

Body of Collyer Is Found Near Where Brother Died

By HAROLD FABER

Langley Collyer was found dead yesterday in his old brownstone home at 2078 Fifth Avenue. His body, wedged in a booby trap set to keep out intruders, was lying in the same room on the second floor where his blind brother, Homer, had been found dead on March 21.

The time of his death was not fixed by the medical examiner pending an autopsy today at the morgue, but the police were sure that the eccentric 61-year-old recluse had died at least three weeks ago. The cause of death was unknown, but he apparently starved or suffocated, unable to get out of his own trap.

Langley's body was found in a mazelike tunnel just inside the hallway entrance to the room. He was lying on his right side, his head turned toward the front space where his paralyzed older brother spent his time. He apparently was carrying food to his ailing brother, whom he had carefully nursed since Homer was stricken in 1932. His body was ten feet from where Homer had been found.

Piles of newspapers, books, tin cans and old furniture filled the room. The two-foot-wide passageway in which the body was found was lined by a chest of drawers on one side and an old bedspring on the other.

A suitcase, three metal bread boxes and bundles of newspapers rested upon the partly decomposed body, gnawed by rats. The booby trap, similar to many others in the junk-filled house, was activated by an overhanging box. It probably was tripped by Langley during a weak spell, according to Inspector Joseph Goldstein.

The search for the missing eccentric thus ended in circumstances as bizarre as when the police first entered the junk-filled house which has become a legend in the once-fashionable section of Harlem where the Collyer brothers lived.

A mysterious telephone call to the police on the morning of March 21 reported that there was a dead man in the house. The police, hav-

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ing received many such calls about the queer brothers, sent a patrolman to investigate. On previous occasions Langley would appear when the patrolman knocked. This time there was no answer.

A police emergency squad then forced its way through the barricaded doors and windows of the building and found Homer dead. Three days later, the police, sure that Langley would have appeared if alive, began to search the building.

120 Tons of Junk Removed

Up to yesterday the police, together with laborers from the Public Administrator's office, had removed 120 tons of junk from the Collyer home. It included fourteen grand pianos, an old generator, parts of a Model T Ford, more than 3,000 books, pictures of pin-up girls—enough to substantiate the legend of the Collyers.

Simultaneously with the search of the house the police sent out an eleven-state alarm for Langley. He was described as a white-haired man, blue-eyed, with a big mustache. His lawyer, John R. McMullen, said Langley looked like "a gentleman of the 1880's."

The police became certain that Langley was dead, however, when he failed to attend Homer's funeral on April 1 in Cypress Hills Cemetery, Queens. Langley probably will be buried in the family plot there, too.

The discovery of Langley's body solved the question of where he was, but raised several others. One was, Who made the mysterious telephone call to the police on March 21? and the other was, Why did it take the police so long to find Langley's body?

William Rodriquo of 1 West 127th Street told the police that he had called. Asked how he knew Homer was dead, he said two unidentified men had told him. The police were inclined at first not to believe him, but Rodriquo signed an affidavit saying he had made the call.

The explanation yesterday was that of the many calls the police received over a period of years one of them sooner or later was bound to be accurate by the laws of chance. Rodriquo's call, they said, was the one.

Second Query More Complicated

The answer to the second question—why didn't the police immediately search the second-floor room for Langley—was more complicated. On the day Homer's body was discovered, the police said they had been told there was a dead man in the house and they had found a body, ending their part in the search.

The next week the Public Administrator's office was appointed temporary executor for the assets

of Langley, who had been reported missing. The search from then on was directed by the men from the Public Administrator's office. They started at the basement and worked their way up.

The search yesterday started out the same way as on previous uneventful days. Laborers from the Public Administrator's office and detectives entered the debris-filled house and started to clear the second floor. Items of no value — seventeen tons during the day — were carted away by Department of Sanitation trucks.

At 3:30 P. M. the trucks and a police emergency squad left for the day. At 8:35 P. M. Detective Joseph Whitmore, clad in cob-webbed coveralls, came down the steps of the building and told reporters to follow him. He walked to the corner drug store and phoned headquarters that he and Detective John Loughery had found Langley dead.

"We've got him," he said.

"We were scraping around in the rubbish when we saw a foot sticking out," Detective Loughery explained.

Jacob Iglitzen, the corner druggist, identified the body. He was positive it was Langley. Not only did he recognize the partly decomposed face, he said, but he knew the clothing. The body was clad in black and gray striped trousers, resembling overalls, and an old worn brown jacket.

A crowd of 500 neighbors, who had been watching the police operations all day, grew to more than 2,000 within an hour, swelled by the neighborhood grapevine that Langley Collyer had been found dead.

A group of high police officials hurried to the scene. Arthur W. Wallander, commissioner, was among the first to arrive. He immediately congratulated Detectives Whitmore and Loughery for their work in finding the missing man.

Medical Examiner Thomas A. Gonzales examined the body for a half hour. He indicated that the missing man had been dead for at least "a couple of weeks," possibly three or four. This would bear out the police theory that Langley had died first and that his crippled brother Homer had died because of lack of food. An autopsy of Homer's body disclosed previously that he had had no food in his stomach for several days.

Many times before his death, Langley, a friendly man, told neighbors that he and his brother did not believe in doctors and that diet would help cure Homer's ailments. The cure would be effected by a diet of oranges, Langley said, and therefore he brought his brother as many as a hundred oranges a

week. He also brought home scraps he picked up in garbage cans and left-overs furnished by neighborhood butchers and grocers.

Langley, a former concert pianist, said he kept the pianos in the house to play to his brother. He explained his vast collection of old newspapers in this way: Homer, a former admiralty lawyer, would want to read them when he regained his sight.

Mr. McMullen, lawyer for the brothers for fifteen years, said last night that he would confer today with Joseph A. Cox, attorney for the Public Administrator, on the disposition of their assets, said to total at least \$100,000 on deposit in banks.

The brothers, descendants of a family that came to America in 1620 have at least forty cousins surviving them. They never married.