

"Denver Spiderman of Moncrieff Place"

In Denver in the Fall of 1941 Philip Peters bumped into an old acquaintance, Mathew Cornish. Cornish and Peters had spent many evenings together, years before, in a Mandolin Club which often met at Peters' home on Moncrieff Place. This evening in 1941, Cornish, who was close to starving and living on the street, asked Peters for money. Peters politely declined.

Unbeknownst to Philip Peters, Mathew Cornish followed him home that night. Cornish waited and watched the house on Moncrieff Place, until Philip left to visit his wife, who was in the hospital after breaking her hip. In Peters' absence, Cornish snuck into the house. Inside, he found food, and in the upstairs bedroom closet found a small opening the size of two cigar boxes that led to a small attic space. Desperate for shelter, he took up residence in the tiny attic.

Weeks passed. Cornish snuck downstairs when Peters was away for food and water, and would sometimes shadow Peters from room to room without his knowledge...watching him. One afternoon, thinking that Peters had left for the hospital, Cornish crept downstairs, without taking much care to be quiet. However, Peters was not away. He was taking a nap on the sofa when he was awakened by noises in the kitchen. When he went to investigate, he found Cornish at the refrigerator gobbling food! The two men scuffled, and ultimately Mathew Cornish murdered his old friend Philip Peters by beating him to death with a fire iron and the butt of a pistol. With Peters' bloody body lying dead on the floor, Cornish

calmly went upstairs and climbed back through the tiny opening into his tomblike attic home.

Later that day, Philip Peters' body was discovered. Denver Police searched the house, even finding the tiny opening to the attic, but assumed it was permanently sealed when they were unable to push it open. Little did they know, the reason it would not open, was because Mathew Cornish was sitting on top of it! Peters' murder remained unsolved.

Peters' wife returned home from her hospital stay in the wake of her husband's murder. But, things were never quiet at the house on Moncrieff Place. Mrs. Peters and her housekeeper called police numerous times claiming to see shadows and hear the sounds of someone in the house. After searching the home many times, Denver Police decided that the 70-year-old Mrs. Peters was insane from old age and the shock of her husband's death. They stopped responding. Afraid that the house was haunted, Mrs. Peters' housekeeper quit, and Mrs. Peters went to live with her son.

The house sat "empty". Children dared each other to go in. Neighbors saw strange shadows. One woman even screamed and ran after seeing "the face of a ghost" in one of the upper windows. However, it wasn't until July 30, 1942 that a Denver Police Patrol spotted long pale skeleton-like fingers pulling back a curtain! Police rushed in, to find Cornish's feet sticking out of the tiny opening leading to the attic! Cornish confessed to killing Philip Peters. Police and Denver newspapers, shocked at the coffin-like attic filled with spider webs where Cornish had lived for almost a year, dubbed him the "Denver Spiderman of Moncrieff Place".