



District  
Attorney

# Character Sketch of Ruby Hulen

July 9, 1891 – July 7, 1956

Age in April, 1923: 32    Age at Death: 65

Age when picture was taken: (est) 32

Ruby Mosely Hulen was born to John and Lucy Hulen – early settlers of Boone County – on July 9, 1891 in the town of Hallsville, Missouri. After graduating from the Kansas City School of Law in 1914, he began to practice in 1916 at age 25.

Soon after, he began service in the Army and served in France from 1917 until 1919. His commanding officer was Henry Davis, who would later become the Assistant Attorney General for Missouri and Hulen's co-counsel for the prosecution of George Barkwell's murder trial.

Before leaving France, Hulen marries Anna English in Paris on June 4, 1919. She was born in New York. Anna was 29 and Ruby was almost 28. Anna was in France for an unknown reason. Together they had no children. Upon returning to the United States, the Hulens made their home in Centralia where Hulen resumed his private legal practice.

In 1920, Hulen was elected to his first of two, two-year terms as the District Attorney for Boone County. He beat the incumbent DA, George Starrett to gain the post; Starrett would serve as one of George Barkwell's lawyers. After serving as DA, Hulen then becomes the legal counsel for the Missouri Farmers Assn., but he also continues to support party politics. He managed a successful Senate campaign and in the early 1940s when it appeared the federal courts might force the integration of the Law School at The University of Missouri, Hulen helped in a small way to ensure that a "separate but equal" school was created at Lincoln University.

In August 1943, Hulen was appointed to the federal bench in St. Louis where he presided until 1956. In 1950 Hulen issued an injunction that required the city of St Louis to open its municipal pools to swimmers of all races. He suggested that racial exclusion – even if another truly equal pool were provided – might still violate the Constitution.

In April 1956, Judge Hulen was awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the Law Alumni Assn. of The University of Missouri. The award was made – certainly coincidentally – on Saturday, April 28, 1956 – exactly 33 years to the day that James Scott was taken from his jail cell while Hulen and five other armed men watched.

On July 7, 1956, Judge Ruby Hulen was found in his back yard by his gardener with a gun shot wound to his left temple. He was rushed to a hospital and died four hours later. An inquest into the cause of Judge Hulen's death was inconclusive as to whether the gunshot was accidental or the result of a suicide.



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## ***Character Sketch***

Boone County Prosecutor Ruby Hulen thought he had a slam dunk – but he later found out that “he” was the one sitting in a “dunking booth.”

After Chief Rowland quickly completed the investigation into Regina’s rape, Hulen thought the solid evidence that was gathered was easily more than enough to convict Scott. The identifications by both the victim and the informant were solid and – he felt – irrefutable.

Hulen was truly heartbroken that he was not able to save Scott from the mob. He knew it wasn’t “his” fault though, since “he” was not in charge of the jail. The sounds of James’ pleas to him and the other five men in the Jailer’s Kitchen will haunt him for the rest of his life.

But Hulen knows that what is in the past is just that, “the past.” So, he needs to both correct the errors of Rowland’s investigation if needed and convict the men who took the law into their own hands.

Once Hulen is met with Regina’s re-identification of Ollie Watson, Hulen has to make the biggest decision of his life. Does he put Regina through a trial in which Ollie Watson’s lawyer will rip her apart on the witness stand because she initially ID’d a different man, or does he let Watson be tried and convicted for raping Ernestine Huggard and hope his jail sentence satisfies the Almstedt’s – all this leaving the indictment of James Scott tarnishing he and his family’s reputation.

In the trial of George Barkwell, it was fairly obvious that the Prosecution brought a knife to a gun fight. Barkwell’s “dream team” of defense lawyers – with the assistance of favorable rulings by Judge Gantt – easily drove the jury to a Not Guilty finding. Between Hulen’s indictment and the Tribune’s incitement, followed by the national admonishment of Columbia, Starrett’s statement to a “guilty jury” about “casting the first stone” was really all that was needed to secure a favorable verdict for the defense. Because of his previous involvement in the Almstedt rape case that greatly influenced the Barkwell murder case, Hulen should have recused himself, and allowed Scott’s likely innocence to be brought forward in the trial. It may not have had an effect on the verdict, but at least it would have made the jurors refuse to convict Barkwell for murdering an *innocent* man. Hulen should have been able to figure this out – maybe he did. But hubris, re-election and future political aspirations probably all got in the way. And maybe he finally got that monkey off his back in July of 1956.