

# lobbying

WITH THE FIRST-NIGHTER

## The Crime of Martin Flavin

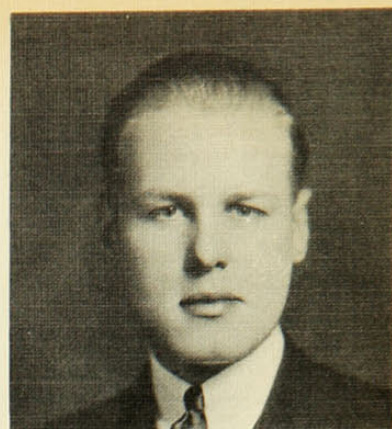
Both the story and Mummers production of "Criminal Code" of Friday, December eighth, had to do with murder under extenuating circumstances. That the company should have displayed the temerity to slush such tripe into the faces of a university audience surprises your old First-Nighter no less than the fact that the customers "took it."

It was more the director's labors than Mr. Flavin's that held the spectators in their seats after the first two or three scenes. It appeared that the audience took to heart the four-times repeated manuscript admonition: "Don't let those bastards get your goat," and sat and sat. At this point the First-Nighter presumes to deplore the necessity for the individual effort of the director, for the company has as its purpose the development of student ability in the theatre arts rather than the shallow idea of presenting near-professional exhibits.

Plot entanglements of "Criminal Code" having to do with a sex-starved homicide lead to an experiment by Dr. Reinwulf (Anatole Kersanoff) to reconstruct the morale of Robert Graham (Louis Levy). The Warden's daughter does the trick in adherence to Freudian doctrine. A mix-up over the murder



LOUIS LEVY



M R . H U N T E R



M I S S B R I T T E N

of the Warden's clerk ends with Graham in solitary confinement from which he escapes by killing Police Captain Gleason (Joseph Berning). This bit of blood-letting happens at the moment that Graham is to be paroled. So the fellow ruins his future and all the cottage-by-a-water-fall plans of the Warden's daughter.

The talent of Mr. Levy, veteran Mummer, suffered exquisite torture under the strain of weak dialog. The scene with the Warden (Stanley Waxman) in which the latter pleads with Mr. Levy to divulge the clerk's murderer's identity, was the high-spot of Mr. Levy's work. This one big moment is compensation enough for enduring all that goes before and after. Mr. Waxman, well on the way to topping all Mummers stars, did a well-studied interpretation of the politico-jurist warden and covered his miserable lines. Yet his hair got into the First-Nighter's teeth like mad.

Woodrow Hunter earned the tinsel laurel wreath by shouting his fool head off as the bumptious political boss. John Sinn enjoyed a well-conceived role and did a commendable job of it. His weird tales of prison-breaks and such were provokingly interesting, were told in a provokingly attractive manner, and, most provoking of all, were never finished. This role was the playwreck's one bid for fame.

Mr. Kersanoff, with his natural and appropriate accent, provided the one spark of cheerfulness. His refreshing overseas mannerisms and verbal inflection were the most sincere elements in the action of the play.

The neglected women's parts, the Warden's sister by Marguerite Lotspiech and the hotcha daughter by Laurette Fillebrandt. Nordic Miss Lotspiech, a capable performer, was carelessly cast in a part obviously designed for a sanguine, jittery, screeching bundle of nerves, but she carried it off well enough. Miss Fillebrandt did heroically with her mediocre role.

Lorna Doone Newman added a single relieving touch of Police Gazette humor to the extraneous prologue.

Besides the calibre of work tabulated by your possibly too hypercritical First-Nighter, in the above airings, there are the rest of the cast to mention. And that, briefly: Their acting just about came up to the level of the play.

M. H. B.