

LAW OFFICES

JOSEPH B. SHANNON

418-19 SCARRITT BUILDING

KANSAS CITY, MO,

March 19, 1925.

TO THE PEOPLE OF KANSAS CITY:

TOUCHING ON AND APPERTAINING TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS CITY,
MISSOURI, 1921-4 INCLUSIVE.

To begin with, let me quote from The Kansas City Journal of March 9, 1925:

"Judge Albert L. Reeves of the United States District Court, who recently spoke before the Men's Bible Class of the Calvary Baptist Church, delivered a most severe arraignment of the police.

"'Liquor is being sold all over Kansas City, and apparently everyone knows about it but the police.' was the opening gun of his talk.

"'I am informed that the recent seizures were brought about only when bootleggers fell out.'"

In the language of Al Jolson: "Wait a minute, folks; that ain't half of it. You ain't heard nothin' yet."

There are other crimes, plenty of them. Also, is it not pertinent to inquire at this time: "What power has controlled the police force for the past four years?" The echo answereth: "THE KANSAS CITY STAR."

The Star took possession early in 1921 and put "Matthew" and "John" in control as police commissioners. Matthew A. Foster soon passed from the scene of activity. John E. Wilson, personal friend and private attorney of the editor of The Star, was on hand "ab initio" when The Star assumed management and was present as well at the finis.

RESUME OF THE STAR'S MANAGEMENT

First: More murders, both solved and unsolved, were committed during The Star's four years of control than during any other four years of the city's history.

Second: More highway robberies have taken place during its four years of control than in any similar period of the city's existence.

Third: More bank robberies and more payroll stickups have taken place during The Star's four years of control than during any other like period in the city's history.

Fourth: More burglaries of all kinds, and especially burglaries of residences, have taken place during The Star's four years of control than during any other like period of the city's existence.

Fifth: More abject surrenders by policemen to holdup men during The Star's four years of control than were ever dreamed of before.

Sixth: More families have been afraid to open the doors of their homes through fear of being held up during the four years of The Star's control than in the entire previous history of this city.

Seventh: More women have stored their jewelry in safe deposit boxes, hid it from view on their persons when leaving home or leaving entertainments, for fear of bandits, than ever before in the history of this city.

Eighth: More persons within a radius of one hundred miles from Kansas City—our trade

territory—have remained away from here through fear during these four years than ever before.

Ninth: More citizens have been brutally assaulted in police stations than ever before in the history of this city.

Tenth: More policemen are known to have committed felonies during The Star's four years of control than in all the previous years since Kansas City has had a Metropolitan Police Department. Many policemen were caught red-handed and quietly dropped from the force, when public decency demanded that they be prosecuted. The Star realized that the publicity incident to such prosecutions would injure its wing of the Republican party, hence the soft pedal.

Eleventh: More faithful police officers were discharged purely for political reasons than ever before in the history of the city.

Twelfth: More men were hired and fired as policemen during The Star's four years of control than had been hired and fired since Kansas City has had a police department.

Thirteenth: More cruel and unusual tortures have been inflicted upon prisoners, such as burning, etc., to extort confessions than ever before. This brutality cannot be compared with anything like it in former years, because police records fail to show the burning of prisoners in any administration except The Star's.

Well might it be said that it was a progressive administration "backwards," and that such tendencies are readily seen in statistics of crimes reported and shown by the files of the department.

"CRIME WHAT AM"

During

FOUR YEARS OF STAR MANAGEMENT

Murders		Business Houses		Burglaries		Highway Robberies	
				Dwellings			
1921	51	1921	569	1138	1921	610	
1922	64	1922	523	1054	1922	919	
1923	58	1923	641	1146	1923	1161	
1924	62	1924	944	1594	1924	1287	
Total	235		2677	4932		3977	

If this evidence of progressivism is not sufficient to convince one of the SPLENDID efforts of The Star, then the following should convince even the most skeptical that Star control and progress go hand in hand:

RATES OF BURGLARY INSURANCE

1920 The year previous to The Star's taking over the Police Department Rate per \$1,000, \$13.00

1924 Last year of The Star's control of the Police Department Rate per \$1,000, \$55.00

Truly, crime has progressed as never before in this community under the management of The Star! However, there is a sort of reverse English to the progress.

Since The Star's recall ideas now prevail, it will not be amiss to recall that in this four years of newspaper government everyone connected with The Star—owner, manager, reporter, clear down to the office boy—has taken a fling at Kansas City's police department. When the management of our police affairs was turned over to The Star by the Governor of this State, The

Star stood ready, if not to praise, then to excuse every phase of police administration[...] the services rendered by it in the way of governmental management of this community's police department. Therefore, I am writing this, lest it be forgotten.

Very truly yours, Joseph B. Shannon

P. S. More money was collected from policemen for political purposes during The Star's control than in any like period in the history of this city. When The Star assumed control, its political chairman sent out letters ordering individual policemen to report to party headquarters in the Scarritt Building and pay monthly political assessments. The gentleman who did this political fat-frying was promoted to a high Federal position, through Star influence.

A properly conducted police department's sole duty should be to prevent crime and apprehend criminals.

Shades of the departed! Think of this: Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt led a great movement in the '80s for Civil Service Reform and the abolishment of political assessments in public service. None was more staunch in their support in that fight than the late William R. Relson. And now think of this! Abolishment of civil service. Political fat-frying assessments the order of the day by those in charge of the property of the late Mr. Relson.

The four years of gross mismanagement of the Police Department, resultant in incompetency and worse, of a necessity produces a very low morale amongst its members. It will take years and years to improve this, as a Police Department cannot be successfully rebuilt in a day.

The Star's control came through former Governor Hyde, who, I think, had in mind the revival of an ancient English custom, that of having a privy council. He made his from the higher-ups of The Star, who in return gave to him and his administration open, brazen and notorious praise.

This four years of police administration cost the taxpayers of Kansas City \$5,232,691.74.
J.B.S.