Cal Crim

Cal Crim, Detective Extraordinaire

David Calvin “Cal” Crim, at the age of ten, hopped off a train freight car in Cincinnati, knocked around with odd jobs, joined the Cincinnati Police Department and disgusted with City politics, went into private investigations, ultimately founding the multi-million-dollar Cal Crim Detective Agency.

Born in Oakland, Maryland in 1864, he worked as a bellman at the Gault House then as a boot black and newsboy at the Brighten Hotel barber shop. He married in 1885 and that marriage lasted 66 years.

Cal joined the Department in 1886. He quickly showed a talent for investigation and was assigned to Detective Headquarters three years later.

When Fort Thomas, Kentucky officials found the headless body of a pregnant 22-year-old female it became an international story and they called upon the Cincinnati Police Department for help. Newly appointed Assistant Chief of Detectives Crim traced the woman’s shoes back to Cincinnati and her origins back to Greencastle, Indiana. He identified and arrested the murderers and gave evidence and testimony to convict them in Kentucky. They never found Pearl Bryan’s head, but two men hung for her murder.

Dan Foley, known nationally as Foley the Goat, left the criminal life in Chicago because he was too cantankerous for the mob, traveled the county piling up warrants in Oregon, Colorado, Minneapolis, and California. He was apprehended by Crim in 1901; but not before he shot the detective twice in the chest. Crim carried the bullets in his body for the rest of his life.

The Goat went to the Ohio Penitentiary for 12½ years and later testified about the torturous time he spent there.

After some political wrangling at City Hall, Chief of Detectives Crim resigned effective December 31, 1913. Four days later, he took over a new security force at the Hotel Gibson.

On April 3, 1914, Crim's application for incorporation of The Clifton Amusement Company, a motion pictures venture, was approved.

On August 13, 1914, he filed as an independent to run for Hamilton County Sheriff[v]. Largely a family-supported campaign, he was defeated.

During March 1917, he resigned from the Hotel Gibson to begin a Cal Crim Detective Bureau detective agency with Detective Paul Ryan. They immediately increased their reputation after solving numerous big cases while working for a local bank association, the Big Four Railroad, and even the United States Post Office.

During August 1919, the Cal Crim Detective Bureau Company was incorporated with Cal Crim, E.M. Crim, and Paul Ryan listed as owners. They also published classified ads under the name Cal Crim Detective Agency.

The Cal Crim Detective Agency also investigated the so-called Black Sox scandal the 1919 World Series involving the Cincinnati Reds and Chicago White sox and was issued a gold-plated all access pass to all Major League Baseball facilities by the Baseball Commissioner. In 1926 he solved a racketeer murder case in Canton, Ohio sending five mobsters to prison. His agency also provided dignitary protection for Republican Presidents McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, William H. Taft, Warren Harding, Herbert Hoover, and Calvin Coolidge.

He retired from the agency in 1950 but kept a hand in the business as chairman of its board until his death at 89 in 1953.