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Now You Know:



Encounter with Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker

Ask any Ranger who knew him and he will tell you that Bennie Krueger was one of the best Rangers who ever lived and one of the finest men he ever knew. But few know this story—a tale that could have ended in death for Bennie.

It was a cold fall evening in 1933 and Bennie was working as a police officer on the Brenham (Texas) Police Department. He and Officer Arthur Sternberg were sitting in their office trying to stay warm when the phone rang. A lady was complaining that a suspicious-looking car was parked on the side of the road near her house. Would the police please check it out? Even though the car was parked outside the city limits and was not in their jurisdiction, Bennie and Sternberg agreed to look into it.

Parking behind the car, Bennie approached the driver's side while Sternberg came up along the passenger side. Bennie observed a man lying in the front seat, with a man and woman lying under a blanket in the back seat. When Bennie tapped on the rear window, the man lifted his head. Seeing Bennie, he rolled the window down about two inches and asked what the officer wanted. Bennie told him that the people in the nearby house were concerned about them being parked there all night. Would they mind moving on?



By this time, the woman was awake and glaring at Bennie with a look that made the hair on the back of his hair stand on end. Trying to ignore the look, he moved on to the driver. The driver said they were waiting on another party to join them but would move on. Bennie and Sternberg followed the car through town and until it disappeared from sight.

Bennie only wondered briefly about the piercing look from the woman in the back seat of the car and then dismissed it.

But his thoughts didn't stay off the woman with the cruel eyes for long. The next morning while reading a Houston newspaper, he learned that the infamous Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow had somehow slipped through a police dragnet and disappeared. Bennie knew immediately how lucky he and Sternberg were to be alive.



Little did he realize just how lucky. Later Bennie was in Huntsville at the jail when one of the jailers told him that Bonnie and Clyde's driver was in their jail. Would Bennie like to talk to him? When Bennie went to see the driver, he immediately knew that this was not the man he had met that night several months before on the side of a lonely country road.

The man confirmed that he was not with Bonnie and Clyde that night, but that he had heard the twosome talk about it.

Bonnie had said that she had had a submachine gun pointed straight at Bennie. The only reason she hadn't fired was that she was afraid of hitting Clyde.

Bennie Krueger was as tough a Texas Ranger as ever came down the pike, but he later related that when hearing this, his throat got dry and his knees became a little wobbly. He said he realized that he was one of the few officers to have ever confronted Bonnie and Clyde and lived to talk about it.



Other officers were not so fortunate. Two Highway Patrol motorcycle officers, E. B. Wheeler and H. D. Murphy, were patrolling north of Dallas when they came upon a car parked by the side of the road. Approaching the parked car, they were met by a hail of gunfire. Wheeler went down first, followed quickly by Murphy.

A nearby farmer named Schieffer witnessed the murders. He said that two men—Clyde Barrow and Henry Methvin—had shot the policemen. He said that one of the officers had moved his leg. The woman in the backseat—Bonnie—also saw the movement and had gotten out of the car with a shotgun in her hand. Standing over the officers, she proceeded to pump twenty-gauge shots into the officers.

Yes, indeed, Bennie Krueger was very lucky to be alive.

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