

THE
GEORGE REEVES
NEWS ARTICLES
FILE

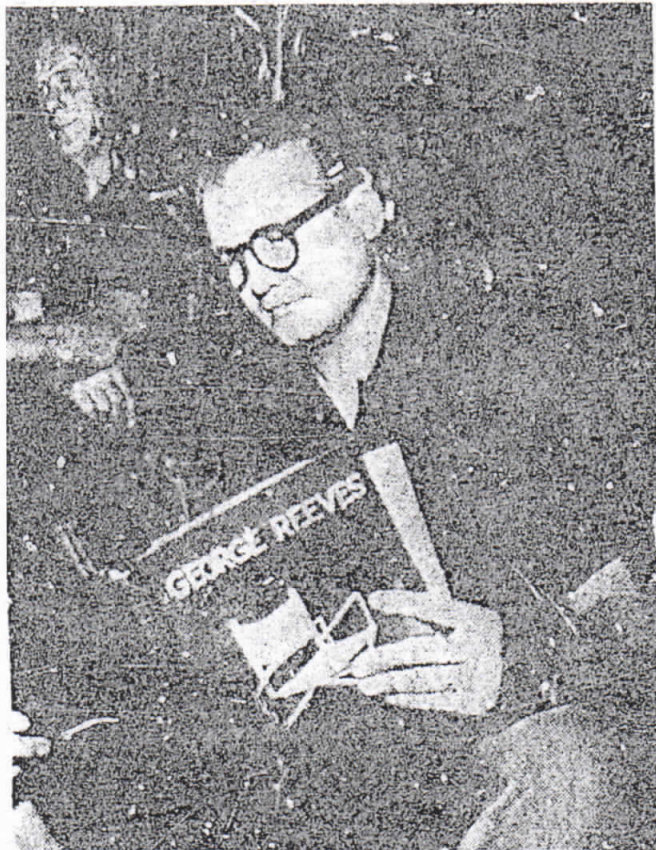
COLLECTED BY
LOU KOZA

JUNE 17, 1959
(events of June 16th)

Fed Up With Role

TV'S SUPERMAN

KILLS HIMSELF



—AP PHOTO

LAST YEAR, REEVES DIRECTED TV FILMS
He wanted to avoid "bottleneck" of type-casting.



—MIRROR NEWS Photo

RIP VAN RONKEL AND HIS WIFE CAROL
They say Reeves was unhappy over the Superman tag.

'Superman's' Death Rocks Young Fans

6-17-59 MIRROR-NEWS

Parents Face Problem: 'What Do We Say About His Suicide?'

BY PAUL WEEKS, Staff Writer

"What do I tell my children?"

That was the question facing thousands of parents, whose kiddies knew George Reeves as TV's Superman, their "indestructible" idol.

Children old enough to read told younger ones that Superman had shot himself to death early yesterday. There had never been another Superman. Reeves played it 8 years.

What should parents tell their children if they ask?

"The truth, of course," one mother said. "Tell them that Superman is not dead."

"Reeves, the actor," she suggested, "merely played Superman — much as your children play Superman. He wasn't really Superman. Play-acting children, too, know they're not really Superman, even while pretending they are."

Jungle of TV

Some of Reeves' friends blamed "the jungle of Hollywood and TV" for his suicide. As an actor, he was so typed with the role he couldn't get another acting job.

He has been unemployed since completion of the 103-film series more than a year and a half ago.

However, he wasn't broke. Arthur Weissman, business manager for the actor, declared:

"George received no residuals from re-runs of his first 25 films but under his contract he did from the remaining ones. It's hard to estimate his income since the last film he made two years ago, but at that time he was making about \$5,000 a week."

Income High

Asked to estimate Reeves' income since then, Weissman said he could not. But when pressed as to whether it was more than \$1,000 a month, Weissman replied, "It was well in excess of that."

Reeves began filming the series on the old RKO lot in Culver City on July 30, 1951.

"His face looked closest to the character in the comic strip," it was explained by the producers, Bernard Lubar and Robert Maxwell, who tested more than 200 applicants.

Shortly after the series started, Reeves fell from a ladder on the set. He was quickly whisked away and the incident was hushed up — it would never do for "Superman's" vulnerability to human mishaps to become known.

The actor, 45, had been in show business 27 years.

He was born in Woodstock, Ia., the son of a druggist, and was brought to California as a baby.

At Pasadena Playhouse

Educated in Pasadena schools, he showed early interest in dramatics, and enrolled at the Pasadena Playhouse.

Mannie Pineda, Pasadena sports writer who once sparred with Reeves in the ring, said today:

"He was a great ring prospect in 1932 and entered the Golden Gloves. But at the last minute, his mother

Los Angeles
Mirror News
Wednesday
June 17, 1959

Lou Koza
Collection

fact minute, his mother wouldn't let him fight. She was afraid he'd get banged up and ruin his acting career."

Married in 1941

Reeves was married to Ellnora Needles, who also was a student at the Pasadena Playhouse, from 1941 to 1949, when they were divorced.

Lenore Lemmon, the former New York showgirl whom Reeves was to marry Friday in Mexico City and who heard the fatal shot in his home, sobbed today:

"It was the Hollywood system which drove him to kill himself."

Returns to Home

Miss Lemmon broke her silence after returning from a private invasion of her fiancé's sealed home at 1579 Benedict Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills. She had gone there to get some of her clothes and to recover a pet cat.

Miss Lemmon said she went to the house yesterday and found that Weissman, who had been named administrator of Reeves' estate, said he was going to change the locks on the house.

Weissman explained that the house had been ordered sealed by the county administrator.

New Series for TV

He said Miss Lemmon and Mrs. Dan Dailey entered the house illegally and that the coroner's office and police advised him to change the locks on the house because he would be responsible for its contents.

Weissman, an old friend, business associate and personal manager of the actor,

Turn to Page 4, Column 2

'Superman's' Death Blamed on 'Jungle'

Continued from First Page — "He didn't even say good-bye. We didn't have any beef. He just went upstairs and shot himself. It was that simple. "It was just that his heart was broken because he couldn't get a job and bring me the things he wanted to."

Mother Due Here

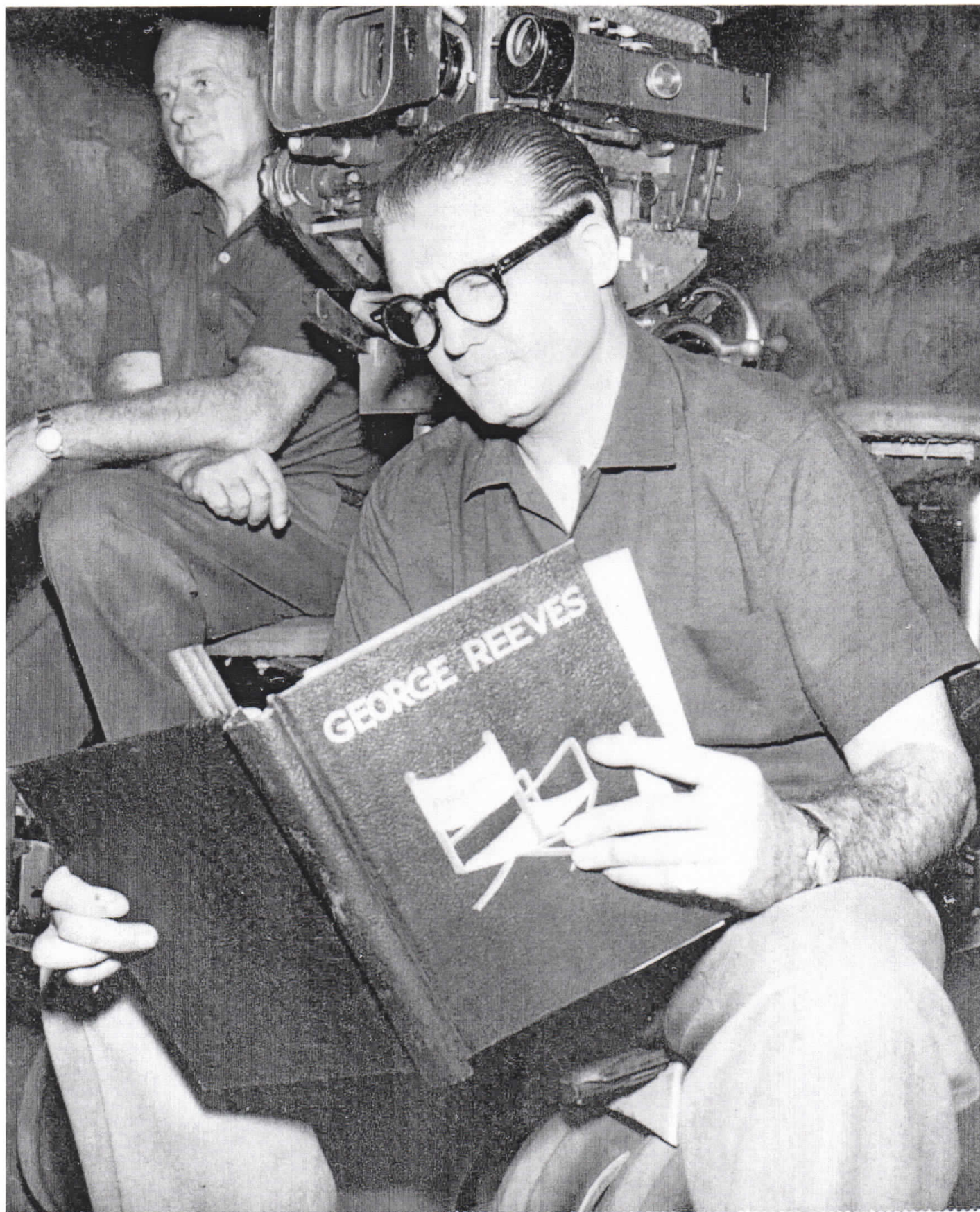
Reeves' mother, Mrs. Helen Bessolo of Galesburg, Ill., is flying here tomorrow for services which will be held Friday under direction of Gates, Kingley & Gates, West Los Angeles. Pallbearers will be Alan Ladd, Gig Young, Bill Treadwell, Ken Hansen, Damien

'Diamonds, Moonbeams'

"He wanted to bring me the moon and diamonds and moonbeams and he just couldn't do it because he just couldn't get a job."



SADDENED OVER THE DEATH OF HIS HERO, SUPERMAN **END** Charley Kephart, 7, of 2225 Berkeley Ave. doesn't know what to make of it.



(ADVANCE FOR USE WITH BOB THOMAS COLUMN IN PMS OF FRIDAY, JUNE 13)

(LAI-June 12) HOLLYWOOD, June 13--HE'S A DIRECTOR NOW--George Reeves, who has been an actor for 26 years, isn't spending his time in front of the cameras these days. He's a director instead. He played the part of Superman so long that producers wouldn't give him a job acting. So-- George took over as director on the last 13 Superman segments. "Now I'm enthused about doing more," George said and added he's forming a production company. (AP Wirephoto)(see Thomas column)(mw50400stu) 1958

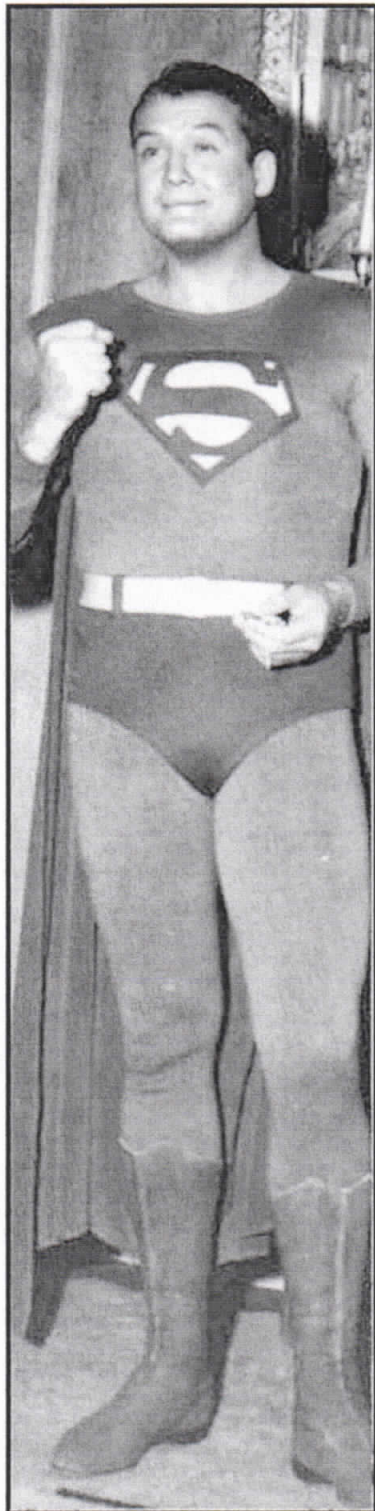


AP
WIREPHOTO

(MH2)Miami, Fla., June 16--"SUPERMAN" AND FIANCEE--George Reeves, known for his television role as "Superman" and his fiancée Lenore Lemmon are shown as they appeared here April 30. Reeves was found dead today in his Hollywood, Calif., home. Police said his death was apparently a result of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.(AP Wirephoto)(hlv31820Her)1959

'Superman' Suicide as Wedding Day Nears

(Another photo on Page 3)



IN ROLE of "Superman," George Reeves thrilled many youngsters.

Superman—Actor George Reeves, 45—shot and killed himself in his Benedict Canyon home early yesterday, leaving his friends shocked and puzzled and a worldful of children desolate.

The TV "man of steel" fired a Luger pistol bullet into his brain—apparently on impulse, a few moments after apologizing for peevish discourtesies to a late-calling couple.

Why?

No answer occurred to Leonore Lemmon, 35, former "madcap playgirl of New York society," whom Reeves was to have married in Mexico City next Friday.

'X-RAY VISION'

In fun, but with an accuracy as eerie as if she possessed Superman's "x-ray vision," Miss Lemmon described Reeves' suicide to the callers, Mrs. Carol Van Ronkel, 33, and William (Bud) Bliss, 45, while the act was in progress.

Appalled when she learned that her vision in jest had come true, Miss Lemmon collapsed and was placed under sedatives.

Screenwriter Rip Van Ronkel, not present at the time, advanced the theory that Reeves was heart-broken because he was "typed as Superman" and could get no other acting jobs.

In New York Mrs. Arthur K. Lemmon, mother of Reeves' fiancée, recalled the actor was injured in an automobile accident April 8, and believed this may have had something to do with his act.

But Mrs. Van Ronkel, an old friend of Reeves, said:

"The truth is that Superman was a pussycat. All who knew him, men and women, wanted to cuddle and care for him. He was like a puppy dog, happy one minute and worried sick the next."

This view was shared by

Turn to Page 15, Cols. 2-6

'Superman': Asked Late Callers to Leave

From Page One

Another old friend, Mrs. Gwen Dailey, wife of Dan Dailey, the actor, who said: "George and Leonore were supposed to have come to our Chatsworth home for a swim yesterday (Monday). He called me and said they couldn't make it, but told me:

"At last I know exactly what I'm doing and where I'm going, and I've never been so happy."

Detective Sgt. V. A. Peterson said police were informed Reeves had retired at his 1579 Benedict Canyon home when Mrs. Van Ronkel, who lives nearby at 2300 Benedict Canyon, telephoned that she and Bliss would like to "come over for a few minutes."

A house guest, Robert (Bobbie) Condon, New York writer, 45, was preparing for bed, but Miss Lemmon, also a guest, answered the telephone and invited Mrs. Van Ronkel and Bliss to come along.

They arrived a few minutes after 1 a. m., Sgt. Peterson reported, and shortly afterward Reeves came downstairs in a dressing robe and remonstrated with them for calling "at this ungodly hour."

Peterson quoted Bliss, a heating equipment manufacturer, as saying Reeves asked Mrs. Van Ronkel to leave, and that:

"I apologized to him, and he seemed to cool off. He apologized to both Carol and myself, then excused himself and went upstairs."

JEST

At this, Miss Lemman, accustomed to Reeves' mercurial changes of mood from anger or elation to abject depression, remarked jokingly:

"Well, he's probably going to kill himself now."

Peterson said Miss Lemmon knew Reeves kept a pistol in a nightstand at his bedside, and, on hearing sounds from above, added to the jest with: "See? He's opening the drawer now . . ."

The sound of a shot followed.

Bliss and Condon rushed upstairs and found Reeves sprawled across his bed, the

Luger at hand and a bullet wound in his right temple. Miss Lemmon said, "George couldn't exist in this kind of a world. That's why he killed himself. He died of a broken heart."

"From being Superman he couldn't get a job. He had been Superman on TV for eight years. A year and a half ago they stopped making them.

"George hadn't had a job since. His dignity was shattered. He was typed, and it was 'Sorry, George. We think you're great, George, but we can't use you.'"

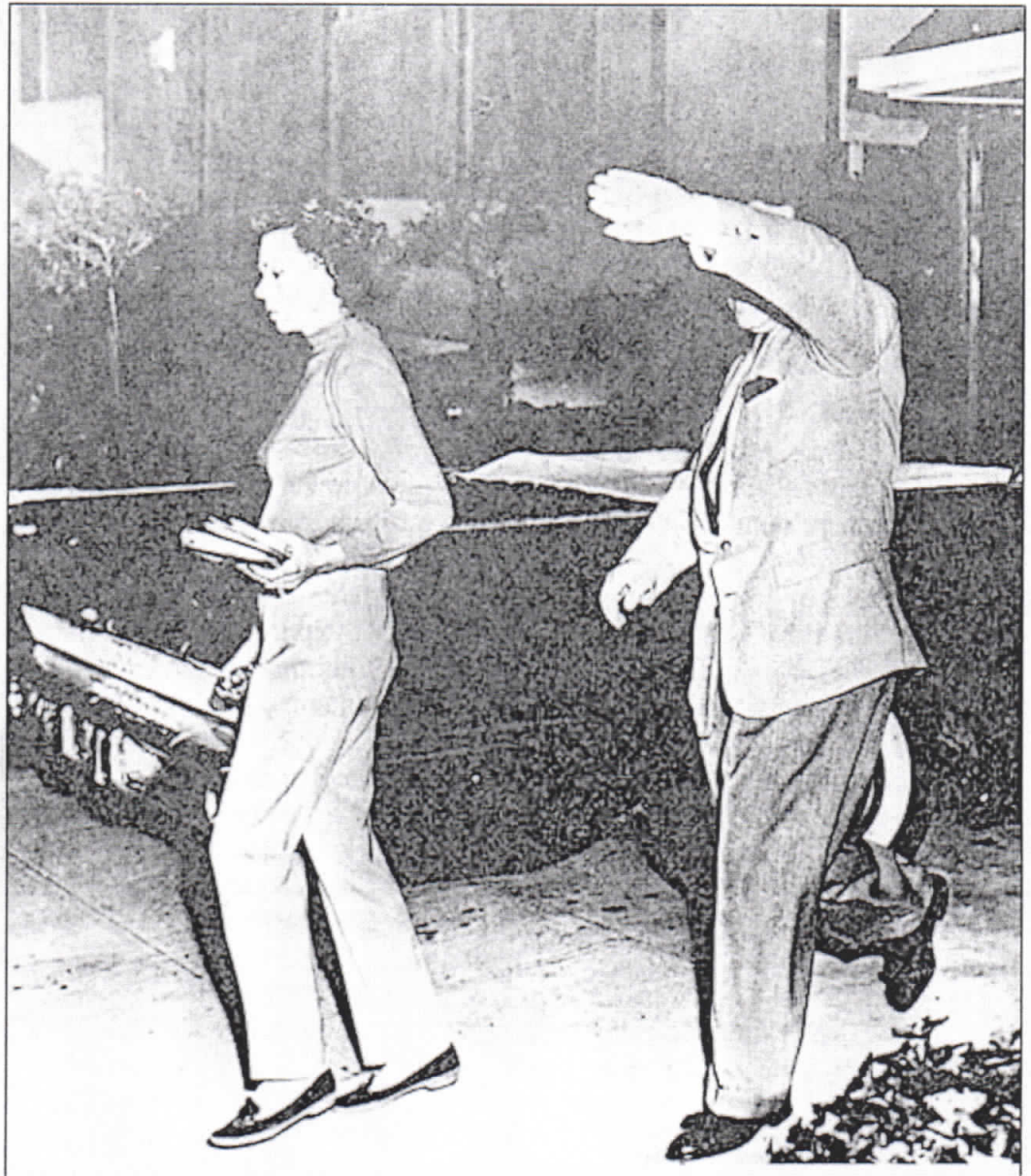
"He had been depressed for months and months, but he hid it. He was full of chuckles . . ."

Reeves became TV's "Superman" eight years ago and played the role in more than

100 television films which are still playing all over the world.

Friends said he received "residual payments" from

showing of the Superman films, but that he has found no work as an actor beyond filming of the series for more than a year ago.



Lenore Lemmon and unidentified man leaving the home of George Reeves

Man could be either William Bliss or Robert Condon
Image added

'Superman' Killed By Broken Heart

Former New York actress Leonore Lemmon, 35, whose plans to wed George (Superman) Reeves, 45, were shattered when he shot and killed himself, regained her composure sufficiently today to discuss motives behind the suicide.

"George just couldn't exist in this kind of world," Miss Lemmon said. "That's why he killed himself."

"He died of a broken heart. He was the sweetest gentlest, most tender man. I can't begin to tell you.

105 SUPERMAN FILMS

"He was known as Superman to children everywhere. He was beautiful with children. But from being Superman, he couldn't get a job. What I mean is this—he had been Superman on TV for eight years. He made 105 Superman pictures. A year and a half ago, they stopped making them. They had enough.

"George hadn't had a job since then. His dignity was shattered. He was typed, and it was 'sorry, George, we think you're great, George, but we can't use you.'"

"You don't know what kind of business this is. This is a jungle. That's it. A slap on the back. You're a good guy. But, no more than that.

"George hadn't had a job pressed for months and months. Normally, he hid it. He was full of chuckles.

"He wasn't in financial trouble. He had enough money. But he wanted to work."

MARRIAGE NEAR

Miss Lemmon, who first met Reeves last October, was one of four friends present in the living room of Reeves' home at 1579 Benedict Canyon dr. early yesterday when he went upstairs to a second-story bedroom and shot himself.

Reeves and Miss Lemmon were to have been married Friday in Tijuana.

The one-time actress said that in addition to Reeves' dependency over lack of work he was also bothered by the unwelcome attentions of another woman.

"But I don't want to talk about her," Miss Lemmon explained. "She had been harassing him. I can't tell you who she was."

Funeral arrangements for the handsome, jut-jawed Reeves, whose real name was George L. Bessolo, are pending the arrival here of his mother, Mrs. Helen Bessolo, from her home in Galesburg, Ill.

Lou Koza Collection



—Associated Press Wirephoto

'SUPERMAN' AND FIANCEE ON A RECENT DINNER DATE

Today Leonore Lemmon Tells Why George Reeves Killed Himself: 'He Died of a Broken Heart. He Couldn't Exist in This Kind of World'

Superman Kills Himself; Fiancee Called the Shot

Hollywood, June 16 (AP)—George Reeves, depressed because he could find no acting jobs after starring as TV's Superman, killed himself early today, seconds after his fiancee, cafe socialite Lenore Lemmon, predicted his death.

The end of Reeves' 27-year dramatic career was as weird as any scene he had played on the movie or television screen. Police Sgt. V.A. Peterson gave this account.

Reeves and his house guests, Miss Lemmon, 38, and writer Robert Condon, 45 had retired to their respective bedrooms late last night. About 2:30 A.M., two friends, William Bliss and Mrs. Carol Van Ronkle, dropped by and awakened them.

Reeves argued with Bliss over the lateness of the hour, then apologized and said, "I'm tired. I'm going to bed." He disappeared upstairs.

Find No Messages

Miss Lemmon, who planned to marry the 45-year-old actor in Tijuana, Mexico, Friday, blurted, "He's going to shoot himself."

The others treated her remark as a joke, but she uncannily continued, "He's opening a drawer to get the gun."

Then a shot was heard.

"See there -- I told you!" Miss Lemmon exclaimed.

Reeves' nude body was found on his bed, a bullet from a .30 caliber Luger pistol in his temple. No note was found.

Why did he do it?
"Because he was known as Superman to 9 million children, but he couldn't get a job," Miss Lemmon said.

"They stopped shooting the series a year and a half ago. They had 105 chapters finished and they can show them for the rest of their lives..."

Sensitive, She Says

"That combined with the fact that a woman never got off his back... A woman who wanted him, never left him alone... For the past four months, she has been calling him 20 times a day, starting at 7 in the morning."

"I don't say that's the reason, but it was one of the motivating factors."

"I think everything just kind of swooped down on a very sensitive man."

Reeves had offered his services



(Associated Press Wirephoto)

George (Superman) Reeves and fiancee, Lenore Lemmon, had themselves a good time during recent night out.

as a professional wrestler and had been able to get one booking.

And tonight he was to have boxed a two-round exhibition with light-heavyweight champ Archie Moore in San Diego, Calif.

Born in Woolstock, Iowa, Reeves studied dramatics at the Pasadena Playhouse. He appeared in many films during the 30's, including the Hopalong Cassidy series and "Gone With the Wind."

When he returned to Hollywood after World War II Army service, he drew only a few roles, then went to New York for TV dramas.

A well-built 6 feet 2, he was a natural for the role of Superman. He signed up for the series, realizing the jeopardy it held for his career.

"I was hungry," he admitted later.

Center of Nitory Fight

Miss Lemmon, daughter of Broadway ticket broker Authur K. Lemmon, first made news in 1941 when she was the center of a Stork Club fistfight. The brawl started when her dancing partner's wife objected, and it ended when she was banned from the night club.

A month later she eloped with Jacob Vanderbilt Webb, a Vanderbilt heir. They were divorced and she married British entertainer Hamish Menzies in 1951. This marriage also ended in divorce.

George Reeves, TV Superman, Commits Suicide at Coast Home

HOLLYWOOD, Calif., June 16 (AP) ---George Reeves, television's Superman, killed himself early today. Seconds earlier his fiancée had predicted his death.

Friends said Mr. Reeves, 45 years old, had been depressed because he could find no other acting jobs.

Police Sgt. V. A. Peterson said Mr. Reeves and two house guests---Miss Lenore Lemmon, 35, his fiancée, and Robert Condon, a writer --had retired to their respective bedrooms late last night.

About 2:30 A. M., the sergeant, said, two friends, William Bliss and Mrs. Carol Van Ronkel, came by and awakened them.

Mr. Reeves argued with Mr. Bliss over the lateness of the hour, then apologized and said, "I'm tired; I'm going to bed." He went upstairs.

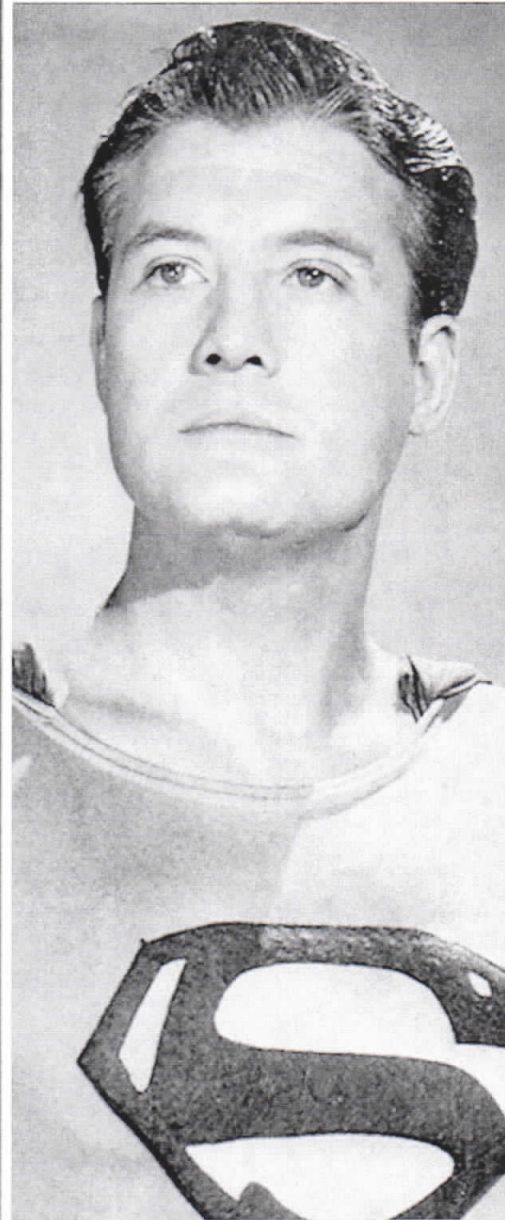
Miss Lemmon, who planned to marry the actor in Mexico Friday, said:

"He's opening a drawer to get the gun."

Then a shot was heard. "See there --I told you!" Miss Lemmon exclaimed.

Mr. Reeves was found dead on his bed, a bullet from a .30-caliber Luger pistol in his temple. No Note was found.

Mr. Reeves was born in Woolstock, Iowa. He came to California in 1929 and studied dramatics at the Pasadena Playhouse. He had supporting roles in many films, including "Gone With the Wind" and "From Here to Eternity."



Associated Press

George Reeves, the actor who portrayed Superman.

In 1951 he began a television career as Superman.

The series brought Mr. Reeves financial security --He was paid for each television showing -- and the devotion of a vast audience of children. But friends said this had given him no fulfillment as an actor.

Why 'Superman' Killed Self



Lenore Lemmon... fiancée of ill-fated George Reeves, she foresaw his suicide.



George "Superman" Reeves... closes his 27-year career with dramatic, violent finish.

HOLLYWOOD, June 16 (AP).—George Reeves, television's Superman, depressed because he could find no acting jobs and "because a woman wouldn't let him alone," killed himself today, seconds after his fiancée, Lenore Lemmon predicted his death.

Why did he do it?

"Because though he was known as Superman to 9,000,000 children, he couldn't get a job," Miss Lemmon said.

"That, combined with the fact that a woman never got off his back—a woman who wanted him, never left him alone. For the past four months she has been calling him 20 times a day, starting at 7 in the morning. I don't say that's the reason, but it was one of the motivating factors."

[United Press International described the other woman as an ex-girl friend. Miss Lemmon said Reeves was despondent, that the woman "was driving him crazy."]

THE END OF REAVES' 27-year dramatic career was as weird as any scene he had played on the movie or television screen. Police Sgt. V. A. Peterson gave this account:

Reeves and his house guests, Mrs. Lemmon, 35 and writer Robert Condon, 45, had retired to their bedrooms late last night. About 2:30 a.m. two friends, Will-

iam Bliss and Mrs. Carol Van Ronkel, dropped by and wakened them.

Reeves argued with Bliss over the lateness of the hour, then apologized and said: "I'm tired, I'm going to bed." He disappeared upstairs.

MISS LEMMON, who planned to marry the 45-year-old actor in Mexico on Friday, blurted: "He's going to shoot himself!"

The others treated her remark as a joke, but she continued: "he's opening a drawer to get the gun." Then a shot was heard. "See, there — I told you!" Miss Lemmon exclaimed.

Reeves' nude body was found on his bed, a bullet from a .30 Luger pistol in his temple. No note was found.

IN A DESPERATE hunt for work, Reeves had even offered his services as a professional wrestler and had been able to get one booking. But though he was loved by millions of TV fans throughout the world, he still could find no work in acting.

Born in Woolstock, Ia., Reeves came to California in 1929 and studied dramatics at the Pasadena Playhouse. He appeared in many films during the 30s, including the Hopalong Cassidy series, and as one of the Tarlton

Lenore: Supergal in Headlines

By HARRY ALTSHULER

Lenore Lemmon would have been the right mate for Superman. She's been something of a Superwoman herself, in collecting headlines since she was a bright-eyed deb in New York.

She was the fiancée of George Reeves, TV Superman, who killed himself yesterday.

LENORE, daughter of a prosperous ticket-broker, always had gift for the startling phrase. When she first came to public notice—in a separation suit involving some cafe society figures—she chortled joyously: "Just think! Here I am only 18—and already named a correspondent!"

Lenore is 36 now, and a lot of quips have passed over the dam. Also a lot of punches, given and taken.

She got the heave-ho out of the Stork Club, for a fist-fight with another glamor girl.

She eloped, at 18, with the very social Jackie Webb, of the Vanderbilt clan—and their togetherness

lasted all of two days before the gendarmes grabbed Jackie on a matter of bouncing checks.

LENORE HAD herself a fling at the night clubs from the other side of the ropes, then, becoming an entertainer with one very entertaining ditty called,

Continued on Page 20

Continued on Page 20



George Reeves As 'Superman'

'SUPERMAN IS SUICIDE

TV SUPERMAN ENDS HIS LIFE WITH BULLET

Guests Hear Shot, Find George Reeves Dead

Hollywood, June 16 {Special}—George Reeves, 45, who



Reeves

portrayed "Superman" in more than 100 television films, shot and killed himself Tuesday in his bedroom in his Benedict canyon home.

In the house at the time of the shooting were Leonore Lemmon, 35, his fiancée, Robert Condon, a writer, William Bliss, a friend, of Hollywood, and Miss Carol Von Ronkel, a neighbor.

Miss Lemmon and Condon were house guest and Bliss and Miss Von Ronkel were midnight callers.

Ordered Visitor Out

Miss Lemmon, who said she and Reeves were to have been married Friday, said Reeves had retired when Bliss and Miss Von Ronkel appeared. She said Reeves came down stairs, objected to the lateness of the call, and ordered the visitors to leave.

"When Reeves went back upstairs I had a premonition he was going to shoot himself," Miss Lemmon said. "Then we heard the shot."

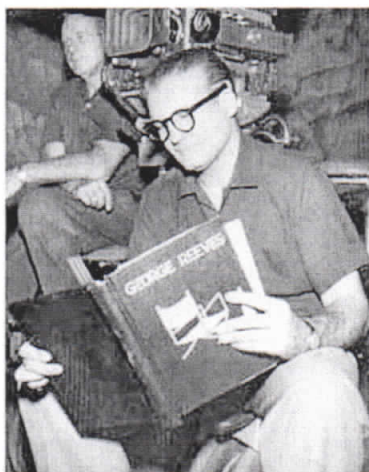
Friends said Reeves had not worked regularly in two years and was despondent over being identified so closely with "Superman" that he found it difficult to get other roles.

Lethargic Since Accident

Reeves suffered a head injury April 8 in an automobile crash near his home. Friends said he had been lethargic since this accident.

However he had planned to go to San Diego Tuesday to box two exhibition rounds with Archie Moore, world's light heavyweight champion, and had talked of embarking on a wrestling career. He made his movie debut in 1937 playing one of the Tarleton twins in "Gone With the Wind." He appeared in several Hopalong Cassidy films.

Miss Lemmon, daughter of a Broadway ticket broker, is a familiar figure in New York City cafe night life. She was married in 1941 to J. Vanderbilt Webb, an heir to the Vanderbilt fortune, and divorced in 1946.



Caption reads: (MH2) Miami, Fla., June 16--"SUPERMAN" AND FIANCEE--George Reeves, known for his television role as "Superman" and his fiancée Lenore Lemmon are shown as they appeared here April 30. Reeves was found dead today in his Hollywood, Calif., home. Police said his death was apparently a result of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Images above added

Lou Koza collection

Reeves, Superman of TV, Kills Himself in His Home

Actor Believed Discouraged by Slump in Career

Actor George Reeves, 45, known to children the world over as television's Superman, killed himself with a bullet through the head early yesterday in his Benedict Canyon home, police reported.

Although the motive was not completely clear, police said Reeves was discouraged over the slump in his acting career since he finished filming the Superman series, which is still running in many cities.

Element of Mystery

An element of mystery was injected by his fiancée, Miss Lenore Lemmon, 35, an actress from New York, who said they were to be married Friday in Tijuana. Seconds before the fatal shot was heard, Miss Lemmon inexplicably predicted to visitors that Reeves was going to kill himself.

The husky actor, a wrestling, judo and boxing enthusiast, was scheduled for an exhibition bout with Archie Moore, the light heavy-weight champion, in San Diego today, police said.

Miss Lemmon and Robert Condon, 45, a New York writer, were guests of Reeves at his home, 1579 Benedict Canyon Dr. Condon was writing a story about Moore, officers said, and was planning to do one on Reeves.

Two Visitors Arrive

The actor and Condon had retired to their rooms and Miss Lemmon was downstairs when, about 1 a.m., two visitors came calling. They were William Bliss, 45, of 638 Robertson Ave., Beverly Hills, and Mrs. Carol Van Ronkel, 33, of 2300 Benedict Canyon Dr.

Reeves came downstairs, irate at being disturbed by the late callers and declaring that he was "in no mood for a party," the others told police. He threatened to "throw Bliss out," but eventually both apologized and Reeves returned to his room.

"He's going upstairs to shoot himself," Miss Lemmon was quoted as saying.



TAKES OWN LIFE—Actor George Reeves, 45, who killed himself yesterday in his home in Benedict Canyon, is pictured in the Superman role that made him known to young television fans the world over.

A noise was heard in Reeves' room and Miss Lemmon added, "See, he's opening the drawer to get the gun." Then a shot rang out and Miss Lemmon exclaimed, "See there, I told you; he's shot himself."

Body Sprawled on Bed

Bliss rushed to the room and found Reeves' nude body sprawled on the bed, a bullet hole through his head. A 9-mm. German Luger was on the floor between his feet. Bliss called police.

Detectives said Reeves purchased the gun several days ago and kept it in a drawer in his bedroom.

Miss Lemmon told police she was "only kidding" when she made the remarks about Reeves' plans to kill himself.

Two months ago, the actor suffered a concussion and a deep 5-in. gash in his fore-

Please Turn to Pg. 24, Col. 4

SUPERMAN

Continued from Second Page
head when his sports car skidded into an embankment near his home. He was in Cedars of Lebanon Hospital several days.

Met Six Months Ago

In New York, Miss Lemmon's mother, Mrs. Arthur K. Lemmon, said her daughter met Reeves there about six months ago. She said the actor was "in beautiful spirits" when she saw him here about two weeks ago.

Miss Lemmon, well known in New York cafe society circles, has not worked as an actress for a number of years, her mother said. She was formerly married to Vanderbilt heir J. Vanderbilt Webb and Hamish Menzies of Scotland.

Reeves, whose real name was George L. Bessolo, was born in Woolstock, Ia., and grew up in Pasadena. He trained for an acting career at the Pasadena Community Playhouse.

Marriage Fails

There he met Eleanor Needles, a stage player, and a romance blossomed. They were wed in 1940, but the marriage ended in divorce.

Reeves' motion picture credits included many Hopalong Cassidy films, "Gone With the Wind," "Winged Victory," "So Proudly We Hail," "Till We Meet Again" and "From Here to Eternity."

Nine years ago he was picked from scores of actors for the television Superman role. His 6-ft 2-in. muscular frame, straightforward good looks and prowess in judo and wrestling (he was Pacific Coast light-heavyweight champion while at Pasadena City College) helped.

It was estimated that the series drew an audience of 35 million each year, 48% of them adults. It became one of the top programs in Japan and Reeves received a letter from the Emperor telling how much he enjoyed the series.

The actor's mother, Mrs. Helen Bessolo, was notified yesterday in Galesburg, Ill., and was reported en route here to take charge of arrangements.

Lou Koza Collection

LA TIMES
June 17, 1956

Human Weakness Killed 'Superman'

(Special to Newsday)



George Reeves
A Broken Heart

Hollywood, June 16 (AP) - To the children who knew him as TV's Superman, George Reeves was a demigod to human frailty. But to a woman who mourned him today, he was a man whose life started to end the day he lost his role as a comic-strip character. The story of a man trapped by futility in the midst of fame was told by café playgirl Lenore Lemmon, fiancée of the 45-year-old actor who committed suicide early yesterday in his Hollywood home. Miss Lemmon said he shot himself to death "because he was known as Superman to 9,000,000 children, but he couldn't get a job."

Reeves, a handsome, husky six-foot-two, portrayed Superman as though he were born to the cape and tunic of the extra-terrestrial man of steel. He played the role too well. When his contract ended, Reeves had typecast himself as Superman and found it difficult to obtain other parts. He was just another unemployed actor, even though reruns of the TV films were being shown as far away as Japan.

There were troubles to plague George Reeves in real life. Said Miss Lemmon: "There was a woman who wanted him, who never let him alone... For the past four months, she had been calling him 20 times a day, starting at 7 in the morning. I don't say that's the reason (for Reeves suicide), but it was one of the motivation factors." She added: "I think everything just kind of

swooped down on a very sensitive man."

Reeves' death took place at 2:30 AM yesterday in his room. He had just left Miss Lemmon, another house guest, writer Robert Condon, 45, and two visitors, William Bliss and Carol Von Ronklic.

There were reports that after Reeves left, Miss Lemmon blurted out: "He's going to shoot himself." But today, sobbing uncontrollably, she denied that she had predicted his suicide moments before it occurred. "I'm not clairvoyant," she said. "I'd have stopped him if I knew what he was going to do." She said that the shooting actually took her by surprise. "We didn't have any beef," she said. "He just went upstairs and shot himself. It was that simple."

But while it surprised Miss Lemmon, it didn't shock her. "It was easy for her to explain her fiancée's suicide. 'It was just that his heart was broken because he couldn't get a job and bring me the things he wanted to.' She said that because he lost his 'Superman' job Reeves began looking for a job in the bafloon world of wrestling and last night had been scheduled to go two rounds with light-heavyweight champion Archie Moore. 'It was too much to take,' she said 'after 20 years as an actor you can't forget dignity.'"

Miss Lemmon and Reeves were to have been married Friday, but today, instead of making wedding plans, she talked in tears of a "Superman" who died of human weakness.



Lenore Lemmon
A Grieving Fiancé

Newsday, Wednesday June 17, 1959



This is a true and certified copy of the record
 If it bears the seal, imprinted in purple ink,
 of the Registrar-Recorder.

JAN 10 1986

Shel Windel REGISTRAR RECORDER
 LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA



STATE FILE NUMBER		CERTIFICATE OF DEATH				LOCAL REGISTRATION	
STATE OF CALIFORNIA - DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH		STATE OF CALIFORNIA - DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH				DISTRICT AND CERTIFICATE NUMBER	
DECEDENT PERSONAL DATA	1. NAME OF DECEASED—FIRST NAME George AKA: George	2. MIDDLE NAME Lecher	3. LAST NAME BESSOLO REEVES	24. DATE OF DEATH—MONTH DAY YEAR 6-16-59		25. HOUR 1:20 A.	
	3. SEX Male	4. COLOR OR RACE Caucasian	5. BIRTHPLACE Kentucky	6. DATE OF BIRTH January 6, 1914	7. AGE LAST BIRTHDAY 45 YEARS	IF UNDER 1 YEAR: <input type="checkbox"/> INFANT <input type="checkbox"/> CHILD <input type="checkbox"/> ADULT	
	8. NAME AND BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER Frank Joseph Bessolo, Calif		9. MAIDEN NAME AND BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER Helen Lecher, Illinois		10. CITIZEN OF WHAT COUNTRY U. S. A.	11. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER 542-28-8600	
	12. LAST OCCUPATION Actor	13. NUMBER OF YEARS IN THIS OCCUPATION 20	14. NAME OF LAST EMPLOYING COMPANY OR FIRM Superman Inc.		15. KIND OF INDUSTRY OR BUSINESS Television & Motion Picture		
	16. IF DECEASED WAS EVER IN U.S. ARMED SERVICES GIVE BRANCH AND DATE OF SERVICE	17. IF DECEASED WAS EVER MARRIED IN CALIFORNIA Divorced	18. NAME OF PRESENT SPOUSE		19. PRESENT OR LAST OCCUPATION OF SPOUSE		
PLACE OF DEATH	16. PLACE OF DEATH—NAME OF HOSPITAL			17. STREET ADDRESS—GIVE STREET OR RAILROAD ADDRESS AND LOCATION DO NOT USE P.O. BOX NUMBERS			
	18. CITY OR TOWN Los Angeles			19. COUNTY Los Angeles		20. LENGTH OF STAY IN COUNTY OF DEATH 14 YEARS	
	20. LAST USUAL RESIDENCE—STREET ADDRESS 1579 Benedict Canyon Drive			20b. CITY Los Angeles		20c. STATE California	
PHYSICIAN'S OR CORONER'S CERTIFICATION	21. NAME OF INFORMANT IF OTHER THAN SPOUSE Helen L. Bessolo			21b. ADDRESS OF INFORMANT 1447 W. Michigan Avenue, Pasadena, California			
	22. PHYSICIAN—WHEN DEATH OCCURRED AT THE HOUR DATE AND PLACE STATED GIVING FROM THE CAUSE STATED BELOW AND THAT I ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM			22c. PHYSICIAN'S SIGNATURE <i>George C. Boush</i>			
	22a. CORONER—THE BODY WAS OPENED AND THE CAUSE OF DEATH AND PLACE STATED GIVING FROM THE CAUSE STATED BELOW AND THAT I WAS HELD			22b. ADDRESS HALL OF JUSTICE, LOS ANGELES		22c. DATE SIGNED 6-30-59	
FUNERAL DIRECTOR AND LOCAL REGISTRAR	23. METHOD OF BURIAL Entombment	24. DATE July 1, 1959	25. NAME OF CEMETERY OR CREMATORY Woodlawn Mausoleum		26. LICENSER—SIGNATURE IF BODY REMOVED; LICENSE NUMBER <i>George C. Boush</i> 4598		
	27. NAME OF FUNERAL DIRECTOR Gates, Kingsley & Gates WW			28. DATE RECEIVED FOR REGISTRATION JUL 8 1959	29. LOCAL REGISTRAR—SIGNATURE <i>Shel W. Windel</i>		
CAUSE OF DEATH	30. CAUSE OF DEATH PART I: DEATH WAS CAUSED BY GUNSHOT WOUND OF HEAD						APPROXIMATE INTERVAL BETWEEN ONSET AND DEATH
	PART II: OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING TO DEATH BUT NOT RELATED TO THE TERMINAL DISEASE CONDITION GIVEN IN PART I						
OPERATION AND AUTOPSY	31. OPERATION—CHECK ONE <input type="checkbox"/> OPEN <input type="checkbox"/> CLOSED			32. DATE OF OPERATION	33. AUTOPSY—CHECK ONE <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FULL <input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED		
	34. SPECIFY ACCIDENT SUICIDE OR HOMICIDE Suicide			34b. DESCRIBE HOW INJURY OCCURRED as above			
INJURY INFORMATION	35a. TIME OF INJURY 12:00 P.M. - 1:00 P.M. 6-16-59			35b. PLACE OF INJURY HOME			35c. CITY TOWN OR LOCATION LOS ANGELES
	35d. INJURY OCCURRED <input type="checkbox"/> WHILE AT WORK <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NOT WHILE AT WORK			35e. PLACE OF INJURY HOME		35f. CITY TOWN OR LOCATION LOS ANGELES	

REEVES FORENSIC LABORATORY

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WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

SYMBOLS
DL = Day Letter
NIGHT
CASH

The time shown in the line on domestic telegrams is STANDARD TIME at time of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.

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LOSANGELES CALIFORNIA COUNTY CORONER=

(CARE YATES KINGSLEY AND YATES 1500 SOUTH

SEPULVEDA LOSA=

1959 JUN 16 AM 8 58

I HEREBY AUTHORIZE AND DIRECT YATES KINGSLEY AND YATES
TO HANDLE DETAILS OF FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS, ABSOLUTELY
NO CREMATION, PER MY INSTRUCTIONS FOR MY SON GEORGE
LESCHER BESSOLO STAGE NAME GEORGE REEVES REMAINS TO BE
KEPT UNTIL ARRIVAL OF HELEN LESCHER BESSOLO HIS MOTHER=
HELEN LESCHER BESSOLO=1

to Public Inquest Galesburg, Ill.

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS CUSTOMERS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE