



Henry Hampton "Hamp" Rowland

Bio & Character Sketch of Hamp' Rowland

1877 – 1930

Age in April, 1923: 46 Age at Death: 53
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Age when picture was taken: est. 45

Character Sketch

Henry Hampton "Hamp" Rowland was the cousin of Columbia Police Chief Ernest Rowland. At the time of James Scott's lynching, Hamp Rowland would have been about 46 years old. Hamp's father, Dr. Benjamin Franklin "DF" Rowland, was the younger brother of Chief Rowland's father, Joshua Marion Rowland.

Hamp was one of a handful of prominent figures in the lynch mob that staged an assault on the Boone County Jail, abducted James Scott from his jail cell, marched him through the streets of Columbia in the early morning hours of April 29, 1923, and lynched him from Stewart Bridge in front of a mob of 2,000 people. At any stage of the activities he participated in that evening, Hamp could have said "No," refused to engage and go home. He did not.

Whether Hamp Rowland was a card-carrying member of the KKK or not, we may never know. But his culpability for his participation in the lynching of a yet-to-be-tried Black man certainly does not make him an Altar Boy by any means.

Typical of many mobs, the leader (in this case, George Barkwell) has a number of loyal co-conspirators who can somehow justify their actions, regardless of any consequences. It was almost like Hamp felt totally bulletproof – an early century "Teflon Don" – and he acted with impunity as a result.

It might have made for a more interesting – and potentially more bloody – evening had Jailer Hall made good on his threat to "kill any man who walked through the door." Sometimes mobs have a way of backing down when they realize "their own lives are at risk."

SIDES

INT. BOOCHE'S POOL PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

Among the pool players: GEORGE BARKWELL (40, tall and muscular, an alpha male) and three sidekicks—HAMP (40, a scar bisecting one eye), RED (35, tattered overalls, built like a fireplug), and LOU (25, bow tie, tough-guy swagger).

FOSTER HAILEY (25, tall and muscular), a reporter for the Missourian, plays at an adjacent table. A smoker and sharp pool player, he blends in seamlessly, listening with a reporter's ear.

HAMP

Where were you and the crew workin' today George?

Barkwell lines up his shot.

BARKWELL

I was in the office all day 'Hamp. My girl, Gracey's been running the crew pouring sidewalks on Rollins Avenue at the university. Monday it's sewer lines on Locust Street.

(under his breath)

People's shit gotta go somewhere.

Barkwell spots a man at the other pool table. His demeanor shifts—predatory. He walks over.

BARKWELL

Hey. Remember me?

The PLAYER looks up. Terror flashes across his face.

PLAYER

Sure, you, you, you're Mr. Barkwell.

Barkwell's voice drops to menace.

BARKWELL

Then you got that ten dollars from the card game last weekend, right?

SIDES

The PLAYER tries humor first.

PLAYER

Wait, didn't I win that last hand??

Barkwell stares. The room dies. Men look away. The PLAYER's smile evaporates.

PLAYER

No. No, I haven't got it right now. But I can have it... Friday? How's Friday?

Barkwell's expression flips—a chilling smile.

BARKWELL

Friday will be fine and dandy. Ten or two fives. No ones.

A MAN WITH A CIGAR (50s, White, stout) sits in a chair along the wall, newspaper spread before him.

MAN WITH CIGAR (reading)

“Miss Almstedt then fought off the beast's assault with the tip of her umbrella. She reported that the assailant was a copper colored negro with a Charlie Chaplin mustache, and police began their investigation immediately. James Scott, a negro janitor at the state university, was arrested within hours, and the victim has identified him positively. A substantial reward is being offered to witnesses who can confirm that the negro was at or near the scene of the crime.”

BARKWELL

But no charges yet, huh?

MAN WITH CIGAR

Well, let me see. None mentioned, as I can see. No, none.

Lou misses an easy shot.

LOU

Shitola!

SIDES

HAMP

The courts move slow, George, let's face it. And that Hulen fellow never impressed me much. Looks like a weak stick, to me.

At the adjacent table, Foster Hailey listens, but keeps a poker face.

MAN WITH CIGAR

He's pretty green as prosecutors go, alright. And if the nigger can buy himself a smart lawyer, well-

HAMP

Not a sure thing, eh?

PLAYER

It just takes one man on a jury to block a conviction, you know.

BARKWELL

One man! Now that's a damn crime! Hey 'Hamp, the Chief's your cousin right?

Hamp nods. Barkwell repositions for another shot.

BARKWELL

You shoulda had him turn that boy over to us. We'd know what to do with him!

The men exchange a knowing, sinister laugh. Hailey smells a story brewing.

EXT. STEWART BRIDGE DECK – NIGHT

Hamp whistles shrilly, like calling a dog.

END FLASHBACK: