

FREDERICK R. "KILLER" BURKE (REAL NAME THOMAS CAMP)

b. May 28, 1893; d. July 10, 1940; Age 34 at time of Toledo robbery

Known Aliases: Dean Campbell, James F. Lewis, Theodore Cameron, Thomas A. Camp, Fred Dane, Richard F. White



Burke had a hair lip which he concealed with a moustache.⁴³ He was also missing a number of teeth in the front of his mouth, which later led to his identification as possibly being involved in the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. Burke's physical attributes did not deter his appetites for both food and women. He was also an alcoholic, which led to his eventual demise. At some point, Burke personally acquired Thompson submachine gun No. 2347,⁴⁴ one of the guns used in the Massacre. He was one of the first criminals to use a Thompson gun during a bank robbery. He is also known to have worn a police uniform on multiple occasions during the commission of various crimes.⁴⁵

It is believed that Burke enlisted in the Army with Bob Carey in May 1918, joining the Tank Corps. It is also believed that the two met Nugent while in Army service in France.⁴⁶ After the war, the three decided to put their expertise with weapons to use, becoming involved in organized crime. The men became involved with the Egan's Rats gang of St. Louis, with Burke also committing various crimes, including murder, on behalf of Detroit's Purple Gang.⁴⁷

After the Toledo robbery and murder and the Massacre, Burke was living under an alias near St. Joseph, Michigan.

The town of St. Joseph was a haven for gangsters who would lay low there until the heat generated by their most recent jobs had cooled.⁴⁸

While driving drunk on December 14, 1929, Burke was involved in a minor traffic accident in St. Joseph. When Burke attempted to leave the scene, Officer Charles H. Skalay approached and jumped on the running board of Burke's car as he tried to flee. Burke fired his revolver three times, fatally wounding Skalay.⁴⁹

Skalay had Americanized his name as Skelly and it is also misspelled as Skelley. Skalay is the original family name and is the name on the officer's tombstone.

Burke's car was later found in a ditch, having struck a telephone pole. Papers in the vehicle identified the auto's owner as one Fred Dane. Berrien County sheriff's deputies then raided Dane's (Burke's) home in Stevensville, Michigan and found an arsenal, including two Thompson submachine guns: Model 1921A, serial No. 2347, and Model 1921AC, serial No. 7580. Deputies also found \$319,850 in stolen bank bonds.⁵⁰

The serial number on the second gun had been ground off, but was later raised with acid by Calvin Goddard. The receiver on this gun remains discolored due to the use of the acid.

Since Burke was already a suspect in the Massacre, the recovered weapons were immediately delivered to Calvin Goddard as possibly being used in the massacre. After this confirmation by Goddard, rewards for Burke totaled more than \$100,000. He was known as the "most wanted man in America." He was apprehended more than a year later in Green City, Missouri on March 26, 1931. He was extradited to Michigan for Skalay's murder and convicted of this crime. Since Michigan had no death penalty, he was sentenced to life in prison. Using money he had stashed from his crimes, Burke lived in relative luxury in prison, becoming obese and diabetic.⁵¹ He died there of a heart attack on July 10, 1940.⁵²

Burke was the only person ever indicted by the Cook County Coroner's jury for the Chicago Massacre,⁵³ but he was never prosecuted for this crime. He was also never tried for the Toledo robbery and murder.