

# CHRONOLOGY

## THE LAST ELEVEN DAYS OF EARL DURAND: MARCH 13~24, 1939

**Monday, March 13:** A hunting party is caught poaching elk west of Cody. Earl Durand, the instigator, slips away, but the other three are arrested: farmer Emil Knopp, his son Ronnie, and a neighbor boy. Durand spends the night on Rattlesnake Mountain. The judge sentences Emil Knopp to sixty days in the Cody jail and releases the two boys.

**Tuesday, March 14:** Before sunrise Durand kills a local rancher's calf, then makes his way back to Rattlesnake Mountain. Sheriff Frank Blackburn is out of town, but an informal posse finds, captures, and arrests Durand. The judge fines Earl and sentences him to sixty days in the Cody jail.

**Thursday, March 16:** Earl breaks jail, first injuring deputy sheriff Noah Riley, then forcing the deputy to drive him to the Durand farmstead near Powell. When law officers Chuck Lewis and D.M. Baker arrive there, Earl shoots and kills them. After neighbor Virginia Turner arrives, Durand flees. He visits the Glasgow home nearby, taking a rifle, while Riley limps to the neighboring Smith farm to warn them. Cody lawyer Milward Simpson learns of the jailbreak and, in the sheriff's absence, organizes a posse to track the killer.

**Thursday, March 16 through Monday, March 20:** Durand's whereabouts are not known. Sheriff Frank Blackburn returns to Cody and leads the posse, without success. Ed McNeely, Vern Spencer, Mel Stonehouse, and Bill Garlow are among the possemen.

**Tuesday, March 21:** Durand appears at the farmhouses of several neighbors, gathering supplies. At the Smith farm, young Dick gives

## CHRONOLOGY XI

the outlaw a haircut and watches him shave off his beard. Possemen pursue Durand from farm to farm, glimpsing him fleetingly, but he eludes them.

**Wednesday, March 22:** Before sunrise Durand forces an elderly farm couple to drive him to Beartooth Mountain. The man reports the incident, and Sheriff Blackburn gathers the posse at the foot of the mountain, establishing headquarters at a ranch cabin. Harry Moore is his radio operator. One group of possemen locates the renegade in an inaccessible spot. Two undeputized tagalongs rush the hideout, but Durand's bullets kill them. (Durand takes a stolen deputy sheriff's badge from one of his victims; it will come in handy two days later.) At nightfall the sheriff calls in the posse and arranges for Montana National Guardsmen to join them the next morning. He also directs a local pilot, Bill Monday, to equip his plane with tear gas and dynamite bombs.

**Thursday, March 23:** Preparations to flush out the killer continue. Durand is believed to be still somewhere on the mountain, possibly headed over a pass to Clarks Fork. The sheriff and a dozen possemen retrieve the bodies of the two dead men on the mountain. The National Guardsmen are in camp when the posse returns.

**Friday, March 24:** Bill Monday's early flight reveals that Durand has disappeared from his hideout. Meanwhile Durand leaves the mountain and, impersonating a deputy, catches a ride with radio operator Moore and two passengers. Hijacking the car, Durand visits his parents, then ditches his hostages and drives to Powell. There he robs the First National Bank; among those terrorized are customer Vastee Dutton, cashier Maurice Knutson, and bank president R.A. Nelson. When Durand pushes three of his victims out the door, one of them, John Cawthrop, is slain by a bystander. From across the street, seventeen-year-old Tip Cox shoots Durand, who then finishes the job with a shot to his own neck. Bill Monday relays word of Durand's death to Blackburn—still on Beartooth Mountain—while coroner and undertaker Ray Easton prepares the body of the West's last outlaw for burial.