the friendship continued while Juliet Hulme was in the sanatorium. Even though she was there, the fancy

of both girls had full play," said Dr. Haslam. "They rushed to each other and wrote to each other in assumed names and their own names. The friendship intensified when Juliet Hulme came out of the sanatorium. It is true that in the latter part of 1953 Pauline Parker had other interests and boy friends; but later the boy friends fall out of sight and it is Hulme who means everything to her. You will remember the strange episode of the Coronation film. When everyone else probably was keenly interested in it, the only interest these girls had in it was to get material to use for their fictional characters.

"Disastrous Association"

"Then this disastrous association gets into its full stride," said counsel. "Both sets of parents became alarmed and tried to break down the association. Mrs Hulme has told you what steps she and Dr. Hulme took. Mr Rieper, with whom we all sympathise in his sad plight, told you how Parker's mother was worried about the association and tried to stop it. The girls were a source of anxiety to both sets of parents. They spent most of their time at 'Ilam'. Unfortunately, Parker convinced the Hulmes that she was unhappy at home. Further, she cut her own parents out of her affections. While the two girls were at 'Ilam' to get out of bed on bad nights and got up to all sorts of pranks. There was a morbidly close association between them, the details of which I need not elaborate for they will be fresh in your minds. They created a Temple of Minerva and became even more fanciful still, as the Temple of Raphael and Pan. They were keen on literature. They admired each other and each other's work. They thought they were literary geniuses and had the fanciful notion of getting their novels filmed. Then came their utterly fantastic plan of getting married."

"Then came the episode which upset them and, no doubt, these children read too much into it," said Dr. Haslam. "That was the episode in Perry's bedroom at 2 o'clock on a morning, and Mrs Hulme told you about it. Dr. Hulme discussed it and there was reference to the marriage breaking up. Though we are not concerned with the domestic affairs of these good people, it seemed to the girls that their security was breaking up. This was the background against which their insanity developed. Their mental disorder mounts and deterioration sets in and grows as it proceeds. They still went on with their crazy plans and the diary says they were sticking to one thing—that was to sink or swim together.

"Distorted Idea"

"They thought Mrs Parker was a threat to their being together. They had the distorted and utterly foolish idea of removing that threat. So we have these girls planning their dreadful act, carrying it out so clumsily, and then, after it was over, not showing a shadow of remorse. That was on June 22.

Dr. Medlicott and Dr. Bennett were called in to see them," said Dr. Haslam. "You will recollect that Dr. Bennett had one big advantage. He knew something of the background of both girls before he started on the case. He had known the Hulmes well for some time and Parker had been taken to his surgery by her mother in December, 1953. So that, when he saw these girls at the police station on June 24 he had some knowledge of the facts preceding the tragedy. He has come to the same conclusion as did Dr. Medlicott. That is that the girls suffer from paranoid delusions of grandeur and delusions of ecstasy. Each affects the other and aggravates the progress of the disease.

"Dr. Bennett has pointed out that delusional insanity is difficult to de-

tect," said Dr. Haslam. "Apparently there is ordinary, lucid working of the faculties as far as the outside world can see. It is difficult to know the mental state of such people until you get to the delusion and find what it is. None of the doctors called by the Crown gave much weight to the Port Levy revelation or to the fourth world or Medlicott. It was their delusion of grandeur and the key to their arrogance and conceit. They found that fourth heaven and gave the reason why. There are many varied forms of insanity. Dr. Bennett said that delusional insanity impairs the judgment. Dr. Medlicott said it is like a cancer in the body. People outwardly look healthy but underneath there is this rottenness. At their interviews with the doctors the girls first pretended to be insane and then sane. But the doctors were not deceived. They got to the core of it."

Delusion Took Charge

"You will remember the evidence on the girls saying the Bible was bunkum, that Juliet was going to rewrite it on parchment vellum and Pauline was going to illustrate it," said Dr. Haslam. "That is one of the many indications of the derangement of their minds. They were not a couple of young people just thinking of the problems of life and the hereafter. It was a case of distorted minds, where a delusion had taken complete charge.

"The Crown doctors say these girls are quite sane, but they concede it a matter where medical opinion can differ. It is for you gentlemen of the jury to say which one you prefer. Doctor Bennett and Dr. Medlicott have told you these girls were insane on June 22 when they committed the attack on Mrs Parker. Dr. Bennett described the attack vividly in your minds—how the delusion works on and takes charge of the reason of these two girls," said Dr. Haslam. "Their dream world was threatened and so they struck. In their imagination they had toyed with violence. Then it broke out and they committed their dreadful act.

"Dr. Bennett told you that the delusion affected their whole judgment. He admits the girls knew when they struck the fatal blow when they were killing Mrs Parker; but you gentlemen of the jury have got to decide whether they still knew that what they were doing was wrong. Dr. Bennett said they were a couple of homosexual paranoics of the elated type. He said obeying the law was an intellectual thing, but he also said that emotion was more persuasive than intellect. These accused girls thought they were morally right or at least not wrong; that by killing Mrs Parker they were transferring an unhappy woman to heaven and also preserving the integrity of their own association. Gentlemen, it is for you to decide whether the girls knew what they were doing was wrong," said Dr. Haslam. "It is the submission of the defence that they did not know. I now commit my young clients to your merciful keeping and I respectfully invite you to bring for a verdict of not guilty on the ground of insanity."