HORRIBLE MISTAKE IN CASE OF FRANK, STATES W. J. BURNS

"Evidence on Which He Was Convicted Was Utterly Insufficient," Says Detective in Card.

MY WORK IN THIS CASE NEARLY DONE, HE SAYS

Burns Makes Absolute Denial of Any Connection With Bribe Offer—Retrial Hearing Resumed Today.

William J. Burns returned to Atlanta last night from Chattanooga, and upon his arrival here he gave out a written statement to The Constitution in which he made absolute denial of any connection with the alleged bribe offer of $200 to Rev. C. B. Ragsdale in return for an affidavit from the preacher to the effect that he heard Jim Conley confess to the murder of Mary Phagan.

The detective also takes occasion in this card to assert positively and emphatically the innocence of Frank, and declares that "in driving Leo Frank to his death without giving him a fair trial, you (the people of Atlanta) are making the most horrible, the most awful, mistake I ever heard of."

Bruns' Statement.

The card of Mr. Burns follows in full:

My statement in the afternoon papers in regard to the Ragsdale affidavit was made in response to an incomplete account of the affair received by long distance phone.

I have since read the account in The Constitution of his being driven out of his church and his *mental affliction, which puts the* matter in a new and pitiful light. I wish to say that I am sorry for this unfortunate man, but I must also say that his statement that I, or anyone in the employ of the Burns agency, bribed, or attempted to bribe, him is utterly untrue.

In mentioning my name as one of those present when the affidavit was "drawn" from him, he is stating a downright falsehood. I never laid eyes on the man in my life, do not know him and was never in his presence. If he made this statement, and if there is any manhood left in him, he will come out and disavow it. I am satisfied it was forced out of him by threats and intimidation.

Please let me say in connection with this Ragsdale affair that it illustrates what I have so often observed: that the commission of one great wrong invariably leads to the commission of other wrongs.

I would like to say one thing to the people of Atlanta. In all my experience I have never been so moved in all my life as I have been by the Frank case. Putting back of this statement all my experience of thirty years in the study and detection of crime, I say to you more earnestly than I ever spoke before in my life, that in driving Leo M. Frank to his death without giving him a fair trial, you are making the most horrible, the most awful, mistake I ever heard of.

Says Frank Is Innocent.

I believe that you will grant that I am entitled to speak as an expert in matters relating to crime and criminal evidence, and speaking as such I tell you that Leo M. Frank is an innocent man, that the evidence on which he was convicted was utterly insufficient, and that bringing on his execution under such conditions you are doing him a frightful injustice and inflicting on your city an irreparable injury.

Notwithstanding that twelve honest men found Leo M. Frank guilty, I say to you that the conditions that existed in Atlanta at that time made it absolutely impossible to give him a fair trial. If the members of that jury were to discuss the events leading up to the rendering of their verdict, they would tell you that the very atmosphere was charged with the story of perversion, perversion, perversion, and that, together with the atrocious crime of the murder of this innocent little girl, aroused the community to a frenzy that made a fair consideration of the case impossible.

I consider that my work in the Frank case, which was to ascertain the truth, is practically completed. I have absolutely cleared Leo M. Frank of the charge of perversion, which was wholly responsible for his conviction, and I have also demonstrated, beyond the shadow of a doubt, by incontrovertible facts, that Jim Conley is a pervert and was the murderer of little Mary Phagan.

WILLIAM J. BURNS.

Hearing Resumed.

Solicitor Hugh M. Dorsey will appear before Judge Ben Hill this morning at 10 o'clock, when the hearing for a retrial for Leo M. Frask is resumed and will begin his fight to [illegible] move of the convicted man's

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HORRIBLE MISTAKE IN CASE OF FRANK

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attorneys to gain for him a second trial.

A strong fight will be made to have Judge Hill revoke the order he gave Frank's defense canceling the amendment which was presented last Friday, and in which Rev. C. B. Ragsdale made an affidavit to the effect that he had overheard Jim Conley confess to Mary Phagan's murder. Ragsdale has repudiated this affidavit in a confession to the solicitor.

It is also reported that Mr. Dorsey has obtained an affidavit from Anna Maud Carter, the negro woman who has made an affidavit for the defense, swearing that Conley—while she was in prison with him—confessed Mary Phagan's murder to her. This report could not be verified, as Dorsey refused to commit himself when approached by a Constitution reporter.

State Has Affidavit.

It is known, however, that the negress has made an affidavit to the detectives at police headquarters who have been investigating the Frank case. This document, it is said, was attested by the Carter woman on the day before she made the startling "Conley confession" affidavit for Frank's lawyers.

Mr. Dorsey has announced that he is well equipped for this morning's fight, and that he has a large amount of evidence that will create much surprise. A brilliant legal battle is expected when both sides clash before Judge Hill. The hearing will be held in the committee room of the state library in the capitol.

Story Is Denied.

Arthur Thurman, the lawyer who was accused by Ragsdale with having been present when the bribe offer of $200 was made, denies the charge and denounces the minister as a liar.

So does C. C. Tedder, the investigator attached to the office of William M. Smith, counsel for Conley, whom Ragsdale also says was present when the offer was made. Tedder likewise says Ragsdale is a liar.

Each, however, admits connection with Ragsdale. Both Tedder and Thurman say they heard of Ragsdale's alleged stories that were being circulated that the minister knew something of the Mary Phagan mystery which had never been made public. Tedder was present, it is said, when Ragsdale's first story was told. He states, though, that Barns was not among the men gathered around the minister when his story was told.