

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

What's the story here? What happened?

Speaker 2 ([00:04](#)):

Well, it's a story of a political jealousy. I think more than anything by a man who was a demented, uh, and, uh, sought revenge in a way that it was just, uh, incredible buy in. Uh, and in fact ingenious in a way because he devised this bomb much like the Unabomber, but I think probably more complex because it involved, uh, using a, I think he was, uh, he had shotguns at home and he took the mechanism out of a shotgun and somehow designed this package, this innocent looking package with a mechanism taken out of a gun. So that as soon as the rapper was removed, I don't know at what point, but then this thing would explode and it was done. It was a potent, uh, I don't know how many sticks of dynamite were in it, but I mean, it wasn't just something that to a meme or just to hurt somebody, it was meant to kill. And certainly it did, it killed three people.

Speaker 1 ([01:15](#)):

So tell me, who was our, who was our protagonist here?

Speaker 2 ([01:19](#)):

Well, he was a man named ISA Bartlett and he was a veteran of world war one. And he, uh, he learned a little bit about explosives in the military. And then when he worked, he worked as a township Constable, but at the same time, I think he had parked, he was a part time helper with road construction. So he had access to explosives during construction, uh, projects in the township, uh, and along with the, uh, expertise that he might have gained in the military, uh, he knew how to deal with explosives. Uh, so he had the, uh, he had the, uh, access, the knowledge and the access to do this thing. Uh, and then of course, uh, being a, uh, a political opponent, uh, he had the motivation as demented as it sounds, uh, to, uh, to use this knowledge, to create a deadly device. And, uh,

Speaker 1 ([02:21](#)):

What was the antagonism between Bartlett

Speaker 2 ([02:24](#)):

And crew back? I don't know what the, what the precise issues were except that, uh, uh, as, as you well know, Bartlett, uh, was inactive Klan member. No, I'm not sure how that comes into play because, uh, the Klan is such a secret operation. You really don't know where he stood in the Klan membership at the time. Uh, I suspect he might have been a high up, he certainly seemed devoted. Uh, and I, and I'm not sure what the policies that he objected to. It may have been nothing more than crew Beck hated the Klan and didn't want anything to do with them. And, uh, that was enough to motivate this guy to, uh, try to get rid of him. Uh, you know, as far as specific issues in township politics that, that, uh, you know, were the Klan stood on one side and crew back and other stood on the other side, I, I have no idea what those were. I'm sure that would take a lot of research to find out what the specific issues were, but it may have been just membership or non membership and the client itself.

Speaker 1 ([03:30](#)):

And, uh, and in fact, uh, Bartlett had long harbored, a grudge, had he not,

Speaker 2 ([03:38](#)):

Well, I'm sure as long as screw Beck was on the township council, and as long as he was a, uh, an employee of the township as a Constable or whatever, uh, I'm sure from that point forward, uh, uh, they were at odds with each other, uh, and that we're only not talking about a lot of years because, uh, he was in world war II. He, I don't even know where Bartlett was from offhand, and I'm sure he didn't know crew back, uh, until well after world war one ended. So we're only talking a period of five or six years, but that's a long enough to build up a grudge, I guess.

Speaker 1 ([04:18](#)):

Well, in fact, uh, didn't, didn't Bartlett, uh, endorsed the candidacy of who was that lady. Uh, Oh, there we go. Jenny, was it Jenny Norton Norlene? That was Jenny Norlene. I think a certain author I read, uh, by the name of, and, um, talked about the Bartlet and his cronies ran, uh, new Orleans in and she won the 1925 supervisor's position by one vote.

Speaker 2 ([04:48](#)):

I know nothing about her or her politics. Uh, but I assume she was, if not a Klan member, I don't know if women were even in the Klan where they, uh, if, even if she wasn't, she certainly, apparently he, uh, uh, was in bed with the Klan, uh, politically, uh, in other words, maybe it's just the fact that she ran against grew back. It didn't matter, you know, nobody could be in this guy's eyes as bad as grew back. So maybe anybody would have been an ally. Uh,

Speaker 1 ([05:21](#)):

Then the subsequent election crew Beck was voted back in again. Right.

Speaker 2 ([05:24](#)):

Apparently they had every year, they had elections. That kind of surprised me. I don't know if that's the case in township politics. I don't think they have elections every year, but they apparently they did at that time. So you only served one year and then you had to get reelected every year. So she apparently replaced him for one year, but then when, uh, and I, again, I can't explain that why, but, uh, uh, the next election, he easily defeated her. And I think this infuriated, uh, uh, this man Bartlett,

Speaker 1 ([05:55](#)):

So set the stage for me. What, happening

Speaker 2 ([05:58](#)):

On that Thursday, uh, when a package was delivered, what, what was happening at this at the three light three lakes Tavern? Is that I believe that, yeah, that's the name of it? Uh, uh, mr. Kubeck was the owner of the Tavern. It was a kind of a combination hotel, restaurant and Tavern, uh, for, uh, um, mainly for tourist business. I don't know, I'm not sure how they did in the winter time, but it was basically a warm weather, uh, uh, Tavern. Uh, she, he, his daughter, Jeanette, uh, was 18 years old and, uh, she had met another young man from Chicago, whose brother I believe was also, uh, on the township. He wasn't a council member, but he was an employee of the township. So that's probably how she met him, but ending rate, uh, the couple were, had met and, uh, got engaged and, uh, had planned on getting married on, uh, I believe the 29th of May.

Speaker 2 (06:58):

And so everything was in order for a typical, uh, gala wedding and reception, uh, which was to take place at the three lakes Tavern, obviously because the father, you know, owned the place. So they were happily preparing for this occasion. Uh, you know, it was a joyous thing. They had a lot of out of town guests from Chicago because both families were Chicago oriented. Uh, and I think that was true of that whole area of blue Lake, a lot of the tourist business where people from Chicago and maybe some came to settle down permanently, but I think most of them had roots in Chicago. So at any rate, they were, uh, in the process of, uh, happily preparing for a great wedding and a reception at the hotel. And, uh, a package was delivered, uh, about noon by the local post man. I, uh, I F I forget his name, but at any rate, uh, it was, uh, apparently wrapped in a plain Brown paper, uh, and how big it was, who knows, but it probably, I would say like a shoe box, perhaps, uh, it was delivered to the Tavern and it was addressed to Gus crew Beck.

Speaker 2 (08:16):

And the return address was his son in law, a man named green. So, uh, the presumption was that they looked at it and actually from what I understand, Janette went to the mailman and got the package and then brought it into the Tavern. But, uh, it was presumed to be a wedding gift because I'm sure at that time they were receiving by mail, you know, gifts, uh, and in advance of the wedding. Uh, and so she took it into the Tavern and, uh, they did not notice that the return address, the name was correct, but the address was wrong. The son-in-law had moved recently and they had the old address on there, but apparently that one I noticed or just didn't change anything. Uh, so the three of them, uh, Gus and the daughter and the groom to be, uh, proceeded to open this package and the, uh, I believe it was in the dining room of the hotel.

Speaker 2 (09:19):

And, uh, and I think just about the time when it was too late, uh, after the last crucial wrapping was removed, uh, I think you had Gus realized what it was, uh, and he made a point apparently made an effort to try to throw it into the sink or get rid of it, but it was too late. It went off and that, it just, uh, it was awful. I mean, it just basically killed the three of them right away. They didn't die while the Frank died right away. But, uh, uh, Gus died a little later and then Jeanette in the hospital a little after that, but it was just devastating. It was just a gruesome thing. And I'm sure that must have shaken the whole building and the whole neighborhood to hear that thing go off. And So that's what happened at that time,

Speaker 1 (10:17):

According to mr. Aquaman, this world, famous author, um, Gus lost his hand. What were the extent of the injuries? Do you recall that?

Speaker 2 (10:26):

Well, uh, based on, uh, uh, what I remember in the, in the newspaper write ups at the time he, he lost a part of one arm and a part of it, one side. I mean, it was one of those probably fatal injuries, especially the, the side injury. I mean, you could probably live with arm blown off, but, uh, it just, uh, he really cause he probably went off in his hands. So he would be the one that would suffer that kind of damage, uh, and how close to the other two were, I don't know, but I'm sure they were huddled around close enough to be, uh, you know, certainly not spared from the concussion or anything else. The debris, it

also had the package had a shrapnel in it and a manmade shrapnel. I don't know exactly what, but, uh, it wasn't just dynamite. I mean, it had shrapnel on there, so I'm sure it was a gruesome scene.

Speaker 1 ([11:28](#)):

And in fact, you wrote, it wasn't even dynamite. It was a pirate pirate tall,

Speaker 2 ([11:33](#)):

Hi, we're tall, but I'm not an expert on explosives and I'm not even sure what that means. Uh, I got, from what I read in the paper, I got the impression that that was maybe a, uh, a better grade of dynamite, uh, or perhaps more explosive than ordinary dynamite. But again, it may have just been a brand name of dynamite. So,

Speaker 1 ([11:54](#)):

And, uh, amazingly out of the whole explosion, I mean, it, it, you said it shattered the windows, uh, splintered, the window frames, uh, ripped out part of the ceiling in the dining room, blue part of the kitchen, uh, apart and yet out of that whole bomb, one of the things that did survive, what did survive?

Speaker 2 ([12:15](#)):

Well, it was the, the, the part of the outside packaging that had the label on it and it survived in tact. It was a scrap of paper. And, uh, that was, uh, I mean, they would have solved that sooner or later anyway, I think, but boy, that was a quick shortcut to, uh, solving, uh, tracking down, uh, the prime suspect because, uh, they knew where that package, where that, uh, well, they didn't know that I'm not sure how they found that out, but, uh, he, he had gone to the money, you post office to mail it into by the, the, uh, the parcel post standard label, whether he did that beforehand, uh, or did it at the time he put the thing in the mail, I don't know. But, uh, the clerks, for some reason remembered that it, of course it wasn't that long before it was probably a day or two before, but, uh, they remembered that, uh, the suspect, uh, buying that label, so that automatically made him a prime suspect.

Speaker 2 ([13:18](#)):

And then the, uh, the, uh, investigators went directly to his home. And I think anybody in blue Lake who followed any part of the blue Lake politics would probably have come to the conclusion that he would have been a prime suspect anyway, because of their political differences. But so they went immediately to his home and he was home and, uh, they had all kinds of immediate evidence. Uh, they even, I think, found the shotgun with the missing parts that were used to make the bomb. I mean, he, uh, I think he was resigned to, uh, uh, do is dastardly deed and, uh, and pay the consequences immediately for it. Uh, and then in other words, there was no long puzzling investigation and, uh, it was very quick,

Speaker 1 ([14:08](#)):

Uh, it was so quick that, well, I, although Charles Green certainly fell under, under suspicion for about Oh five minutes, the son-in-law, they looked at him hard. And as soon as the son-in-law, uh, was able to clear himself, they went right to Bartlett. Yeah. And, and what, uh, what about the arrest and what about his subsequent treatment?

Speaker 2 ([14:28](#)):

Well, he, uh, he was so of course incarcerated right away and he made a confession. I presume it, uh, police headquarters, whatever it was in the township. Uh, and, uh, and then he, he made this confession and he told them that he did not want the text of that confession, uh, uh, made public until he was sentenced and on his way to prison. Uh, which was agreeable enough because it's the case case closed. I mean, there's no, uh, so they did that and, uh, he let's see, that would have been okay. The, uh, Friday or Saturday, I'm sure when they took him into custody and it was oddly enough, it was Memorial day weekend to Memorial day two, I think Sunday was the 30th, which was to Memorial day. So on Monday, he, uh, he was sped through the process. Uh, he waived all these rights. Uh, he was taking them out into the judges, chambers, and the judge. Uh, I'm surprised the law, even in that kind of circumstances, connect that quickly. I'm not sure that'll happen today, uh, that a judge can, uh, just immediately pass sentence and put them in, uh, in custody and ship him off to, uh, his eventual jail cell. But that's what happened. He was by Monday, he was on his way to market prison in Northern Michigan, upper peninsula.

Speaker 1 ([16:11](#)):

Um, so

Speaker 2 ([16:13](#)):

It was an open and shut case, but green, uh, you know, the first impulse was say, you know, why, why would the son-in-law send us horrible device in the mail while obviously he didn't send it in? And I don't think it took more than a couple of minutes to determine that. I mean, there was absolutely no motive whatsoever, you know, why he would do this. And I think, uh, the fact that the address was wrong, uh, also, and I'm sure green himself looking at the label saying that's not my handwriting. So he was cleared right away. And they're also, they thought, well, you know, they're trying to investigate all different scenarios. And they, uh, thought perhaps a, there was a jealous rival for Jeanette, but, uh, that wasn't the case either. That was, uh, all friends and relatives said, uh, no, there was no. So it was just so obvious that, uh, who the prime suspect was.

Speaker 1 ([17:16](#)):

Yeah. Um, Bartlett's mother, wasn't going to believe that he was guilty maintaining

Speaker 2 ([17:23](#)):

Typical mother. Uh, it's certainly not unusual. And, uh, she wouldn't believe it until she talked to him, but he refused to talk to her. He would not talk to us, her mother, his mother. And I understand his father tried to get an attorney. He didn't want that either. So he was determined to take care of business himself and, uh, be sentenced and be done with it, which in a sense was kind of a, uh, if there is any mercy in this thing of, it probably is just as well for everybody that there wasn't a long public trial. And then, uh, with a lot of agony that the surviving family would have to go through and, you know, constantly retelling the scenario. So there was a little bit of a blessing there that this guy just quickly, uh, confessed and was removed from the area.

Speaker 1 ([18:17](#)):

And I understand the judge, what is a vendor Vogue vendor vendor work? That was it, uh, lamented that, uh, that, that capital punishment had been recently, uh, outlawed in the state.

Speaker 2 ([18:29](#)):

Yeah, I think they had just had a resolution go through the state legislature. I understand from time to time, you know, people have tried to get capital punishment in Michigan and it's never worked, and this was right after another attempt to, but I think, uh, I don't know how [inaudible] sentiments were personally about the death penalty, but he, he was so appalled by this crime that he felt that had the, had the death penalty been, uh, approved in the state that this guy was a prime candidate. And I think most people would agree. Uh, I mean, it was just an unforgivable crime that, uh, unimaginable, even for many devious criminals to pull off something like that

Speaker 1 ([19:13](#)):

Now Bartlett, uh, was sentenced to life. And, uh, what, what happened to him?

Speaker 2 ([19:18](#)):

Well, he, he, I'm not sure if he spent all of his, uh, uh, prison time in Marquette prison. Uh, I think he did, but I'm not sure that he spent, you know, life sentences kind of a misnomer all the time. Anyway, it doesn't mean the rest of your life. So he spent, uh, I think about 30 years, 35 years behind bars. And I don't know what his record was. I assume he was, uh, like many, uh, diabolical criminals. He was probably a model prisoner. Uh, you know, it's just like Leopold and Loeb. And, uh, then he was finally released and he came back to the area and he, I think he lived with a, with a cousin and, uh, no Eagle County. And from what I read in the papers, there were people in his neighborhood that really didn't even know who he was. Uh, it's hard to believe that the word wouldn't spread immediately, you know, people like to gossip about things like that, but, uh, uh, I'll take that for its word that, uh, but he, people that didn't know who he was and what his background was, they liked him. You know, it's just kind of a strange twist to, you know, you would think a man who would commit a crime like that would be a diabolical madman. Uh, you know, another Rasputin would be incurable, uh, an incurably violent nature, but apparently I assume, was a model prisoner and a model neighbor. When he got out,

Speaker 1 ([20:53](#)):

Go back to, there are three who left their mortal clay behind Gus, Jeanette, Oop, uh, what was their disposition? I mean, you've got all three of them dead. Uh, what of their funeral? What of their burial?

Speaker 2 ([21:11](#)):

Well, just from again, I'm basing, I'm not old enough to remember it. So I'm basing on what, what I've read in my research in the newspapers. I think it was a, rather about a somber funeral, as you can imagine because of the 180 degree turnaround from a, from a bunch of people in town for a celebration of, uh, you know, of a joyous wedding, uh, turning into a, just a McCobb funeral of, uh, the two principal parties and the, and the father. I mean, boy, this must have been devastating to have to do this complete turnaround. I mean, uh, you could hardly think of a sad or funeral, uh, and they, they had, uh, a, uh, he was a member of the Muskegon Alex, and, uh, and he was also incidentally, a pretty good friend of, uh, another historical character in Muskegon lore from a year before detective Charles Hammond, who was killed in a, in a notorious, uh, in a gunfight in the alley behind city hall with a notorious, uh, uh, fugitive gangster from the area Dutch Anderson.

Speaker 2 ([22:21](#)):

So he, that was the headlines one year earlier, uh, less than one year, really. And he was, uh, a good friend of, uh, Charles Hammond, but anyway, he was a, he was a well known ALC. So, uh, they had a big auditorium in the Elks temple here in downtown Muskegon. So they had the, the main funeral ceremony

there, which attracted a huge throng of people. Uh, and I'm sure plenty of people that knew probably didn't even know personally the victims, but it just caught the, caught the sympathy of the community. So they had a huge ceremony at the Elks temple and then a, a long funeral procession, uh, all the way up to, to you. And, uh, I imagine that was a pretty in those days of, you know, early days of automobiles, I'm sure that was still a pretty lengthy procession, especially when I assume that I don't know how many, uh, caskets they could, one Hearst there may have been three separate hearses. So it was, uh, I'm sure a mournful procession that, uh, you know, almost like a, the Lincoln funeral train, uh, up to Montagu at least on a local level

Speaker 1 ([23:36](#)):

And the Klan, how did the Klan come out of all?

Speaker 2 ([23:38](#)):

Well, uh, I understand that, uh, the negative reaction by the public and, and the shock and horror of this crime that was perpetrated by a very active member of the Klan, uh, pretty much destroyed the Klans effectiveness, at least in blue Lake township and probably in Muskegon County. The only problem is the Klan was so secret, uh, in many ways that you, you never really knew who belonged to the Klan, or, but I suppose a certain policies, uh, you know, uh, certain issues in that politics, uh, were pretty clearly, uh, something that Klan would simplify and something they would oppose. So you probably would get a pretty good feeling of who might or might not be a, if not a member of the Klan, uh, somehow, uh, a sympathizer. Uh, so I, my understanding is that, that there was a devastating blow to a Klan's influence in the area. But again, it's a, I'm not an expert on the Klu Klux Klan, nor are, nor are very many people because it was not very well recorded as far as I know. Uh, I doubt if you'd have, you'd be able to, uh, historically go back and get a membership role of the Klan, because I don't think they had a recorded records, but that's just my opinion. I don't know,

Speaker 1 ([25:06](#)):

Actually they kept fairly good records. Oh, did they? Yeah. These were, these were a matter of dues. I mean, the Klan gold money making.

Speaker 2 ([25:13](#)):

Yeah. It's hard to believe it, that a fun thing that had had would be unable to function with some kind of a, you know, organized record keeping, but, uh, what did I miss on this whole thing? Well, I'm curious myself to know if, uh, where he stood in the Klan membership. Uh, do they have any rosters or anything or any list of officers or, you know, how, how high up was he in the, in the local Klan

Speaker 1 ([25:40](#)):

Dad? I don't know, but we're going to try and find out, I mean, Clark historical library may have that. Um, if the central records were in, in, uh, new Eggo, uh, but we may never, we may never know the Klan could easily say there's no proof that this man was, uh, was one of our members. This was, this was some journalists idea, but it was, you see the Klan wasn't wasn't as near as much disparaged then as it is now, it was another fraternal organization. And they were after many of the other things that many other fraternal organizations were after they wanted good, solid Americanism. They wanted, they were against hyphenated Americans. They against anybody who would not swear allegiance to what they thought.

Speaker 2 ([26:25](#)):

I wouldn't be surprised at some of the, some of the antisemitic sentiments of Henry Ford got a lot of sympathy from the KU Klux Klan. So who knows,

Speaker 1 ([26:36](#)):

Well, in this town, you'd think my goodness, what a, what a natural, uh, you have a long time congregation synagogue here. That's a, that's more than a century old. Sure. This congregation. So here's a, here's a natural outgrowth in 1926. How many blacks would there have been in this year?

Speaker 2 ([26:56](#)):

Not very many. I, they, I think maybe world war one attracted, uh, black laborers because of the war industries here. And, uh, but prior to that, I think, uh, blacks were almost nonexistent, uh, in this area. So by the twenties, you would, especially in a place like Bullock, a blue Lake township, uh, why would there be, uh, if, if that was the prime focus of the KU Klux Klan was, was, uh, against blacks? Uh, I'm sure, like you say, uh, the issue, uh, the antisemitism was certainly a lot more valid issue across the spectrum of population around here than, than, you know, trying to figure out reasons to Lynch blacks

Speaker 1 ([27:44](#)):

Or against Catholics. Do you suppose hold backs were Catholics?

Speaker 2 ([27:47](#)):

Yeah, that's a good question. I, we probably could have asked, uh, Evelyn that, uh, I'm not sure of that.

Speaker 1 ([27:57](#)):

That would be enough reason for, for, uh, for Bartlett to hate grew back,

Speaker 2 ([28:02](#)):

I suppose. Yeah, no religion wise, uh, who were the Klans opponents, uh, uh, just Catholics and Jews

Speaker 1 ([28:13](#)):

And foreigners, any kind of, but I mean, in terms of religion, in terms of religion, pretty much Catholics and Jews. Yeah.

Speaker 2 ([28:19](#)):

I mean, how did they feel about, for example, Oriental religions or Islam?

Speaker 1 ([28:25](#)):

Well, that would have been so far outside the kitchen that, you know, didn't, it didn't even show up

Speaker 2 ([28:30](#)):

And even on the spectrum, then

Speaker 1 ([28:33](#)):

Not really anything more you want to say that I haven't asked you about?



Speaker 2 ([28:37](#)):

I, it sound like I'm interviewing you.