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Public enemy number one killed in Bangor Maine

Even though in 2016 Maine had the lowest crime rate in the country, (Crime Rate by State 2020), occasionally, Maine will make national headlines. The most notorious police standoff in the history of the state of Maine, was in 1937 when the Brady Gang was apprehended and killed. This is because of the infamous standoff that took place in the small city of Bangor, the amount of arsenal found with them at the time of their demise, and mainly because Al Brady was public enemy number one.

On October 24th, 1929 the stock market started to crash. Later being referred to “Black Thursday”, this was when everyone started nervously selling their overpriced stocks. This led to unemployment levels rising to roughly 13 million, “by 1933 the national income dropped from \$88 billion to \$40 billion”, (The American Promise, A Concise History). During this time, it was extremely hard to find a job, so people had to do whatever they could to take care of their families. Some people were able to find work, Alfred James Brady was one of the lucky ones who really had no trouble finding work and ended up jumping from job to job until around 1932. This is when things took a turn for the worst. He was arrested for the first time for homelessness, under the alias, James Reid. Eventually the charges were dropped, however he was arrested again but this time for possession of stolen property. This was only the beginning of his long rap sheet.

After being sent to Greencastle, Indiana where he had to serve 180 days on a farm, Brady met James Dalhover who was also working on a farm nearby. They hit it off pretty quickly and after Dalhover spent some time in jail for making moonshine, Brady was able to convince him to help with robberies. His operation had been destroyed during a raid; so, he was unable to make any more moonshine to turn a profit.

Clarence Lee Shaffer Jr was the last one to join the gang of thieves. He was the youngest out of the group and had been stealing and stripping cars since he was 12 years old. Together these three dangerous and would eventually end up stealing numerous cars at gun point, robbing 150 stores and banks across the country, and murdering two people. They first caught the attention of the FBI after they bombarded a sheriff, stole his gun and took the car of a man who was trying to help the sheriff during the attack. After one of their robberies they had crossed state lines with their stolen jewelry and this gave the FBI jurisdiction to follow their trail. The manhunt that ensued lasted one day shy of a year and took the Brady Gang with the FBI on their heels, across several states. Brady was now considered public enemy number one. This manhunt would eventually end in Bangor Maine after a salesman alerted local police about a ridiculous order of artillery.

Shep Hurd was the owner of a sporting goods store in down town Bangor called Dakins Sporting Goods Co. In September of 1937 the Brady Gang made their way into a sporting goods store in Maine to buy a couple pistols and some ammunition. Their next stop was in the Queen City, stopping at Hurd's store to buy several more guns. Before leaving they inquired about special clips, a Thompson submachine gun, and whether or not they could purchase them there. Hurd grew suspicious and alerted the local police, but it wasn't until he contacted Sergeant F. R. Hall from the Maine State Police that the FBI got involved. Hall went to the store and

questioned Hurd about the incident, and found out that Brady was to return at a later date to retrieve more guns.

The Brady Gang returned to the area on October 5th, 1937. Once they had purchased a few more weapons with many extra clips, they asked about the machine gun again. This time they wanted the staff at the hardware store to obtain the weapon and Brady would be back once again between October 11th and the 12th to pick it up. They quickly contacted the State Police who then contacted the Boston Field Division of the FBI. Upon arrival one of the FBI agents showed Hurd and his staff recent photos of the three men and were able to identify Brady and his gang immediately. With this confirmation they began to set up surveillance inside and all around and of the store waiting for their return.

On October 12th, 1937, The Brady Gang showed up to collect their order. Dalhover went into the hardware store while Shaffer stood guard outside by the front door. Agents waiting inside grabbed Dalhover and immediately arrested him. Shaffer started firing at the agents through the glass door but started to run across the street once shots were returned. He was struck and fell in the middle of the street, and died from the gunshot wounds. Brady still in the back of the car, throws his hands up saying “don’t shoot, don’t shoot, I’ll get out” (The Brady Gang). Once he got out of the vehicle, he quickly drew his weapons and started unloading his pistols but was quickly gunned down.

Upon inspection after being shot “Brady had in his hand a .38 caliber revolver from which four shots had just been fired. A .32 and a .45 caliber automatic were on his person.” (The Brady Gang). Dalhover had, “a .45 caliber Colt automatic and a .32 caliber Colt automatic both fully loaded with two extra loaded clips for each on his person.” Shaffer was only found

carrying a .32 caliber automatic pistol and the Buick they showed up in was found to have another pile of pistols, shotguns, rifles, machine guns, and revolvers, a total of 35.

After the long manhunt, “the criminal careers of the two of the most vicious and dangerous criminals ever to have been sought by law enforcement agencies in this country were terminated. Dalhover was removed to Indiana and convicted in federal court for the murder of Indiana State Policeman Paul Minneman and was sentenced to die” (The Brady Gang). Some would probably say that the Great Depression was the reasoning behind The Brady Gang’s malicious acts just trying to make ends meet. Killing another person, we now know today, takes a special kind of person to pull it off, a sociopath. If Brady and his men hadn't been killed and captured who knows what else might have happened, and what they were planning to do with all the artillery they had acquired. Something big had been in the works.

Work Cited

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