

May sent twice from Don

by Murray Moore
According to testimony given at the inquest that started this week into the Sept. 13 hanging death in Oak Ridge of Mitchell May, the man was admitted on two occasions to Oak Ridge in 1982, on both occasions coming from Toronto's Don Jail with a Form 1, a formal request from a doctor that a person be detained for a psychiatric assessment for a defined period of time.

May had also been a patient in Toronto's Queen Street Mental Health Centre several times, and in another provincial psychiatric centre.

His psychiatrist at Oak Ridge, Dr. Ivan Sirchich, who spoke to him during his weekly rounds several hours before he hung himself, told the coroner's jury that May had a history of using the hallucinogenic drugs LSD and angel dust, and of schizophrenia.

May was not given a routine physical for

three weeks after his second admittance to Oak Ridge, July 9. The jury was told that patients are given physical examinations as soon as possible after admission, and then thereafter at yearly intervals. However, examinations are not done until the patient is considered to be co-operative.

Dr. Ian Richardson, a Penetanguishnee general practitioner who works at the Mental Health Centre as well as having his own practice in the evenings, testified that he decided to put May in B Ward rather than H Ward, the other ward for admissions, after interviewing him upon his arrival in July. B Ward, Dr. Richardson said, is for patients "who are a little more out of touch with reality," and also as well "is more secure in some aspects." H Ward, he said, is connected to the Centre's social therapy unit. Patients in H Ward can participate in activities not available to patients in B Ward.

Dr. Wing Lau, another general practitioner who had contact with May during his second admission, said that the three week delay before he was given a physical examination suggested

to him that May was in a poor mental state for three weeks.

May was treated soon after his admission to

Oak Ridge in July because he smeared jam around or in his eyes.

May was very con-

fused when he was admitted in July, Dr. Richardson said. May told Dr. Richardson that he had no intention to

harm himself, but that he was suicidal, the doctor testified. May was given 100 mg of a major tranquilizer some time in the 48 hours

before Dr. Richardson interviewed him, and this could possibly have contributed to his confusion, the doctor said.

Application denied

by Murray Moore

The Mitchell May inquest started in Midland, Wednesday morning, with a denial by Coroner Dr. Peter Cameron of a request from the lawyer representing May's father, William May, that the inquest be adjourned to allow William May's lawyer time to go over the documents submitted as evidence, and time to speak with the witnesses.

William May's lawyer complained that the Mental Health Centre would not release medical records which the lawyer requested. His lawyer said that he did not have a copy of the autopsy report or a list of the witnesses.

The inquest was requested by letter by William May on Oct. 5, his lawyer said, and the date fixed two weeks later. A letter dated Nov. 4 confirmed the inquest date.

Crown counsel Fred Horton said that the records of the Ministry of Health are not given out lightly, for the protection of all citizens, and that the needed records were at the inquest and could be examined.

Cameron, in his denial of the request for an adjournment, noted that the inquest is being held at William May's request, and that

evidence could be examined as it is revealed.

Also, one of the five jurors was excused from jury duty because he has a son and a daughter working at the Mental Health Centre, and his father was an employee there for 35 years.

The Mental Health Centre is represented by two lawyers who have been granted standing, as have Mitchell and his lawyer. Persons with standing at an inquest have the right to ask questions of witnesses and to call their own witnesses.

The psychiatrist who was treating Mitchell May, Dr. Ivan Sirchich, is represented by a lawyer who is observing the inquest and who, he said, might try to obtain standing before the end of the inquest.

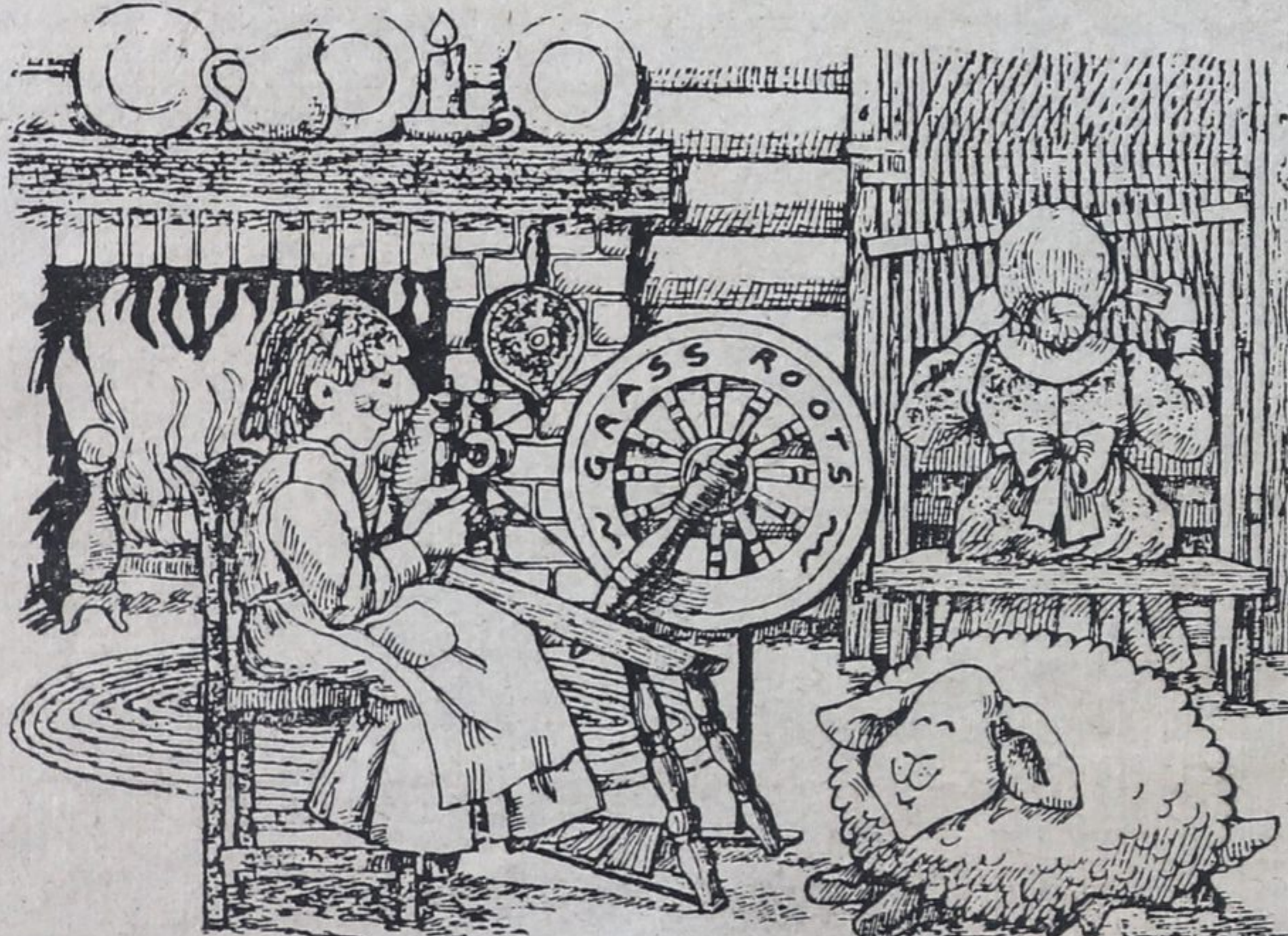
The May inquest resumes on Dec. 16.

On Dec. 15 Dr. Herman Jilesen will conduct an inquest into the death in H Ward at Oak Ridge last Aug. 23 of Stanley Carson, 32. And this Wednesday Coroner Dr. Peter Cameron will convene an inquest into the drowning last Aug. 28, during the annual Midland Bay Sailing Club Hope Island Race, of Jacques Robitaille, 34, of Penetanguishene.

Nov. 27
Centre d'activites francaises, 63 Main St., Penetanguishene, will be presenting an exhibition of drawings by Pierre Lamoureux on Saturday, November 27, from 12 noon. Drawings will be on sale at Boutique Chez Nous from November 29 to December 24.

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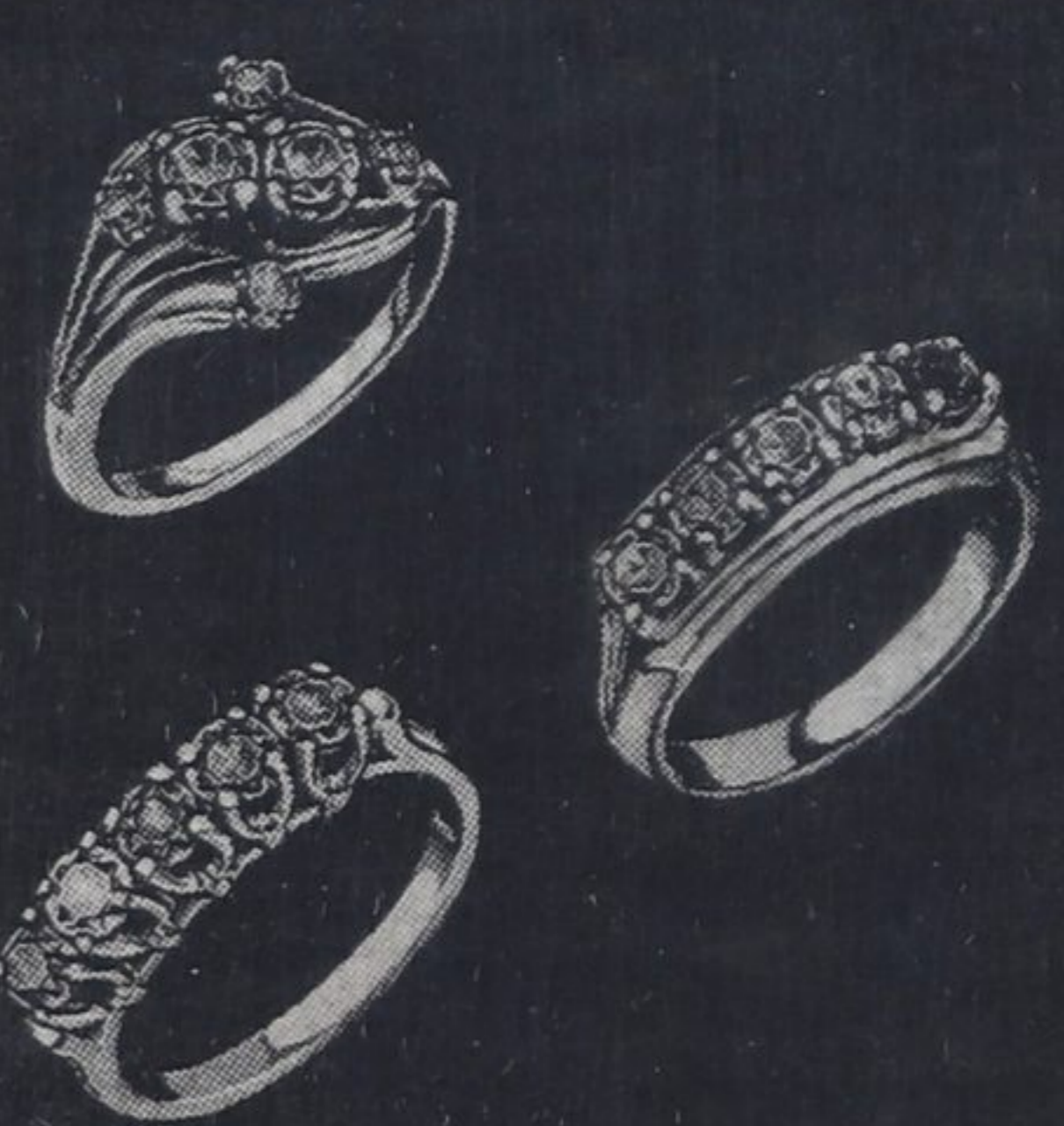
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