

Sergeant Anthony H. Overberg | Norwood Police Department



Age: 35
Served: 6 years
July 18, 1936 to July 8, 1942

INCIDENT

Beginning July 5, 1942, Norwood Chief of Police Charles Fritz established stakeouts at various Norwood pharmacies because a man had been committing armed robberies in area drugstores. On July 8, 1942, Sergeant Overberg, 1941 Maple Avenue, and his wife Agnes were entertaining friends that they had not seen for two years. Sergeant Overberg was assigned to Lawson's Drugstore, 4320 Franklin Avenue at 10 pm. It was only 2000 feet from his home. Almost half an hour later, Mrs. Overberg and her guests heard a siren. Mrs. Overberg commented, "I guess Tony got his man." It wasn't long before she was notified that her husband was shot and fighting for his life.

When Sergeant Overberg arrived at the pharmacy just before 10

p.m., the owner, Howard Lawson, a clerk, and several customers were inside. He went behind the prescription counter, set his .38 caliber Colt revolver (serial number 449325) on a tabletop next to him, and began his stakeout.

About 10:20 p.m., a young, well-dressed man came into Lawson's, ordered a Coke and sat down on one of the stools. Soon after that, he displayed a .45 Colt Model 1911 (serial number 76136) and ordered everyone to stay where they were. The bandit then took the cash out of the register and asked if there was another cash register. He was so calm in his demeanor that one of the customers quipped to Lawson about how easy it was to get money out of his registers. Lawson pointed to a second register, which the bandit then emptied of its cash. Then he asked about a safe and Lawson directed him to the end of the counter where he knew Sergeant Overberg would have an advantage if the robber went to look for the safe.

Unfortunately, due to the robber's quiet demeanor and a noisy fan, Sergeant Overberg never realized a robbery was in progress. All seemed quiet to him as he read a law enforcement publication. Lawson, in a low tone, warned him; "He's here for God's sake! He's here!"

Overberg reached for his revolver, but the robber heard Lawson too and raced behind the counter. He got the drop on Sergeant Overberg and told him to drop his gun. Knowing he was outgunned and vulnerable, but seeing his duty, Sergeant Overberg instead went for the bandit's gun. It almost worked. The robber fired wildly. A struggle ensued and during the struggle the bandit dropped his pistol. He then grabbed Sergeant Overberg's revolver and shot six times hitting Overberg three times in the chest, leg and groin. He then ran out of the store, east on Courtland, and across Allison - with a total of \$8.00 in loot.

DEATH

An ambulance rushed Sergeant Overberg to Good Samaritan Hospital where he died within an hour at 11:26 p.m.

Besides his wife, Agnes, Sergeant Overberg left two daughters, Carole Ann (2 $\frac{3}{4}$ years) and Kathleen Alice (7 months). His funeral took place at Ihlendorf Funeral Home at 4400 Montgomery Road. The Guards of Honor included Norwood Patrolmen Carl Brinkman and Carl Merckel. Pallbearers were Sergeant Oakley Wilson and Patrolmen Louis Purdy, William Bullock, Richard Stone, George Flick, and Harold Davis. The funeral Mass was celebrated by Father Cornelius Berning on July 11, 1942, at St. Elizabeth Church and was attended by roughly 700 people. The funeral procession consisted of about fifty cars. Sergeant Overberg was laid to rest in Section 18 of St. Mary's Cemetery, St. Bernard, OH. Agnes joined him there 42 years later in 1984.

INVESTIGATION

In the months that followed Sergeant Overberg's murder, Norwood Police would check leads from Ashville, North Carolina, to Everett, Washington, without success.

Almost 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ years later, during November 1943, Frank Dudley Carter, a married man, began dating Margie Christopher (19), the wife of a United States Navy sailor. He soon confided to her that he had robbed some businesses and that once he and his wife went to Cincinnati, robbed a drugstore, and ended up killing a policeman. By 1944, he began taking Mrs. Christopher with him to rob places in Chicago and Indianapolis.

During September 1944, Carter enlisted in the United States

Navy. He returned to Louisville on furlough between Christmas and New Year's 1944, during which he separately visited Mrs. Christopher and his own wife. When he was to return to the Navy, he said good-bye to his wife, got on the train, and got off on the other side to say good-bye to Mrs. Christopher. The latter advised him that she was now engaged to a Louisville auxiliary police officer. During the ensuing argument, he tore up a picture she had of her fiancée and threatened to kill her and her fiancée.

Mrs. Christopher told her fiancée about Carter and that he had killed a policeman in Cincinnati (sic) during a robbery. The auxiliary officer took the information to the Louisville Police Department. On January 18, 1945, Norwood Detectives Les Kelly and Meredith Dockum, joined by Louisville detectives, arrived at a small house in Middletown, Kentucky (near Louisville), the home of Frank and Linna Louise Carter. The detectives knocked on the door and Ms. Carter answered. She fainted almost immediately after the detectives stated that they were from Norwood, Ohio. She fainted several more times as the detectives questioned her and searched the home. The detectives found Sergeant Overberg's sidearm in a suitcase and arrested Mrs. Carter. She was taken to a Louisville jail and then transferred to the custody of Detective Dockum who took her back to Norwood.

Loyal Martin, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, interrogated Mrs. Carter at Norwood City Hall, during which she stated that Frank rented a car from the 'You Drive It Company' of Louisville and that they drove it to Cincinnati and spent time at Union Terminal. She said Carter dropped her off at a show around 8:00 p.m. and told her he would pick her up about 11:00 p.m. Frank came back to pick her up between 11:00 and 11:30 p.m. smelling of vanilla with a cut on his leg (determined to be from a bottle of vanilla broken during the struggle with Sgt. Overberg).

On Friday, January 19, 1945, Navy and FBI agents arrested Frank Carter near Chicago at The Great Lakes Naval Training Station. Norwood detectives picked him up from the train in Cincinnati and, on the way to the police station; he showed them where he had parked on the fatal night. While being fingerprinted, he stated about Sergeant Overberg: "I had the drop on the officer, but that didn't stop him. He came straight after me. He was the bravest man I ever saw. I lost my gun in the scuffle, but I managed to get his and I shot him."

Carter was charged with 1st Degree Murder, convicted, and, on April 3, 1945, Judge Nelson Schwab sentenced him to death in the electric chair. After several appeals and stays of execution, Carter appealed to the governor Frank Lausche postponed for one week his execution to study his case. Afterwards, the governor determined there was no need for his intervention. A few days prior to his execution, Carter converted to Roman Catholicism and expressed equal love for his wife and girlfriend. He was electrocuted on November 8, 1945; 3 1/3rd years after the murder and less than 9 months after his arrest.

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.

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