

ACCUSED AGENT FREED BY JURY

**James L. Asher, Federal 'Dry'
Officer, Acquitted in Sa-
loon-Keeper's Death**

**Judge Criticizes Government
Policy of Issuing 'John Doe
Warrants by Wholesale'**

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 23.—James L. Asher, prohibition agent, known as the "Lone Wolf" was acquitted by a jury in the Federal District Court tonight of charges of second degree murder and manslaughter in connection with the death of Peter Yancauskas, a saloon-keeper.

The jury returned a verdict of not guilty after deliberating about five hours.

Counsel for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which prosecuted the case, contended that Yancauskas died as the result of a beating and kicks in the stomach administered by Asher during a raid on his saloon in April, 1923. The saloon-keeper died about five weeks later from peritonitis, which the Commonwealth alleged, developed from the kicks.

Asher denied having used unnecessarily rough measures in arresting Yancauskas and the assistant Federal district attorney, who defended the prohibition agent, maintained that the alleged injuries received during the raid had nothing to do with his death.

In his charge Judge Dickinson pointed out that the principal question for the jury to decide was

whether Yancauskas was killed or had died from natural causes. He made only brief reference to the testimony. Criticizing what he declared had been the Federal policy of issuing "John Doe warrants by the wholesale," Judge Dickinson told the jury that this practice "savored much of the 'lettres de cache'" of France which were responsible for the downfall of the bastille. On the day of the Yancauskas raid deputy United States marshals toured the city with 61 "Doe" warrants for the arrest of liquor dealers.

After asserting that Asher was in no way responsible for the issuing of these warrants, the court said the objection to them was that "they partake too much of the Lettres de Cache. In a sense both were blanket authority for the arrest of anyone whom the person having them chose to take and keep them in jail as long as they pleased."

Trial of the case lasted five days with each side introducing about a score of witnesses. Charges of attempted bribery to absent himself from the jurisdiction of the court were made by one of the witnesses for the Commonwealth, who in turn was alleged by Federal investigators to have attempted to extort \$1000 from Asher.



Greetings

Hear the joy
And the an
Peace on earth,
Each heart
Its song of
For Christmas tin

LASK
John C.

peter yancauskas

Clipped By:



al630

Sun, Aug 14, 2016