

Elmer (Laura Mitchell’s Brother), Age 79 and
wife Florence Zander, Age 68

WARM
Tonight—Chance of thun-
showers, low in lower 70s.
day—Warm, less humid,
h in low 80s. Saturday—
tly cloudy, cooler.
Tap and chart on Page 44.

CHICAGO DAILY NEWS
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FINAL MARKETS
RED
STREAK

9TH YEAR—14556 PAGESTHURSDAY, JUNE 18, 19647 CENTS★★PHONE 321-2000

Plan to Kill Elderly Couple Foiled

Nab 3 Boys in Murder Plot

Uncle Elmer
Grand Harold

N. Siders
Seized in
Michigan
Leader Sought
To Continue
Forging Checks

Police Thursday disclosed a bizarre plot by three North Side youths to kill an elderly Chicago couple with two golf clubs and a baseball bat.
The motive, police said, was to let one of the youths continue forging checks on the couple's \$150,000 bank account.
THE YOUTHS—aged 13, 15 and 18—planned to stay the couple this week in the pair's hideaway summer home at Fife Lake in Traverse County, Michigan, police said.
But Michigan state police, alerted through a previous bungled murder attempt by the youths, trapped and captured them Monday in a rented cabin near the elderly couple's home.
The 13-year-old said he was to get \$500 and a Thunderbird auto for his part in the killings.
The 15-year-old boy was to receive \$2,000, he told police.
The 18-year-old, a high school drop-out, was to get the chance to continue check-forging, according to his two accomplices.
Police identified the elderly couple as Florence and Elmer Zander of 2014 N. Sheffield.
Zander is secretary-treasurer of the Zander-Reum plastering contracting firm at 7 S. Dearborn.
POLICE SAID the Zanders left their Chicago flat unoccupied May 1 in order to spend the summer at the Fife Lake home.
The 18-year-old, who knew the couple, obtained a key to the Zander flat and moved in, according to Youth Bureau officers Leonard Peterson and Joseph Bongiorno.
He was soon joined by the 13-year-old, who ran away from his home in the neighborhood June 1, and the 15-year-old, who lives several blocks away.
Police said the three drove up to Fife Lake June 5 to look over the Zander home, then drove back to Chicago.
THE TWO younger boys said the 18-year-old masterminded a plot that went this way:
The trio, armed with a bat and two golf clubs, would surprise the Zanders in their summer home.
The 13-year-old would hit the Zanders on the head with the bat while the others were
Turn to Page 15, Column 3

Boys' Plot
To Murder
Two Foiled

Continued from Page 1

in reserve if anything went wrong.
Then the 18-year-old would slit the Zanders' throats and the 15-year-old would remove their false teeth to prevent future identification.
The youths then would drag the bodies outside, burn them and bury them.
The 18-year-old was to provide the "payoffs," including the cash and the Thunderbird, for his accomplices.
POLICE SAID the three drove up to Fife Lake a second time on June 12, stole a Zander auto there, and burst into the Zander cabin, intent on slaying the couple.
But a third person was present in the cabin, according to police, and the youths fled in confusion, abandoning the stolen car.
A Michigan state police stakeout of the abandoned stolen car led to arrest of the youths when they rented a nearby cabin last Monday, ready for their second murder attempt.
THE ZANDERS, who knew only about the stolen auto, told police they were acquainted with the 18-year-old and didn't want to press charges.
The two younger boys were released and returned to Chicago, but the 18-year-old was kept in the Traverse County (Mich.) jail.
THE 15-year-old broke down and told of the murder plot when questioned here Wednesday by Peterson and Bongiorno. Then the 13-year-old also admitted the plot.
The two younger boys are being held in the Audy Home.

Chicago Tribune
June 19th, 1964
↓

Tribune
June 19th
6 - Section 1A

2 BOYS REVEAL
PLOT TO SLAY
RICH COUPLE
Seized in Michigan,
Implicate 3d
A story of a plot by three Chicago teen-agers to beat to death a wealthy Chicago couple in their Michigan summer home and burn their bodies is under investigation by authorities both here and in Michigan.
The three were arrested Monday night in a cottage near Fife lake, 16 miles south of Traverse City, Mich., when the owner of the cottages in which they were staying became suspicious and notified Michigan state police. The police found that the teen-agers' car was stolen.
Tell Cops of Plot
Two of the teens, Frederick A. Smith, 15, of 2235 Clybourn av., and George Marchand, 13, of 644 Webster av., told of their plan to Leonard Peterson and Joseph Bongiorno, Chicago youth detectives. They implicated Horst Schmelz, 18, of 1008 Armitage av., and accused him of being the ringleader. They said they had lain in wait for the couple four times, twice here and twice in Michigan.
In a police statement, the boys said they planned to beat to death Elmer Zander and his wife, Florence, 2014 Sheffield av. They said that Schmelz had forged \$500 to \$1,000 in checks in Mrs. Zander's name in May. Zander is secretary-treasurer of Zander-Reum company, 7 S. Dearborn st., plastering contractors. He and his wife, who have been in Michigan since May 1, were planning to return to Chicago yesterday.

Took Advantage of Absence
According to the statement, the teen-agers took advantage of the Zanders' absence to cash the checks in currency exchanges and small groceries. While Schmelz cashed the checks, they said, one of the others waited in the home to verify them by telephone if suspicion arose.
The boys said Schmelz, who lived across an alley from the couple, developed the murder plot early this month, and offered Smith \$2,000 and Marchand \$500 and a car to help him.
Tried on June 10
They said that they had attempted to carry out the plan June 10 but abandoned it when the Zanders returned to their Michigan home with a friend.
In all, they said, they sought to ambush the Zanders at home twice in Chicago and twice in Michigan.
However, the statement said that the crime was to be committed in Michigan. Schmelz felt it would go undetected because of the Zanders' two homes, the boys said.
Smith and Marchand were returned to Chicago juvenile authorities. Schmelz, who is being held in the county jail in Traverse City, has been arraigned on charges of auto theft. Bond is \$1,000.
Won Science Prize
Police said Schmelz lived with an uncle, Max Schmelz. They said he attended Cooley Vocational High school and in 1963 won a state-wide science fair award in Champaign. They said he is regarded as a "near genius" in elections.
According to police, Smith attended Montefiore school, and Marchand was a pupil at Arnold school.

PAIR STUNNED WHEN TOLD OF MURDER PLOT

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Zander expressed disbelief yesterday when told that two boys had admitted a plot to murder them at their summer home at Fife Lake, Mich.

The Zanders returned to their Chicago home at 2014 Sheffield av., where two youth detectives and Zander's brother, Roy, informed them of the boy's bizarre story.

They expressed surprise when told that Horst Schmelz, 18, of 1008 Armitage av., was accused as the ringleader.

"A Wonderful Boy"

"We've known him for six or eight years now, and we've always thought he was such a wonderful boy," Zanders said. "He was very bright and friendly as can be."

Schmelz, who has been accused by Frederick A. Smith, 15, of 2235 Clybourn av., and George Marchand, 13, of 644 Webster st., has been a handyman to the Zanders for the last several years. He lived across the alley from them.

Find Home Ransacked

The Zanders found their home ransacked. Wine and beer bottles were on the floor. On their kitchen table were numerous pieces of scratch paper with Mrs. Zanders' name written, where the boys apparently had practiced forging her signature.

The Zanders found 15 checks made out to Schmelz under Mrs. Zanders' forged signature. Police say \$740 in checks bearing the forged signature have already cleared the bank.

Held in Audy Home

Marchand was held on a delinquency petition yesterday in the Audy home, where he is awaiting an appearance in Family court on June 29. Smith, who is on parole on several charges, including three burglaries and a theft, was turned over to the Illinois Youth commission.

Schmelz is being held on an

auto theft charge in Traverse City, Mich., on \$1,000 bond. He has denied plotting the death of the Zanders but said that one of the other boys made some mention of killing the couple.

Nabbed in Stolen Car

The three were arrested Monday night in a car which had been stolen in Chicago. Smith and Marchand were returned to Chicago.

They said that Schmelz conceived the plot after he had written a number of forged checks on the Zanders bank account. The murder, according to the two, would have been committed so that the couple

would not discover the forged checks.

Zander is secretary of the Zander-Reum company, 7 S. Dearborn st., plastering contractors.

WS, Saturday, June 20, 1964

'Do Away with Us?' Zander, Wife Horrified

Couple Finds It Incredible That Boys Plotted Murder

BY JOHN CULHANE

The elderly couple sat in their living room and learned how three teen-agers plotted to murder them.

Elmer Zander, 79, sat on the edge of a piano bench, slowly shaking his white-thatched head, and staring incredulously through his spectacles.

"Do away with us?"

Zander recalled that 18-year-old Horst Schmelz, alleged mastermind of the plot, "was out to our cabin two summers ago with his folks. They're our neighbors across the alley."

ZANDER'S WIFE, Florence, 68, burst into tears as Youth bureau officer Leonard Peterson explained, as gently as he could, how Horst and his 13- and 15-year-old accomplices planned to knock the Zanders unconscious, slit their throats, and the bodies with gasoline and set them afire.

"Oh, Vera," she sobbed, as her sister-in-law entered the old-fashioned living room at 2014 N. Sheffield. "Isn't that Horst terrible?"

The Zanders had arrived home about 11:45 a.m. Friday from their hideaway summer home—which has no phone—in the woods near Fife Lake, Mich. Police say this was to have been the scene of their murder.

A DAILY NEWS REPORTER was waiting to talk to them about Horst Schmelz.



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West Side Blast Damages Car

A bomb explosion early Saturday damaged a 1963 model station wagon parked behind the Clearview Simmonizing Co., 4757 W. Grand.

Sgt. Gerard Mahle of the Austin district said the blast broke most of the vehicle's windows and buckled the roof. He estimated damage at \$1,500.

UNTIL 10 P.M., SAT.
CLUDED. OPEN ALL DAY
SUNDAY 'TIL 6 P.M.

R WAY
ONIGHT
P A



MRS. FLORENCE ZANDER
"Isn't that Horst terrible?"

"Wait'll I put the car away and we'll go inside and talk," Zander said.

But the motor of their white Oldsmobile kept stalling as Zander tried to back the car into his garage.

"Well, you know, Horst stole this car up in Michigan," Mrs. Zander explained. "He probably didn't drive it right. We saw him in jail in Traverse City."

At that moment, they knew nothing of the plot on their lives.

The motor stalled four more times.

"I'll drive around the block and come in from the front," Zander said.

In their garage, he found a white Thunderbird, its axles on blocks.

"That's Horst's car—but the wheels are missing," Zander said.

AT THAT MOMENT, Zander's brother, Roy, arrived, followed by Officers Peterson and Joseph Bongiorno of the Youth Bureau. Roy Zander suggested "everyone go inside and talk."

As the couple passed the stone birdbath in the sideyard of their old, two-story brick-and-frame home, Mrs. Zander broke down momentarily, perhaps in fear of the unknown to come.

"I've been so nervous, she said.

Inside, Mrs. Zander gasped. The house was a shambles.

"Look. The broom is broken," she said, holding a splintered half in each hand and trying to hold back the tears.

"Don't bother about that now," her brother-in-law said. "Sit down and listen to the whole story."

"Yes," said Elmer Zander. "Let's hear what the policeman has to say."

"But look at the dining room!" Florence Zander said.

"They've been drinking all our soft drinks."

THERE WERE SEVERAL empty pop bottles on the round dining room table. There was also an empty whiskey bottle. Playing cards and leaves of a calendar—May 5 and May 6—were scattered across the tablecloth. So were practice checks from the LaSalle National Bank.

"Look!" said Zander. "They've cashed all these checks!"

"These aren't cashed, sir," said Peterson. "They're practice checks."

AMONG THE PRACTICE checks was Florence I. Zander's driver's license—from which someone had rehearsed forging her signature on a pad and on the practice checks.

"They didn't cash any, then?" Zander said.

"They did cash some," said Peterson.

"Are there many?"

"Considerable," Peterson said.

HE TOOK THE COUPLE into the living room and started the story at its beginning, when Horst Schmelz, apparently leaving the couple would discover the check forgeries, allegedly asked a 13-year-old friend:

"Could you kill someone?"

The couple sat silent, listening to the story, until Peterson mentioned the name of the 13-year-old member of the trio.



ELMER ZANDER

He never back of the teenage plot to kill them.

"Oh, He's a redhead," said Mrs. Zander.

"Yes," said Peterson. "Horst and the 13-year-old told me, 'We'll give you \$2,000 if you do this.'"

"Well, where was he going to get \$2,000?" Mrs. Zander said.

"Well, listen," said her brother-in-law.

"Yes, listen," said her husband.

"The answer," said Peterson, "was that the \$2,000 was to come from your bank account."

(Mrs. Zander was gazing about her living room. "Excuse me for interrupting," she said softly, "but they certainly got everything wrecked.")

"... After they did away with you," Peterson concluded.

"Oh, my God!" Mrs. Zander said.

"Do away with us?" said her husband.

IN A GENTLE, matter-of-fact tone of voice, Peterson told the couple the details of the plot as they had been revealed to police by the two younger boys.

"Horst had been missing from home for quite some time," Peterson said. "His father saw his Thunderbird, took off the wheels and put it on blocks. He thought that, without the Horst would be thwarted and would come back home."

Instead, the boys stole a second Thunderbird from a used lot and drove up to Fife Lake to surprise the Zanders in summer home.

"They took two golf clubs and sawed them down and bought a baseball bat. Those were just to stun you. They want any blood."

Mrs. Zander looked at the police officer with horror.

They would drag you outside, where Horst would hit you in the Adams apple, breaking your larynx.

Her eyes widened. "Oh, God, isn't that terrible!"

"Then they would drench your bodies with gasoline..."

"That boy must be insane!" she said.

"... And set them afire," Peterson concluded.

PETERSON SAID the trio lay in wait in Zander's garage, but when the couple drove up, they had a third person with them—so the boys fled.

"A third passenger?" said Zander slowly. "That's this Haag up there who takes care of the place, I guess."

The boys moved the execution date up to June 15, said Peterson. "We still don't know how the state police caught them, but they came in on a mass call, Fife Lake) with drawn guns and arrested them."

Mrs. Zander sat silent for several minutes, letting the story sink in. Then she turned to her husband:

"I think that Horst needs psychiatric treatment."