

Hillstrom Game Ready for Death Swears Innocence

Doomed Man, in Letter to Telegram Editor, Declares He is "Goat;" States Emphatically He Knows Nothing of Killing of Morrison.

From the death house at the state prison Joseph Hillstrom written a letter to the editor of THE TELEGRAM laying his case before the people. It is the message of a man who is doomed for whom there seems little hope. The date of his execution is little more than a month away.

Hillstrom closes his statement with this declaration: "I HAVE LIVED LIKE AN ARTIST AND I SHALL DIE LIKE AN ARTIST."

Nothing but the action of the governor and the board of pardons can stay the hand of the executioner. Hillstrom's case has been before the supreme court and the decision was against him.

He is now under sentence to be shot at the state prison Oct. 10 for the Morrison murder.

He declares emphatically, in his letter to THE TELEGRAM, that he is innocent.

Hillstrom's letter was received by the editor last night. It was registered through the Sugarhouse substation, the return address being marked on the envelope: "J. Hillstrom, state prison." The letter in full is printed below:

State Prison, Aug. 15, 1915.

For Telegram, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Sir—I have noticed that there have been some articles in your paper wherein the reason why I discharged my attorneys, F. B. Scott and E. D. Dougall, was discussed pro and con. If you will kindly allow me a little space, I think I might be able to throw a little light on the question. There were several reasons why I discharged, or tried to discharge, these attorneys. The main reason, however, was because they never attempted to cross examine the witnesses for the state, and failed utterly to deliver the points of the defense.

When I asked them why they did not use the records of the preliminary hearing and pin the witnesses down to their former statements, they blandly informed me that the preliminary hearing had nothing to do with the district court hearing and that under the law they had no right to use said records.

I picked up a record myself and tried to look at it, but Mr. Scott took it away from me, stating that "it would have a bad effect on the jury." I then came to the conclusion that Scott and McDougall were there for the purpose of defending me, and I did just what any other lawyer would have done—I stood up and showed them the door. But, to my great surprise, I discovered that the presiding judge had the power to compel me to have these attorneys, in spite of all my protests.

The main and only fact worth considering, however, is this: I never saw Morrison and do not know a thing about it.

He was, as the records plainly show, killed by some enemy for the sake of revenge, and I have not been in this city long enough to make an enemy. Shortly before my arrest I came down from Park City, where I was working in the mines. Owing to the prominence of Mr. Morrison, I had to be a "goat," and, the undersigned being, as they thought, a friendless tramp, a Swede and, worst of all, an I. W. W., had no right to be anyway, and was therefore duly selected to be "the goat."

There were men sitting on my jury, the foreman being one of them, who were never subpoenaed for the case. There are errors and perjury in the trial, and I am screaming to high heaven for mercy, and I know that I, according to the laws of the land, am entitled to a new trial, and the fact that the supreme court does not grant it to me only proves that the beautiful phrase, "equality before the law," is merely an empty phrase in Salt Lake City.

Here is what Judge Hilton of Denver, one of the greatest authorities on the law, has to say about it:

"The decision of the supreme court surprised me greatly, but the reason why the verdict was affirmed is, I think, on account of the rotten records made by the lower court."

This statement shows plainly why the motion for a new trial was denied and there is no explanation necessary. In conclusion I wish to state that my records are not quite as black as they have been painted.

In spite of all the hideous pictures and all the bad things said and written about me, I had only been arrested once before in my life, and that was in San Pedro, Cal. At the time of the stovedores' and dock workers' strike I was secretary of the strike committee, and I suppose I was a little too active to suit the chief of that burg, so he arrested me and gave me thirty days in the city jail for "vagrancy"—and there you have the full extent of my "criminal record."

I have always worked hard for a living and paid for everything I bought, and my spare time I spend by painting pictures, writing songs and composing music.

Now, if the people of the state of Utah want to shoot me without giving me half a chance to state my side of the case, then bring on your squads—I am ready for you.

I have lived like an artist and I shall die like an artist. Respectfully
JOSEPH HILLSTROM.