

The Tide Gate

THE CASE FILE

Ansel Bodiford, who had signed the lease over to a buyer no hand here had met, was found in the pen water at 3:20, at the end of the round. The coroner set three readings against the one mark and would not choose. A torn oilskin hung on the dock rail. Frampton and Limehouse had shed theirs there; Seabrook and Hazzard too, as every hand does off a night tide.

Nothing goes over unclipped: sink weights 1 to 3, stack bars 4 to 6, haul lines 7 to 9, one of each to a berth. The tide board bands them: the outer berth takes the grown stock, 1, 6, 8; the middle berth the seed, 3, 4, 9; the inner berth the shell, 2, 5, 7. The make-up book: 1 Hazzard, 2 and 3 Frampton; 4 and 5 Limehouse, 6 Frampton; 7 and 8 Hazzard, 9 Seabrook. All nine came back. The standby round bands no berth; Limehouse had it last, two weights.

THE VICTIM	FOUND AT	TIME	APPARENT CAUSE
Ansel Bodiford	In the pen water, below the wash	3:20 a.m.	Undetermined

THE SUSPECTS

1

DELIA FRAMPTON

Shoal hand, first round

Motive: The sale killed the note Bodiford owed her for two seasons of seed.

Alibi: "On the wash float, running the grader." The wash book takes her mark at 2:52. A mark fixes a minute, not the hour it opens.

2

OTIS LIMEHOUSE

Shoal hand, second round

Motive: Bodiford promised him the nursery float, then sold it out from under him.

Alibi: "At the fuel drum, topping off cans." The fuel book has his hand at 3:04. A book says he signed, not that he stayed.

3

NORA SEABROOK

Shoal hand, third round

Motive: Her family's name came off the lease the week Bodiford signed.

Alibi: "At the scale house, weighing out." The scale slips hold her count at 2:58. A slip fixes a weight, not the hands that follow it.

4

CALEB HAZZARD

Shoal hand, fourth round

Motive: Bodiford had his brother put off the shoal over a short count.

Alibi: "Racking clips back at the shed." The rack book holds his signature at 2:47. A signature closes a draw, not what follows it.

H	Y	P	O	T	H	E	R	M	I	A	O	C	N
A	W	S	H	Y	E	E	G	D	E	R	D	T	A
D	N	T	S	T	G	N	I	R	G	O	H	M	I
R	O	R	T	G	F	F	I	K	S	E	U	N	S
E	I	A	A	W	L	N	S	J	T	A	T	G	A
A	T	N	B	Y	K	V	E	A	R	O	N	O	N
C	A	G	B	K	X	T	L	T	N	I	M	G	I
Y	C	U	I	I	O	F	T	G	N	C	N	G	T
S	O	L	N	Q	D	N	E	O	U	I	D	P	R
P	F	A	G	U	U	R	S	L	H	O	S	L	A
U	F	T	M	L	R	I	L	S	C	T	K	Q	P
L	U	I	B	V	O	E	U	H	W	H	I	V	S
F	S	O	Q	P	R	R	M	W	R	A	C	K	O
V	C	N	I	A	C	S	H	U	C	K	E	R	Y

EVIDENCE 2 - THE HIDDEN MESSAGE

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| 1. FLUPSY | 2. TONGER | 3. DREDGE | 4. SHUCKER |
| 5. MUDFLAT | 6. SPARTINA | 7. CULLER | 8. SKIFF |
| 9. HOGRING | 10. WRACK | | |

YOUR LETTERS**THE HIDDEN WORD**

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EVIDENCE 1 - THE MISSING WORD

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| ☐ HYPOTHERMIA | ☐ STRANGULATION | ☐ BLUNT TRAUMA | ☐ SUFFOCATION |
| ☐ DROWNING | ☐ STABBING | ☐ POISONING | ☐ CRUSHING |

EVIDENCE 1 - METHOD**EVIDENCE 2 - LOCATION****VERDICT - CULPRIT**