

# State Books Still Open in Bill Bonelli Case

By HENRY C. MacARTHUR

SACRAMENTO — (CNS) — The case of William G. Bonelli, California's figurative "man without a country" seems doomed eventually to be forgotten in the cob-webs of time.

But the state controllers of office is not forgetting the case, which is wrapped up in the peculiar financial fiascos resulting from the vagaries of California law, and rulings from attorney generals.

The controller maintains a special "Bonelli Fund," which now has grown to \$70,240.50, which is the amount Bonelli, former member of the state board of equalization has drawn from the state for retirement benefits.

The only catch is that Bonelli hasn't drawn the money, which is impounded by the state controller, and has been ever since the ex-state official put in his bid for the funds on Dec. 1, 1958, more than 10 years ago.

And more than 14 years have elapsed since Bonelli's case rocked the state in 1954, when he was defeated for re-election to the board, and subsequently indicted in two counties, Riverside and San Diego, for allegedly accepting under-the-table payments for liquor licenses, which the board at that time dispensed.

The then liquor czar for his district fled to Mexico City, and efforts to return him to California for prosecution un-

der the indictments were unsuccessful, largely on the grounds that Mexico held him to be a political refugee.

And since that time, he has not returned to the United States to the knowledge of authorities. His last known habitat in Mexico as listed with the controller's office, was Hermosillo.

While Bonelli vegetates in Mexico, now about 75 years of age, his political enemies in California have grown in stat-

The figures range all the way from \$130,000 to \$320,000, and the state treasury isn't likely to see any of it.

The strange thing about the case is that it never has been decided by the courts. A suit filed by Bonelli's lawyers to force payment seems to have disappeared in the limbo of forgotten legal annals, and apparently can't be revived until Bonelli returns to render an accounting of the funds he allegedly received which are claimed to be due and payable to the state.

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And former Attorney General Stanley Mosk, who ruled that Cranston's decision was correct in that the state could withhold funds allegedly due, although it could not withhold payment of pensions to fugitives, is now a member of the

state supreme court, another of the state's highest offices.

What will be the final disposition of the more than \$70,000 withheld from Bonelli remains to be seen, but it is more than likely that a legislative act will be necessary to write the money off the state account books. Meanwhile, the state treasurer is investing the money in the pooled money account, and it is drawing interest, not for Bonelli, but the state of California.

## Comment and Opinion

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### It's Open Season

To many of us, this is the Holiday Season and spirits are soaring as we bustle about with our shopping lists and card lists getting ready to remember those around us at Christmas.

It also is a rather special season for some others — for those who look to the season between Thanksgiving and Christmas as an open season for burglars and petty thieves.

Police department statistics traditionally show that December ranks as one of the busiest months every year as the number of home and auto thefts and burglaries reach epidemic proportions.

An areawide campaign, boosted by a pamphlet called "Don't Give a Burglar An Even Break," is being waged throughout the Southland.

Police officers point out that 70 per cent of all burglaries occur during an extended absence by a homeowner. Police suggest leaving a light burning, canceling home deliveries, and keeping lawns trimmed as a help in keeping burglars away.

Securely locked doors is an obvious suggestion, and a thorough check of windows and shutters before leaving home could be well worth the effort.

If your absence from home is to be of any length, notify the police department. Patrolling units will be alerted for any unusual activity in the area of your home. Neighbors, too, play an important role here. Tell them you're going, and for how long.

Arrange with neighbors to watch for package deliveries, and for other signs which may be a signal to a prowling burglar.

It's a lot easier to prevent a crime than it is to solve one.

### Other Opinions

ELSINORE, CALIF., SUN: "For a touch of the ridiculous, we might throw in the fable of the goose that laid the golden egg. The greedy man who came into ownership of this fabulous bird could not wait for it to lay one golden egg each day. He killed the goose, according to the fable so that he might get all of the golden eggs once. Is that what our taxing bodies want to have happen . . . destroy the source?"

BEEVILLE, TEXAS, BEE-PICAYUNE: "It seems that just about every generation in every society has its rebels. The current species is called the hippy. The breed varies but little from nation to nation. The teddy boys of England and the lipstick-wearing long-hairs of the Scandinavian countries are the same, fundamentally, as the domestic oddballs of San Francisco, New York and Boston fame."

WILLIAM HOGAN

## He Looks at Death After Eleven Years on the Row

Writing in his 11th year as a resident of Death House, New Jersey State Prison at Trenton, a man named Edgar H. Smith Jr. declares, with a certain amount of authority: "I do not intend to argue here a defense of my own case . . . but rather to take a personal look at the system of capital punishment — how it works, how effective it appears to be, and what life is like under the shadow of a death sentence. Quite apart from the obvious personal reason, I believe it is a terrible system and should be abolished."

In a remarkable personal document, "Brief Against Death," Edgar Smith takes a long hard look at the State engaging in the death business; at the State, and the law, playing a game of cat-and-mouse with a man convicted of (but not necessarily guilty of) the brutal bludgeon murder of a Mahway, N.J., teen-age girl in March, 1957. Smith describes his arrest, interrogation, trial, imprisonment, years of solitary confinement (nine of these spent in a small windowless cell), and an incredible 14 appeals and 13 stays of execution he has been through. There

was, then, some doubt about Smith's guilt.

Smith's case reminds one of Caryl Chessman's 12-year effort to escape the gas chamber at San Quentin and his writings from Death Row before he was

*Browsing Through the World of Books*

legally murdered in 1960. Once again, this system of incarceration, this on-and-off threat of execution, confinement, legal dilly-dallying with a human life becomes a particularly repellent apparatus of justice and social obsolescence.

Smith admits he did much to contribute to his own conviction by lying to police originally, "partially out of fear, partially out of misplaced loyalty toward friends." He was 23 at the time, an ex-Marine sergeant, married, the father of a small daughter, "a thoroughly indolent, immature, half-educated drifter."

Smith used his year of confinement well. He took college correspondence courses, studied law, read widely. For one

ROYCE BRIER

## Murphy a 'Happy Choice' To Ease Transition Work

The time was 1946. The place was General Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters in the Four Power control in Berlin.

The man was Robert Murphy, who looked like a hardware dealer on tour. His pants were baggy from flying about,

and he had just come from a session with the British, French, and Russian delegates.

He spoke with a soft voice, and his listeners were some thirty newsmen visiting the rubble of postwar Germany.

### Opinions on Affairs of the World

His listeners listened carefully. He said something like, "I think they understand us," the "they" being the Russians. He had other comments but they are forgotten after 22 years.

Mr. Murphy was already famous, for he had lined up the French Admiral Darlan in a deal not to resist a North African landing. The deal was savagely criticized, but it had saved the lives of some thousands of American soldiers, who would otherwise have had to fight the French for a bridgehead. Shortly after, Darlan was assassinated by a Frenchman.

Murphy, a retired diplomat-at-large, is representing President-elect Nixon at the White House during the interregnum. President Johnson called him an "observer."

Nixon's choice was a happy one, for Murphy is at home with every stripe of European, including the Soviet stripe.

He is a tough diplomat, not granite-tough but resilient-tough. He understands the problems of his opposites, their motives in reacting as they do. They know he understands, which is ultimately helpful. This failure to understand the problems of the antagonist is a foremost trait of the failed dip-

lomat, the one who is followed by warfare.

Mr. Murphy is no dove on co-existence. He believes in concession, as all true diplomats must, but he believes in concession by the strong, not concession by the weak. He is not going to be fooled by the Russians, the South Vietnamese, Messrs. Johnson and Rusk, or anybody else, in the advice he gives the President-elect.

Nor will he drone along on a fixed line, only to re-state the line a month later with a slight change of wording. If his position is unchanged he will tell Nixon why, meanwhile starting wheels to try to change it.

He would make an excellent Secretary of State, except he is 74, and may not feel he can undertake so exacting a task.

Anyway, Murphy will know what's going on, vis-a-vis the Russians, President de Gaulle, President Thieu and in the Mideast, to identify four enigmas facing any man taking office ten weeks hence. This should be exceedingly valuable to the President-elect, because President-elects under our system live in a curious limbo — they must be respected but not necessarily indulged.

Murphy is not swayed by the foreground appearance of the Kremlin people. If they are abruptly conciliatory at this or that point, he does not believe it means a change of policy. He believes Soviet policy is a cautious but never-ending antagonism toward the West.

One is loath to hail this skepticism (which is ingrained with Murphy), but the Czech affair was quite enlightening.

## OUR INTERFERENCE



## HERB CAEN SAYS:

### City Crew Has Fastest Ticket System in West

Good morning, Luv: And here we are watching a city crew hard at work. First a guy with a jackhammer rips out four parking meters — rat-a-tat-tat. Then another paints the curb to indicate a new bus zone. After which a Meter Maid comes along and slaps parking tags on the car which, just a few minutes earlier, had been legally parked . . . Pretty good restaurant scene at Rubini's in Fairfax reports Gordon Jones. This wife kept pestering her husband for a new "fall" (you know, the hairy kind) to the point where he suddenly exploded "Okay, okay, you want a new fall" — and yanked the chair out from under her.

Meanwhile, back at the flack: Redwood City now has a topless pool hall, putting that town two up in the mammary sweepstakes. Is San Francisco sagging on all fronts? . . . Graffiti spotted on a Stanford wall by Leonard Schwartz: "Revolution now, pay later!" And I did like that one in the local weekly the other day: "Why did modern music have to come along in our time?"

The magic lantern: The S.F. police cooperated to the hilt

while "Bullitt" was being filmed here, and why not? A glamorous star, Steve McQueen, was playing a local police officer — a Lieutenant, at that — and the movie had to make Our Force look good, didn't it? . . . Yes, didn't it: The epic beings with Lt. McQueen de-

### A Report From Our Man in San Francisco

veloping an unexplained hatred for a U.S. Senator about to stage an anti-crime hearing here. Ostensibly, the Lt. and the Senator are on the same side, but you'd never know it. The Senator puts the Lt. in charge of his star witness for a couple of days, a friendly gesture, and the Lt. lets the witness get killed in a hotel on "Embarcadero Row." If we have an "Embarcadero Row," I never heard of it. . . . After the witness dies, the Lt. has the body spirited to the morgue as a John Doe, which is probably a violation. Then he talks a friendly doctor at S.F. General — a black, naturally — into "misplacing" the records, another bummer. . . . In the famous chase scene, the Lt., in civvies and driving his own car

(a Mustang, naturally), races around town at what looks to be 110 miles an hour, going through stop signs and red lights and scattering pedestrians while chasing another car going 111 miles an hour. This race goes on all over town, from Russian Hill to Twin Peaks, and not one police car gives chase! Where were all our Blue Meanies, having coffee at Enrico's? . . . Furthermore, not that it matters any longer, the Lt. wears his hair too long and is shackled up with a chick in a pad on Nob Hill. The S.F. Police Dept.'s a cappella choir may now join us in yet another chorus of "Hooray for Hollywood!" Followed by the question: "Dis is a tribute-ute???"

A look at the book: Dr. Him Wong lives on Fifth Ave., but him right most of the time. Him Tak Wong, who lives on Broadway, don't talk to no wonger than anybody else. Him Way Wong, who lives on 12th Ave., isn't way wong most of the time. . . . The case will now join in a chorus of "I'm the Eighth Little Dwarf from Fisherman's Wharf and Crabby Is My Name".

## FROM THE MAILBOX

### Thompson Restates Plea For Police Recognition

Editor, Press-Herald:

I recently read Mayor Isen's response to my suggestions to establish a criminal law course for our city police officers, and I want to be very explicit that the last thing I want to do is alienate Mr. Isen and have him close his mind to this problem, but I must comment on his statements.

To try to restate the problem in a more acceptable way, I accept all of the Mayor's statements regarding the city's training, working conditions, salary, pension, etc. afforded our police officers; but if anyone can show me that any of these efforts and money has reduced our crime rate, I would say no more, but this alarming fact remains. We are losing our battle against crime.

What I'm suggesting is that we are in immediate need of a new concept in police work if we are to retard the growth of crime within our city.

I further suggest that the root of the problem lies in the respect or disrespect shown the patrolman. The respect of the senior officers and administrators has nothing whatsoever to do with the problem as these men earned their respect in the field under fire. Because of this respect they usually move up into the administrative ranks and are pulled away from the public. The system are are now following leaves us in this situation. No police officer below the rank of sergeant has any way to show the public his achievements or capabilities, and is,

therefore, automatically placed in such a position that favorable public opinion is withheld more and more, day by day.

What I'm trying to convey is the need of some type of continuing educational program available to all police officers of such high quality the public would know and appreciate their efforts, thereby allowing the patrolman to regain the respect necessary for him to be his most effective.

I hope that my efforts to restate the problem would meet with the Mayor's approval and that I would witness Mr. Isen apply the same leadership, drive, and imagination he has so successfully displayed in bringing so many previous honors to our city by initiating some program of this type to regain the respect for law and order within our city.

J. E. THOMPSON  
Torrance

## Morning Report

As far as I have been able to learn, the Fidel Castro International Airline has the best safety record of any major carrier in the world. Not one of the hijacked planes has made anything but a perfect landing in Havana.

The trained cockpit crews have remained calm and efficient — even in the presence of unauthorized and lethal instruments. But passengers have tended to complain and show some tenseness. This drawback to the Castro service was reduced on the most recent flight when the hijacker gave the stewardess \$20 and bought drinks for everybody. I support this will increase traffic in the future.

Of course Fidel could close down the line any time he wanted to. Just return the hijackers for trial.

Abe Melinkoff

## Crusade Thanks

Editor, Press-Herald: Thank you for being so cooperative in publicizing the United Crusade this year. Both the staff and volunteers appreciate all you have given. We are sure it influenced people in the community to support our effort.

BEVERLY BUTMAN

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Glenn Pfeil  
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