0. FISH TAKES THE BAIT - Story Preface

1. WHO WAS ALBERT FISH?

2. YOUTHFUL TRAUMA

3. THE SETUP

4. KIDNAP OF GRACE BUDD

5. FISH TAKES THE BAIT

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Walter Winchell, the popular newspaper journalist, was Detective King's biggest ally in 1934. Just about everyone (including Albert Fish) read his column, "On Broadway," published in the New York *Daily Mirror*.

Here's an excerpt from Winchell's November 2, 1934 column:

> *I checked on the Grace Budd mystery. She was eight when she was kidnapped about six years ago. And it is safe to tell you that the Dep't of Missing Persons will break the case, or they expect to, in four weeks. They are holding a "cokie"* [a cocaine addict] *now at Randall's Island, who is said to know most about the crime. Grace is supposed to have been done away with in lime, but another legend is that her skeleton is buried in a local spot.*

Winchell, of course, made up the story to help Detective King. But as events transpired over the next few weeks, his column proved to be amazingly prescient.

On November 12, Gracie's mother received a letter that would crack the case. Functionally illiterate, Delia gave the letter to her son. Edward's face turned white as he read:

> *On Sunday June the 3 - 1928 I called on you at 406 W 15 St. Brought you pot cheese - strawberries. We had lunch. Grace sat in my lap and kissed me. I made up my mind ... On the pretense of taking her to a party. You said Yes she could go. I took her to an empty house in Westchester I had already picked out. When we got there, I told her to remain outside. She picked wildflowers.*

The letter went on. It described what had happened to Grace. Only someone with a deranged mind could have written it.

But ... was the letter true? Was Gracie the victim of a crime so heinous it would make the final kitchen scenes in *Hannibal* seem mild by comparison?

Detective King was soon to learn the truth. The answer, to the questions, is "yes."

Hannibal Lecter, the fictional character, would have been shocked by Hamilton Albert Fish, his real-life model. And ... members of the New York City Police Department were about to learn how totally depraved a man can be.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/FISH-TAKES-THE-BAIT-Hannibal-Lecter-and-Albert-Fish

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/FISH-TAKES-THE-BAIT-Hannibal-Lecter-and-Albert-Fish

Media Stream

Gracie Budd's Mother, Delia Budd

Image of Delia Budd, described above, online courtesy Murderpedia.

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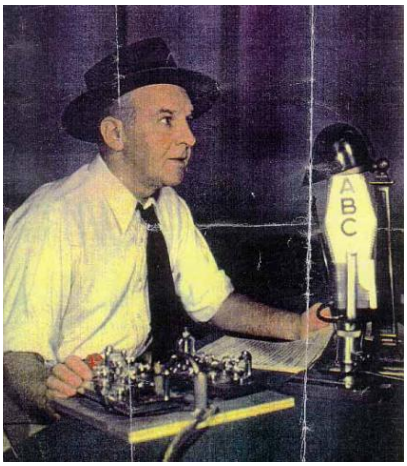

Walter Winchell

Image by Professor Thomas Perera, online via Professor S.O. Coutant (retired, Performing and Communication Arts, Pasadena City College).

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