

Philip A. LaMonica

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Birth: 1907
Death: Sep. 21, 1952
Harlem
New York County (Manhattan)
New York, USA

The New York Daily News, Monday,
September 22, 1952

2 Jailbreak Badmen, 1 Cop Slain in Battle

By Anthony Marino and Henry Lee

An 11-day crime spree by three gun-crazy fugitives from a federal prison reached its climax yesterday when cops closed in on them in a small uptown bedroom here. For five roaring minutes, police and criminals blasted away at each other at close range.

When the shooting was over, two of the thugs — the Nolan brothers of Warbranch, Ky. — were dead and a heroic detective was fatally wounded.

A second detective, shot in the chest was reported in serious condition last night at Knickerbocker Hospital. But the third fugitive, who had been hiding under the bed with a naked woman, escaped unscathed, though the mattress was shredded by .38 slugs.

Also unhurt were two other women — all of them are Negroes — found crouching behind shower curtains in the bathroom of the four-room, seventh-floor apartment at 500 W. 140th St., at the southwest corner of Amsterdam Ave., opposite City College.

The dead:

Joseph Wayne Nolan, 24, whose body was ripped by three bullets. The Kentucky desperado, on the FBI's most-wanted list,



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broke out of the Federal Penitentiary at Lewisburg, Pa., Sept. 10 with the other two cons and started a spree of kidnappings, car thefts and a bank robbery, from Pennsylvania to the Bronx.

Ballard Nolan, 21, Joseph's brother, who fired from behind a dresser as Joseph blazed away from a double bed at the vanguard of the 31-cop raiding party.

To Get Inspector's Honors.

Detective Philip LaMonica, 45, of the Morrisania Ave. station, who saved the life of a police submachine-gunner by leaping at Joseph Nolan and knocking his gun hand aside. But Joseph managed to fire three .45 bullets. One of them nicked the submachine gun, and at least one other, police think, got LaMonica.

With three shots in all in his chest, the detective, a 14-year veteran on the force who only last December received a promotion, died within minutes after his arrival at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center.

LaMonica will be given an inspector's funeral at 9 A. M. Thursday at the East End Funeral Home, Gun Hill and White Plains Roads, Bronx. Eight uniformed patrolmen will serve as pallbearers. An honor platoon of 48 patrolmen, headed by a battalion commander and the Police Department's band and glee club, will take part.

A funeral Mass will be offered at 10 A. M. at St. Valentine's Church, E. 221st St. and Barnes Ave., Bronx. Burial will be in St. Raymond's Cemetery, Bronx.

The seriously wounded detective was 34-year-old Nicholas Cotter, also of the Morrisania Avenue station. Cotter, who joined the force in 1943, was made a detective two years later and in May on 1950 was promoted to first-grade for shooting and capturing a hold-up suspect.

Jealousy Led to Raid.



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The surviving fugitive, 21-year-old Elmer Schuer of Chicago, fired several times from under the bed, but then yelled, "I'm not going to shoot! I give up!" He tossed out his gun, tentatively poked out his hands and then his head — and was yanked out the rest of the way by the cops. Following him came the naked woman, identified as 21-year-old Josephine Jiminez, of 1 West 111th St.

As related by Lt. Al Coogan, in charge of the Morrisiana detectives, the raid — based on a tip from a jealous boy friend of one of the women — came about this way:

... (pieces of article missing) ...

... supervising officers, 23 detectives' and two emergency squad patrolmen were quietly assembled near the newish, better-class apartment house about 1 .A. M.

The target was L-shaped Apt. 7-H on a top-floor corner of the building, supposedly occupied by Arline, Ball, 32, a Negro student nurse. Her boy friend, police sources said, had been beaten up and driven away by the white intruders, when he sought admittance. The boy friend then tipped off the cops.

Under Deputy Inspectors Martin Donelan and John Holk, in charge of two Bronx detective divisions, and Acting Capt. Joseph McLaughlin, of the Bronx homicide squad, the raiders were deployed with military precision.

Detectives were posted at the elevator, on both the ground and seventh floors, and five were assigned to basement dumbwaiters. Others were put on the roof, and the rest split into two squads — one with orders to hit the kitchen door opening on a rear stairway, the other to remain in reserve at the front door of the apartment.

Door Smashed

With Coogan at the rear door were five detectives and the two emergency squad patrolmen, Vincent A. Grant, 33, a twice-wounded Army veteran and submachine gun specialist, and his partner, Nicholas B.

Photos may be scaled.
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- LAH

Added: Feb. 15, 2013



Dear Philip, I trust that there is a family left behind to treasure your memories, and so will many colleagues do who certainly admire you for your bravery and that sacrifice you made when trying to re-establish safety for many. You were taken home a long...[\(Read more\)](#)

- Edda Meinikat

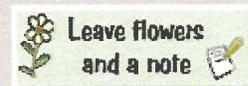
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Matarazzo, a seven-month rookie temporarily assigned to Emergency Squad 5.

Detective Cotter tried to jimmy the door with a crowbar. The bar fell to the floor with a clatter, but there was no sound from inside. The detectives then smashed in the door with shoulder thrusts, breaking two ordinary locks, plus a "Foxlock." This is a vertical steel bar which drops into a metal cup below floor level.

Capt. McLaughlin ran through the kitchen, dinette, and foyer to open the front door, protected by a more formidable horizontal bar. Cowering in the bathtub, behind shower curtains, the cops first found the Ball woman and Bessie³⁹, a domestic, who lives in the building. They made no resistance.

Refuse to Surrender.

As a dozen or so cops, guns in hand, piled up in the foyer and small hallway leading to the living room and bedroom beyond, Detective "Frank" Weber grabbed a chair and put it against the closed bedroom door as a shield.

"Throw your guns out!" Coogan yelled. "Come out with your hands up!"

There was no answer from the Nolans and Schuer.

"Come out!" he yelled again. "If you don't come out with your hands up, we'll blow your brains out. We have a machine gun."

This time, there came a taunting Kentucky-drawl.

"Have you got a search warrant?" asked one of the Nolans. "Yon need a search warrant. You can't come in."

That did it. Grant jumped over the chair shield, smashed open the door with his submachine gun and pulled up short in the door frame. Joseph Nolan, wearing only a pair of pants, was standing on the large double bed. No one else was in sight.

His left hand extended pleadingly, right arm behind his back, he yelled, "Don't shoot!"

As Grant held his fire, Nolan swung around with a .45 in his right hand. Only two feet away, slightly behind Grant, Detective LaMonica saw the motion and leaped between the two men. Nolan fired, the shell denting Grant's machine gun. Then Nolan, LaMonica, and Grant all began firing.

"There's a guy in the corner, shooting from behind the dresser!" yelled Bronx Homicide Detective Edward Harran.

Grant turned his heavy fire in that direction, riddling Ballard Bolan. At the same time, his partner, Matarazzo, spotted shots winging up from under the bed. He put his bullets into the mattress, and the shooting by Schuer abruptly stopped.

Find Bank Loot.

When it was over, Joseph Nolan was dead, his right hand only a few inches away from his .45 on the floor, Ballard and LaMonica were dying, and Cotter was seriously wounded. Bed, furniture, walls were pocked with bullet holes.

By a strange quirk, neither of the two windows in the bedroom was hit by bullets — even though at one point three detectives and three thugs were firing at each other at a heavy rate. One window fronts on 140th Street and the other overlooks the courtyard entrance of the building. The bedroom is only 10 by 12 feet.

In the apartment littered with empty beer cans and unwashed whiskey glasses, police found an imitation leather briefcase containing \$3,510. This, Schuer insisted, was all that remained of the \$12,680 in loot which the trio got only last Tuesday in the stickup of the Manufacturers Trust Co. branch at 3015 Third Avenue at 155th Street, Bronx. Schuer said liquor, high living with prostitutes, and lavish tipping had taken the rest, but the cops suspect some of it had been stashed

elsewhere.

Schuer, after lengthy questioning at the W. 152nd St. station, was booked for homicide, felonious assault and Sullivan Law violation, and, of course, the feds, who weren't in on yesterday's show, would like to get their hands on him.

The three women, charged as material witnesses, were transferred to the women's detention cell at the W. 30th St. station. Later, a fourth, Mayola Jones, 39, also of the W. 140th St. address, was similarly booked.

Lt. Coogan explained that when the three cons first hit town, they looked in a newspaper classified section for a suitable apartment and decided on a room-and-kitchenette at 906-08 Kelly St., Bronx, at \$20 weekly. They went out only to eat — and then at different times — and pretty soon they tired of the cramped quarters.

Ballard, Lt. Coogan said, had met Mayola Jones, and through her, was introduced to the Ball woman. The men arranged to sublet her apartment at \$300 to \$400 monthly, according to the police, and they moved in Friday.

With them, they brought a collection of machine guns, sawed off shotguns, pistols and revolvers, found later by the cops in the apartment. A car key in the apartment led to a 1950 Pontiac, parked in front of 905 Beck St., Bronx. The trio had stolen it from a Pennsylvania family they kidnapped during the first, wild dash for liberty. Under the back seat were five rifles and three large knives.

The trio were identified by employees of the Manufacturers Bank branch and by victims of their raid last Monday on the DeMayo & Sons gunshop, 374 E. 174th St., Bronx, where they obtained a dozen or more firearms, plus ammunition. For their getaway, they kidnapped Dr. Joseph Taferner of Marion Avenue, Bronx and forced him to drive them to Manhattan.

Dr. Taferner yesterday identified Schuer, but

added, "I'm sure he had lighter hair then." Whereupon police said, Schuer told them that only Saturday, he gave Bessie Smith \$24 to get him dye, so he could change his light chestnut hair to a deep black.

On April 6, 1953, the Police Department honored Det. La Monica during a Medal Day Ceremony. At the time, Spring 3100 reported that "One hundred and three of the awards involved thugs armed with loaded guns, twenty-four policemen were actually shot at, and six department members were hit and seriously wounded, two fatally, in these cited cases." Also honored for the incident in which Det. La Monica was killed, were Detectives Nicholas J. Cotter, Frank Weber, Clinton J. Thomas, Jr. of the 42 Squad, P.O. Vincent Grant of ESS #5, and Nicholas Matarazzo of the 25 Precinct and assigned to ESS #5.

Detective Philip A. LaMonica
New York City Police Department
New York
End of Watch: Sunday, September 21, 1952

Biographical Info
Age: Not available
Tour of Duty: Not available
Badge Number: 2068

Incident Details
Cause of Death: Gunfire (Accidental)
Date of Incident: Sunday, September 21, 1952
Weapon Used: Officer's handgun
Suspect Info: 2 killed; one apprehended

Detective Philip LaMonica was shot and killed while attempting to arrest three notorious criminals who had escaped from the federal prison in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. The three had also held up several banks and gun shops.

Detective LaMonica and several other officers, went to an apartment at 500 West 140th Street in Manhattan to arrest the suspects. When they arrived, shots were fired and

Detective LaMonica was shot twice. The second shot to hit him killed him instantly. The second shot was fired from another patrolman and hit Detective LaMonica after ricocheting off the weapon of one of the suspects.

Detective LaMonica was assigned to the 42nd Detective Squad. He is survived by his wife.

Family links:

Spouse:

[Phyllis LaMonica \(1910 - 1981\)*](#)

[*Calculated relationship](#)

Burial:

[Old Saint Raymonds Cemetery](#)

Bronx

Bronx County

New York, USA

Plot: Section 15, Range 110, Grave 122

Created by: [Gaye Hill](#)

Record added: Feb 22, 2011

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