

GIRL IS ASSAULTED AND THEN MURDERED IN HEART OF TOWN

Chum Identifies Victim

Mary Phagan, of 146 Lindsay Street, Then Swoons. Girl Had Just Resigned From National Pencil Company, in Which Plant Her Body Was Found.

MOTHER AND FATHER STAY UP ALL NIGHT WAITING HER RETURN

Negro Watchman Is Under Arrest on Suspicion—Police Believe That She Was Lured to Building by Three Young Companions, Assaulted Despite Her Vigorous Struggles, and Then Killed to Shut Her Lips.

While mother and father anxiously waited her return home Saturday night, pretty 14-year-old Mary Phagan lay dead in a corner of the dark basement of the National Pencil factory at 37-39 South Forsyth street, the victim of an atrocious murder, following a brutal criminal assault.

Her skull crushed and her neck horribly bruised where she had been choked to death, the body was found at 4 o'clock Sunday morning, several hours after the crime had been committed, and was unidentified until the arrival of a girl chum.

Two suspects are under arrest. One is Arthur Mulhax, formerly a street car conductor. The other is Newt Lee, negro night watchman of the factory building, who found the body and notified police headquarters. He stoutly maintains innocence. Detectives believe he was implicated in the crime. A confession from him is expected to lead to the girl's slayer or slayers.

Mother Prostrated With Grief.

She was an employee in the pencil factory, but had resigned last Thursday. She was the daughter of Mrs. J. W. Coleman, of 146 Lindsay street. Her mother was prostrated with grief Sunday morning, and although physicians worked over her throughout the day, her condition was precarious last night.

Two notes were found near the body. Although they purport to have been written by the dead girl, the handwriting has not been recognized as hers. It resembles, however, that of the imprisoned night watchman. The theory of detectives is that both were written to mislead the police.

One note was penciled on order blank of the factory. It read: "That negro hired at here did this. He pushed down that hole. A long, negro, black that had it wor Long, lean, tall negro." It is incoherent and hardly legible. The second was written on ordinary tablet paper: "He said he would love me." The rest of the note fails to make sense. Neither note was signed.

The pretty victim was first choked into insensibility, then beaten upon the head with a blunt instrument, presumably a

Victim of Tragedy Horribly Bruised.

She was horribly bruised and lacerated upon the face. Both eyes were blackened and swollen. The hands and fingers were distorted, showing the agony in which she had died. She was attired in a fresh summer frock of pink, trimmed in lace, and wore silk stockings. A big bow of baby ribbon was caught in the single strand of hair, arranged girlish fashion down the back.

The clothing was torn and bloody. Her pink parasol was found near the trap door through which the body had been lowered. A missing shoe and a bloody handkerchief were found in a trashpile near the boiler in the basement. Following an investigation by members of Coroner Donegan's staff the body was removed to the Bloomfield undertaking establishment on South Pryor street. An inquest will be held today.

Detectives are searching for a trio of men said to have been seen with Miss Phagan Saturday night about 10 o'clock. E. S. Skipper, of 224 1/2 Peters street, told a reporter for The Constitution that he had seen a girl answering the exact description of the victim walking up Pryor street with three men, apparently youths. She was reeling slightly, as though affected by drugs or narcotics, and was weeping.

At the intersection of Trinity avenue she attempted to continue up Pryor street in the direction of Garnett, but was caught by one of her companions, who turned her steps toward Whitehall street on Trinity avenue. Skipper's attention was attracted by the girl's tears and unwillingness to accompany the men. She strove to resist them, he said, but appeared feeble. She did not seem intoxicated, he said, but sick and weak.

Detectives Rely on His Story.

At Forsyth street, the men and girl turned down toward Garnett and several streets. Skipper continued in direction of the Terminal station, at which he was bound. The reporter referred him to Detectives Black and Starnes, who are in charge of the squad investigating the mystery, and he told his story to them. He is positive of his ability to identify either of the men, and gave the detectives accurate descriptions.

Adam V. Woodward, night watchman to the Woodward livery stable at 35 Forsyth street, three doors distant from the building, told the detectives at 10 o'clock, or later, he had heard screams in the vicinity of the plant. The sounds lasted for several minutes, suspecting the cries were from courting girls on the street, he paid little or no attention to them.

That was within less than an hour after Skipper had left the mysterious quartet at Forsyth street and Trinity avenue. If they were the slain girl and her murderers, they walked directly from Trinity to the factory, into which she was lured to death. Detectives place strong faith in Skipper's story.

Miss Phagan left home Saturday at noon. She came uptown to see the memorial day parade and to draw her two days' salary due from the factory when she resigned. Telling her parents to expect her back for supper, she assured them she would return before nightfall. When she failed to appear at a late hour Mr. and Mrs. Coleman grew uneasy and began searching. Police headquarters were notified, and a lookout placed upon the bulletin board.

No Love Affairs, Say Her Parents.

She had never been known to stay away at night. Her father and mother declared Sunday that until Saturday night, they had always known where to find her. She was a model girl, bright, eager and cheerful. Her parents had never allowed her to have a sweetheart, or to receive callers, and was not in love, so far as her parents know.

Her anxious father and mother were awake all night, awaiting news of the missing daughter. At daybreak a messenger came with word she had been murdered in the factory. Mrs. Coleman fell into

a faint, from which she did not recover for an hour. She was prostrated and her condition necessitated the constant attention of a physician.

News of the gruesome discovery reached the police station about 4 o'clock Sunday morning, when the negro watchman called over telephone: "Send the police to the National pencil factory right away," he said. "There's a dead girl down in the basement, and she's been murdered."

Two policemen and a Constitution reporter jumped into the automobile of Boots Rogers, which stood at the front of headquarters, and were rushed to the factory. The watchman stood at the Forsyth street entrance holding a lantern. He was trembling, his teeth chattered, and he was visibly excited.

"She's down in the basement. I'm scared to go. You all go first. I'll show you the way," he muttered.

The building was dark and deserted. The footsteps of the policeman echoed from floor to floor, creating an uncanny sound that sent chills down the spine. The negro led the way to a small, cubby hole near the entrance, just wide enough to admit a human body, and through which a ladder projected.

As the policemen pushed their way through the inky blackness, the negro muttered fearfully: "Lookout, white folks, you'll step on her."

Negro's Manner Arouses Suspicion.

He was unable to readily locate the position of the body. His wild and excited manner instantly aroused suspicion when the body was found. The limbs had not grown rigid, and the crimson mass over the wound in the head was still moist.

She had been placed in a corner of the basement, evidently with the intention of concealment. Face downward, the form partly covered by sawdust and shavings, was barely discernible from a distance. In the meager light shed by the lantern the body was hidden completely from view.

The negro, in custody of a uniformed policeman and under arrest, was carried to the office on the third floor. A thorough search was made of the basement. The two notes were first found. One lay within three feet of the corpse. The other some distance further. Both were plainly in view and lay upon the sawdust flooring. A man's handkerchief, crimson with blood, but with no identifying marks, was discovered near the first note.

The victim's handkerchief was found in the trash pile, forty feet away from the spot where lay the body. The hat and parasol were hidden in the pit of the elevator shaft. No marks of identification were found upon the dead girl. Her mesh bag, containing a few dollars in change, was missing, and has not yet been found. A plain gold bracelet adorned her left wrist. It was splattered with blood and was bent and battered. A girl's signed ring, engraved with the lone letter "W," was upon the little finger of the right hand.

The problem of identifying the slain girl confronted the police, Rogers, in whose car they were rushed to the scene, volunteered to go for Miss Grace Hicks, an employee of the pencil factory, with whom he was acquainted, and to bring her to the place in the hope that she might recognize the body. Miss Hicks was found at her home, 100 McDonough Road. She got out of bed at 6 o'clock, dressed and came with Rogers to town.

Identifies Corpse and Swoons.

Instantly she viewed the corpse, she swooned. Upon being revived, she revealed the dead girl's identity:

"She is Mary Phagan, and she lives at 116 Lindsay street," she said. "She

and I have been working together at the same machine. She was the best girl I ever knew, and a pure child never lived."

The negro watchman was brought to the basement. His story was to the effect that he had entered through the cubby hole at 3:15 o'clock on his hourly round. Usually, he said, he went into the basement but seldom. At the time the body was discovered, according to his story, he did not intend to go through the place, but only half way.

Going into a toilet, which is situated some twenty feet from the recess in which the body was discovered, he says he remained therein for several minutes, leaving his lantern sitting outside. Upon emerging, he declares the light fell upon the partly hidden form of the dead girl.

Elevating his lantern, the negro peered more closely at the object. Gradually, he discerned in the dim, weird light, the outlines of a human form. Thinking some one was trying to play a prank on him, he advanced upon the body. Still suspecting a joke, he reached down and caught an arm in his hand. It was limp and human. The negro screamed and fled for the ladder leading to the first floor.

He declared he had heard no screams at any time of the night, and that no one, of his knowledge, had entered the building since the closing hour. He stated further that he had made hourly inspection of the building.

Accused Negro Irritable.

Lee is a middle-aged negro, black, thick-lipped and hazy-eyed. All during the day he was nervous and irritable. He is married, and had been at work with the pencil factory for only three weeks. The charge against him at police headquarters is suspicion, under which he will be detained until the mystery is cleared.

He was forced to show his discovery in pantomime. All lights were cut out of the basement, the single entrance to the rear was shut tight, and the only illumination was the lantern he carried at the time. A detective was stretched upon the spot where the body was found. While a small assemblage of detectives, police officials and reporters stood about the basement in hushed groups, the negro, alone, descended the ladder from the cubby hole, swinging his lantern. His step was faulty, and he missed the lower rung.

Slowly and deliberately, he walked to the closet. Sitting the lantern outside the small inclosure, he entered, emerging quickly. The rays of light barely fell upon the form of the detective lying in the sawdust. It was barely distinguishable. The watchman picked up the light, held it aloft and peered at the prostrate slench in exactly the manner he had previously described. With wavering step he advanced upon the spot, caught the detective's right wrist in a tremulous hand, and said:

"There, now, white folks. That's exactly how it happened."

The belief of detectives is that the girl was drugged before being carried into the factory. Before returning home as she intended, they believe, she met with one or more acquaintances, presumably men acquainted with the pencil plant. She was enticed away, it is advanced, drugged, as is shown by Skipper's story, and led in the direction of Forsyth street.

It is suggested that she was lured into the building from the Forsyth street entrance. The deed, apparently, was committed upon either the first or second floor. No blood or marks of scuffle can be found, however, on either. When the girl resisted the efforts of her captors, she was choked into submission.

Choked With Undergarments.

The detectives believe that it was at this point where the girl's screams were heard by the Woodward negro. The garrote with which she was choked were two strips torn from her underclothing and knotted together. She was a strong girl, and undoubtedly fought tigerishly. Dr. John W. Hurt, who performed the examination upon her body, asserted his opinion that it was a task for more than one man to overpower her, which, to a degree, substantiates the theory that there were more than one connected with the crime.

Criminal assault was committed upon the victim. Such is the opinion of detectives and medical experts. The deed committed, according to the theory of the police, the fiends, anxious to seal their victim's lips forever, choked her to death, made sure she was dead by the blow in the head, then secreted her corpse in the cellar.

The body was lowered through the hole by the rope found looped around the girl's neck. This, also, was a task for more than one man. Her weight was estimated at 150 pounds or more. The form was dragged the distance of 100 feet from the ladder to the recess upon the face. A trail was in the sawdust showing the path made by the body.

The rear door, leading to an alleyway to which entrance is gained from West Hunter street, was forced open. The staple holding the lock was prized off. The murderers, upon ridding themselves of the body, were too frightened to return upstairs and to emerge from the factory through the Forsyth street entrance. Instead they fled through the safer exit in rear of the building.

The mystery is baffling. Chief Beav-

ers, in a talk to each of the police watchmen, instructed ever three of the uniform department by man his every effort in running do to lend Phagan's slayers. A small town Miss detectives have been assigned army of case. Never before has such to the tardy crime stirred the catch a dash. All day Sunday thousands flocked to view the dead girl. Punishment to town's exclusive story of the Constitution in an extra that the tragedy, daybreak, spread the news like wild fire. In every respect it is one of the most horrible crimes of local police records.