



WHAT
HAPPENED

The axeman's
first attack
murder
was on
May 22, 1918.

Equally frightening and fascinating, the story of the **Axeman murders** stands out in a city of ghost stories.

THE "PANEL BURGLAR" THEORY OF THE AX MURDERS TOLD IN PICTURES



In 1918 and 1919, the Axeman terrorized the city, killing at least five people and seriously injuring at least seven others with an axe or a razor blade.

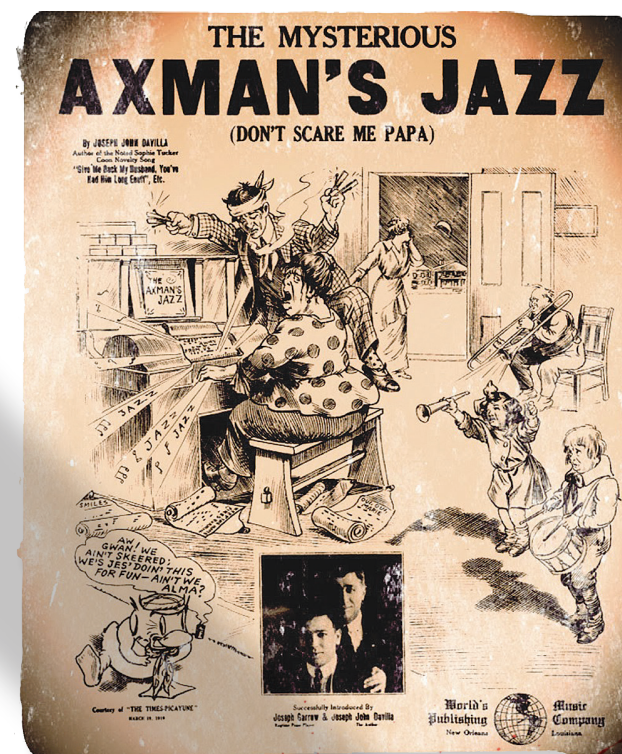
The attacks occurred in the night, and the attacker often gained access through a small hole carved in a door. The axeman would bludgeon or cut his victim and then leave the axe on the scene. Robbery was not believed to be a motive because money, often in plain sight, was left untouched.

The robberies were thought to be mafia related because many of the victims were Italian grocers.

The city's terror reached a peak in March 1919 when a letter, from a person claiming to be the axeman, appeared in local papers. In the letter, the axeman said on March 18, 1919, he would attack any home that didn't have a jazz band going.

The letter, to "Esteemed Mortal," reads: "Undoubtedly, you Orleanians think of me as a most horrible murderer, which I am, but I could be much worse if I wanted to. If I wished, I could pay a visit to your city every night. At will I could slay thousands of your best citizens, for I am in close relationship with the Angel of Death."

Jazz halls were filled and people had live jazz in their homes on March 18. The axeman did not strike that night and was never caught. His last attack was in October 1919.



In 1919, Joseph John Davilla wrote the song 'The Mysterious Axman's Jazz (Don't Scare Me Papa)' after the Axeman demanded that jazz be played in every home in March 1919.