



Murder Suspect Caught

Evaded police 88 hours

Robert Raymond Cook, 22, finally was brought to bay at 4 p.m. Tuesday after the largest manhunt in the history of the province was staged following his escape from the Ponoka Mental Hospital. He was found hiding unarmed in a hog pen on the farm of Nerman Dufva, one-half mile south of Bashaw.

Some 100 R.C.M.P. from detachments throughout central and southern areas of the province, supplemented with 50 militia members from the Army

Provoost Corps in Edmonton, sought the alleged slayer of seven people for 88 hours after, using tremendous effort, he ripped the wire mesh from his "maximum security" cell at the mental home and escaped into the night last Friday, stealing a 1950 Chevrolet from a Ponoka street.

His escape was discovered at midnight, some 25 minutes after a routine check had found him in his cell. Police were notified immediately, and roadblocks were set up on all Central Alberta roads.

The car stolen by Cook later was found in a ditch on Highway 12 between Lacombe and Stettler, near Nevis. Some 75 R.C.M.P., assisted by private citizens and two police dogs, started a search of the Nevis area Saturday.

As the search progressed, slim clues came to light, but searchers did not at any time come close to the fugitive. At one time dogs found a piece of pyjama cloth, likely ripped from the escaped man's stripped night clothes that he was wearing at the time he leapt from the window of his cell.

A dance hall in the Nevis region was broken into Saturday night and food was stolen. A farm was visited by a prowler Sunday, and it was feared for a while that firearms had been taken, a fear that later proved

drove back to the Schultz home, just one-half mile from the abandoned car, and informed her husband. Police say that Mr. Schultz and a neighbor, Nick Kerik, drove to the parked car and watched the suspect leave the vehicle. One of the men returned to the Schultz home to telephone police and the other kept watch over the abandoned car.

SEARCH CENTRE MOVED

As soon as the report of the finding of the stolen car reached police, Inspector M. Laberge and Staff Sergeant Beeching of the Red Deer Division, who had been in charge of the search in the Nevis region, immediately ordered search headquarters moved to the site of the abandoned car, four miles north and four miles west of Bashaw.

Meanwhile, militia members who had arrived at the scene of the Nevis headquarters were immediately shifted to the Bashaw area. The heavily armed military policemen travelled in one large bus, two parked trucks and some 20 jeeps, making an impressive convoy as they worked their way northward on the district highway, presently undergoing paving. Also entering into the search were up to five airplanes.

By the time the search headquarters had been shifted, police were certain that Cook would have to be within an area with a maximum radius of 15 miles centering on the abandoned car. The area

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THE SEARCH AREA

Here is the area where police combed the bushes in search of escaped murder suspect Robert Raymond Cook. The circle indicates the 15-mile radius around the abandoned car (marked with an X) where police were sure they would catch the fugitive. The arrow marks the location of the farm where Cook calmly walked out of a pig pen and surrendered when police arrived on the scene. —Map courtesy Alberta Motor Association.

The big break in the case came Sunday night, when a 1957 Monarch 4-door sedan was stolen from the garage of W. E. Jennings, Alix farm equipment and automotive dealer. The powerful car, a Turnpike Cruiser model, was an ideal getaway car for a hunted man. But too soon for Cook's good, the theft was discovered and the description and license number of the car were broadcast throughout Alberta.

FUGITIVE HEADS NORTH

Creeping along backroads, obviously in a panic with little in mind except to remain free, Cook drove the car north to Bashaw, just 25 miles from the centre of the search operations. The escape car proceeded along the north-south secondary highway to the junction with Highway 53, four miles north of Bashaw. Cook then headed east toward Ponoka.

Shortly after the car turned onto the east-west highway an alert farm wife, Mrs. Richard Schultz, spotted it and took chase in the family car, accompanied by another woman.

The two women watched the car turn off the highway four miles east of the junction, drive onto a side road and then onto a wagon trail, stopping behind a barn and a clump of bushes.

Mrs. Schultz and her companion