

Boy, 15, Who Killed Stepfather to Protect Mother, Exonerated

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GRIEF-STRICKEN—Mrs. Lois Lane, mother of youth accused of killing his stepfather, bows head as she collapsed at inquest. An attorney, left, and Charles Cornett, the son, go to her assistance.



EMBRACE FOR JOY—Mrs. Lois Lane hugs son, Charles Cornett, exonerated in slaying, following her collapse at inquest. At right is Mrs. Frances Lowe, her sister. Times photos

Woman Begg Release of Son

'He Was Only Trying to Protect Me,' She Testifies at Inquest

"My boy didn't realize what he was doing. He was only trying to protect me."

In these words Mrs. Lois Lane, 35, yesterday explained the fatal shooting last Friday of her husband Frank, 40, by her son, Charles Cornett, 15.

Testifying at a Coroner's inquest, the sobbing mother related details of a family row leading to the shooting.

BEATINGS TOLD

Following her account of repeated threats by her husband and numerous beatings at his hands, she heard the Coroner's jury bring in a speedy verdict—justifiable homicide.

"Oh, my God, that's wonderful," she muttered on learning the decision, hugging the boy to her.

The youth, who has been held by juvenile authorities on suspicion of murder, did not testify on advice of counsel.

Mrs. Lane, who lives at 2224½ Pasadena Ave., and who had been separated from her husband, said that he suddenly appeared at her home.

"He had been drinking," she related. "He started arguing and struck me across the face with his open hand. He told me 'I ought to fill you full of lead' and then put his hand in his shirt as if he had a gun there."

BOY PLEADED

The mother testified that her son, born of a previous marriage, pleaded with his stepfather to cease beating her.

"Daddy, don't hurt mother," she said he implored.

Mrs. Lane related she did not witness the actual shooting, in which the youth fired a shotgun at his stepfather, the charge hitting him in the neck.

A nurse, Mrs. Phoebe Williams, accompanied Mrs. Lane to the inquest, conducted by Deputy Coroner Frank Montfort.

Mrs. Lane's nephew, Lloyd Cottrell, who was in her house during the shooting, was among the witnesses. Edward D. Rhodes, a chemist, also in the house, also testified.