

# S CAREER OF SLAIN FILM MAN TOLD

## Producer Started Clara Bow in Movies, Says Widow

Nat Ross, the 36-year-old former film producer slain in a rag factory Monday night, started Clara Bow in pictures, once directed Jack Holt and was a roommate of Irving Thalberg when he and Thalberg were just getting a start in the movies.

And when he was shot and killed he had in his pocket a contract to go back to work as a producer-director but had delayed his comeback in order to speed a factory national defense order for wiping rags for battleships....

These and other intimate details of Ross' life were disclosed for the first time today by his widow, the former Audrene Brier of the films, in an exclusive interview as a coroner's jury prepared to hold an inquest into the slaying.

### 'KINDEST MAN'

"He was the kindest man I ever knew—a man who helped hundreds get their start and who often said that there is good in everyone if only you can bring it out," the tragedy-saddened widow sobbed today in the home of a friend in Beverly Hills.

"He always said that doing harm to anyone would never help anything....that things take people on the wrong track sometimes and you can always make them see the right way if you try. "He often remarked that violence never accomplished anything."

Ross was shot and killed by Maurice L. "Mike" Briggs, 25, who police quoted as saying, "I killed him because he was going out with my wife."

Mrs. Briggs indignantly denied the accusation.

### CONFIDENCE IN MATE

Mrs. Ross likewise expressed fullest confidence in her husband's ability and ambition. She had the rag plant at Seventeenth street and Broadway and pleaded to get Briggs his first job and had rehired Briggs once after the latter was discharged.

"He just felt that those people were unfortunate and wanted to help them," Mrs. Ross declared.

She met Ross nine years ago when he was a director at the old Christie studios and she was just starting her film career.

"We celebrated our fifth wedding anniversary Feb. 12," she said.

She said Ross was born in San Francisco but the family moved to New York when he was a child.

"He got his first job at 13 when he walked into the office of Stanley Nasbaum, theater chain owner, and declared, 'Mr. Nasbaum, you need someone like me to go into your theaters and report back to you what the general public, like me, thinks of them.'"

"My husband said he got a job and an office and was so scared he just sat around pushing buttons. But he finally got to be general manager and left to become secretary to Carl Laemmle sr., Universal president.

"After he learned the picture business Mr. Laemmle made him a director and Irving Thalberg, with whom my husband was sharing an apartment, took his job as Mr. Laemmle's secretary.

"He was at Universal for 15 years—he started Clara Bow on her first picture—and later left to become a producer on his own.

### SIGNS UP HOLT

"He signed Jack Holt and went back to Universal.

"Then he went to England and made two pictures—I played the second lead in one of them—and returned to Hollywood and signed Constance Bennett to do a series of pictures which were not completed.

"He had to stop his picture work to take care of his interests downtown but had a contract to go back March 1 as a producer-director. He delayed going back so that he would be able to finish the national defense order."

Mrs. Ross, who has been under a physician's care since the tragedy, recalled that one time before their marriage Ross asked her to play the lead in a two-reel picture he was about to make.

"But I told him to get Betty Grable, she was better than I was—and she was, too."

Funeral services for Ross will be held at the Home of Peace Chapel after the inquest late today.

## TELL SLAYING DETAILS



Maurice Briggs, who killed Nat Ross, film producer, is shown in jail today while Mrs. Ross revealed for the first time details of the producer's career. She said he introduced Clara Bow to films and had a contract to resume film work.



Joseph Bizenberg, at left, cousin of the slain man, and Robert Hartman, show how Ross was slain at the rag factory where he was rushing defense orders for battleship wiping rags. Briggs said he was going out with Mrs. Briggs, which she indignantly denied.