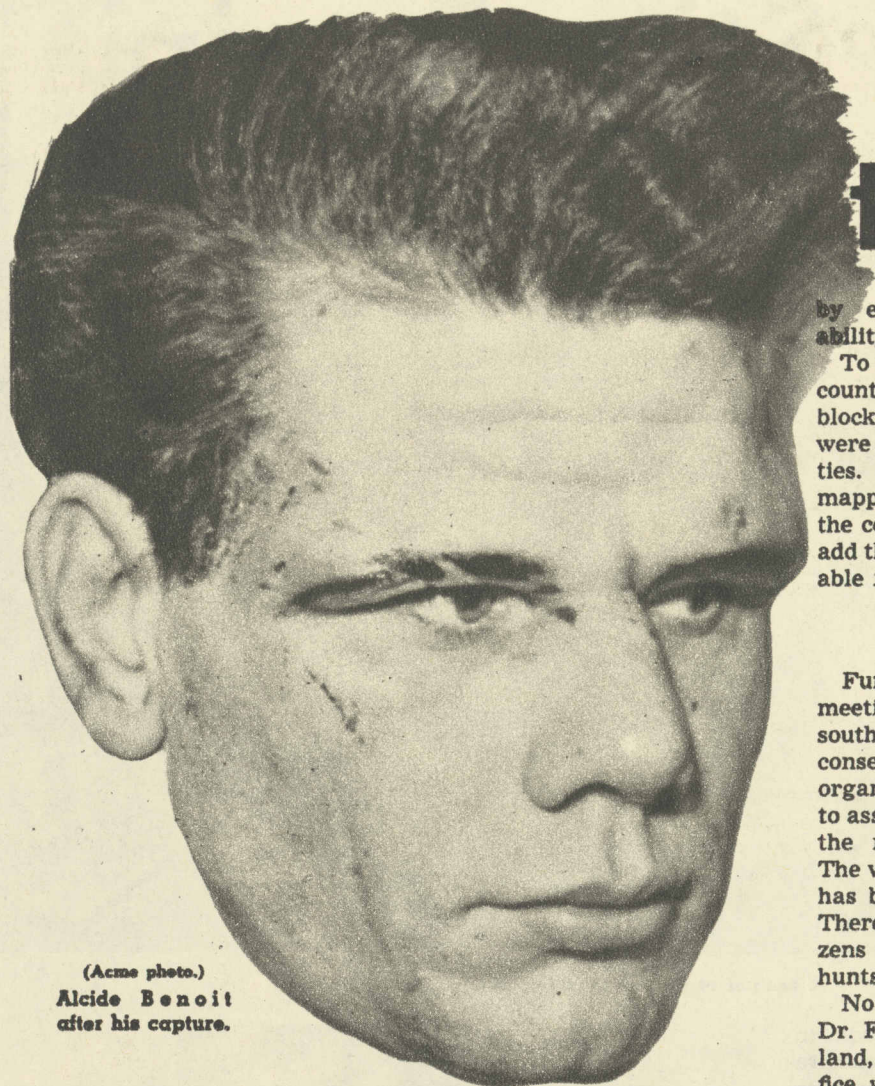


Road Blockades to Trap Killers



(Acme photo.)
Alcido Benoit
after his capture.

New Police Network Puts Ring Around Fugitives

(Continued from page one.)

cars. Policemen or sheriffs and their deputies hastened to close in on the fugitive. Always, with no diminution of vigilance, the roads, from the great interstate trunk lines to the loneliest country lanes, were kept blocked. Where it was advisable trucks were placed across the highways as barriers.

Small wonder it was that Benoit was first pinned into one county, Monroe, then gradually restricted to a smaller and smaller area. He was only a few hundred yards from the spot where Hamilton was slain when he was captured. He had ridden far in two commandeered automobiles, but had been balked by the circle of the blockade.

Benoit is now serving a life sentence in a Michigan penitentiary.

...

This is an example of the successful blockade. There is a real necessity for its wider use—for streamlined law enforcement.

Criminal gangs were quick to adapt modern tools to their trade. Dillinger, Al Brady, all the more notorious big shots of the crime world, sensed the value of swift flight by automobile from the scene of the crime to a distant hiding place.

Their technique was based on sound psychology. They were unhampered by tradition, but law enforcement generally was in the horse and saddle days. Cities and counties were expected to catch their own criminals. Help across the county line might be given willingly, but it was not organized. State police forces were designed (and near-

by experience and planning ability.

To the sheriffs of all the border counties, who were present, the blockade was explained. They were intrigued with its possibilities. They agreed to accept the mapping and radio directions of the central police station and to add their men to the forces available for highway barriers.

...

Further, at the close of the meeting the sheriffs of the seven southernmost Michigan counties consented to head committees to organize "minute men" details to assist in the work, to augment the regular policing agencies. The value of such volunteer help has been displayed in the past. There are in every county citizens who are glad to assist in hunts for lawbreakers.

No farther back than Sept. 29 Dr. F. L. Hardy, dentist of Midland, Mich., leaned from his office window and with his deer rifle killed one bank bandit and wounded another. The pair had just emerged from the Chemical State Savings bank and were fleeing without loot after they had wounded the president and the cashier. Dr. Hardy, it may be mentioned, was a member of a vigilante group that had been formed to combat just such forays by criminals.

parolees who would rather "die with their boots on" than go back to prison, and consequently are quick to use their weapons. The blockaders realize that a criminal trying to break through a blockade will shoot at any one in his way, so to protect themselves they have adopted the "shoot first" plan. Also there is the feeling among law enforcers that a desperate criminal captured soon may be just a parolee at large. They feel that courts and parole boards are turning too many killers loose.

An example of quick shooting on the part of state policemen is reported from Indiana as recently as Nov. 17. Henry Davey, a former convict, was slain at a tavern at Worthington in a trap set by seven state policemen. Believed responsible for several crimes in the neighborhood, Davey was trailed to Worthington from Terre Haute by the policemen. As the criminal was occupied elsewhere for a brief time, the policemen waited outside the tavern, saw Davey enter, and shot him to death as he was emerging with a slot machine in his arms. Davey had served time in Indiana, Florida, and the federal prison at Atlanta.

...

There are three essentials to the operation of an efficient



(Acme photo.)

A case where crime paid off in death. The body of Edward Schearer is removed from Smiths Creek, Mich., postoffice, where he and a companion were slain during a gun battle that interrupted their attempt at robbery.

State policemen and their volunteer assistants, such as Dr. Hardy, have adopted the plan of shooting criminals as the safest measure, inasmuch as these desperadoes oftentimes are

crime blockade system. They are:

1. Good radio communication.
2. Accurate mapping of districts.
3. Adequate numbers of alert, determined men who can hear and will heed the orders of the central dispatcher.

Radio broadcasting facilities in the five central states are ample. Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois particularly are well equipped with short wave stations for police use. Their state police cars have receiving sets that keep them in touch with the central station or its satellites at all times. It is comparatively easy for the cars of sheriffs and city police forces to tune in on the same band. The communication feature offers slight difficulties.

But only Michigan has yet reached the blockade map making stage, a system which is portrayed in the drawing on page one of this section. Lieutenant Van Loomis of the state police has prepared the plan for the border campaign. Every highway leading from his state into Ohio and Indiana has been accurately marked, described, and numbered. It was not an easy task. Between Lake Erie and Lake Michigan are 177 roads that criminals might travel in an interstate journey. Monroe county has 17, Lanawee 33, Hillsdale 26, Branch 28, St. Joseph 24, Cass 19, and Berrien 30.

The blockade lines on the lieutenant's maps in all cases follow

watercourses, and stations for the blockaders are at bridges. It is convenient for the sheriffs' forces and the volunteers to remember that, and the bridges are often narrower than the roads and consequently easier to block.

A map for the Detroit metropolitan area blockade has been drawn also. It shows that to establish a tight ring that will foil a fleeing criminal 32 points where a break to the open country might be made must be covered. (Blockades could be established here likewise to prevent criminals fleeing into Detroit for sanctuary.) The district as mapped begins on the south where the Huron river flows into Lake Erie. Its boundary follows the river to Belleville, then north to the Wayne county line, which is in turn followed to Walled Lake. There a swing to the east



(A. P. photo.)
Policeman Richard F. Hammond,
Benoit's victim.



(Acme photo.)

Investigators examine the rural mail box to which Benoit manacled Hammond. Discovery of the policeman's body launched the chase for the slayer.

is made. Woodward avenue is crossed and the blockade line then sweeps to the east end of Oakland county and still farther east across Macomb county to Lake St. Clair.

...

All law enforcement agencies near this boundary line have been enlisted for service, and Lieutenant Loomis believes that only a small amount of detail work needs to be done to make the Detroit blockade fully effective.

Under the system outlined, whenever a blockade is declared the dispatcher at the central East Lansing radio station becomes director-in-chief. He first announces the area to be covered. Stations of the state police and local forces, having their maps at hand, will know where to go; their points to guard are understood, assigned in advance. The state police in the area are responsible for seeing that the orders are carried out.

Once at their posts, cars must remain until relieved or given new assignments by the dispatcher.

er. He is, of course, to receive immediate reports, as in the Benoit case, whenever the location of the quarry is determined. If it appears that additional cars and men can be used to tighten the blockade he can call them out and give individual orders to each unit.

Neither communication nor mapping is extremely difficult. The blockade system would be in effect now if they were the only drawbacks. But man power is insufficient unless the local law-enforcing agencies willingly co-operate. They must be organized if the dispatchers are to have sufficient forces in each blockade district.

Michigan is fortunate in that it has only one short land boundary on its lower peninsula. But even its state police force, efficient though it is, numbers only about 260 men. Illinois has 300 state highway policemen, but their powers are somewhat limited. Sufficient reinforcements from the local jurisdictions will be needed to make blockading effective.

...

It is significant that the state highway police chiefs—Donald Stiver holds the post in Indiana and Walter Williams in Illinois—want something like the layout that Michigan is slowly bringing to efficiency. They regard the blockade not as a hare-brained dream but as an idea with real possibilities. Oscar G. Olander, the Michigan state police head, is enthusiastic about it.

The state police forces, only a little strengthened, could furnish all the direction, the maps, and the communication. The counties and the cities have plenty of deputies and policemen. Only the hard work of organization must be carried out. When it is finished the forces of law will be superior to the hard-driving criminal on the open roads.



(Acme photo.)

Harry Chapman is captured by a posse following a gun battle. Chapman and three companions were wanted for a pay roll robbery in Springfield, O., near where this scene was enacted.



(Acme photo.)

How G-men laid a trap for the Al Brady gang in Bangor, Me. Two men pose with guns in room across from sporting goods store where Brady and his cohorts were trapped when they called for a machine gun. Brady and Clarence Shaffer Jr. were slain; the third man, James Dalhover, was captured.