

Perry Edward Smith (October 27, 1928 – April 14, 1965) was one of two ex-convicts who murdered the four members of the Clutter family in Holcomb, Kansas on November 14, 1959, a crime made famous by Truman Capote in his 1966 non-fiction novel *In Cold Blood*. Together with Richard Hickock, Smith launched an invasion of the Clutter farmhouse, mistakenly believing that a large amount of money was kept in a safe.

Smith admitted to cutting the throat of the father, Herbert Clutter, and to shooting both Herbert and Kenyon Clutter in the head with a shotgun at close range. It remains a matter of dispute which of the two shot the women, Bonnie Clutter and Nancy Clutter. Hickock insisted that Smith performed all the killings, while Smith first claimed Hickock killed the women, but later claimed to have shot them himself.

Life

Smith was the son of two rodeo performers who separated when he was young. He lived initially with his mother, a promiscuous alcoholic who died before Smith reached adulthood, and later in a Catholic orphanage, where nuns abused him physically and emotionally for his chronic bed-wetting (a life-long problem). In his teens, Smith lived an itinerant existence with his father. Two of Smith's siblings died as young adults, and the remaining sister cut off contact with him.

During World War II, Smith served in the U.S. merchant marine, where he had an opportunity to visit Asia and the Pacific — his seaman skills were evident in the knots he used to bind the Clutter family. He was also a decorated Korean War veteran.

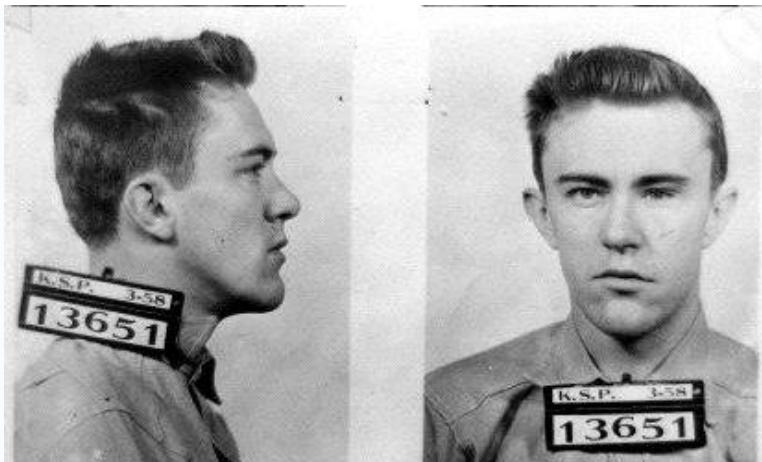
While Smith had only a grade-school education, he maintained a strong interest in art, literature, and music. He read extensively, frequently travelled with a guitar, and during his time on death row, painted pictures for other inmates from photos of their family members.

Smith suffered from chronic pain due to a motorcycle accident which shattered his legs, and consumed large amounts of aspirin continually.

Smith and Hickock first met in prison, and resumed their acquaintance in November 1959 after Hickock's release. After the murders, Smith was captured in Las Vegas, Nevada in late December 1959, and was executed by hanging on April 14, 1965, a few minutes after Hickock.

Film portrayals

Smith was portrayed by Robert Blake in the 1967 film version of *In Cold Blood*, by Eric Roberts in the 1996 miniseries adaptation of the original film, and by Clifton Collins Jr. in 2005's *Capote*. Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perry_Smith_%28murderer%29"



Richard (Dick) Eugene Hickock (June 6, 1931 – April 14, 1965) was one of two ex-convicts who murdered the four members of the Clutter family in Holcomb, Kansas on 14 November 1959, a crime made famous by Truman Capote in his 1966 non-fiction novel *In Cold Blood*. Together with Perry Smith, Hickock launched an invasion of the Clutter farmhouse, mistakenly believing that a large amount of money was kept in a safe.

Hickock is generally regarded as the more hardened criminal of the pair, a sociopath who took sadistic pleasure in killing dogs and harbored (and frequently acted upon) pedophilic desires for pre-pubescent girls. According to Capote, who interviewed Hickock and Smith extensively from their initial imprisonment until their execution, Hickock enlisted Smith in the robbery because he did not want to leave witnesses, but thought himself incapable of killing; he was impressed by Smith's (fabricated) stories of killing people during robberies, and thought he had found someone to do the dirty work for him.

While Smith admitted to cutting the throat of the father, Herbert Clutter, and to shooting both Herbert and Kenyon Clutter in the head with a shotgun at close range, it remains a matter of dispute which of the two shot the women, Bonnie Clutter and Nancy Clutter. Hickock insisted that Smith committed all the killings, while Smith first claimed Hickock killed the women, but later claimed to have shot them himself.

Hickock was captured in Las Vegas, Nevada in late December 1959, and executed by hanging on 14 April 1965 after several appeals.

Film portrayals

Hickock was portrayed by Scott Wilson in the 1967 film version of *In Cold Blood*, Anthony Edwards in the 1996 miniseries adaptation of the original film, and by Mark Pellegrino in 2005's *Capote*. Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Hickock"