

Inspector Faurot's Own Story Of Capture of Hans Schmidt

Stranger than Fiction is Startling Narrative of False Clews, Erroneous Identifications and Misleading Circumstantial Evidence through which New York Police Doggedly Followed Right Thread to Unravel Murder Mystery.

(By Joseph A. Faurot, in the New York Herald.)

This city, perhaps, was never more deeply stirred than it has been by the atrocious murder of Anna Schmidt by the Rev. Father Hans Schmidt, and the rapidly succeeding chain of events which connect him with other crimes that stamp him as one of the most diabolical criminals to fall into the hands of the New York police. Fortunately for us, and due to the splendid co-operation received from members of the New York Detective Bureau, the murder is no longer a mystery. That, I am glad to say, has been cleared up and we have evidence aplenty to convict the priest of cutting the throat of the girl he duped and then, after dismembering her body, tossing it into the Hudson River from the deck of a ferryboat. There are in our possession three separate and distinct confessions made by him as to this crime, and we have his own confession as to counterfeiting and other infractions of the law which, while having no immediate bearing on the murder itself, may, before we have finished picking up the loose ends, involve others in the murder and other crimes.

The ramifications of this murder are so vast that I cannot hazard even a guess as to where the various leads we are following will land us. We have followed Schmidt's movements relentlessly since his arrival in this country, and already we know much about his life in Germany and England. He has been characterized by some as an "arch demon." I should prefer to designate him a monster, for most certainly he is the most monstrous creature that ever confronted me in my long connection with the police.

Many gratifying things have been said and printed about my work in this case. No one is insensible to these encomiums when bestowed by a generous and appreciative public and even more precious and in the press. Most certainly I am not, but I would like to preface the narrative of our work in this case with a brief statement. Had it not been for the untiring and intelligent aid given me by the detectives and policemen detailed in this case my efforts would have gone for naught. Those men are entitled to their full share of the credit of praise we hear.

Finding of Body.

Now for the mystery and its subsequent solution. A brief paragraph appeared in the New York Herald of September 6, stating that the upper portion of a woman's body had been found floating in the Hudson River, off Woodcliff, N. J. I, of course, was interested from the very start and confidently expected that my department would be called on by the Jersey authorities to help them solve the mystery. Two days later the lower parts of the torso and hips were found by fishermen. A pillow slip, moth paper and milliner's wire which were found on the body were turned over to the Hoboken police. I was consulted and at once concluded that the tracing of the pillow slip alone would solve this murder, for murder we suspected it to be.

On September 8 my men learned what factory had made the pillow, and furthermore we had traced all the sales of this pattern of pillow made by this manufacturer. The trail narrowed down to Sachs' second-hand store at No. 2762 Eighth avenue, and all the sales made by Sachs were traced with the exception of three. One of these we soon ran down and eliminated. Another, we found, had been made to a large captain. I am frank to confess when I learned this I was confident we had our man in sight and that he would prove the author of the murder. Our deduction was loud and reasonable, to say the least. Here was a river mystery and what was more natural than to suppose that the actual killing had been done aboard a barge or craft of some sort and the body dismembered and tossed overboard?

Our captain proved a veritable wily o' the wisp. He flitted from job to job, from barge to barge, and from scow to scow with the facility of a flying fish. We traced him through the various offices that had employed him and at last ran him to port and our end at last ran him to port and our end. That eliminated him, of course, and other leads were sought.

Of course every one is familiar with the several false identifications of the body that were made, so it is useless to dwell on them here. Both the aged Sternman, who thought the body was that of his daughter, and Day, who thought it that of his sister, were in error, despite the fact that each was positive beyond contradiction that the victim was a near kinswoman. Near Sachs' store we found Hurwitz, a drug-gist, and learned from him that he had sold the moth paper which was wrapped about the body. That clinched our theory that the murder was a New York job and, further, we were confident it had been committed in that immediate neighborhood. When the case seemed darkest I managed to ascertain from Sachs where the third set of pillows had been sold. They had been purchased by "A. Van Dyke" and sent to No. 83 Bradhurst avenue.

Unrelenting Vigilance.

From that moment an unrelenting vigilance was kept over all the entrances to that building. Detective O'Neill was kept on this vigil and faithfully he stuck to his post for four days and four nights, receiving only infrequent and brief relief. On the afternoon of September 13, O'Neill convinced me that hot a soul had entered the flat we were watching in that building since he took up his watch, and although we had little or nothing to base our action on, we decided that unless something developed that night we would take summary action. That night I told Detective O'Neill, O'Connell, Cassassa and McKenna, who were with me, that I intended to break into that flat "if I want to fall for it."

Since no man had been detected lurking near the premises we decided that if murder had been committed there the murderer had long since

fled and unlike the majority of them, had failed to return to the scene of the crime. Entrance to the flat was effected by the fire escape route, the window being forced, through which Cassassa crawled. The room he entered was intended for a dining room, but a white enamel bedstead stripped of mattress and covering greeted his vision. As we were ushered into the flat through the door which Cassassa opened, one glance was sufficient to show that we were correct in our surmise and at last the murder flat had been found. Blood garments were lying about in confusion. The stained and bloody knife with which the victim's throat had been cut and the body dismembered were in a locked trunk. The flat itself had been scoured and scrubbed relentlessly in an effort to cover up all traces of the crime. Telltale spots in a corner here and there, however, had escaped the mop and brush of the murderer, and there were spots aplenty from which finger print reproductions could be made. At last I breathed easy, for I knew we were on the eve of the solution of the mystery, and the taking into custody of the author, something told me, would be only a question of a day or two at the most.

Accumulating Evidence.

Among the effects found in the flat was a gray coat showing the name of the maker, an Eighth avenue tailor, the date it was made and the name of the person, "A. Van Dyke," for whom it was made. The trail was narrowing and again my spirits rose. Other things found there were later addressed to Anna Ammiller. We at once concluded that Anna was the victim of the inhuman butcher. We found a photograph lying in the wash bowl. It was of a man and had been torn into four pieces. This we patched up in the hope it might be of use to the murderer, which we think we erred, for so far it has shown no bearing on the murder. It may prove an important link in another chain of evidence, however, which we think will prove of vital importance and interest when we have perfected the line of investigation now in progress. In a pocket of the gray coat was a handkerchief marked "J. S." A man's cuff, badly stained, was found in the dining room, and it bore a laundry mark. Within a circle was printed a "T," and we knew this cuff would aid us. Several postcards were found bearing Anna's name. All had been directed to the rectory of St. Boniface Church, in East Forty-seventh street. Another important link in our chain of evidence was being so rapidly forged.

After getting all the evidence we needed in the flat we left it in charge of Detective Daiter, who had been summoned, and started out to interview the superintendent of the building, as well as some of the tenants. From the former we got an accurate description of the man who had rented the flat and of the girl who lived there with his wife. This we knew was Anna Schmidt, and we also learned that the photographs we had seized. We learned that neither the girl nor her husband had been seen about the premises since September 2, and this was the date we had fixed in our minds as to the one on which the murder was committed. From Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Willoughby, two of the tenants, we procured descriptions of the man and girl. The superintendent further told me that the man had the appearance of a clergyman, and that he wore closely woven straw hat. That man later events showed, was a close observer, for his description of the confessed murderer to the minutest detail was absolutely perfect. The recent occupant of the flat had hired it on August 25, paying a deposit of \$5 and moving in for occupancy on September 2, when he paid the balance of the \$14 due.

It was now necessary to find some trace of those who had known the Ammiller girl. We drove in our touring car to Forty-second street and Second avenue where we left it. Detective O'Connell and Cassassa and myself went to the rectory of St. Boniface, and from Father Braun and his sister, who keeps house for him, learned that Anna had worked there a while but had been discharged two weeks previously. We also learned that she was in a delicate condition and this was the cause of her dismissal. This was a link in the chain that confirmed our earlier deductions. It was impossible to ascertain at the rectory where Anna had moved to. We left the rectory and combed the neighborhood with thoroughness that satisfied even me. Finally we found a clew. A man living somewhere in the neighborhood, and named Egglest, was said to be a cousin of Anna. After an hour's hunt we found him in a saloon and he admitted the relationship. We took him along with us and went back to St. Joseph's rectory.

The man Egglest had convinced me on the way to the rectory that he knew nothing about the crime, so I turned him loose, well knowing I could get him on short notice if I wanted him.

Arrest of Schmidt.

It was getting late and both my men and myself were nearly overcome with weariness, but we realized that we must strike while the iron was hot, so we re-entered our automobile and hastened to the rectory of St. Joseph's Church, in West 125th street, where we had been told we could find Father Schmidt.

Ring the bell of the rectory after a wild ride across the city, I saw standing at the head of the steps and draped in a dressing gown the original of my post card. I knew him at a glance. He was ascending the stairs as the bell tinkled he paused, started to descend the stairs and then stood irresolute, as if he didn't know what to do next. Father Quinn had let us in.

When we asked if Father Schmidt lived there Father Quinn replied in the affirmative and pointed to the figure crouching at the head of the steps. He called him and Father Schmidt slowly made his way to the little reception room in which we were ushered. Father Quinn left us.

As Father Schmidt approached I

THREE BOYS SAVE TRAIN

Halt Fast Freight by Waving Handkerchiefs after Finding Broken Rail—Great Presence of Mind.

Brookville, Ont., Sept. 25.—The presence of mind displayed by three boys returning to their homes north of Mailand averted what might have been a bad wreck on the main line of the G.T.R., a few miles east of that station. The engineer of a 35-car freight train had his attention attracted to the boys some distance ahead standing on the line waving their handkerchiefs. At first he felt disposed to treat the incident in the light of boyish prank, but on second thoughts decided to halt the train lest the signal might be one to stop. Accordingly he shut off steam but the momentum carried the engine and a few cars past the spot where the boys stood before the train came to a standstill. Investigation proved that the lads had discovered a broken rail with a space of fully four inches between the broken ends. The engine and cars had safely passed the gap and by running slowly the remaining portion of the train was hauled ahead without accident. The necessary precautions were taken to protect the line as the International Limited was the next train due to pass.

DEATH DUE TO CARELESSNESS.

Woodstock, Ont., Sept. 25.—As the result of a boy's carelessness, Charles Rish, of Michigan, lies dead here today. Rish had arrived here yesterday morning after an absence of twenty-seven years, to visit his brother. With his brother John he was walking down the hill on Hunter street when they heard a noise behind. Looking back they saw a boy coming down the sidewalk in an express wagon. They started to leave room for him, but the boy ran into Charles's legs, knocking his feet from under him. He fell backward, striking his head on the sidewalk, and fractured his skull. He died four hours later in the hospital. The boy's name is not yet known.

told him that we wished to discuss a matter of importance with him, and furthermore told him who I and my companions were. His face blanched and his hand shook as he lifted it to wave us to seats. But before he could seat himself I approached his side and, snatching the photograph of Anna from a side pocket, I held it before his face and said: "Do you know that girl?" His face underwent an instantaneous change. It took on an ashen hue, even his lips paled. His knees shook, and tottering to a chair, he fell rather than sat upon it. As he nodded his head to my rapidly repeated questions as to knowing the girl, I flashed back at him:—

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ISAAC COWAN IS DROWNED

Well Known North End Resident Fell Over Indian Wharf—Body Found Under Pier.

Isaac Cowan, a well known resident of the North End, was found drowned yesterday morning at the wharf about 9 o'clock by Frank Bogel, fireman on the tug Wasson, and the police were immediately notified. They in turn sent word to Coroner Roberts, who ordered the body removed from the water and taken to Chamberlain's undertaking parlors. The deceased was employed on the tug Flaming, which arrived down river on Wednesday afternoon and tied up at the wharf. In the evening he left the boat and went up town and was seen returning to the tug shortly before 10 o'clock in the morning. The Flaming had moved down a couple of wharves and the tug Wasson took her place at the wharf. It is supposed that the unfortunate man, while attempting to board the tug, slipped and fell over the wharf, striking his head on the side of the boat and being knocked unconscious, as no cry was heard by any of the crew on board the Wasson. Yes, yesterday morning when Fireman Bogel was standing by the side of his boat he saw the body floating face downwards in the water right under the wharf. When he was taken out of the water a mark on the head showed where he had probably struck when falling.

The deceased was a son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cowan, and was a native of this city. He had been working on river boats for a great many years and was well known and respected by all with whom he came in contact. He is survived by his wife, who is unfortunately at present visiting her son, Harold, in New York, and two daughters, Mrs. Rev. Cormier and Miss Gene at home; also three brothers, Messrs. Robert, of the Savages Bank, Edgar and Charles E. V., all of this city, and three sisters, Mrs. F. L. Hea, Mrs. F. W. Thompson and Miss Julia P. Cowan. The deceased had been in the employ of Messrs. D. D. Glasier & Son for the past twelve years, and was always looked upon as a good, reliable workman. He was also popular with his fellow workmen, who were deeply grieved to hear of his accident.

WEDDINGS.

Douglas-Straten.

A very pretty wedding took place at the Manse, by the Rev. Canon Hoyt, on September 24th, when Daisy V. B. Straten was united in marriage to William G. Douglas, both of Lakeside, St. John. After the ceremony the happy couple drove to the residence of the groom's parents, on the Hickey Road, where supper was partaken of, after which a pleasant time was spent with music and dancing. The bride was the recipient of many handsome and useful presents, testifying to the popularity which she enjoyed among the friends in the city as well as at Lakeside. The young couple will reside at Lakeside, St. John.

RICHARD D. ISAACS FOUND GUILTY ON FORGERY CHARGE

Jury Out but Thirty-one Minutes—Prisoner Remanded to Jail for Sentence—Evidence Taken Yesterday Proves Interesting and Important—Viola Reid Murder Case Commences Today.

The jury in the case of the King vs. R. D. Isaacs, after being out only thirty-one minutes yesterday afternoon, returned with a verdict of "guilty," convicting the prisoner on the charge of uttering forged documents, knowing them to be forged. The prisoner was not sentenced, but was at the conclusion of the trial remanded to jail. Sentence will, in like likelihood, be imposed before the court adjourns, since die.

When the trial of R. D. Isaacs was resumed yesterday afternoon Mr. Baxter asked to have the prisoner recalled. Mr. Barry objected, but his objection was overruled.

The prisoner was asked if he was held on a charge in Boston.

A—Yes.

Q—Did you plead guilty?

A—On technical grounds.

Q—What was the charge?

A—Forgery, larceny and uttering forged documents, where?

Q—Did you even mention to anyone besides your counsel that you had been "taken in"?

A—Yes, to the authorities in the United States.

Q—To anyone else?

A—Not that I remember.

Mr. Baxter then asked to have George K. Knodell called to prove that Isaacs had title documents printed here. Objection being made, His Honor stated that this evidence was not proper rebuttal evidence, and refused to allow this testimony to be given.

This closed the case for the defence, and Mr. Barry at once commenced his address to the jury, and continued for about half an hour. He stated that the evidence showed that Isaacs himself had been swindled and the frauds had not been perpetrated by him. Evidence was given that T. C. Ansel & Co., of Winnipeg, were the swindlers, and the Crown had offered no evidence to rebut this testimony. The evidence that Isaacs had followed them to Chicago also was not rebutted. He told the jury that if any one of their number had a reasonable doubt the prisoner was entitled to that doubt, and he urged them to hold out if such a doubt existed in their minds. He spoke a word of sympathy for the man's wife and family, and asked them to carefully consider all the evidence, for it was a very important case, the prisoner being liable to life imprisonment if found guilty.

Mr. Baxter, in addressing the jury, went carefully over the various points brought out on cross-examination and recounted to the jury the various discrepancies and contradictions in the prisoner's testimony. The Crown, he said, had no opportunity to rebut the evidence that Isaacs himself had been swindled, as that was mentioned for the first time on Wednesday afternoon. The Crown, he said, had proved their case beyond all doubt, but if the jury had a reasonable doubt, they were entitled to give the benefit of such a doubt to the prisoner. He thought, however, that there was no

reasonable doubt and ought not to be any in the minds of the jurors. He instructed them to pay no heed to the sympathy plea.

His Honor charged the jury very fairly, instructing them carefully the points they should consider. He also complimented Mr. Barry on the excellent manner in which he had handled the prisoner's defence.

The jury retired at 4:42 o'clock and returned at 5:13 o'clock with the above verdict.

The court arose until 10 o'clock this morning when the trial of the murder case of the King vs. Viola Reid will be commenced. Attorney General Grimmer will prosecute and P. A. Guthrie will appear for the defence.

Morning Session.

On the resumption of the case against R. D. Isaacs, charged with uttering forged documents in connection with transactions in Alberta real estate, before Mr. Justice White in the Circuit Court yesterday morning, the testimony of the defendant was continued, the entire morning being occupied with his examination by J. E. M. Baxter, K. C., who is appearing for the Attorney General of Alberta. In addition Attorney General Grimmer was present and J. A. Barry conducted the defence.

During the morning Isaacs was repeatedly asked whether he had himself had the duplicate title certificates which he gave to Messrs. McArthur and Nyles, printed in this city. The memory of the witness, however, seemed to desert him. An interesting feature was brought out in the evidence when the witness gave some specimens of his writing to Mr. Baxter. In the specimen he spelled the word registrar without the second "r," making it registrar.

Mr. Baxter pointed out that in the certificate purporting to have been issued in Alberta which declared that Isaacs was the registered owner of certain property, the word had been spelled in the same unusual way. Again, after inducing the witness to admit that he had arrived in Edmonton, Alta., at 1:30 o'clock and left at 4:40 on the only occasion when he had visited that place, Mr. Baxter pointed out that one of the documents which purported to have been registered by Isaacs bore the hour it stamped upon it.

On the conclusion of the evidence Mr. Baxter asked leave to call witnesses in rebuttal to show that the title certificates had been printed in the city, and also to connect the prisoner with another alleged fraudulent transaction with Charles Magnusson. Mr. Barry objected and when the court rose at one o'clock the matter was still undecided.

Isaacs, under cross-examination by Mr. Baxter, said his land dealings were principally in Saskatchewan, where he had at one time owned some property.

Mrs. Clark and son who have been the guests of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Van-war left last evening for their home in Ottawa. They were accompanied by Mrs. George T. Polly and child, who will spend a few weeks in the capital.

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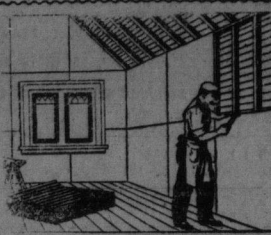
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