
Alonzo Hunt Wrongful Death Investigation

The death of Alonzo Hunt in May, 1925, in Marion, OH turned into a wrongful death investigation that quickly and quietly ended. Did someone get away with murder?

Alonzo Nance Hunt (Granduncle of the author)

1860–1925

BIRTH 8 APR 1860 • Lawrence County, Ohio

DEATH 19 MAY 1925 • Marion, Marion, Ohio

These are the main players in this tragic saga:

1. William Allen Barnett
2. Nellie Mae Coffey-Barnett
3. Delbert Flippin
4. Louis E Myers

Alonzo Hunt (age 65) was struck by an auto on the evening of May 16, 1925 in Marion OH (Marion, OH, in 1925, was a town of about 30,000 people). He was returning from the home of his daughter, Mrs James Pine (nee Nellie Hunt). He had his loyal dog by his side after he was struck. His skull was severely fractured. He never regained consciousness and died two days later at a Marion, OH hospital.



THE MARION STAR, MAY 19 1925

A person that responded to the injured Alonzo, noted a state license plate - 2996 - on a 'big black sedan' (later identified as a Buick) driven by 'large, well-dressed woman', that passed the scene several minutes after Alonzo was struck. He jotted the number down on a piece of cardboard, and gave it to the ambulance driver.

The woman, Mrs William A Barnett (Nellie M Coffey-Barnett), initially charged with manslaughter, was related to a prominent lawyer in Marion, OH. The lawyer, Louis Edmund Myers, owned the car with the license number 2996. Louis Myers was married

to Ethyl J Barnett-Myers. Ethyl and William Barnett were siblings. Mrs William Barnett, wife of Louis Myers' brother-in-law, was exonerated by a Grand Jury within days of the incident.



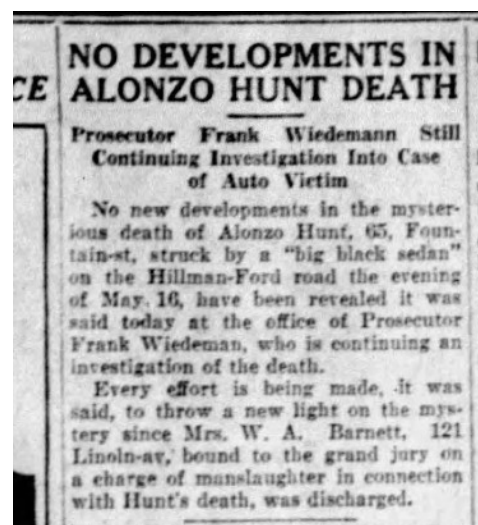
THE MARION STAR, MAY 21 1925



THE MARION STAR, MAY 26 1925

The Marion Star newspaper, though it originally closely followed and reported on the investigation, seems to have gone out of its way, to show that the woman charged, Mrs. William A Barnett, could not have been the person driving the car - even providing a picture of the "petite" woman - a case of 'mistaken identity'.

The police stated on May 26th that there "would be no further investigation." Yet, on May 28, the police stated to the Marion Star that the prosecutor in the case would continue to investigate.



THE MARION STAR, MAY 28 1925

Mention was made in a Jan 1926 Marion Starr article, that Nellie Barnett had been “freed of charge of manslaughter” in connection with the death of Alonzo Hunt by a Grand Jury in June, 1925.

Did a well connected lawyer get his relative off the hook for a manslaughter charge?

Was the Grand Jury **AND** the Marion Star newspaper complicit in getting charges quickly and quietly dismissed and swaying public opinion away from the relative of the lawyer?

Did Mrs. William Barnett get away with the manslaughter of Alonzo Hunt? Let’s take a closer look.

Lawyer of Mrs. William Barnett and wife:

Lewis Edmond Myers

BIRTH 9 OCT 1874 • La Rue, Marion County, Ohio

DEATH 13 SEP 1931 • Marion, Marion, Ohio

Ethel J Barnett

1881–1959

BIRTH FEB 1881 • Ohio

DEATH 20 DEC 1959 • Marion, Marion County, Ohio

I did a little research on Mrs. William A. Barnett - the allegedly ‘large woman driving the big black sedan’. Her maiden name was Nellie Mae Coffey.

Nellie Mae Coffey

BIRTH 5 MAR 1887 • Marion, Marion County, Ohio

DEATH 10 DEC 1966 • Hardin County, Ohio

Nellie Coffey married William Allen Barnett in July, 1905. At the time, William was 30 and Nellie was 18.

William Allen Barnett

BIRTH 15 Jul 1875 - Marysville, Union County, Ohio

DEATH 6 Oct 1937 (aged 62) - San Diego County, California

William and Nellie Barnett had two children, Leroy Allen (1908-2000) and Lillian Mae (1906-1934).



ABT. 1918, NORTH LEWISBURG, CHAMPAIGN, OHIO

William Allen Barnett was in the 'soft drink' business in Marion, OH. In 1920, he was arrested for having intoxicating liquors at a place not his residence. Louis E. Myers (the lawyer who got the 1925 Alonzo Hunt case dismissed) filed to get the liquor case dismissed.

So, Louis E Myers and William A Barnett were not only relatives but likely also business associates. Was 'soft drinks' a coverup for liquor distributor in 1920. In 1922 William and Nellie and children were living at 121 Lincoln Ave in Marion - a house they owned, free of mortgage.

Here's where it gets interesting.

In the May 1925 Marion Star newspaper stories about Alonzo Hunt's death investigation, a fellow named Delbert Flippin was arrested and questioned by the police a few days after Alonzo's death incident. An anonymous tip came in that Delbert was following closely behind the big black sedan. It was never reported what Delbert Flippin told the police about his involvement.

In Nov 1925, William Barnett sued his wife, Nellie, for divorce. He claimed she 'entertained men' at their home during May 1925, the month of the Alonzo Hunt death investigation.

HUSBAND SUES WOMAN IN DEATH CAR MYSTERY CASE

William A. Barnett, Charging
Wife Meets Other Men,
Seeks Divorce

Mrs. Nellie M. Barnett, found not guilty several months ago as the "well dressed woman driver" of a "big black sedan" which was claimed to have struck and caused the death of Alonzo Hunt, May 16, on the Hillman-Ford-rd, today is defendant in a divorce action filed by her husband, William A. Barnett.

Mr. Barnett charges that Mrs. Barnett entertained different men at their home on Lincoln-av, particularly during May, the month of the Hillman-Ford-rd mystery, and in September.

Names of correspondents are not mentioned. It is claimed that the exact names of the various men entertained at the Barnett home and the dates are not recollected.

Mr. and Mrs. Barnett were married July 29, 1905, and have two children, Lillian, 19, and Roy, 17.

Barnett asks that his wife be barred from any right in his real and personal property.

In January, 1926, Nellie Barnett married Delbert Flippin. They lived at 41 Chicago St in Marion. At the time, Delbert stated he was 35 (a lie) and Nellie was 39. In 1930, Nellie and Delbert and her son, Leroy, were living at 665 Woodrow Ave in Marion.

Marriage License:

Name: Delbert Dean Flippin

Age: 35

Birth Date: Nov 1900

Marriage Date: 4 Jan 1926
Marriage Place: Marion, Ohio, USA
Spouse: Nellie M. Barnett

Delbert's Birth Certificate:

Name: Delbert Dean Flippin
Birth Date: 7 Nov 1900
Birth Place: Paragould, Greene, Arkansas, USA
Father: William Thomas Flippin
Mother: Samantha Jane Flippin

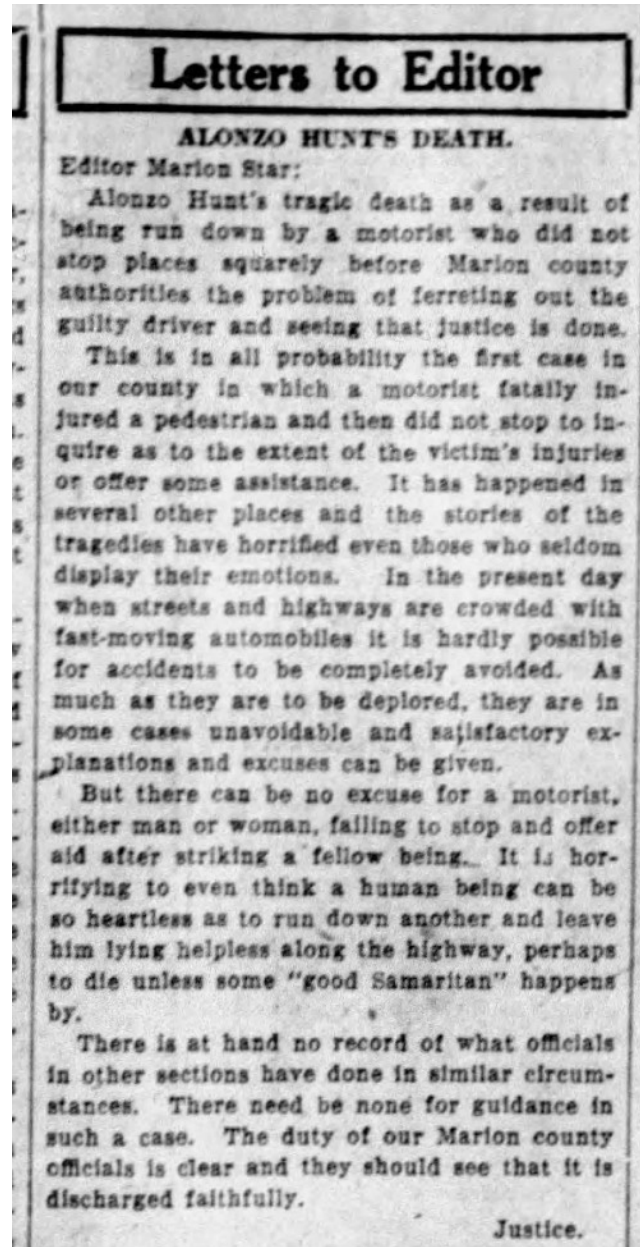
Delbert clearly lied about his age on the marriage license. He was actually 26 years old.

What happened with Nellie such that she was divorced by William Barnett and married Delbert, so close after the death of the Alonzo Hunt incident? Did Delbert witness the incident? Did Nellie know Delbert before the incident? Was Nellie blackmailed by Delbert, with Delbert threatening to tell all? Or, was Nellie in an affair with Delbert prior to the incident and he protected Nellie with his testimony and the incident exposed their affair? I wonder if William Barnett knew Delbert Flippin; family friend or employed by William Barnett.

Nellie and Delbert Flippin divorced in Arkansas, July, 1934.

Nellie Coffey-Barnett-Flippin then married a fellow named Harry Green in Dec 1935, in Marion, OH. In 1940, Nellie and Harry were living alone at 483 Olney Ave in Marion. They remained a couple until his death in 1956. Nellie Coffey-Barnett-Flippin-Green died in 1966.

Epilogue



ALONZO HUNT, MARION, OH CEMETERY

THE MARION STAR, MAY 20 1925, UNKNOWN AUTHOR

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