

People and Things

The Truth about Huey Long's Death

by A. BEVERLY COOTE

WHEN HUEY LONG was fatally shot and his assailant riddled with bullets just a little more than a month ago, various motives for the killing were advanced. It was difficult to believe that intelligent, young Dr. Carl Weiss was the tool of an organized band of plotters, as charged by Long adherents. It seemed equally inconceivable that his mind had been affected by political tribulations heaped upon his jurist father-in-law by the Kingfish's legislature. That version of the story, it will be recalled, was that the jurist's opposition to Long had resulted in the passage of a law abolishing the office of the judge. This motive also appeared ridiculously inadequate. Doctor Weiss was not the type of person who could conceive and consummate assassination for an even much more important reason than the loss of a position by a relative.

As weeks passed it became increasingly certain that the real inspiration for the tragedy of Louisiana's capitol would remain shrouded in mystery. Long was as dead from one little bullet out of Dr. Weiss's gun as the latter was from the two-score slugs pumped into him by Huey's tardy bodyguards. (I wonder as to the future of these gun-toting gentlemen upon whom Huey had relied to protect his precious person. Can you visualize one of them applying for a similar job and stating as to previous employment: "I was Huey Long's bodyguard"?)

There has come to me recently through a medium that can hardly be questioned, the *real* facts behind the slaying of a potential candidate for president of the nation. I know enough about the source to *believe firmly* in its authenticity. It bears every mark of logic and truth. Yet I cannot understand why this story has been kept cloaked in secrecy for it reflects no discredit on Dr. Weiss. Conversely, it is in accord with the best traditions of Southern chivalry.

Here is the story, told in type for the first time:

Several days before the fatal encounter in the marble halls of the capitol at Baton Rouge, a large number of new laws had been passed by the legislature at the behest of the Dictator, one of them the measure affecting the judgeship of the father of beautiful young Mrs. Weiss. The

judge had been a bold opponent of Huey and his ruthless reign over the state. He couldn't be discharged. So Huey thought of the clever scheme of rearranging the judicial districts of that section so that the position itself would be abolished. The bill was duly passed and as the signature of Governor Allen was affixed to it, Huey couldn't refrain from an expression of his satisfaction. "Well," he exclaimed laughingly, "*that rids the state of its only nigger judge!*"

Everyone laughed at this witty sally of the Kingfish, who was famous for his wise-cracks. Of course they all knew that there was no "nigger" in the judge. Although dark-skinned, they were familiar with his ancestry. He comes from one of the fine old Creole families of the state, a family with an honorable record dating back to many years before the Revolutionary War.

The crack was so funny to the Long adherents that it was repeated around town. Within a few hours it came to the ears of Dr. Weiss. His feelings may be imagined. Young, high strung and devoted to his beautiful young wife, *he regarded it as the deadliest possible insult.* In the South those are not only fighting words, they may be regarded as the declaration of an intention to commit suicide.

It is declared that despite the provocation, Dr. Weiss did not intend to slay Huey Long. He did not have his gun drawn when he accosted the senator. According to the details provided in this version of the story, the doctor approached Long, said something in a low tone, and struck him in the mouth. This wound was referred to in dispatches telling of the affair. Upon being struck, Huey is said to have reached for his gun, whereupon young Weiss drew his weapon and shot the Kingfish in the abdomen. A few seconds later the doctor was dead from the guns of the guards.

Just one more detail which seems to testify to the fact that the Kingfish was destined to die in this manner. Had Doctor Weiss not been hurried in pressing the trigger of his gun, he would probably have tried to aim at the heart of the dictator. And Huey would have lived. *He had on a bullet-proof vest and the lethal slug entered a few inches below it.*