

Murder of J.I. Hornsby-Part 3**By Kathryn Dodd**

J.I. Hornsby, a filling station operator at a station between Krum and Ponder was murdered on July 25, 1928. John Rippy, the owner of the filling station Mr. Hornsby leased, was charged for the murder. Witnesses for Mr. Hornsby said they had seen John Rippy around the time of the murder leaving the station. Witness for the other said they had not seen Rippy. In two trials held Rippy received 25 years, and then 35 years, but both convictions were reversed by the Court of Criminal Appeals. A third trial was scheduled for April 1934 but Rippy did not appear. The defendant made a sweeping denial of ever having even felt unfriendly toward the deceased and declared he always had felt kindly toward the slain man. I thought this was going to have no ending as I was not able to find anymore newspaper articles about what had happened so was left wondering if Rippy ever served time for the murder. Luckily I was able to contact a relative of John Rippy who provide an ending for the story.

Denton Record Chronicle-April 2, 1934**\$250 Reward For Rippy Offered by Governor Allred**

A reward of \$250 for the return of John Rippy, charged with murder, on the condition of his being convicted within a six month period, has been posted by Governor Jas. V. Allred. County Attorney Judge Gambill has been notified by the governor.

Allred's actions came after Gambill wrote the governor to urge he investigate the case.

The proclamation offering the reward was dated at Austin, Feb 12, so that the six month period begins of that date. Rippy was indicted here in August, 1928 on charges of slaying J.I. Hornsby filling station operator who was fatally wounded with a shotgun. In two trials here Rippy received 25 years, then 35 years, but both convictions were reversed by the Court of Criminal Appeals. The case was then sent to Dallas and tried but a new trial granted. The case was set for trial in April 1934 and that time Rippy did not appear. His bond was forfeited.

The section below was written by John Rippy's granddaughter in a document titled "The Life and Times of John William Rippy."

And so a new trial was set for April 23, 1934. But on that day, the Denton paper reported, "Rippy Bond Forfeited in Dallas Court...District Judge Grover Adams today declared forfeit the \$10,000 bond of John Rippy, who failed to show up here for his fourth trial. The case was reset for 2 PM today and Judge Adams instructed the special venire of 250 to report back at that time. Rippy was tried here a month ago and received a life sentence from the jury." It goes on to mention the two previous trials where he was convicted and sentenced to 25 and 35 year prison terms. So each time he was retried, he received a longer sentence!

Then on April 24, "No Word from Rippy Received...County officials said Tuesday they still had no word as to the whereabouts of John Rippy...whose bond of \$13,000 was ordered forfeited when the defendant did not appear in court Monday. At that time, Mrs. Rippy and Rippy's counsel told the judge that had not seen him since Thursday."

There are no references to John Rippy on Newspapers.com for 1935. But then this eye-catching headline on February 14, 1936, "\$250 Reward for Rippy offered by Governor Allred...A reward of \$250 for the return of John Rippy, charged with murder, on the condition of his being convicted within a six month period, has been posted by Governor James Allred. His action came after Judge Gambill wrote the governor to urge him to

investigate the case....the case was set for a new trial in April 1934, and at that time Rippy did not appear and his bond was forfeited.”

Then on February 26, 1936, the Denton paper reported “Judgement Given for Rippy Bond...Judgment for the state for forfeiture of the \$13,000 John Rippy bond was given by Judge Grover C. Adams in his Criminal District Court in Dallas Tuesday afternoon and counsel for the sureties filed notice of appeal. County Attorney Judge Gambill went to Dallas to conduct the state’s case. Judgment nisi, a temporary judgment given pending final hearing, was rendered in the state’s favor some time ago. E.C. Rippy, W.L. Smith, J.D. and J.B. Jackson are sureties on the bond, the largest Denton County case bond a forfeiture has been obtained in since the \$15,000 W.W. Bentz bond judgment.”

By Kathryn Dodd: So this was the story of the murder of J.I. Hornsby. Apparently John Rippy did not show up for any more proceedings or trials and in fact he had moved to Oklahoma and changed his first name. He probably served about 6 months in jail for the alleged murder. He died in 1941 and is buried in Oklahoma. J.I. Hornsby is buried at Krum Jackson Cemetery.