

Patrolman William Thomas “Big Mox” McQuery | Covington Police Department



Age: 39
Served: 4 years
1896 to June 12, 1900

OFFICER

During 1884, William McQuery, known variously as “Mox” or “Big Mox”, at age 23, began playing major league baseball with the Cincinnati Outlaw Reds. He played in Cincinnati, Detroit, Kansas City, Syracuse, and Washington before his baseball career ended in 1891 and he returned home to Kentucky. About 1896, Mox joined the Covington Police Department. By 1900, he was considered the most popular man on the Department.

INCIDENT

During June 1900, Wallace Bishop, a former mail clerk for the St. Louis Star, and Thomas Mulligan were living among hobos under the Southern Railroad trestle in an encampment known to Ludlow residents as the “Tramps’ Jungle.” After a

disagreement with another hobo, known only as the "Erie Spider," the "leader" of the hobos ejected Bishop and Mulligan from the Jungle. On June 8, 1900, Bishop and Mulligan armed themselves, returned to the Jungle, and shot and killed the Spider as he slept. They fled toward Cincinnati aboard a horse-drawn streetcar.

Ludlow Police provided a description of the culprits to adjoining law enforcement agencies. Patrolman McQuery was patrolling near the Suspension Bridge. Shortly after 5 p.m., he boarded a streetcar headed across the bridge and found two men who matched the description of Bishop and Mulligan. He ordered them off the car and they seemed to agree to go, but as they were getting off, Mulligan ran into Patrolman McQuery. His firearm discharged into the platform along the streetcar track and Bishop pulled a revolver and shot Patrolman McQuery in the chest and fled across the bridge pursued by Covington officers.

The bridge was filled with hundreds of people returning from work in Cincinnati and while the officers shot at Bishop, they had to avoid hitting any innocent bystanders. Several officers climbed aboard the streetcar and traveled to the other side. There, they joined with Cincinnati officers and began coming back in and firing at Bishop. Being shot at from both ends, Bishop jumped off the bridge into the water some 100 feet below.

He swam toward some barges moored on the Covington side and was met there by Covington Police Captain Feeney and more officers. As he climbed aboard a coal barge, he pulled his revolver and snapped it at the officers, but it was either empty or waterlogged. He raised his hands and was taken into custody.

Patrolman McQuery was rushed to a Cincinnati Hospital

DEATH

Patrolman McQuery lingered between life and death for four days. An infection set in and on June 12, 1900, he died.

Patrolman McQuery was survived by a wife. There was a huge crowd at his funeral. He is buried in Linden Grove Cemetery, Covington, Kentucky.

JUSTICE

Bishop had been taken to the Covington Jail where he was treated for a flesh wound to his leg. Initially, Bishop claimed to be William Burns, that his killing of the hobo was self defense, and that the shooting of the officer was merely done in his excitement. Mulligan also lied about his name and was logged in as Thomas Lyons.

After Patrolman McQuery's death, it became necessary to move the two murderers to Louisville for their own safety due to reasonable assurances that some of the Covington citizenry would soon try to lynch them.

Mulligan was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of the Erie Spider. He entered the prison in Frankfurt on August 2, 1900.

Bishop was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death for both murders. He appealed his sentence based on the claim that his murder of McQuery was not pre-mediated. The courts agreed and at his second trial he was sentenced to life imprisonment. He entered the same prison as Mulligan on March 21, 1901.

On August 20, 1902, Bishop and Mulligan and two other prisoners overpowered a guard, took his firearm and keys, and relieved themselves of their balls and chain. They took a foreman hostage when they were unable to escape the building

that they were in. After a few hours of negotiating and assurances that the guards would not harm them, they agreed to give up. As they escorted the hostage toward the Warden, one of the marksmen shot and killed Bishop.

Mulligan became a model prisoner and was released March 18, 1908, having served less than eight years.

If you know of information, artifacts, archives, or images of this officer or incident, please contact the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum at Memorial@Police-Museum.org.

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