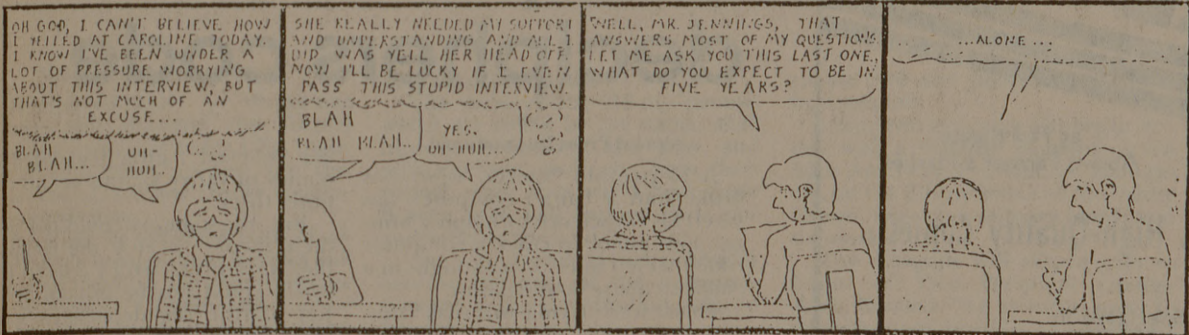


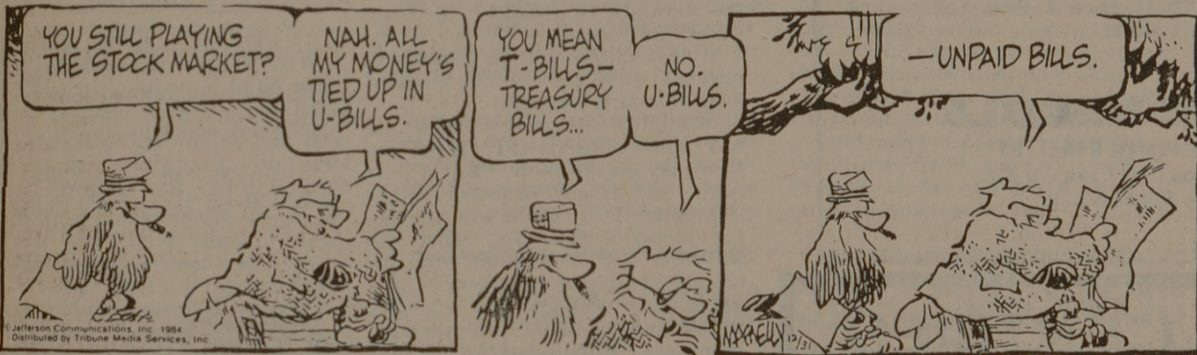
Warped

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Wife accused of murder plot

Trial begins this week

**United Press International**  
**JUNCTION CITY, Kan.** — The trial of a former church secretary who is accused of plotting to have her late husband murdered is scheduled to begin Monday, though jurors may have to wait a week before hearing any testimony.  
 Lorna Anderson, a former Emporia resident who now lives in Hutchinson, is charged with two counts of conspiring to commit first-degree murder and one count of aiding and abetting first-degree murder in the shooting death of her husband, Martin Anderson.

*Shortly before the shooting, Mrs. Anderson complained of being ill and asked her husband to stop the family's van. When Anderson got out of the vehicle, a gunman appeared from nowhere and shot him in the head.*

"We have set aside two days for those motions," Gradert said. "They do not state any specific reasons. Until I hear the arguments, I cannot make a decision."  
 Gradert predicted the trial would last a minimum of two weeks.  
 County Attorney Steve Opat, who could not be reached for comment, has presented the court with a list of more than 200 potential witnesses, a court spokeswoman said.

Mrs. Anderson had been charged with criminal solicitation in Lyon County for allegedly conspiring with the Rev. Thomas Bird to kill her husband, but that charge was dropped pending the outcome of a grand jury probe into the death of Bird's wife, Sandra, who was killed in a car wreck in July 1983.

Mrs. Bird's death is being investigated because of similarities in the way she died and her husband's plan to kill Anderson.

Prosecutors say Bird, a former minister at Faith Lutheran Church in Emporia, and Anderson, his former secretary at the church, were lovers. In August, Bird was convicted in Lyon County of conspiring to kill Anderson. Authorities say that scheme never was carried out. He is serving a 2 1/2- to 7-year prison sentence.

Daniel Carter of Emporia and Gregory Curry of Glenn, Miss., already have pleaded guilty to criminal solicitation in Anderson's death. Both men testified for the prosecution during Mrs. Anderson's preliminary hearing in June.

Anderson was slain in a Geary County farm field along a rural road in November 1983. No one has been charged with firing the gun that killed him.

Shortly before the shooting, Mrs. Anderson complained of being ill and asked her husband to stop the family's van. When Anderson got out of the vehicle, a gunman appeared from nowhere and shot him in the head, Mrs. Anderson told authorities. She said the gunman then fled into the night.

Geary County Associate District Judge Melvin Gradert will preside over Mrs. Anderson's trial.

He says he will hear arguments on motions filed in the case by Mrs. Anderson's attorney, Jack Focht of Wichita, on Monday and Tuesday. The judge said jury selection would be Wednesday.

Initial testimony in the trial probably won't begin until Jan. 21, Gradert said, because Focht has to appear before an appellate court Thursday in Wichita.

An inquisition in Geary County

into Anderson's death, which began last week, was to resume Monday. Gradert said it would not interfere with the start of Mrs. Anderson's trial.

Focht filed a number of motions with the court on Jan. 2, including one to dismiss the charges against Mrs. Anderson. One of the grounds he hopes to have the charges dismissed on is that Geary County does not have jurisdiction in the case, he said.

"There is no evidence that Lorna Anderson conspired with some unknown person to kill her husband in Geary County," he said Friday.

Armed with a search warrant, authorities searched the Anderson home in Emporia for a .22 caliber handgun and ammunition, as well as credit cards and identification belonging to Anderson, according to court documents.

Focht said a gun was not found. As a result, one of his motions asks Gradert to suppress as evidence the fact that deputies were searching for a weapon at the Anderson home.

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