

Charles Bannon's second confession

Chas Bannon
Dec. 1930

"I bought 7 young hogs for\$ 28.00

"I bought 10 head of cattle

"I bought 2 horses

"I bought 10 tons old hay

\$ 277.00

I gave him \$ 265.00 cash money

4 days work at \$ 3.00 per day12.00

\$ 265.00cash that

I gave Albert Haven this money Sunday eve about 3 or 4 o'clock we were sitting at table when I made the deal and turned over the money. Swenson boy was there at the time he was in other room playing with Leland at the time Mr. Haven and I were making the deal. Daniel ask if I was going to rent the place and stay there. Mr. Haven answered him and said to keep still and not let nothing out.

Next we talked about renting the place. Mr. Haven asked me if I could stay there a couple of months and work. I said I would stay and work a couple of months. He asked if \$ 35.00 per month was too little and I said I wanted \$ 50.00 per month and he said all right. We did not say any thing about when he would pay these wages.

Mr. and Mrs. did not know which day they would leave but talked of leaving on Feb. 10th. That was Monday morning, at this time they had 3 suit cases packed. Mr. Haven got up first, built fires, he came in room, shook I and Daniel said for us to go out and do chores said he would help Mamma with breakfast.

Daniel and I went to barn to do chores. Fed three saddle horses and team and gave the cows some alfalfa hay. Then we started to milk. I was milking 2nd cow on east side of drive way in barn, a white cow. Daniel was milking first cow on west side of drive way.

We had milked some of the cows before this time. But these were the cows that we were milking when Leland came to barn. Leland had a gallon pail in his hand, he stepped over to Daniel and said, give me some milk for breakfast. Daniel said go and milk some for yourself.

I got thru with my share of the cows, or I thot so at least. Daniel said you better milk that other cow you Son of a Bitch. I was laughing and Danny laughed when he said this to me. I stepped back and took a 25-20 rifle off of side of saddle horn.

I said 'What did you say' and he called me the same name again. I pointed the gun at him, and did not pull the trigger. Danny was sitting and looking at me at time, the gun went off and shot him in the right temple killing him dead.

I walked over by him and seen that he was dead. Then Leland jumped up and seen what had happened, he pulled his 22 revolver out of pocket and shot at me twice, one bullet striking post at side of feed box and second bullet striking board on brace above manger at side of feed box, this being first stall on east side of driveway, Leland standing in alley way with one leg in manger when he fired the first shot. Then he came out in drive way and fired his second shot. I fired about same time at him, striking him in forehead.

He fell on his side -- right side -- and raised up on his elbow, just then Mrs. Haven came to barn, she walked in part way and Leland was getting up again. He had his gun in his hand and was going to shoot at me again. He stood up again and I fired second time striking him in chest on right side.

Then Mrs. Haven was wild. I could not blame her. I would have been the same way if it had been my father, mother or children. Then she started coming for me and screaming. I pointed my gun at her and said for her to stand where she was and I would not harm her. She stood there crying and screaming till Mr. Haven came.

When Mr. Haven came there was a pick lying by manure pile. He took handle out of pick. He came in barn and he and Mrs Haven came at me. I took gun off of them and tried to get away from them thru north door in drive way. Mr. Haven said 'he won't get away from here alive.'

I did not get to door till Mrs. Haven caught me by coat tail when I was half way thru door, Mr. Haven striking me with pick handle on right shoulder. It was blue and swollen for quite a while afterwards. I fought with them till I could get to door Mr. Haven kept backing up at this time.

Mrs. Haven got past me as I did not get out of north door. She got out of south door, Mr. Haven and I still fighting with gun and pick handle. I think Mr. Haven called to Mrs. Haven to get gun. She started for house and looking back towards barn -- then is when I shot striking Mrs. Haven on forehead. She staggered but kept on going.

I shot again striking her, I don't know where, and she fell in door way to kitchen, her body lying in house. Then I started to go up there or to the house and Mr. Haven started fighting again and he broke and started to run for house and I shot him in back and he only got to gate.

I did not hit him with gun after he was down. As I walked past him he never moved. He must have been dead at time.

I walked on into house to where Mrs. Haven was lying on floor. She was not dead yet. She said 'Can you pray' and I said 'Yes,' and she said 'God help us' and she died.

I did not pray at time, but did afterwards. It was after I had killed all of them and had them put away in shed at side of barn.

After Mrs. Haven died I killed babies. I killed Charles first, he was in front room screaming. I did not know what I was doing. I was afraid some one would come around, so I killed them, the

baby the last. I don't remember whether I shot or clubbed them to death, the baby in davenport bed at the time.

I next dragged all in to cow shed but Mrs. Haven, and I dragged her to cow shed with the Haven saddle horse, the black one. I covered them all up with hay in the mangers of barn. I got Mrs. Haven in manger on east of cow shed. After I covered her with hay I buried the baby in straw pile where the officers found it.

Next I mopped up floor and all blood in house and on step at front door. Then I took shovel and scraped and shoveled all snow where there was blood on it, I threw it in garden. Then I went to cow shed and buried Mr. Haven, Daniel and Leland at same spot where officers found their bodies in cow shed.

Then I went in and ate some, did not build any more fire, the coffee was warm yet that they had prepared for breakfast. Then I went back to cow shed and dug a deep hole for Mrs. Haven and Charlie and while I was digging Alex, the Finn, came and hollered around the barn and went in to the house. I was in cow shed and was watching him thru crack in door.

I believe Fassett was there before the Finn came. I saw Fassett as I was burying Mr. Haven and the boys. When I was thru burying them Fassett came back with load of hay. This was about 2 o'clock P.M. While I was out in shed he had put his coffee pot on stove so he ate his lunch, put his team in barn and watered them. He stuck around and helped me wash the cream separator and he hitched up his team and went home.

After Fassett started home I did up the chores and then I went home over to my fathers four miles northwest. Dad and Mr. Morrison were there. I told Dad I was going to work for Haven for a couple of months and I had taken Haven's family to Williston. I told them that I was to get \$ 50.00 per month and that I had rented the farm. I told this to Dad in the presence of Mr. Morrison. We were all three out side of the house when I told Dad this.

Morrison went back to town. Dad and I had supper. I helped Dad with chores and milking, then I got on saddle horse and went back to Haven home. Then I went to bed on davenport, got up next morning, done chores and had breakfast. This morning I took bed clothes which I had put in to a roll in closet. I burned them between toilet and bunk house. I also burned at this time three suit cases, one duck coat. This time is Tuesday forenoon.

In afternoon Hans Oakland came. He stopped in, said he had heard about the Havens leaving. I told him I had taken them to Williston. He wanted to know what was the matter. I told him Mrs. Haven had one of her spells again. He went home, did not have much to say.

I had something to eat then. It was a pretty late dinner, so I done up the chores for the night.

There is one thing I forgot to say about that before I buried Mr. Haven I took from his hip pocket \$ 265.00 which I had paid to him on Sunday afternoon for cattle, hogs, horses and hay.

Tuesday night Shorty Semple came from town, stopped in, wanted to warm up. I told him to put his team in barn so he did. He stayed all night with me. I told him the same story I told Hans Oakland. I said I did not care to stay there alone. Semple went home the next morning after breakfast.

I stayed alone for a week and the only one that came around was Fassett when he came after another load of hay. I went over to see Dad a couple times that week and I lied to him again and told him I had rented the place. He told me he intended to drop the McMaster place and would work with me if I wanted him to. I said 'all right.' I kept telling him I had it rented and everything.

Father had to stay and take care of the McMaster stock till Morrison, the man who had rented the place, could get there. Dad and I drove back and forth between the two places for at least a week doing the chores at both places. Dad stayed with me nights on Haven farm. During this week there was one night Morrison came back with Dad as there was no coal at McMaster place.

We three got up next morning early. We caught the McMaster team for Morrison to use. I think Morrison got coal and got his family out from town. From this time on Dad and I were together on Haven farm. During the week that Dad and I traveled back and forth between these two places we brought over Dad's cattle and pigs and hay and feed.

I lied to Dad all the time. I always told him that they went to Colton, Oregon. Dad talked of going west from the time he moved from the McMaster place. He always worried about me not hearing from the Haven family and always there was something wrong. He said when he left in a laughing way that he would send them back to me. Father left for the coast on Sunday, I cannot say what date. About 5 days after Dad left I moved the body of Mrs. Haven and Charles. I done this in night. The tunnel where I put their bodies has always been there under them white rocks. I was intending to move all the bodies after Dad left but did not get a chance. I used a team and wagon to move their bodies. It was a hard job. The reason I did not get all of Charles I could not find all of him. I has their bodies covered with hay while I was moving them. I moved them between 7 and 8 o'clock in evening. The rocks where I put the Mrs. and Charles are near no trail and away back in the hills there.

This last summer Dad and Mother would be talking when I came in they would stop. I do not know what they were talking about but they would watch me just as much as to say that they were not so sure that I was telling the truth about the Haven family. Mother at one time had the letter that I have confessed to writing and which I said I had gotten from Colton, Oregon, from Daniel Haven. She would look at letter and then at me and said 'are you sure you got this letter from Havens or is not this your writing.'

This is the only time she said anything about it till after I was arrested.

I had cattle in the shed over the bodies all winter and in the summer I had it nailed up tight. Father was not in shed only when we were castrating calves and dehorning them. I don't think Dad or Mother ever noticed the smell around the cattle shed. I did not clean out the manure in shed because I thought it might expose the bodies. I did not use lime on any of the bodies.

There was a pair of overalls that I had on when this deed was committed that I burned with the Haven clothes. My overall jacket had some blood on sleeve but I kept on wearing it. I did not change any paper on the wall of the Haven house. I did change the furniture around, put the cupboard in front room and put the kitchen cabinet where there was more light. There is still some blood on the base of the cook stove and little lid on side that comes up.

I did not make a trip with the Haven car on these days that was testified to in my hearing at Watford. The Haven family used the car Saturday night and were in Watford at Skadrons store. I used the Haven to go to get my mother at the Kora school twice. Went to Watford once, was pulled in by Parks. The blood in rear of Haven car was caused by dressed pigs which I hauled to Williston. There were 4 hogs -- dressed -- I sold 1 hog to Hogans Cafe. I sold 2 hogs to Model Cafe. The 4th hog I sold to restaurant in old Williston Hotel. These hogs were all Dad's and were sold just before the 4th of July.

My father or mother know absolutely nothing about me killing the Haven family only what I have told her today. I have told this story to Earl R. Gordon, deputy sheriff, of Williston, N.D., with my own free will and with the understanding that the evidence can be used against me in courts. There has been threats of violence used against me here at Williston, N.D., or at Watford, McKenzie Co.

I am sorry I lied to everybody and officers, as they seemed to be helping me and was only wanting the truth. I did not realize it then but I do now.

The text above is from State v. Bannon, 62 N.D. 517, 536-542, 244 N.W.1 (1932). The text is broken into paragraphs for readability -- the original confession had minimal paragraphing.