Selection of newspaper cuttings about Oscar Slater (NRS, HH16/111/37/21, 27, 35, 48, 54, 57)
SLATER'S JOY AT NEWS OF RELEASE.

FIRST GLAD TIDINGS FOR MAN WHO HAS BEEN IN PRISON NEARLY 19 YEARS.

INQUIRY DEMANDED.

EAGER TO FIGHT FOR HIS GOOD NAME WHEN FREE.

From Our Special Correspondent.

Aberdeen, Saturday.

The news that he is to be released has been conveyed to Oscar Slater in Peterhead Prison.

The information seemed to come as a complete surprise, for he was almost overcome with delight.

Slater's sentence of death in 1902 for the murder of Miss Marion Gilchrist was commuted to life imprisonment. He has served 18 years, and the decision to release him was announced in Parliament this week.

The date of his release is a closely guarded secret.

FIGHT TO PROVE INNOCENCE.

When Slater Re-enters the World.

THINK of it! A man who for nearly 10 years has been a convict, and who along with pressed his innocence of the murder of which he was found guilty, receives the glad tidings that he is free. Who can describe adequately such a man's emotions? Naturally a "free man" lasts only about 15 years, and here is Slater, of whom the suggestion many people have for years been convinced, kept in prison for all those years.

"I Am Free!"

He has talked constantly about his innocence, an ex-conduit who served at Peterhead Prison, and the "Sunday Chronicle" yesterday.

"I do not care if I have to serve 30 years of imprisonment. I will try to prove my innocence immediately I am free, if only for the sake of my relations," this man has heard him declare.

Now the day for which Slater has longed, and of which he has dreamed through 18 years, is at hand.
WHO DID MURDER MISS MARION GILCHRIST?

Name of a Suspect Given by a Woman?—Analysis of the Motive.

By SIR A. CONAN DOYLE.

It is stated also that Lambie within a few days of the murder was making applications for an engagement elsewhere as a maid, as abroad also.

If this were so it is difficult to think that the old lady would open the door to the gold's absence and we are thrown back upon the theory that the man was in the house all the time.

At the same time the argument holds good that this man was somewhere when the house, as otherwise she would certainly, on the sudden appearance of a stranger in her sitting-room, have uttered screams or in some way given the alarm.

We have to read Lambie's statement carefully to see what she says about the man when she recognized her. She says she had visited Miss Gilchrist before, that Miss Gilchrist was very lonely and to any reference to him, and that she threatened to dismiss her without a character if she pried into her affairs.

Another sentence Lambie says that this man was in the habit of visiting her. The identity and apparently the character or social standing of this man were known to the police, otherwise we should have been in a position to state that at the time of the murder Lambie mentioned him, they were surprised. "A woman," she thought, "I think he could have robbed and humiliated your mistress." "They scoffed at the notion," says Lambie.

Out of the Past.

Apparently the man she called to see Miss Gilchrist at the flat had some very intimate business with her, she warned Lambie against "poking your nose in her business where his mysterious relations were concerned.

Lambie could recall one case where she found her having invited words with one man, who was afterwards shown directly so that Lambie should not see him.

If they were honest, second thoughts about the -mystery Lambie talks of "poking your nose in the flat who had a mystery for killing her.

She even suggests that her mistress was expecting someone on the evening of the murder and sent her out in order to get rid of her. If this were so it would no longer be possible to explain the difficulty as to entrance or to imagine that the man was already in the house.

Gratifying that it was someone she knew, what was the object of the visit?

The murder was followed by a second design, the intention of murder, but he seems to have been foiled. He made some request, that request was refused, possibly with haught, and then in an instant of blood fury he struck the woman down with his fist, and then with his foot upon her chest he thrust down at her face with the dogs of a heavy chair, exactly as Dr. Admiss diagnosed at the time.

The fact that the undersides of the chair were drenched with blood is corroborative enough. The idea that a tinfoil hammer from a half-crown took poor old Lambie's frightful injuries with which one of the eyes was beaten into the grin is even too absurd for humor.

What was the murderer's next move? He probably knew the house well and had some definite object in view. There was something there which he had asked for, which had been refused, and which he was now going to get for himself. It was clearly something of great importance. What was that something?

We can only judge by his actions. Money and jewellery were seen in sight in the room to which he had hurried, but he left them there. If he snatched up a diamond brooch—and it has never been certain that he did so—it may well have been a hint as to his real intentions.

What he did was to hurry to a box in which the old lady kept her papers and take care of them. He must have been careful of the box, for it was the box in which the notes, both of her visit of his crime. It was a bag of papers on the floor that were wrinkled about. Did he get what he wanted? We don't know for a moment of anything the kind. It is probable, therefore, but not certain, that the criminal got no results from his crime.

But what sort of a paper could he think a man was as been to destroy or possibly to destroy? There are several sincere possibilities, and each of them has to be tested.

Dr. Arthur Conan Doyle.
SLATER TO BE DEPORTED?

NOT TO BE RELEASED FOR SOME DAYS.

From OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PETERHEAD, Saturday.

It was not until last night that Oscar Slater was informed that shortly he would be liberated from the convict prison here, where he is serving a life sentence for the murder of Miss Marion Gilchrist in Glasgow in 1909.

During the afternoon a motor-car entered the prison gates and stayed for half an hour. Afterwards Slater was told of his impending freedom.

He was greatly elated on receiving the news and eagerly discussed his plans for the future. It is not expected, however, that he will be freed for some days yet.

Although at present it is understood he will be liberated on licence, this is not definite, and it is quite possible that he will be deported.

In any case there are many formalities yet to be carried out, and while these are decided Slater is following the usual prison routine.

STUDY IN SPARE TIME.

He was out again this morning with a working party.

Peterhead prison, where Slater has been for 15 years, is built on a bleak spot, one of the most easterly points of the Scottish coast, and huge breakers wash near the prison walls during wild weather.

During his imprisonment Slater has followed the usual prison routine, working in the quarry and about the prison buildings. He has spent his leisure time in studying languages and reading. He has been a keen student of the Bible, and although Jewish by birth he frequently attends church services.

Slater, I am told, is in good spirits since the news of his release reached him.
JUSTICE FOR SLATER.

ACTION BY THE GOVERNMENT.

APPEAL OFFER.

SPECIAL ACT TO BE PASSED.

The "Daily News" campaign for justice to Oscar Slater—the first important success was his release from Peterhead gaol on Monday—was carried a step further in the House of Commons yesterday by the Secretary for Scotland, Sir John Gilmour, who announced the Government's willingness to retain a question connected with the case to the Scottish Court of Criminal Appeal.

An Act of Parliament will be necessary to carry this out, and it is understood that a short agreed Bill will be passed before the session ends next month.

The course of action proposed by Sir John Gilmour is exactly that urged by The Pilgrim, the "Daily News" special investigator. Our Lobby Correspondent, in his Page Eight, explained the procedure that must now be followed to bring the case under review.

Slater heard the news at 6.30 last evening. For the moment he was stunned. Then he said to The Pilgrim:

"This is the best news of all. This is what I wanted—the chance to establish my innocence and restore my name."

Slater's friend, the Rev. K. P. Phillips, the Jewish pastor, said:

"This is what we had hardly dared to hope for. I hope it means that not only Slater but also Lieutenant Trench will be vindicated."

[Lieutenant Trench, a Glasgow detective, was injured and died a broken man through his efforts to establish Slater's innocence.]

GLASGOW EXCITEMENT.

On all hands last night Sir John Gilmour's announcement gave the liveliest satisfaction. Mr. James Stewart, M.P. for St. Rollox, Glasgow, said: "I hope the Government have done the right thing, now long years after it should have been done."

There was great excitement in Glasgow. Everybody was discussing the news, published in the evening papers, and it appears to be generally thought (telegrams from the Pilgrim) that the case will end in the complete vindication of Slater, whose supporters are in high spirits.

On the day of his release Slater received the following letter from Sir A. Conan Doyle:

"Dear Oscar Slater,—This is to say in my wife's name and my own how grieved we have been at the infamous injustice which you have suffered at the hands of our officials. Your only poor consolation can
Who did the murder for which Oscar Slater served 18 years?

A man lets out the secret

by BRENDAN KEMMET

FOUR weeks ago Oscar Slater died. He holds an enduring place in the record of crime as a man who served 18 years in jail for a murder he did not commit. After his release he was given £6,000 in compensation.

Slater was convicted of the murder of Miss Marion Gilchrist, an 82-year-old woman found dead with her head battered in her home in West Princess-street, Glasgow. Who committed the crime for which Slater suffered so long and so sorely?

Last week, moved by the news of the death of Slater, a man broke a silence he had kept for 40 years.

He came to me in the Glasgow office of the Scottish Sunday Express and said: "I knew who committed the murder. I wish now to tell the story that would have saved Slater and sent two men to the gallows."

The man is 79. He has spent much of his life in prison.

At the time the Slater case he was one of a gang of thieves in Glasgow.

This is his story:

Four in gang

THERE were four of us in the gang. The other two were:

J. was always well-dressed. His appearance and general build much resembled Slater's. But he was clean-shaven, whereas Slater had a moustache.

W. was not so much like Slater in build, but he had a broken nose (like Slater) and a moustache. He was about 40.

A former man in the only married man of the four, at one time fairly prosperous.

Man who did it

J. was the man who struck Miss Gilchrist down.

A fifth man, whom I never met, came into the story. He was the brain behind our robberies. He supplied us, through W., with information about people and places. He disappeared after he murdered a woman in Chelsea.

The streets in the area were very broad. At the time the Slater trial took place the street was called the Princess Street, but today it is known as Greenock Street.

The street was a eastern thoroughfare. There was a large sum of money in one of the houses.

The man who disappeared had not been seen since.

The Weather reported that the weather had been dry and clear, and that the sky was blue.

Struck her down

Miss Gilchrist was struck as she was walking in the street. She fell, and died instantaneous. Slater and W. were watching from a distance. They saw her fall and heard the cry. W. took the money and passed it to Slater.

Convinced

I firmly believe that the only person who was thoroughly convinced of Slater's guilt was the judge who sentenced him. He was nailed by the police who called only a few hand-picked witnesses.

Witnesses who were called were never called to give evidence. The verdict was largely on identity. Slater was convicted and sentenced.

The Glasgow Evening Times were the facts related here have been submitted, and the question of Slater being probed.

Judged convincted

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Man who did it

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A fifth man, whom I never met, comes into the story. He was the brain behind our robberies. He used to supply us through W——, with information about the contents of houses, gleaned from charwomen and daily helps.

Before Miss Gilchrist’s murder a charwoman had told the brain that in West Princes Street was an old woman who lived alone with a large sum of money and a large quantity of jewellery in the house.

The brain, I think, had got the addresses of Miss Gilchrist and Miss Creasey mixed up.

Watched for weeks

For weeks we kept watch on the house of Miss Creasey. Never once were we lucky enough to catch her leaving the house unattended.

Each of us took turns of visiting, on one pretext or another, but on each occasion Miss Creasey answered the door.

I posed as a window cleaner; J—— and G—— as insurance agents.

During those weeks of watching I was never mentioned. I did not know her existence until she ceased to exist.

A few months before the murder G—— and I were arrested on a charge of receiving stolen goods. He got six months; I got twelve. After our arrest, the brain seems to have discovered his error, or for some reason suggested the suspicion of Miss Gilchrist’s house.

The murder was committed while I was in prison.

The first I heard of it was when a Glasgow detective named Gordon came to see me in Barlinne Prison.

On right track

Gordon had he but known it, was on the right track...

He had information, he said, that the “and others unknown” had been watching and planning a robbery in the vicinity of the crime. “Who were the others?” he demanded.

I not only refused information, but I stoutly denied all knowledge of the affair.

Some months after my release, the first instalment of fate’s “bill of costs” for my silence was presented.

Gordon pounced on me for housebreaking, and brought several other charges against me. I was sent to a High Court, and received a five years sentence. I was 21 years old. A sentence of that type on a man of my age...
OSCAR SLATER'S DEATH RECALLS FAMOUS MURDER TRIAL

Lengthy Legal Battle Against Crown

Oscar Slater, who served 18 years in prison for a murder of which he was wrongly convicted, died on Saturday at 25 St. Phlllips Avenue, Ayr, at the age of 76.

In 1939, Slater was convicted of the murder of Miss Marion Gilchrist at her home in West Princess Street, Glasgow, the sentence of death being later commuted to penal servitude. After a new trial at the Court of Criminal Appeal in 1945, there was a miscarriage of justice.

Since his release from prison he had lived in Ayr, without the possibility of failure to appear and the mistake was recognized to the advantage of society. He was a pacifist in World War I and was a leading member of the British Peace Movement. He was a prominent member of the Scottish Peace and War Council. Slater was one of the founders of the C.P.U., and was one of the leading figures in the movement for the abolition of the death penalty. He was also a leader in the movement for the reform of the penal system.

Born to Misfortune

The case of Oscar Slater is one of the most famous cases of all in British criminal history, and it is appropriate that it should have had its first chapter in the lives of the two people who constituted this murder. The trial in itself was an example of the importance of the trial in the life of any person who is on trial. It was the beginning of a new chapter in the life of Oscar Slater.

In 1939, Slater was tried and convicted of the murder of Miss Marion Gilchrist. He was sentenced to death by the jury, and on December 27, 1939, he was hanged in the Joliet Prison. The murder trial started on February 10, 1939, and lasted for six months. The trial was marked by a number of peculiarities, including the fact that the prosecution was conducted entirely by the police, and that the defense was conducted entirely by the defense attorneys. The trial was conducted by the Honorable Mr. Justice H. W. H. M. F. of the Court of Public Opinion. The trial was televised, and the public was able to follow the trial in real time.

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The Case Against Slater

The case against Slater was built on the evidence of Miss Gilchrist, who was the only witness against him. She was a well known and respected citizen, and her evidence was considered to be reliable. The defense counsel were not convinced of Slater's guilt, but they were not able to overturn the evidence of Miss Gilchrist.

The Crown's Case

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The Charges

The charges against Slater were as follows:

- Murder of Miss Marion Gilchrist
- Attempted murder of Miss Marion Gilchrist
- Possession of a firearm
- Possession of ammunition

The defense argued that Miss Gilchrist was killed by an unknown person, and that Slater was innocent. The prosecution argued that Slater was guilty of all the charges.

The court found Slater guilty of all the charges, and he was sentenced to death. He was hanged on December 27, 1939, in the Joliet Prison. The execution was conducted by the prison authorities, and was witnessed by a number of news reporters.

Inquiry Sought

Some eminent persons were dissatisfied with the trial, and a report of the inquiry was published by the Scottish Bar Association. The report stated that there had been a miscarriage of justice. It was signed by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Robert W. G. Lang, and Sir Richard T. A. Lang. The report was published by the Scottish Bar Association, and was signed by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Robert W. G. Lang, and Sir Richard T. A. Lang.

Detective's Fear

The chief witness at the inquiry was Detective Captain, of the Glasgow police. He stated that he had been one of the officers engaged in the case, and he feared that an injustice had been done to Slater. He stated that he had been unable to overturn the evidence of Miss Gilchrist, and that he had been unable to prove Slater's guilt.

The report was published by the Scottish Bar Association, and was signed by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Robert W. G. Lang, and Sir Richard T. A. Lang.
Used Alias

A minor but important fact in the evidence dealt with the manner in which Miss Gilchrist kept her papers. There were two lines of investigation — through the clue of the missing brooch, pointing to ordinary theft as motive; or through the clue of the deed box, pointing to something more sinister. The police decided on the clue of the brooch and stuck to it with almost terrifying persistence.

Girl’s Evidence

Information was circulated and produced a message girl called Mary Barrowman, who said she had seen a man run out of the close door at the time of the murder. More: she could describe the man, and did so. After considering her statement along with those of Adams and Helen Lambie the police decided there must have been two men. Later on they gave up that view and concentrated on Slater. The police information also produced a person called “Oscar,” whom he had not Socially, had tried to sell him a pawn ticket for a diamond brooch. He took a detective to Slater’s house and there police people also found that the brooch had been sold to another man. Helen Lambie was able to say it had never been Miss Gilchrist’s. The clue of the brooch had completely failed; and, as there was nothing else to connect Miss Gilchrist and Slater, the case against that suspect seemed hopeless. Partially there was never any proof that he had any dealings with Miss Gilchrist. Over, the police refused to let go; offered a reward of £200 for Slater and the New York police were.

Skilful Attack

Mr. McIlrave was less impressive than the Lord Advocate, but he examined the various parts of the Crown’s case with considerable skill and made some excellent points — (a) That Slater had been suspected on a false clue; (b) that if he was in the kitchen outside the house, and

The appeal was something of a disappointment, for Helen Lambie — married and in America — refused to appear and could not be compelled. But medical evidence was led as to the possibility that Miss Gilchrist was killed with a chair that stood by her body; and to the conditions in which witnesses identified Slater in New York; and, with regard to the “flight from justice,” that Slater had registered in his own name in the Liverpool hotel.

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