

GUARDS DEMOTED IN RELES ESCAPE

Five to Get Departmental Trials on Laxity Charge— Mayor Orders Inquiry

Police Commissioner Valentine announced yesterday the demotion of three detectives and two patrolmen pending departmental trial on charges of laxity in guarding Abe Reles, the blustery Brooklyn gang leader who once blurted in open court: "All cops are yellow and I'll fight any single one with guns, knives or broken glass."

The police action came on the heels of Mayor La Guardia's disclosure that he had ordered "a very thorough investigation" into police conduct in connection with Reles's attempted escape early Wednesday morning in which he knotted two bedsheets and a length of wire together and lowered himself from the sixth floor window of the Half Moon Hotel in Coney Island, only to fall to his death.

The detectives, who were transferred back to uniformed patrol duty, were James Boyle, departmental medal winner for excellent and brave duty; Victor Robbins,

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cited for excellent duty, and John E. Moran, twice cited for excellent police work. The patrolmen, who were relieved of their temporary assignment to detective work with the Kings County District Attorney and returned to their precincts were Frank Tempone and Harvey McLaughlin.

Mayor Criticizes System

"Personally, I wish there was some other way to take care of star witnesses," Mayor La Guardia said, in ordering the police inquiry. "I mean so that police would not have to do it, not having police live with them and babying them. I have been opposed to this means of guarding star witnesses for the last eight years, particularly if witnesses are under indictment, but there is no other way. I don't like it."

Meanwhile, at the first-degree murder trial in Kings County Court of Louis (Lepke) Buchalter, former ruler of the city's \$1,000,000 industrial rackets, Allie Tannenbaum, room-mate and close personal friend of Reles, testifying against the underworld bosses who gave the murder assignments by which he and Reles lived, said that a detective sat in a chair in his room in the Half Moon Hotel while he was sleeping at night and that he believed the same custom was followed with Reles, who occupied the adjacent room.

Similar testimony was given last week at the trial by Sholom Bernstein, another gangster turned informer, who roomed in the suite with Reles, Tannenbaum and Myer Sycoff. An official version released after Reles was found dead declared that it was the custom of the police guards to look into the rooms of their charges every fifteen minutes.

As the trial proceeded, the body of Reles, who was to have been a principal witness yesterday against his underworld boss and mentor, Lepke, was taken from the Jewish Memorial Chapel, 1406 Pitkin Avenue, Brooklyn, a few minutes after 3 o'clock, and was buried in Mount Carmel Cemetery, Queens, at 3:55 P. M. In addition to the hearse there were three cars containing members of the family. There was no elaborate coffin, only a simple pine box.

Sees Inquiry Unhampered

Special Prosecutor John Harlan Amen, investigating charges of official corruption in Brooklyn, asked if Reles's death would hamper his inquiry into allegations of police grafting, said that it would not and added that he had arranged with District Attorney William O'Dwyer to question Reles after the Buchalter trial. Mr. Amen said that information indicated Reles had paid protection money, but that Reles always had denied it.

Meanwhile speculation mounted as to Reles's motive in attempting to escape from a custody that admittedly afforded him a haven from an underworld enraged over his informing against the Brooklyn murder syndicate.

Reports that Reles had feared to face Lepke at the trial were discounted, as it was known that Reles feared only one underworld figure, Albert Anastasia, a fugitive

and former leader of the Brooklyn waterfront gangs, whose reputation as a killer is such that only a year ago Vito Gurino, a lesser "trigger man," fled from hiding when he heard Anastasia was looking for him and raced into a Catholic church in Manhattan, crying to be taken to District Attorney O'Dwyer, to whom he "confessed" three murders.

Little credence was given rumors that Reles had been "bribed" with a large sum by racketeers on the West Coast to attempt an escape and it appeared that Reles had acted in the same inexplicable manner that marked his entire life.

It was pointed out by officials that when Reles shot a man dead he stabbed him fifty times; that when Reles strangled a victim he afterward poured gasoline over him and set him afire. He always did the weird, fantastic thing, and he sought to escape when to escape was the strangest of moves, officials reasoned.

Among police, who detested Reles, his death was the occasion of banter and remarks such as, "He could sing but he couldn't fly," and "The only law that got him was Newton's law of gravity."