

# Delinquent Dads Given a Warning

**By EVELLE YOUNGER**  
District Attorney

Fathers who won't support their children are about to discover that it's "one, two, three strikes — you're out."

Or, to phrase it differently, we've had a crackdown, but starting now we're cracking down harder. We're using a tougher formula. If a man falls down three times and doesn't have an adequate reason, he could find himself face to face with criminal charges.

The record shows that during the first four months of 1966 the number of our non-support criminal complaints swelled by something like 50 per cent. Now we can expect an even more spectacular increase.

**THE LOW POINT** in criminal complaints filed against defaulting fathers in the past year was registered in September, 1965, when they dipped to 163. The high point was last February, when the District Attorney's office went to court with 371 of them.

These figures are more or less representative.

What happened between those two months?

About a year ago we embarked on a new policy, growing out of the fact that all the civil courts could do was to jail offenders for contempt, and it was not enough. A man cited for contempt could serve up to five days for missing a month's payment. Many apparently did not mind at all.

Fortunately for the anguished mothers and the sometimes hungry children, the law provides more severe penalties if convicted of failure to provide. The father could serve up to a year in jail and pay a fine running to \$1,000.

**WE DECIDED** it was time to start filing more cases under this statute.

During the last four months of 1965 we went to court with 880 complaints, and in the first four months of this year, 1,301 more. That's how we came up with an increase figure of 50 per cent.

But there are still many frustrated and bitterly unhappy mothers, their payments in arrears, their husbands unheeding and contemptuous. To these women it seemed that nothing was being done.

They were still up against the old procedures. They would complain and the offenders would be taken to court and the fathers would go to jail for a few days and promise to behave better. And pretty soon it would be the same thing all over again.

The District Attorney's office, under this system, prosecuted criminally only after the courts gave the signal. We did the best we could, and obviously we've done pretty well.

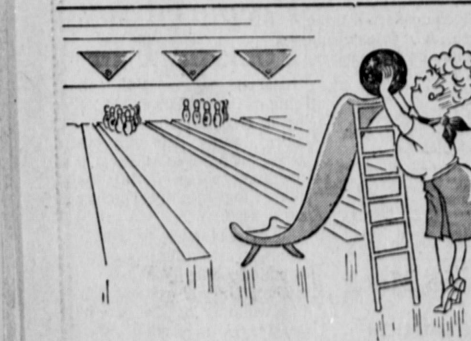
**THE INQUEST** into the shooting of Leonard Deadwyler by Los Angeles policeman Jerold Bova, and a verdict of accidental death, received a heartening reception. Almost everybody thought the proceedings were eminently fair and the outcome warranted.

Curiously, there were some who were critical of the use of this open and wholly public method of sifting the facts.

To those who disparaged the holding of an inquest, perhaps we might say this: Suppose this case had simply gone to the Grand Jury. How would the public have viewed the outcome?

## FUN and FACTS

About Bowling.....by Dick Ericson



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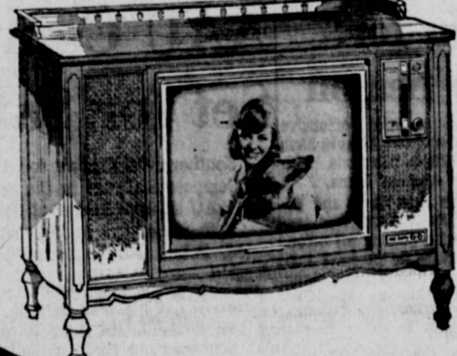


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