

CRIPPLE ROBS S.F. POSTMAN OF MAIL SACK

Did It to Draw Notice to Dad's
Invention, Mother Says

By WILL STEVENS

For thirteen years, Clellan R. Pleasants Jr., paralyzed from the waist down, has sat in a wheelchair in a basement apartment on Twin Peaks and dreamed of the day when fame would touch his inventor father.

Yesterday, with his father dying in a hospital and fame as elusive as ever, Clellan Pleasants took matters into his own hands.

Using a home-made gun, he "robbed" a mailman of his sack of mail, forced him to sit in a chair for fifteen minutes and read a five-page letter about the father's invention, then allowed him to go unharmed.

LETTER GIVES CLUE.

Why did Clellan R. Pleasants Jr. do this?

Part of the answer was given in the letter:

"This is an age of sensationalism, not an age of reason."

The rest of the answer came from the 29 year old youth himself:

He wanted to help his father with his invention, a "fog-dispelling compound" designed for airports.

The sequence of events burst with dramatic suddenness yesterday but they were in the making for months while Pleasants lived in his wheelchair at 143 Lower Terrace.

There he sought and found



DESPAIR—Clellan R. Pleasants Jr. conceals his face with hand as he sits dejectedly in wheelchair at his home, 143 Lower Terrace, after his abortive "holdup" of a mailman. His mother said he did it to get publicity for father's invention.



PROBE—San Francisco Policeman Richard Reed, left, displays homemade pistol used in "holdup" of Postman Ray Manley as he gets Manley's version of the incident. Crippled Clellan R. Pleasants Jr., who held the gun on Manley and took his mailbag, was given a psychiatric examination and released.

seclusion, not even allowing himself to be taken outside where the panorama of the city's skyline was arrayed. All he did was study, reading every scientific book on which he could lay his hands.

Some day, he was convinced, the world outside the small rooms in which he lived would learn of Hygotrol, his father's creation.

FATHER STRICKEN.

Two weeks ago his father, in final stages of tuberculosis, was taken to San Francisco Hospital to die. Yesterday the son staged the "holdup."

In the ensuing minutes police cars with screaming sirens sped to the basement apartment to answer an emergency call of

mail to attract attention to his father's invention—to bring the police out here and the reporters."

Manley partially confirmed this.

"He pointed this strange looking gun at me," said Manley, who lives at 661 Alvarado Street. "Neighbors said he had a letter to mail, so I was going to pick it up. When I come in—there's the gun. He told me to sit down, and handed me a long letter, addressed 'To Whom It May Concern. It was all about his father's invention. He told me to read it."

"Then he told me that I'd have to leave my mail there,

because he wanted the police to come out, which wouldn't mean reporters, which would mean publicity for his father's invention. Finally, he let me go—and I called the cops."

Police, after Pleasants gave them his own version, looked at each other.

"He seems all right to me," said one.

"Just the same," another policeman said, "we have to send him out to the psychopathic ward for observation. What else can you do in a case like this?"

Pleasants was taken there. Police did not place any charge against him. A post office inspector, observing that Manley had retrieved his bag of mail and was delivering it, shrugged his shoulders when asked if the case would be turned over to the United States attorney's office.

"They're taking the guy to psychopathic," he said, by way of explanation, and departed.

An hour and a half later, doctors sent young Pleasants home. As far as police were concerned, that seemed to be it. There was no arrest on the record—and the doctors obviously did not think Pleasants was psychopathic.

In the background was twenty years of planning by Pleasants Sr. in an effort to get his invention on the market.

SECRET TESTS.

As early as 1936, the fog-dispelling chemical was given secret Army tests, which later were termed successful. Golden Gate channel was cleared over an area of sixteen square miles in a recorded and witnessed demonstration. After that, nothing happened.

Pleasants Sr. formed a corporation—but there were no takers. In 1949, another demonstration cleared Sacramento Airport of 50 per cent of fog. But marketing the invention was something else.

Two weeks ago, the father was hospitalized in a dying condition. For another two weeks his son—who suffered a spinal injury in his youth—brooded over what should be done next—and then came up with his answer.