Patrolman Julius E. “Bud” Mayer, Jr. | Cincinnati Police Division



Badge: 200
Age: 24
Served: 13 Months
February 1, 1939 to March 16, 1940

THE OFFICER

Julius was born on December 27, 1915 in Cincinnati to a lithographer, Julius E. Mayer, Sr., and Clara (Hackstedt) Mayer; both German immigrants. He graduated from Woodward High School (Sycamore Street) and attended night school at the University of Cincinnati.

As a boy, Julius worked for four years as a news carrier. He then worked as a Bookkeeper for a year and then clerked for the J.H. Day Company for 3 years. But his sights were set on law enforcement.

He lived with his parents at 538 Milton Street and was a very active member of the Salem Reformed Church at Orchard and Sycamore Streets. As an adult, he sang there in the choir, served as a Sunday School teacher, and served on committees.

During 1938, he took an examination for Park Policeman. On May 28, he was announced as the 2nd highest scorer. We do not know if he joined the Park Police Department, but later in the year, he took the examination for the Cincinnati Police Division and finished 3rd.

Julius joined the Cincinnati Police Division on February 1, 1939. On March 21, 1939 Recruit Mayer was transferred to District 6 (3855 Eastern Avenue). He was promoted to Patrolman on May 1, 1939. Five months later, on August 1, 1939, he was transferred to District 1 (1024 York Street). He was the youngest officer in the district and fellow officers nicknamed him "Bud."

THE MURDERER

Walter F. Whitaker was born April 28, 1911 and lived a criminal's life. At 21 years of age, during a 1932 holdup in Falmouth, Kentucky, he and two others shot Frank Begel, Jr., the son of former Newport Police Chief Frank Begel, Sr. He was sentenced to only five years in prison. Six years later, during 1938, he was sentenced to five years' probation for the Burglary of the Putman Candy Store on Race Street. There is no indication as to why he was treated so lightly, but by March 1940, he was spending all his money on whiskey, sleeping in box cars, and on March 15, 1940, breaking into another downtown Cincinnati business.

INCIDENT

Shortly after midnight on the 16th, Patrolman Mayer and Lieutenant Merrill Surber were patrolling Court Street. They saw a man's form dimly outlined on a fire escape in the rear of Western Auto Supply Company at 920 Race Street (about 921 Baldwin Alley). Lieutenant Surber ran to the front of the building on Race Street. Patrolman Mayer ran into Baldwin Alley where he found Whitaker and chased him. Lieutenant Surber saw the two dart across the street, running through Pendery Alley.

He tried to cut them off by running to 9th and Elm Streets when he saw Patrolman Mayer struggling with Whitaker just west of Race and heard two shots ring out.

At 107 W. 9th Street (at Race Street) Patrolman Mayer had caught Whitaker. Whitaker pulled away three times and each time Patrolman Mayer was able to catch him again. Whitaker then reached for Patrolman Mayer's .38 Special revolver, pulled it, and shot him twice with it. One shot grazed his head, but the other entered his chest just below his heart. Whitaker ran south on Race Street. William N. Morton of 118 Garfield Place saw the struggle and came to help Patrolman Mayer at 119 W. 9th Street.

Whitaker fled down the alley and diagonally across the street at 9th and Race. Lieutenant Surber gave chase and Whitaker took a shot at him but missed. The pursuit continued down an alley past Garfield Place and then east on Eleventh Street. Lieutenant Surber commandeered a vehicle from Fireman Clifford Ader and chased Whitaker to Seventh Street near Vine where Lieutenant Surber leapt from the vehicle and finally seized him.

During the pursuit, Whitaker threw Patrolman Mayer's revolver onto a roof at 809 Race Street (at Weaver Alley). Three

expensive radios were found on the fire escape where Whitaker was originally spotted.

DEATH

Patrolman Mayer was rushed to the General Hospital in a police cruiser. At 5:45 a.m. he died on the operating table from inter-abdominal hemorrhaging from a gunshot wound to the chest.

Patrolman Mayer was survived by his parents and sister, Wilma Mayer. His remains laid in state at the Salem Reformed Church from 4 to 9 p.m. on March 18 and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on March 19, 1940. Funeral services were held at 2 p.m. by Rev. E. A. Katterhenry. From there, he was taken by Patrolmen Orville Backus, Stanley Carle, Howard Hilgeman, Joseph Prues, John Ritter, and Warren Wetterstroem to Vine Street Hill Cemetery.

INVESTIGATION

Sergeant William Burks interrogated Whitaker. He admitted to the Burglary and removing three radios valued at $50 to the fire escape. He said, “I fell on 9th Street and the officer grabbed me. We started to struggle, and both fell. I took the officer’s gun from its holster. I told him to let me go because I didn’t want to hurt him. He held on. He was only doing his duty. I shot him twice and hit him three or four times on the head with the gun to make him release my legs. Then I ran.”

JUSTICE

On March 18, 1940, Detective Thomas Faragher signed a warrant

against Whitaker for willful act of Murder while in the commission of a felony. The next day, March 19, a special session of the Grand Jury returned and indictment against him.

Whitaker's trial started on April 17, 1940. He was defended by Amos P. Foster and Robert A. Ludeke and prosecuted by Prosecutors Carl E. Rich, Frank M. Gusweiler, and Carson Hoy in front of Judge Dennis J. Ryan. Whitaker took the stand and admitted to all the facts and claimed that the firing of the revolver was accidental – each of the three times.

The jury of six men and six women deliberated for six hours and fifty minutes and returned a verdict of 1st Degree Murder with Mercy requiring a sentence of Life Imprisonment.

On October 25, 1953 Whitaker escaped from the London Prison Farm. On January 12, 1954 he was returned to London having been apprehended in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Whitaker died in Franklin County, Ohio, probably in the Ohio State Prison, on May 30, 1979.

EPILOGUE

Also in March 1940, Cincinnati Police Chief Eugene Weatherly ordered an all-out search for Patrolman Mayer's badge. It had come up missing and all the evidence pointed to someone having picked it up as a souvenir.

If you know of any information, artifacts, archives, or images regarding this officer or incident, please contact the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum at Memorial@Police-Museum.org. To the best of our knowledge, Patrolman Mayer's badge, Number 200, was never found. It is very likely now in a badge collection with a low collector's value. If found, please consider donating it to

the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum Memorial Wall.

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