

# An Accidental Anarchist: How the Killing of a Humble Jewish Immigrant by Chicago's Chief of Police Exposed the Conflict Between Law & Order and Civil Rights in Early 20th Century America

Walter Roth

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It was a bitter cold morning in March, 1908. A nineteen-year-old Jewish immigrant traversed the confusing and unfamiliar streets of Chicago—a one-and-a-half-hour-long journey—from his ghetto home on Washburne Avenue to the luxurious Lincoln Place residence of Police Chief George Shippy. He arrived at 9 a.m. Within minutes after knocking on the front door, Lazarus Averbuch lay dead on the hallway floor, shot no less than six times by the chief himself. Why Averbuch went to the police chief's house or exactly what happened after that is still not known.

This is the most comprehensive account ever written about this episode that stunned Chicago and won the attention of the entire country. It does not "solve" the mystery as much as it places it in the context of a nation that was unsure how to absorb all of the immigrants flowing across its borders. It attempts to reconstruct the many different perspectives and concerns that comprised the drama surrounding the investigation of Averbuch's killing.



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