

# SQUADROOM

**RICHARD S. PRATHER** (*Film Strip*) is one of the world's best-selling mystery novelists. Like his carefree private investigator, Shell Scott, Prather lives in southern California; unlike Scott, Prather is married, and refuses to make a habit of being shot at by assorted gunmen. The latest Shell Scott novel, *Dance with the Dead*, has brought Prather's total sales well over the 30,000,000-copy mark in the United States alone.



**ROSS MACDONALD** (*Midnight Blue*), another Californian, has written an even dozen novels about Lew Archer. His latest novel is *The Ferguson Affair*. Often compared to the late, great Raymond Chandler, Macdonald owes his enormous popularity to the depth, compassion, and insight of his writing. Macdonald's profession is very much a family affair: his wife is the mystery novelist Margaret Millar.

**ANTHONY BOUCHER'S** appraisal of fictional crime, as mystery editor of *The New York Times*, has made him the reigning expert in the genre. His clear and incisive treatment extends to the factual world of crime, too, as in this issue's in-depth study of the Sangret murder case, *On a Day Unknown*.



**HELEN NIELSEN** (*Confession*) is one of the very few feminine authors capable of turning out lean, un-sentimental crime fiction in the realistic tradition. Her appearance on the mystery scene was greeted with cheers, one critic calling her "the first major addition to the mystery field in the past decade." Miss Nielsen has since enhanced that reputation with a long list of fine books like her latest, *Sing Me a Murder*. The critic whose accolade launched Miss Nielsen's career, incidentally, was Anthony Boucher.

*Hard Sell* is one of the last John J. Malone stories by the late **CRAIG RICE**. Miss Rice was the author of such classic mystery novels as *Trial by Fury* and *Home Sweet Home-icide*. **FLETCHER FLORA** (*Assassin*) is the winner of the 1960 Macmillan Award for his new mystery novel, *Killing Cousins*. **RICHARD MATHESON** (*The Faces*), foremost exponent of the modern tale of terror, leads off the *Graveyard Shift* department. **REX LARDNER** (*Reasonable Fearsome*), a long-time *New Yorker* magazine staffer, is noted for his probing studies in print. This time, he contributes a detailed and fascinating *Special Report* on counterfeiting.

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# THE CRIME IS MURDER

## ON A DAY UNKNOWN ANTHONY BOUCHER

*August Sangret, you are charged for that you, on a day unknown in the month of September, 1942, at Thursley, in this county, murdered Joan Pearl Wolfe.*

THIS UNCONVENTIONAL FORM OF arraignment was necessitated by the condition of the body, which had been crudely buried for some three weeks. It was Private William Moore of the Royal Marines who found it, on October 7, 1942. On military duty on Hankley Common, Thursley, he saw a hand protruding from one of the mounds on the common. The hand had probably been jarred loose by the passage of heavy military vehicles. Private Moore called a sergeant, who called a lieutenant, who called the Surrey Constabulary, who called Dr. Keith Simpson and Dr. Eric Gardner, two of England's greatest forensic pathologists.

The case was a splendid challenge to a pathologist; indeed it has been

called the foremost triumph of forensic medicine since the Ruxton case of 1935, in which Dr. John Glaister and others solved the jigsaw puzzle of two female bodies which a Hindu physician had chopped into small pieces and strewn about the landscape. The body on Hankley Common was at least all in one place, if not quite in one piece; parts of it were mummified, other parts were completely eaten away. (Dr. Gardner, a precise man, noted that they removed two buckets of maggots before beginning the autopsy.) The most that could be determined as to identity was that the body had been young and female. There was no flesh left on the skull; and it was impossible to tell whether she had been pregnant or whether she had been raped. But it was quite possible to prove that she had been murdered.

Indeed the doctors were able to reconstruct the crime in some detail. She had been cut severely about the head and arms (presumably raised in self-protection); then she had been knocked to the ground, flat on her face, and her skull had been crushed by a powerful blow with a stick; afterward the body had been dragged along the ground. A stick found nearby fitted the skull injuries exactly. The knife must have been a peculiar one, with an odd hooked point.

The pathologists performed a notable job of reconstruction on the shattered skull and it was later introduced in evidence—the first time that the actual skull of the victim had been introduced as an exhibit

in an English court. The jury took it with them when they retired to deliberate. ( . . . *thou shell of death, / Once the bright face of my betrothed lady, / When life and beauty naturally fill'd out / These ragged imperfections . . .* )

Whether Joan Wolfe actually possessed beauty is doubtful; life she certainly enjoyed in abundance for as long as it was permitted to her. No photographs of her have survived; we do know that she had protruding teeth and dyed and redyed hair, but no male seems to have minded.

She was born on March 11, 1923, and lived to be nineteen and a half. She once said she was born in Germany; but she was talking to a German at the time, and amiability was always more important to Joan than facts. She was certainly English in speech and background, if of an English minority. The Wolfes were Roman Catholics, and Joan spent thirteen and a half years "in a very strict Catholic school." She was devout and neither drank nor smoked.

The date is uncertain, but probably when she was sixteen her father committed suicide (by gas) and her mother remarried. Joan's attitudes toward her two parents seem to have been everything a Freudian might wish. She left her home (which was geographically in Tunbridge Wells and spiritually in Mycenae) and threw herself upon the world, which welcomed her enthusiastically. Several times she made the attempt to

go home again, but the duration of her visits grew shorter and shorter. Her last, in June of 1942, was for a matter of hours.

This was wartime—that black period of the war when, as a German general has written: "the German command had reached the zenith of its success." England, half-expecting invasion while herself preparing to invade, was crowded with troops of all nationalities, and Joan became what used to be called a camp follower.

She wore lace-trimmed knickers (panties, to Americans) and a bra under a green-and-white dress with a long skirt and short sleeves. She wore dark, low-beeled shoes (with contrasting laces) and red-white-and-blue socks. Over her very short-cropped hair she wore a pink kerchief.

This extraordinarily pious outfit was all she possessed in the way of clothing. It was the costume in which everybody knew her and in which she was literally found dead. She had last left home thus attired; and her mum (now Mrs. Watts) refused to send her either her clothes or her clothing ration books. Instead, Mum wrote her pious and injured letters, begging her to cure herself of venereal disease (which, by some miracle, she did not have), and attempting to lure her home with such adjurations as: "Joan, please think before it is too late and remember remorse is the worst thing in the world to bear. When I am dead you will think about all this,

and wish that you had been a better girl to me, so before it is too late, Joan, try hard to alter, won't you? . . . I am still praying every night for you, Joan." The letters had the effect that might be expected.

Joan settled into something like an engagement with a Canadian soldier named Francis. He even gave her a wedding ring. But Francis was sent back to Canada, and they parted without marriage or any specific plans for marriage. And that same week, still wearing Francis' ring, she met August Sangret.

Her capacious handbag did not contain cigarettes or a flask or contraceptives. It did contain a New Testament, a crucifix, a rosary, a devotional pamphlet, her National Health card, a piece of soap, a number of letters from and to soldiers (she seems to have sometimes asked for her own letters back, and carried them with her), and photographs of several soldiers and of her dead father.

"You may think," said Eric Neve, K.C., at the trial, with British understatement, "upon the evidence that you hear that she would not perhaps be incorrectly described as being somewhat wayward." Her mother, without being asked, volunteered the statement: "I would describe her as being a wayward girl and a bit of a trial." Superintendent Richard Webb, of the Surrey Constabulary, who had had his problems with Joan and her soldiers, closed the prosecution case by saying: "She was a very well-spoken and a very quiet-

spoken girl. When you spoke to her you got the impression that she was a good-living girl by the way she spoke. She had a very charming way."

August Sangret was born on August 28, 1913; he was twenty-eight when he met Joan Wolfe and twenty-nine when he was hanged. He was born and raised in Battleford, Saskatchewan. Mr. Justice Macnaghten, in his summing up, mysteriously described him as having come "from the far east of Canada to fight our common foe." Actually Saskatchewan is a western province, and Battleford (a town then of a little more than a thousand in population, adjoining the larger North Battleford) is almost due north of Billings, Montana.

Both of his parents were *métis*—that is, Canadians of mixed French and Indian (in this case Cree) blood. Saskatchewan knew the *métis* well: they had been arbitrarily dispossessed of their lands when the French lost dominion over Canada, and had staged unsuccessful rebellions in 1869 and 1885. At home the Sangrets spoke their own patois, a mixture of Cree and English with a dollop of French; but August (surely this was originally Auguste?) spoke plain English well enough, if, as he confessed, "there are some big words I cannot understand."

He was, however, totally and literally illiterate. Saskatchewan has free and compulsory public education, but Sangret never attended any kind of school at any time, and was unable to read or write. He was at

least nominally a Roman Catholic.

Through his early twenties he worked as a farm laborer in Maidstone, Saskatchewan. At this period Saskatchewan, pre-eminently an agricultural province, was suffering an even worse depression than most of the world. The economic factors were aggravated by severe drought and dust storms. We can imagine that his work was sporadic and badly paid; we know that he got into occasional trouble with the law. When he was eighteen, he served six months for violent assault; six years later he drew three months for threatening to shoot a woman of whom he was jealous. He also had convictions for the standard depression-era crimes of vagrancy and theft.

From 1935 to 1939 Sangret served in the Battleford Light Infantry, a militia regiment which trained two weeks in the year; and on June 19, 1940, he enlisted in the Regina Rifles of the regular Canadian Army. (In October, 1942, he was still a buck private.) He was sent to England in March of 1942, and in July he was assigned to the Canadian Education Company, stationed at 103 Camp, Witley, Surrey.

The Education Company did not achieve much with Sangret; after three months his instructor stated, "He can just barely write the A B C." But he kept up quite a correspondence, inducing his fellow soldiers to read his letters to him and to take down the dictated replies. The letters were mostly from women:

women left behind in Canada, who regularly sent him presents ("fudge, razor blades, perfume, and shaving cream. I use perfume," he said); women whom he'd met in Glasgow on leave and hoped to see again soon. His taste seemed to run to mature women, widowed or separated from their husbands.

Slow in speech, inarticulate, impassive ("What I mean," said his instructor, "is that it takes a lot to upset an Indian chap"), August Sangret was still a markedly attractive man. The Cree of his ancestry predominated in his bronze skin, black hair, strong and regular features. Molly Lefebure, pathologist Simpson's secretary, was much taken with him—especially on the post-mortem table where she could observe that he was "muscular, well built, almost good enough for one of Fenimore Cooper's novels." A great deal of nonsense was later to be written about Sangret's "savage heritage," even to hints that the burial of the corpse followed some arcane tribal ritual; but there is little doubt that he looked, at least, satisfactorily like the romantic concept of the Noble Savage, complete with handsome poker face.

On Friday, July 17, 1942, August Sangret and Joan Wolfe met in a pub in Godalming. (Geographical note: All the places mentioned—Godalming and Guildford and Witley and Thursley—are close together, within a radius of about ten miles, in the southwest corner of Surrey,

which is the county directly south-west of London.) Sangret himself has described the meeting:

"I ordered another pint of beer and as I went to sit down a girl entered. . . . She bought a glass of lemonade for herself and came and sat alongside of me. I said 'Good evening' to her, and 'Will you have a drink?' She said 'No.' " But they got to talking, mostly about Francis and the abandoned wedding plans, "and after about half an hour I asked Joan to come for a walk with me. She agreed, and I took her to the park," where they talked about her father's suicide and her mother's enmity. "After about an hour had passed I suggested going for a walk and we left the park and walked up the hill to some grassland where we sat down. We started kissing and cuddling and I asked her if she would 'go with me.' I mean by this that I wanted to have connexions with her. She did not refuse in any way and I had connexions with her. I did not use a French letter and I just did it the natural way."

(Throughout, both in his long statement to the police and later on the witness stand, *connexions* is the normally monosyllabic Sangret's only word for sexual intercourse. One imagines that it was suggested by a police stenographer.)

"After this we got up and walked back to Godalming Railway Station. . . . I gave her my address at the camp, and she promised to write to me. We did not make any arrangements to meet again."

She did not write; but they did meet again, on the following Tuesday. It was purely by chance. Sangret and another Canadian soldier were standing outside a fish-and-chips shop in Godalming when Joan came along and stopped to talk. They talked for so long that a suspicious policeman interrupted and carried Joan off to the police station for questioning—presumably on suspicion of soliciting, which was markedly unjust to Joan's amateur generosity. Sangret went with her, and after she was released "we walked to the grassland where we had previously been and again we had connexions." This time they arranged to meet again the next day, but Joan did not turn up. She had fainted in the street and been taken to a hospital in Guildford.

Something over and above "connexions" had deepened their relationship on this second meeting. She wrote him from the Warren Road Hospital, "I have your picture on the locker beside me. The nurses know you are my boy friend, they told me to tell you to come and see me." But Sangret's hours away from camp did not fit into hospital visiting hours, and they still had not seen each other when she wrote again, on Sunday, July 26:

"Just one week has passed since I have known you, dear. It seems such a long time. [To be precise, it had been nine days.] . . . I hope you will try and come to see me, as I want to tell you when I can come out because someone will have to meet me, and you are all I have in

the world. Of course if you do not want to come I shall understand, August, but I am sure I shall never understand men. I do not know enough about them, but I can live and learn. Anyway, I am pretty sure we are going to have a tiny wee one, maybe that is why you do not want to come and see me because you think that."

You will remember that Sangret first heard this news in the voice of some slightly more literate fellow student in the Education Company. You can imagine the reader looking up with some surprised and bawdy remark, and Sangret impassively nodding and gesturing to him to read on.

"I hope not anyway, but, dear, I would not blame you if you did not want to marry me, because I am really too young, and too old-fashioned [Mum in Tunbridge Wells would hardly agree] to be married. I regret what we did now it is too late, for I still say it is wicked. I hope God forgives me, for I am truly sorry, and do not want to do anything wrong really. . . . Oh, dear August, why did we do it? You will not want to marry me anyway, because we hardly know one another, and I do not know anything about babies, but I [here the letter is illegible] . . . Well, I suppose I shall have to close this letter now, if I want to get it posted, so au revoir (daddy). God bless you always, dear. Joan."

Was Joan really pregnant? A doctor who examined her in late August was uncertain; the autopsy could not

determine the fact because of decay. A missed period made her think so, but this is not conclusive. If she was pregnant, it was more probably by Francis than by Sangret, who had had only one opportunity immediately before the period should have started. But neither of them seems ever to have questioned, from this point on, the facts that she was pregnant and that he was the father.

Released from the hospital sooner than she expected, Joan went out to the camp to find Sangret. "Joan began talking about getting married," he stated, "and I told her I would marry her." They arranged to meet the next night in Godalming, and then (Friday, July 31) began a curious sort of sordid idyll unique in the annals of love.

"I took her to the camp, and sat down in the bracken behind the officers' lines. Joan then told me she had nowhere to live, so I built a small shack from branches of the trees, put my rain cape and my gas cape over the branches, and then covered this with leaves and twigs. I gathered together a lot of leaves, went to my hut and got my blankets, and took them back to the shack. I returned to camp to answer the roll call at ten o'clock and then returned to Joan. During the time we were there she spoke about getting married, and we talked over our plans. I slept with Joan in the shack that night and had connexions with her again."

It was this improvised babes-in-the-woods shack which the press was



later to insist on calling a "wigwam." Sangret never used the word, and it was probably more than a century since his half-French ancestors had lived in the ancient tribal dwellings; but "The Wigwam Murder" made a sensational journalistic catch-phrase.

For more than three weeks Joan slept in this shack and Sangret joined her every night, until they were discovered by a pair of provosts, who routed them with a warning. Sangret simply built another shack/"wigwam," behind the sergeants' lines this time. When the provosts discovered that he was still keeping a woman in camp, Sangret wound up in the guardhouse and Joan was sent back to the hospital in Guildford, which seems to have served also as a sort of detention home for girls who did not quite belong in jail.

This interruption was not without its benefits. The commanding officer turned amiable when he learned that Sangret intended to marry the girl. He explained the technicalities involved, which included getting the consent of the Canadian Army (a long and tedious task) and that of Joan's mother (probably an impossible one, though Joan was optimistic), and gave Sangret £5 to help support the girl in the meantime. The sergeants at the camp began planning a fund for the young couple. And in the hospital Joan could at last enjoy hot baths and a chance to wash her only garments.

But even hot baths pall, and Joan soon slipped out of the hospital to rejoin Sangret—on August 28, his

twenty-ninth birthday. This time he found, rather than built, a nest: what he called "an old shed" but was actually the ruined cricket pavilion of Thursley Cricket Ground. ("If one may say so," observed prosecutor Neve at the trial, "it looks a very delightful cricket ground.") There they lived until mid-September.

At night Sangret would buy or scrounge food and bring it to Joan. Sometimes they went blackberrying and ate the berries or sold them to the officers' mess. During the day Joan had time on her hands. At first she got a job, but soon lost it. Then she hung around Godalming in the daytime. But she was more and more drawn to her home (shack or cricket pavilion) and finally spent most of her time there, dreaming and praying and waiting for Sangret and chatting amiably with passing soldiers.

"At first," said Sangret, "when I slept with Joan I used to have connexions with her sometimes two or three times a night and later on sometimes not at all." They had reached a state of intense need to be with each other even in the absence of sexual hunger—which may be one definition of love.

Joan wrote to Sangret from the hospital on August 24, "I will never regret what we have done, we have had some good laughs, and tears, too. (Oh! Burning wood, the loveliest smell in the world.) I will never forget that, will you? . . . I am so used to talking to you, and then li-

tening to you groaning to yourself because I would not let you sleep. When I turned over I missed you putting your arms around me. I never thought it would be so lonely. . . . We have always been together until now. [For less than a month then; but *always* never dates beyond the beginning of love.] The old fire in the evenings and the blackberries and heaps of little things we used to do. The guards that used to watch us through their field glasses as we walked across the fields through the heather. We have so many things to think about and to laugh at."

Good laughs . . . and tears, too. One night at the pavilion, Sangret stated, "Joan got up and went outside to make water and when she came back she said to me, 'Do you know what I have been doing out there? . . . I have been praying to God. I was asking God, I would like to die.' She was crying, and I said to her, 'That is not a nice thing to wish for.' She said, 'I don't like this suffering, I have no place to live.'"

But in her daylight hours she scribbled happily on the walls of the pavilion: intertwinings of his name and hers (as Mrs. Sangret), crude sketches (such as one labeled *Our little grey home in the West*), scraps of poems, and, from memory, a long prayer beginning *O Holy Virgin in the midst of all thy glory we implore thee not to forget the sorrows of this world. . . .*

Then there was the matter of jealousy. Soldiers would keep passing by, and would feel a not unnatural

interest in a girl alone. At least twice Sangret arrived while she was still visiting, once with a Sudeten German and once with an American. Both times he was angry; and in the case of the American, with good cause. Private Deadman, U.S.A. (who thought the cricket grounds were a bowling green), had made quite a definite pass at Joan—which he explained at the trial, with comically incredible highmindedness, as only an attempt to see whether "she was a decent sort of girl"—and been turned down cold. But there was no violence in Sangret's proprietary anger, just an impassive sullenness.

Possibly more serious was Joan's jealousy. Sangret owed a thank-you letter to the woman in Halifax who sent him blades and perfume. With a spectacular absence of tact he asked Joan to write the letter for him. Joan did so, but she was still brooding about it the next morning. "You can't love two," she said, and was not mollified by Sangret's explanation that Mrs. Oak was "more of a friend."

That was Monday morning, September 14—the last time, according to his statement, that Sangret ever saw Joan alive.

On October 8, the day after the finding of the body, Chief Inspector Edward Greeno of New Scotland Yard came down to Surrey.

Molly Lefebure, whose employer, Dr. Simpson, worked frequently with Greeno, has described him on an earlier case in 1941:

"More than anything else he resembled a huge, steel-plated battle cruiser, with his jaw thrust forward instead of a prow. He spoke little, noticing everything, and was tough, not in the Hollywood style, but genuinely, naturally, quietly, appallingly so.

"I found myself misquoting Hilaire Belloc on the subject of the Lion—but it did just as well for Mr. Greeno: *'His eyes they are bright/ And his jaw it is grim./ And a wise little child/ Will not play with him.'*

". . . He started asking questions in a rather rasping voice that sent shivers down my spine. He was on the warpath, and I thought, 'God help the poor fool he's after.'"

For most of a week, from Monday, October 12, through Friday, October 16, that rasping voice questioned August Sangret. Even at the cost of damaging the novel reader's illusion as to the meticulous chivalry of Scotland Yard, it must be pointed out (because Greeno reluctantly admitted it in cross-examination) that he never, at any point, issued the customary may-be-used-against-you-in-evidence caution, nor did he invite any superior officer to attend this questioning of an illiterate private.

Sangret held up astonishingly well under this treatment. He told and retold the story from which I have often quoted, and insisted that so far as he knew Joan had simply disappeared on September 14. No, he had not made any strenuous effort to find her. (How could he?) Yes,

he had made several contradictory remarks to friends who asked, "Where's Joan?" (Who is humble enough to say simply: "She walked out on me?")

Much has been made of the fact that Sangret seemed aware of Joan's death before he was officially informed. Prosecutor Neve, for instance: "But when he had finished making that statement, he said this: 'I guess you have found her. Everything points to me. I guess I shall get the blame.' You may ask yourselves why he should say that, if he did not in fact know that she was at that moment lying dead, and also know how her death had come about."

You may also ask yourselves just what you would think if a Scotland Yard bigshot grilled you all week on your relations with a missing girl, and asked you to identify, piece by piece, the only clothes you had ever seen her wear.

When the statement was completed (one of the longest statements ever taken from a defendant in England), Greeno realized that the Indian had proved a match for the Inspector on the warpath. He went back to London without recommending an arrest.

Then, more than six weeks later, on November 7, Lance-Corporal Albert Godfrey Gero, Cape Breton Highlanders, was detailed to clean out a stopped-up drain in the wash-house at the Witley camp. The stoppage had been caused by waste paper accumulated around a knife.

The knife was identified as San-

gret's, despite his denial. It was not general issue, but a type unfamiliar to the Canadian Army and easily remembered by witnesses. Sangret had visited that washhouse on October 12, just before Greeno began his interrogation. And the knife had a peculiar hooked tip precisely compatible with the curious wounds observed by Dra. Simpson and Gardner.

Just to confuse the issue, there had, at some point, been another knife—which brings us to the singular episode of Sergeant James Henry Smith, Surrey Constabulary, Dorking.

During the death struggle Joan's handbag and its contents had been widely scattered. After the body had been discovered, the police searched the area thoroughly, and their finds helped to establish the identity of the victim.

Sergeant Smith knew that he was hunting for anything connected with a murdered woman. He found a handbag and tossed it aside. "I thought it was nothing to do with the job." (Fortunately another officer picked it up; it was indeed Joan's.) Near the same spot he found a knife and threw it away. "I did not think it had anything to do with it at all."

Two weeks later he thought to mention this fact to his superiors; a second search found nothing.

The Smith knife was, if one can believe so moronic a witness, "similar to that [the washroom knife]

but in worse condition . . . very rusty."

It was undoubtedly the knife that convicted August Sangret. Attempts to establish the presence of bloodstains on his battle dress and blankets were inconclusive. Without the knife the prosecution case amounted to little more than "Well, who else?" (not that this argument is without effect on jurors); and there was plausibility to the defense contention that any passing soldier might have hopefully misinterpreted Joan's amiability (like Private Deadman) and become inflamed to the point of attempting rape. But the knife is hard to get around.

If Sangret killed Joan, why did he do so? The prosecution (under no obligation to prove motive as part of its case) alternatively suggested a jealous rage or a desire to disencumber himself of a pregnant woman insistent upon marriage. The former seems better suited to the nature of the crime.

A third possibility would seem to be the realization that "his" unborn child was actually that of Francis or even of some previous soldier. Or possibly a quarrel arising from the discovery that she was not pregnant at all. (She had missed her period in July and August; the September period would have been due the weekend of her death.)

But murderers have no more need than prosecutors for a precisely defined motive. Life and intimacy and tensions . . .

In Leipzig, in 1821, a soldier-barber named Johann Christian Woyzeck was tried for murder; and upon his crime Georg Büchner (1813-1837) based the superb psychological drama *Woyzeck*—a work almost a century ahead of its time. From this play Alban Berg (1885-1935) adapted his atonal opera *Wozzeck* (1925), one of the most significant and influential works for the modern musical stage.

Play and opera tell the story of an ignorant and confused soldier who loves a girl named Marie and gets her pregnant. Marie is a girl of simple charm, with moments of remorse and depression and longing for death, but generally happy, whether reading her Bible or flirting with passing soldiers. The jealous Woyzeck stabs her, and later drowns himself accidentally in a frantic search for the weapon because "that knife will betray me."

Both works express infinite compassion for tormented people in an incomprehensible world.

The real-life Woyzeck was unquestionably paranoid (though sentenced to death). August Sangret was arguably sane. The fair trial lasted from February 4 to March 2, 1943; and on March 2, after two hours of deliberation, the jury brought in the verdict: "Guilty, but with a strong recommendation to mercy."

Previous commentators have expressed surprise at that rider.

Sangret appealed the verdict, apparently on his own. Defense counsel (Linton Thorp, K.C.) flatly told the Court of Criminal Appeal that he could see no ground on which the verdict could be disturbed. The Court agreed: no point of law arose, and the adequacy of the evidence was within the exclusive province of the trial jury.

Higher authorities ignored the jury's strong recommendation. On April 29, 1943, August Sangret was hanged at Wandsworth Gaol and his body turned over to Dr. Keith Simpson (and Molly Lefebure) for the post mortem.