



County Prosecutor's Wife
Anna Hulen

Bio & Character Sketch of Anna Hulen

Born in 1890

Age in April, 1923: 33 Age at Death: ?

Age when picture was taken: (est) 40

Anna Hulen was a native New Yorker. Around the period of WWI, she finds herself in France where she meets and is courted by a young lawyer, serving in the Army – Rubey Hulen. The couple fell in love and were married in France at the war's end. Their wedding day was June 4, 1919, a little more than six months after the armistice was signed.

After the wedding, the couple returned to the United States and settled in Rubey's home state of Missouri, in the Boone County town of Centralia. There he resumed the legal practice he had begun before the start of the war.

Shortly afterwards, Rubey wins the election for Boone County Prosecutor. It is 1920. Anna, who has set up their home and been a dutiful housewife and homemaker, continues to care for her husband. Throughout their lives together, the Hulens will have no children. It is not known if this was by choice or the result of any physical issues with either one.

In the feature, Anna is seen on two strategic occasions. First, she is Rubey's sounding board during the "conversation on the porch" scene. As Rubey recounts the errors made in the investigation of James Scott after Regina Almstedt's assault, Anna listens dutifully and offers questions and insights that contribute to the conversation and help to move it forward. Afterwards, in an evening meal with Assistant Attorney General Henry Davis (formerly Rubey's commanding officer in WWI) during the George Barkwell trial, Anna plays the role of hostess and cook and once again, facilitates the conversation between her husband and Davis.

Anna outlived her husband, Rubey, who killed himself in 1956. At the University of Missouri Law School in Kansas City, Anna established a scholarship in Rubey's name which is still awarded to this day.

Rubey Hulen and Anna sit on their backyard patio. A pitcher of iced tea between them. She knits; he pumps the lever of an air gun and inserts a pellet.

HULEN

I'm afraid Davis is right. You hear it on the streets, see it in the newspapers. Laws be damned, courts be damned. They hanged Scott, sure, but he deserved lynching. And he deserved it because I'd already declared him guilty.

He aims and fires another shot across the lawn into the letter and plywood.

HULEN When push came to shove, I let myself be rushed to judgment, Anna. On evidence that now seems pretty damned thin.

He pumps the airgun again. Mrs. Hulen glances at him, then calmly knits as she speaks.

ANNA

Not buying it, mister. You turned the investigation over to the Chief because he had years of experience. When you had doubts about that first identification,

HULEN

Essentially, she managed to identify Scott as the man she'd already identified. Not deeply impressive. He fires the pellet gun again.

ANNA

And then there was that voice-only lineup, where the Almstedt girl couldn't even see the suspects. That seems pretty convincing.

HULEN

So I thought until Professor Ellwood, who teaches criminology at the university, told me about the Clever Hans effect. Now I'm not so sure.

ANNA

Clever Hans effect? You lost me.

HULEN There was a horse in Germany a few years ago that everybody thought could do math. Someone would ask what seven plus two is, and Hans would stomp his hoof exactly nine times.

SIDES

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ANNA

Impressive, but I'm still lost.

HULEN (V.O.)

Turns out Hans wasn't doing math; he was reading his owner's face. He stomped his hoof slowly until some little change in the man's expression showed he had reached the answer, and then he stopped. Hans fooled everybody, even his owner. Even he thought his horse was doing math.

ANNA

So you're saying that Regina didn't really know which voice belonged to Scott, but she could tell which voice the Chief wanted her to choose.

HULEN

That's it.

ANNA

So Ellwood thinks Regina was lying? She was just giving the Chief what he wanted? No sale, Mister. Nothing you've said about the girl or her parents fits with that theory. Hulen pumps the rifle again.

HULEN

That's not Ellwood's theory, Anna. Regina never intended to deceive anyone, any more than Hans the horse did. It was all subconscious. She was confused, nervous, unsure. She read the Chief's face and subconsciously let his reaction to Scott's voice affect her judgment.

Hulen loads and fires. Anna Hulen resumes her knitting.

ANNA

Oh, my! That subconscious mind again? Professor Elwood is full of the most ingenious theories. He told Mrs. Randall last week that radio will change everything. Soon there will be radio receivers in every home. People will stop reading newspapers, and the music halls will lie empty. He's the sort of man one should listen to very closely, if only to see whether he is awake or just dreaming out loud. Hulen smiles in spite of himself.

SIDES

HULEN Don't you dare, Anna Hulen. If you make me laugh now, I might just start crying. I need to talk this through, and I need to talk it through with the brightest, wisest woman on earth.

ANNA

But since she's not here, I'll try to do my best. On to the smell test, then?

HULEN

Yes, the smell test.

HULEN (V.O.)

One bottle contained oil of cedar and the other had formaldehyde in it. She picked formaldehyde—used in every corner of that dissection lab Mr. Scott cleaned that day. Ingenious, really.

Anna looks up from her knitting, needles pausing mid-stitch

ANNA

The Clever Hans effect? Professor Ellwood's subconscious at work?

Anna resumes her knitting.

HULEN

Maybe. Or maybe Regina simply chose the worst smell. Sweet cedar or putrid formaldehyde. Three days later, the formaldehyde scent triggered her memory of the attack. But here's what matters, Anna—three hours after, bloodhounds tracked the rapist's overalls from the bridge straight to Ollie Watson's cab stand. A bloodhound's nose is a thousand times sharper than ours. We overlooked that. Stupidly.

ANNA

The same Ollie Watson who's awaiting trial for raping that Huggard girl?

HULEN One and the same.

SIDES

ANNA

So what now?

HULEN Scott may have been the rapist. But Watson's just as likely. Justice demands I investigate both.

Anna's needles still. Her hands lower to her lap.

ANNA

Barkwell and that mob lynched an innocent man? And the Almstedt girl—her identification?

HULEN

Regina gets dragged through everything her father tried to protect her from. Worse.