

The Long Splice

THE CASE FILE

Ezra Wolcott signed the walk over to a trust on Friday; the hands who kept it are not in the papers. He was found between the stages at 10:20, after the last laying. The examiner read the one mark three ways and would not settle. A pawl bar sat shipped in the crab winch, the fall hard on it; Thurlow and Rackliff had left theirs so; Bickmore and Gerrish too, as no hand unships before the tar.

Each lane keeps its own tagged gear: laying mallets 1 to 3, haul weights 4 to 6, serving hanks 7 to 9, and the round sets each tag against a pot. The head pot takes the tar run, 2, 6, 9; the mid pot the pitch, 3, 4, 7; the yard pot the rosin, 1, 5, 8. The draw book: 1, 2, 3 Thurlow, Gerrish, Thurlow; 4, 5, 6 Rackliff, Rackliff, Thurlow; 7, 8, 9 Bickmore, Bickmore, Rackliff. One mallet, one weight and one hank to a pot; all nine came back.

THE VICTIM	FOUND AT	TIME	APPARENT CAUSE
Ezra Wolcott	On the walk floor, between the stages	10:20 p.m.	Undetermined

THE SUSPECTS

1

SILAS THURLOW

Rope hand, first turn

Motive: The trust ends the lease on the loft where he sells his own line.

Alibi: "At the swift end, hauling off." The yarn book carries his mark at 9:52. A mark fixes one minute and says nothing of the rest.

2

NELL RACKLIFF

Rope hand, second turn

Motive: Wolcott struck her father's name off the walk's founding board.

Alibi: "Weighing hemp at the store shed." The store slips carry her hand at 10:04. A signed slip fixes a delivery, not the hour around it.

3

OTIS BICKMORE

Rope hand, third turn

Motive: He was promised the head stage, then read his name off the layoff list.

Alibi: "Racking gear back at the tag crib." The crib book holds his name at 9:48. Closing a rack ends a draw, it does not hold him there.

4

HARRIET GERRISH

Rope hand, fourth turn

Motive: Her indenture dies with the walk, and the trust files no new ones.

Alibi: "At the water door, taking in coir." The door book marks her at 10:01. A door mark shows a passage and nothing past it.

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

EVIDENCE 2 - THE HIDDEN MESSAGE

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| 1. HACKLE | 2. SLIVER | 3. ROVING | 4. WHIRL |
| 5. MARLINE | 6. GRUMMET | 7. SEIZING | 8. PARCELING |
| 9. FOOTROPE | | | |

YOUR LETTERS**THE HIDDEN WORD**

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EVIDENCE 1 - THE MISSING WORD

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| ☐ STRANGULATION | ☐ BLUNT TRAUMA | ☐ CRUSHING | ☐ HANGING |
| ☐ FATAL FALL | ☐ ASPHYXIATION | ☐ DROWNING | ☐ GARROTING |

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