

“Ride or Die”

By: Vimbai Ndlovu

Bonnie Parker and Clyde Champion Barrow were one of the most famous pairs of American criminals during the Great Depression. They were the ones responsible for a 21-month crime spree from 1932-1934.

Clyde had always been a troublesome fellow. Starting from age 17, he was arrested for stealing a rental car. As he got older, he got into more serious crimes like robbing stores and stealing cars. On January 5, 1930, he met Bonnie Parker through a mutual friend and the two fell in love. Sadly, their romance was put to a halt when Clyde got arrested and was sent to Eastham Prison for auto theft. While in prison, Clyde was repeatedly sexually assaulted, being fed up, he bashed his tormentor in the head with a pipe, crushing his skull and killing the inmate. This led to Clyde getting a life sentence, but by using the weapon Bonnie smuggled to him, he escaped and the two ran off and started their crime streak.

After escaping, their crime streak started and their goal was to collect enough money and firepower to raid against Eastham Prison. Their first attempt to steal firearms failed, and Bonnie ended up in jail for a few months. While Bonnie was in jail, Clyde helped with a robbery in Hillsboro. Even though he was the getaway driver, the store owner's wife was able to identify Clyde from photographs the police showed her. On another occasion when Clyde was out getting drunk with a friend, Sheriff C.G Maxwell and Deputy Eugene C. Moore approached them in the parking lot and tried confronting Clyde. This ended with Moore being shot dead and Maxwell being fatally wounded.

Being on the run from officers and needing more allies, the gang gained new members. In 1933, Buck and Blanche Barrow, Clyde's brother and sister-in-law, joined the gang. In July, 1933, while the gang was staying low and hiding from police, they checked into the Red Crown Tourist Court. During their stay there, other guests and the hotel and staff found them to be suspicious. One day, when Barrow and Jones went out to buy some food, the druggist at the store found them suspicious and called the police. Sheriff Coffey shot Buck and nearly blinded Blanche.

From 1932-1934, the couple committed 13 murders and several burglaries and robberies. Unfortunately, on May 23, 1934, the two passed away. After being hunted down by police for years, they were ambushed and shot by officers near a highway in Sailes, Louisiana.