

BUFFALO MURDER MYSTERY UNSOLVED; A WOMAN SUSPECTED OF THE CRIME

Was Seen on Ashland Avenue, Near Burdick's Residence, on Night of the Murder.

Julian Hawthorne Advances Theories on Case.

HOW MR. BURDICK WAS KILLED

A Weapon Said to Be Found—Description of the Scene of Tragedy and Other Details.

Buffalo, March 7.—It is a week since Edwin L. Burdick was murdered, yet there have been no arrests and only shadowy hints and rumors of accusation. The "positive evidence" for which the authorities have said they were waiting still seems beyond their reach. The chief of police and the district attorney each has declared that he has a definite suspicion amounting almost to a certainty, but these statements were not made jointly. Their individual suspicion may not fall on the same person. Supt. Bull has formed his opinion from the reports made by the chief of detectives, while District Attorney Coatsworth's work on the case has been, in many details, separate from the efforts of the police.

Chief of Detectives Cusack, it is said, wished to make an arrest last night, but was deterred by the district attorney.

"You must not make an arrest until you can convict," the district attorney is quoted as saying to Mr. Cusack. "I have enough for a conviction," is the detective's reply, but he has not convinced Mr. Coatsworth. The district attorney is not an excitable person, and he is thinking his way with extreme care. He has been in office only two months, and he is trying to avoid a slip. The city is still in a fever over the mystery and there will be another turn of the screw if an arrest is made and is not followed by conviction.

"We have not yet played our last card," said the district attorney this afternoon. "When we play it, it will mean success or failure."

An official in a position to know the exact situation said this morning: "In actual evidence which would support an arrest we are as badly off as we ever were. At the same time we are morally certain who the murderer is."

"Do you expect an arrest today?" he was asked.

"No, not today nor tomorrow, nor the next day."

"When do you expect an arrest?"

"When facts that would convince a jury are found to corroborate our theory. This is no Vine Street no Camel street case. We must have strong evidence which would support an arrest as soon as it is made. Lawyers are standing ready to apply for a habeas corpus writ to rush us into court and make us disclose our case at the first jump."

"Does suspicion still point to a woman?"

"It does. It points to one who has to meet expenses amounting to \$100 a month without any visible means to meet them."

"Will you name her?"

"We will name no names until it is written in the warrant charging the person with murder in the first degree."

"Have you any identity of the woman seen on Ashland avenue after midnight about the time of the murder?"

"Later."

Buffalo, March 7.—A woman known to have been under the eye of the police in connection with the Burdick murder mystery, has been taken to police headquarters.

The woman was taken at once to the office of Supt. Bull and the door of his office was locked.

Hereafter anyone whom the authorities desired to question in regard to the murder mystery have been taken to the office of the district attorney.

The fact that this woman was taken to headquarters had led to the belief that an arrest had been made or is imminent.

Assistant Chief Cusack, with Capt. Kitroy, made the arrest in the tenth precinct, which includes the Elmwood district. The woman is now being questioned by Supt. Bull and District Attorney Coatsworth.

HAWTHORNE'S THEORIES

The Well-Known Author Writes on the Case at Length.

Julian Hawthorne writes as follows to the New York Journal concerning the murder:

There was, in the morning, on the table in Burdick's den, a small collation found set out on a table there. This was presumably prepared by Burdick himself. But there is testimony to the effect that he was of a dyspeptic tendency, and was not in the habit of eating such things as the collation consisted of.

It is inferred, therefore, that he prepared (if he did prepare it) for some one else—for his expected caller, for example.

But he is said to have bought a bottle of bitters or of whisky that afternoon, though he already had such liquors in his house.

This bottle has not been found. And, for that matter, there has been no

evidence to show that Burdick did carry the bottle home with him. There was also in the murder room a small medicine bottle, into which, it is said, some of the contents of the larger bottle would seem to have been poured. For what purpose is not intimated. And this matter of the bottles, which may be important, remains obscure. The body of the murdered man is being investigated for signs of drugs or knockout drops, but the result of the analysis has not yet been made known. It is said that very little, if any, of the collation, had been eaten.

The next thing we hear of is that Burdick's dead body, with the head mashed in by some blunt weapon, was found in the morning by the servant

who would not have inflicted such wounds as were found in Burdick's head, which were in the nature of blunt cuts. Or had the bottle been broken when used, the cuts of the glass edges would have been deeper than they were.

A blunt hatchet might have made such cuts.

Was there such a hatchet in the house—one used for chopping ice for the refrigerator, for example? Possibly nothing has been said upon that subject by the investigators.

It might have been a weapon brought by the murderer, which would imply that the murder was premeditated.

Let us assume for the moment that it was a refrigerator hatchet. Ice was wanted to cool the drinks of the collation. Burdick or his visitor got the hatchet from the icebox, and the murderer afterward caught it up to do the murder. Apparently he or she carried it off on leaving the house, but for aught we know the police may be in possession of it—if a hatchet there were.

Some friend or relative of the murderer may possess such knowledge; or some inmate of Burdick's house may possess it. Discarding the former supposition, as being too vague for our purpose, what inmate of Burdick's house could have entered upon the scene in time to recognize the murderer?

There is only one of the servants or old Mrs. Hull, the mother of Mrs. Burdick.

Was it the servant? It is quite possible; and yet it seems unlikely that a girl of that kind would maintain silence as to her knowledge. Besides, supposing that the servant had gone to her bed when the murder was in progress, her room is more distant than the den that Mrs. Hull's is. Moreover, as we have seen, Mrs. Hull was a very poor sleeper. And finally, the Burdick house is a frame structure, not new; and it is almost inconceivable that any disturbance in the lower story should not have made such a noise and vibration as would easily awaken her. She was fond of her son-in-law; the noise might lead her to think that he had been murdered. It would be justifiable, indeed, only if we assume that they were trying to force her from her unwilling lips some facts which they were morally certain must be in her possession.

They must have felt morally certain that she saw the murderer, and have resolved to break down her reluctance to give up his or her name, and, supposing the murderer to have been a woman, Mrs. Hull, who loved and trusted Burdick, may have been moved to keep the thing secret in order to protect Burdick's moral reputation.

To be killed by a woman under the circumstances of this case would mean disgrace as well as death. Mrs. Hull may have wished to spare him. Supposing all this to be accepted as the truth, or approximately the truth, then, when the police make their arrest, we may expect to learn that it was on the basis of information supplied by Mrs. Hull. And if she should name a woman as the culprit we shall have a horror to contemplate such as has not been known in this country in living memory.

I have already given my reasons for thinking it could not have been a woman. Yet it may be considered that the social position and some other circumstances favor the hypothesis that a woman was in the house at the time.

The police express conviction that the murderer was a woman, and that she was a woman of a type so rare in this country, and especially in the social class, which she would presumably belong, as to be very unique. Of course, anything that is physically possible is possible, but the improbability of a woman going alone to Burdick's house that night and murdering him in the manner he was murdered single-handed is so great that I am not disposed to believe it on any evidence at present known.

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In a subsequent letter Mr. Hawthorne says:

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The collateral evidence must be sought from the suspected individual, in his or her house, in his or her personal and physical condition, in words she or he may have left in circumstances indicating that he or she was or had been in the neighborhood at the time of the murder, or falling these aids, the police have persevered until the strain of keeping the secret had broken down the nerve of the murderer, and led to his or her making a confession. Or finally, there may have been no trace left in the room, and the police may have been obliged to work more or less in the dark. In this case it seems doubtful whether evidence insuring a conviction could be obtained. Unless the murderer or some other person—if there be any other—cognizant of the murder has given information to the authorities, and the best circumstantial evidence only, and the police may decide not to make an arrest upon merely circumstantial grounds.

Let us aside for the present the possibility of this information coming from the murderer in person, as a consequence of nervous breakdown, let us suppose that the servant had seen other persons possessing direct knowledge of the matter.

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