

The Opinion of The Night Watchman and Christina M. Meide on “Who Murdered Anna Wiese”

I think the one thing that we can all agree upon is that Anna Wiese died a most horrifying death at the hands of a person or persons with a heart of steel, no conscience and little or no remorse for the pain that they inflicted on Anna and those that loved her. After the deed, the only worry the murderer(s) would have had was to stay cool, calm and collected to avoid having suspicion pointed in their direction.

How, you might wonder, would a person or persons have the strength and ability to carry out this kind of acting job that would be the envy of even the most famous movie star of our time?

We wondered this as well, but the story unfolded itself quite clearly, and in our minds, the guilty party showed their skill of survival each and every day of both trials.

In order to make no mistakes in our evaluation, we took each trial, pulled it apart, and made lists of the following items:

- 1) Anna's wounds
 - a) head
 - b) throat
 - c) body
 - d) face
 - e) hands
- 2) Location of key people within the neighborhood at the time of the murder
- 3) Location and reaction of people in the neighborhood upon being informed of the murder
- 4) Who went searching for the murderer
- 5) Evidence
- 6) Possible suspects – why and why not
- 7) Juror information

We will do this step-by-step for you here so that you might see how we were thinking aloud as we investigated this horrendous crime.

The first thing we noticed is that the three professionals, who examined Anna's body after the murder, could not seem to agree on her injuries. I told The Night Watchman that Peter Ben Dixon, the furniture dealer who prepared Anna's body for burial (and considered one of the three experts), was more acute in his observations than either the physician or the coroner. At times, it seemed they had each examined a completely different person instead of just Anna. See for yourself.

Head

Dr. W. S. Devine – Physician and Surgeon

2 wounds on head

- 1) Right side near top of head – commenced a little forward of ear on right, extended down and slightly back – 3” long and went to skull – sharp instrument used
- 2) Lower wound on base of skull – 1-1/2” long and went to skull – contused, gaping – made by blunt instrument

Dr. W. F. David – Coroner

3 wounds on head

- 1) Right side of head 1-1/2” long where skin was broken
- 2) 2 bruises left side of head – contused – no blood – 2 blows from blunt instrument

Peter Ben Dixon – prepared Anna's body for burial

4 wounds on head

- 1) 1 injury on side of head – to the skull
- 2) 2 on top of head – one above the ear made with sharp instrument and 3-4” long
- 3) 1 on base of skull – back of head broken through

All wounds deep enough to go through to skull

We couldn't understand, if they examined the same body, how all of their reports could be so different. The only answer that we could come up with was that they were more interested in the cut that ended her life than anything else. They were much closer in their reports here.

Throat

Dr. W. S. Devine

2 wounds on throat

- 1) Just below Adam's Apple – only slight
- 2) One above first cut very deep – commencing on right and passing to left severing all muscles and organs in that part of throat

Dr. W. F. David

2 wounds on throat

- 1) Commenced on right side of neck, very deep and coming to the surface on left side. Severed all arteries and veins on that side, but not on left. Commenced under ear, continued nearly to left ear – just under Adam's Apple
- 2) Cut on right side of neck – 2" long about 1/4" below main cut

Peter Ben Dixon

1 wound on throat

- 1) Throat cut from right to left

Not much elaboration on Mr. Dixon's part on the throat, but let's not judge his abilities as yet. After all, he wasn't there to determine her injuries. He was there to clean up her body for the funeral, but you'll be surprised still at his observation skills.

Body

Dr. W. S. Devine

6 wounds on body

- 1) 3 chest cuts – one very deep about 6th rib penetrated pleural cavity and about 14" above hip – was a stab wound with part of wound to front of body
 - 2) 3 on left breast – very slight
- *At second trial, he stated that 2 or more wounds on body penetrated the pleural cavity

Dr. W. F. David

6 wounds on body

- 1) deep wound on right side – entered cavity of body – nearly to spine
 - 2) 2 stab wounds on right side – 1-1/2" apart
 - 3) 2-3 stabs on left side between breast and left arm – flesh wounds
- *At second trial, he said there were 8 wounds – 5 distinct stabs in front, some slight, part deep and 3 surface wounds on left

Peter Ben Dixon

7 wounds on body

- 1) 2 holes on right side
- 2) 5 holes on left side and back – some holes on back were clear through to the hollow

Is anyone else thinking here that if there is a murder to be solved, we would prefer to have the furniture dealer, Mr. Dixon, do the gathering of the evidence? How can things be so different between these three men?

Face

Dr. W. S. Devine

Scratches on upper lip and chin – scratched by fingernails

Abrasion on chin about 1-1/2” long

Dr. W. F. David

Nothing mentioned about face

Peter Ben Dixon

3 or 4 scratches on upper lip – up and down

Hands

Dr. W. S. Devine

Small contusions on hand – no cuts – right hand just below wrist

Dr. W. F. David

Right hand bruised – no cuts

Peter Ben Dixon

Nothing mentioned

Well, there you have it. It appears that the only thing the physician and coroner could agree on was that Anna’s throat was, indeed, cut and that she had bruises on her hand. Everything else was so different that it is difficult to have anything to go on at all. For our investigation, we decided to go by Mr. Dixon’s assessment with maybe a bit of description from the other two if it applied, but include Dr. W. S. Devine’s observation of Anna’s face and the physician and coroner’s assessment of Anna’s hand. This gave us more of a full body view, so to speak.

Now that we’ve covered the injuries, let’s take a look at the people in the neighborhood and where they were at the time of the murder.

Henry Russie – He was in the house helping his invalid wife dress for the night. He’d been out tending a sick foal before coming in to do his husbandly duties. Mr. and Mrs. Russie both heard Anna scream and it’s Mrs. Russie who sent her husband to go help Anna.

Perry Greggs – Age 14 at the time. He was tending the foal when the screams were heard. Mr. Russie told him to go, but he was afraid, so they went together.

Arthur Hill – He was in the house with his wife and children after Anna had left their house.

T. P. Low – He and his wife had seen Anna twice that night. Once on the road and once sitting at Arthur Hill's house in the doorway. They were home and nearly in bed when the murder took place.

Si and Emily Bennett – They say that they were home together and nearly ready for bed.

Arthur Sherlock – He had gone to Green Mountain after the mail as was his custom on Saturday nights. He arrived home only a short time before he heard about the murder.

These are the people that seemed the most important to us in this investigation as they all lived close to the vicinity of the murder site.

Let's examine, now, the same people, and how they reacted to hearing about Anna Wiese being murdered.

Henry Russie – He stood by Anna's body, watching her and thinking that she had fainted, while Perry Greggs ran to get Arthur Hill. Apparently, due to the weeds, he was not able to see the blood all over her even though the reports said he moved her head into a more comfortable position. There are a few conflicting statements saying that he held her and cried like a baby, but had he done this, he would have had blood on his clothing. Heard screams at about 10:05 p.m.

Perry Greggs – Being just a boy, he didn't take the time to look at Anna. He did as Henry Russie told him and ran to fetch Arthur Hill.

Arthur Hill – He was still dressed, all but his shoes, when Perry called to him at about 10:20 p.m. Upon arriving at the site, he looked at Anna and told Henry that her throat had been cut, then immediately took charge and went to warn people.

T. P. Low – He and his wife were in bed sleeping when they learned about the murder from Arthur Hill. The wife said approximately 10:50 p.m. and the husband stated 11 p.m.

Si and Emily Bennett – Here we have conflicting stories. They claim to have been in their night dresses, but Arthur Hill says that Si Bennett came to the door in overalls and a shirt, but he could not see if Si had shoes on. Si Bennett did not come out of the house and held the door in such a manner that no one could see in. They learned about the murder about 11 p.m.

Arthur Sherlock – He had started to undress for bed when he heard Arthur calling for his step-father. He came downstairs and heard that Anna had been murdered. Again, about 11 p.m.

At this point, we know that no one had actually seen Emily Bennett. According to testimony from her husband and son, Emily had gotten out of bed when Arthur Hill called for her husband, but that her husband told her to go get dressed.

We also know that the only two people, other than the wives and children of the other men, who did not go out searching for the murderer was Si and Emily Bennett. Emily sent her son out into possible danger instead. They claim that they stayed up all night watching out the window, just in case the murderer happened by. However, several witnesses testified that they drove past the Bennett farm several times through the night and it was completely dark. If they were up keeping vigilance, wouldn't there have been at least one light?

There was really not a whole lot of evidence despite the magnitude of the crime committed. It was also odd that since Henry Russie and Perry Greggs were on the scene only minutes after Anna had actually died, that no sign of where the murderer went could be found. Basically, scuffle marks, tramped down grass, and blood on the second strand of the barb wired fence were all that could be found. No footprints, no path, nothing.

The following is the evidence that we have used to make our decision about this investigation.

Hair

This was found by the coroner, Dr. W. F. David, in Anna's left hand. Her fingers were partly closed and he had to separate them to get the hair out of her hand. She had a hold of approximately 12 to 15 strands of hair. Another lock of hair was found on the left of her chest about 8" below the top of her shoulder.

Numerous experts were brought into the case to examine the hair found in Anna's hand, on her shoulder, and hair taken from the heads of people in the surrounding community of the murder site. Anna's body was even exhumed to get more hair. The experts in the first trial were Dr. Cottle, the Marshalltown physician and surgeon; Professor Maurice Ricker, a Marshalltown high school teacher and Dr. Thos. Taylor, a government microscopist from Washington, D. C. In the second trial, Dr. Cottle and Professor Maurice Ricker were joined in the testimony of the hair by William Barrow, a wig maker from Chicago, Illinois and Dr. Irving J. Smith, a professor of pathology and histology from the State Ag College in Ames, Iowa.

Dr. Cottle spent a great deal of time examining the hair of Anna – 2000 hairs from her head as well the hairs from the heads of many others, including Emily Bennett. He had a vested interest in finding the truth as the people involved in the case were all patients or friends of his. Out of all the doctors, or professionals, who examined the hair, we believe that Dr. Cottle did the most thorough job.

We didn't pay much attention to Professor Maurice Ricker as he had really not done a lot of examinations of any kind under a microscope.

Dr. Thomas Taylor, from Washington, D.C., should have never been put on the stand. He was, a so-called expert with the microscope, but he didn't even take notes of his findings!!! He spent very little time examining the hair, yet sat on the stand and testified that it was impossible to tell color, texture, etc. of different hairs using the microscope. Of course, he testified for the defense, but we would have thought that if he was the ONLY microscopist for the government, that he would have put his best time and effort into examining what he had been given.

In our opinion, the best witness for the hair was William Barrow, the wigmaker from Chicago. This man had no vested interest in the case, but he could testify that a person didn't need a microscope to tell the difference in hair. His profession required that the eye and touch told you what you needed to know and this is what he had done for years for his clients. In his mind, it was easy to tell the difference between Anna Wiese's hair and Emily Bennett's hair – the color and the texture. It was obvious to him that the hair he examined from Anna's hand belonged to Emily Bennett and the hair on Anna's shoulder came from her own head. Of course, because he wasn't a microscopist, no one really thought he knew what he was talking about. We don't think the jurors took this witness too seriously, though he was nearly the only one with half a brain.

Dr. Irving J. Smith was another mystery to us. Why bring in a professor of pathology and histology who specialized in plants and animals? If this person had never examined human hair before, what possible new insight could he give other than he knew how to use a microscope? Complete waste of time.

Fence

Numerous people observed the marks of blood on the second strand of the barbed wire fence where it appeared someone lifted it up to crawl through. Since there didn't seem to be any other obvious clues left behind by the murderer, and there was no blood anywhere else other than on Anna – well... there were three pools of blood, but there apparently wasn't any blood stains on the grass or anything. What are the chances that someone walking down the road on a different day, who decided to cut through the field, would have bloody hands that day allowing for the marks on the second strand of barbed wire? Pretty nil, don't you think? If you were the murderer, and you needed a quick get away because it was possible that Anna's screams had alerted someone, where would you go? Would you trot up the road where anyone could see you or would you go through the barbed wire fence into the tall field grass?

Grass

All we really know about this was that it was tramped down for a space of about five or six feet either from a struggle or someone lying in wait for Anna. There was no sign of struggle in the road which means the dirt was not disturbed. Our guess, since no one seemed to be able to follow a trail through that grass because it popped right back up

again, was that someone had laid in that grass for a period of time, waiting. The period of time would have been required to make the grass remain flat.

Club

Here we have an amazing piece of evidence. The club, made of soft maple, was apparently more of a long stick that could have been used as a walking stick. When found at the scene, it was broken into four pieces. This obviously means it was swung with great force. Now, in trying to find maple clubs, it was determined by quite a number of people that there were clubs in the groves of many of the farms, but none of these clubs matched the soft maple that could be found in Bennett's cow yard. The clubs found at Bennett's were in their cow yard and the club found by Anna had manure on it.

Hmmm...

Gate on Bennett's Property

This is a tough one, yet not so tough. Despite the discoloration of the mark on the gate, several witnesses said that it was a handprint or finger marks that their own hand fit well into. Bennett's claimed that it came from dehorning the cattle, however, the cattle were dehorned at someone else's farm and then herded back to Bennett's. The person doing the dehorning testified that the cattle did not leave until they were finished bleeding just in case cauterization was required to keep them from bleeding to death. If, in fact, the cattle were still bleeding and had shaken their heads once back in the cow yard at Bennett's, we would see a random splatter pattern. If they rubbed their heads across the wood due to itching, you would see a streaked mark. This would not fit the size and shape of a hand.

Other Blood Stains

We asked a friend of ours who does a lot of berry picking if cherry juice would stain a person's hands. He said that cherry juice leaves hands very sticky, but washes off easily with soap and water, however, it will stain clothing. Other types of berries actually stain the skin and is not as easily removed. The stain on the porcelain doorknob could have easily been cherry juice, but what was found on the door casing – soaked in – could not. Had that been cherry juice, it would have left a sticky residue – not soaked in. Emily Bennett washed the porcelain doorknob, thus removing the stain, but she was unable to get the stain of "cherry juice" off of the door casing which was made of wood.

Button

We didn't put much credence in the button that was found. It didn't match anything that was examined of Emily Bennett's clothing, although it could have been a button from a pair of overalls, but no one mentioned buttons on overalls. This was just one of those odd pieces of evidence that a person really doesn't know what to do with.

Waist

A waist is kind of like an undershirt. It goes from waist to neck underneath clothing. Again, we kind of disregarded this piece of evidence because if a person were to murder someone, we doubted that they would be wearing a waist with nothing over top of it. The waist may very well have been washed, hung to dry, and then put away. No particular

reason, we all put things away all the time that we don't plan to use or wear again anytime soon.

Knife

Apparently, the knife was taken from Arthur Sherlock by G. R. Haas a week to ten days after the murder. It was a pocket knife and Arthur Sherlock never denied owning it. This was not a piece of evidence that was dwelled on much or mentioned much, so it is hard to determine if the knife was the one that actually was used to murder Anna Wiese. You would have thought that the attorneys would have questioned this a bit more, but it seems that most of their concentration was on the waist and the hair.

Other Evidence

There were two pairs of overalls freshly washed at Bennett's house, hanging to dry.

Si Bennett had a scratch on his nose, though this could have been from threshing the day before. The threshing theory, of course, can't really be true, because Si Bennett was ill the entire day of Anna's murder, and to his own admittance, he didn't do anything which obviously means he didn't thresh. The scratch on the nose was not mentioned by the neighbors who came to pick cherries, but it was mentioned on the day after Anna's murder by several who saw Si Bennett.

Hairpins found at the scene of the crime were brought into play in the second trial. Only one witness testified that she didn't believe that they were Anna's hairpins, but she couldn't say for certain. We believe, since most witnesses testified that Anna's hair was down when she was found, that they probably were her hairpins. However, no one ever mentioned having compared the hairpins to anyone other woman's hairpins in the neighborhood, so again, this is kind of a waste of time to consider as evidence.

We bring you now to the possible suspects – why they should be considered or why they should not be considered. We will examine the same people as previously mentioned due to their close proximity to the murder scene.

Henry Russie – Henry's wife was an invalid and what we got from testimony is that not much slipped by her despite her handicap. We did consider the possibility that, because his wife was an invalid, maybe he made advances on Anna and didn't want her to tell, so he murdered her. No... that's pretty farfetched. Why? Henry was in the process of helping his wife dress for bed when the screams were heard from Anna. It was she that insisted her husband go and help Anna, so there is no way that he can be in two places at once. He also did not go alone to find Anna. It also seemed from his testimony that Henry was a bit of a squeamish man when it came to women so our determination here is that he should not be considered a suspect.

Perry Greggs – Here we have a 14 year old boy, though we really don't know how large a boy he was. Iowa boys can be quite big – hard work and good food make for healthy

growth. However, Perry was caring for the sick foal when Henry told him to go find out what was wrong with Anna. Being a boy, having heard the screams, he didn't want to go alone, so the two went together. Again, Perry could not have been in two places at once.

T. P. Low – This man and his wife are a possibility. They knew Anna's whereabouts that night having met her on the road, and later, seeing her at Hill's sitting in the doorway. Of course, they were on their way home from a neighbor's when they saw her in the doorway, so did they pull their wagon into the grass of the slough and wait for her to head for home? Highly doubtful. If this had been the case, Henry and Perry would have seen their wagon leaving the scene, but there was no such sighting. No. We don't believe that this couple murdered Anna. If they had planned to do so, they would have waited for her to come over to eat melon as they'd invited her and then figured out a way to get rid of her. Besides, they lived further away from the murder scene than the rest of those mentioned and were in bed when Arthur Hill alerted them of the murder.

Si and Emily Bennett – It was rumored that Emily was jealous of Anna because her husband and son both spoke very frankly with Anna as though she were their wife. Doesn't seem proper for Emily's husband to do this, does it?

Emily had also made mention to others that she didn't care for Anna's behavior around men and talked badly about her on several occasions, even going so far as to tell Mrs. Sprecker that Anna would ride the boys to death if she could. This indicates that Emily believed Anna to be sexually active. She was also the one to spread the rumor that Anna was pregnant the year before, giving more credence to the fact that Anna was a loose kind of girl.

Si Bennett was ill the entire day of the murder and admitted to doing nothing. The neighbors that came to pick cherries that day testified that Si was also ill and just sat by the tree while they picked the cherries. However, later in the evening, though Arthur Sherlock could have, before going to Green Mountain for the mail, brought in the cattle for Si, instead Si did it himself. Arthur Sherlock saw him doing it as he was leaving for Green Mountain. No one could remember Si having been ill before.

Neither Si nor Emily went out searching for Anna's murderer. Every man in the neighborhood went, including Emily's son, but Si stayed at home. This could have been because he still felt ill, but no mention of this possibility was made at either trial. It appeared that they also did not stay up to keep watch as they stated since not one light showed throughout the night as others who were searching rode past their home.

Emily Bennett was the only woman in the neighborhood with hair similar in color to Anna's.

Emily Bennett told Mrs. Sprecker before the murder that on the Sunday before the murder, Anna had come in for tea, and at that time, she had overheard a conversation while she was momentarily away from the kitchen between Arthur Sherlock and Anna that she didn't deem appropriate. However, after the murder, Emily's story changed and

she said that Anna never came to the house for tea. She said that she went to the end of the road to talk to Anna there and that no such conversation was had between Arthur Sherlock and Anna.

Emily Bennett began complaining to neighbors that she was ill after the murder, though none had ever known her to be ill. She especially complained about her arm being useless, though many people had seen her manhandle milk cans, laundry and the like with both arms without complaint.

Emily Bennett seemed hell bent on making sure that Albert Isenhardt was arrested and punished for the murder of Anna. In fact, she went so far as to visit the neighbors all excited that he might be hung, saying that she was sending her son, Arthur Sherlock, to witness what they did to bad people. Any message there?

The club was already mentioned under evidence as were the overalls.

Now, here are a few questions that we'd like you to consider.

Mr. Bennett testified to nearly every move Emily made the day of the murder, including what she was wearing that day and the day following. Within the busy life of a farmer, what are the chances that he would really have any idea what she did with her time as long as the work was done? Of course, since he was conveniently ill that day, he might very well have noticed what she did, but what she wore? Even Arthur Sherlock testified to what his mother wore, not just on the day of the murder, but when the waist was being introduced into evidence. What boy would ever really notice what his mother wore unless she had completely decked out in a way he wasn't accustomed to?

In testifying, it was said that Emily Bennett's arm was so bad, that Si Bennett had to help his wife dress and undress. On the night of the murder, Si Bennett went out to bring in the cattle and stated that his wife was ready for bed when he came in. How could this have happened if he had to help her on and off with her clothes due to her arm?

The newspapers commented often on the fact that Emily Bennett showed absolutely no emotion throughout either trial. It was especially prominent in the first trial. They went so far as to praise how stoic she was throughout and made the comment that it would break a woman less strong than she. Does this not give the impression that she could have easily committed the murder and not thought twice about it? Despite knowing she could die or go to jail if found guilty and that she was listening to friends and neighbors testify against her, she never broke a sweat or showed an emotion. Amazing, don't you think?

The last thing that we will cover here before we move on to how we believe the murder actually happened, is about the jurors. This is something that may or may not have struck you as important.

The first trial was nearly done. The jurors had been deliberating for over 40 hours. They went to breakfast. The liveliest man, Henry Desch, according to the other jurors, began to eat, then complained of being ill and stopped eating. He was taken back to the courthouse where he grew worse. A doctor was finally called. His symptoms were: severe convulsions taking a number of strong men to hold him in place; copious hemorrhaging from the bowel, and pain so severe that his screams could be heard two blocks from the courthouse. Henry Desch was finally taken to his home and no one knew for sure that he would make it. He survived, but it was a horrendous experience for him.

At the second trial, as the closing arguments were taking place, Juror Willum became ill. He complained of cramping in the stomach and bowels. The court took a recess at 10:30 to allow him to go to the doctor, but when he returned, he grew worse. At 11 a.m., the court adjourned again and the jurors were taken to the east room within the courthouse. Willum lay doubled up due to paroxysms of pain on a table and his symptoms were similar to Henry Desch, from the first trial, though not as violent. Willum resumed his juror duty at 1:30 p.m., though he may not have felt up to it. No one wanted to repeat the trial a third time.

We looked into a few different poisons that could have easily been gotten in the 1800's. The two that stood out the most were arsenic and strychnine.

Arsenic is an odorless and tasteless poison that can be gotten in white powder form which will dissolve in liquid. It is toxic to the gastrointestinal tract. The symptoms from ingesting arsenic are as follows: nausea, vomiting, colicky abdominal pain, diarrhea, dry mouth, garlic breath odor, hair loss, numbness, hemorrhaging from intestine and loss of fluids resulting in vascular collapse with dizziness, convulsions, coma and death.

Now, we don't really know how many of these other symptoms that Henry Desch and Juror Willum had. The hair loss and numbness take place if a person ingests arsenic over a period of time. What if it is given all at once?

Strychnine acts rapidly on the central nervous system causing violent convulsions that result in death from sheer exhaustion and asphyxiation. Ingestion produces jackknife back and forth action from agony followed by furious savage convulsions.

Either poison could have been responsible for Henry Desch's near death experience. If, in fact, he was poisoned, whoever did it must have been terrified of nearly killing another human being, so when the second juror became ill, the amount given was probably much less than Henry Desch had received. If this is the case, whoever gave the poison was probably much disappointed that they had given too little and that the trial went on as planned. However, Emily Bennett was released anyway due to lack of evidence found by the jurors.

What you will find in the next few pages is our vision of how the murder actually took place. We are using the injuries (stab wounds) observed by Mr. Dixon – the furniture dealer and the man who prepared Anna’s body for burial – as he seemed to have more knowledge than the doctor and the coroner. However, in the case of the hand being bruised and the cuts on the face, we will use the information from the doctor and the coroner.

On the Sunday before the murder, we believe that Anna did stop at the Bennett’s and came in to tea as Emily Bennett’s original version of the story stated. We also believe that Emily overheard a conversation between her “husband” (explained later) and Anna that she didn’t believe was appropriate and was afraid that her husband was interested in Anna because of her “loose” attitude towards men. We don’t believe that Arthur Sherlock had any interest, other than friendship with Anna, and that he did have a girl that he was seeing regularly, but he and Anna had gone to the same school and had some kind of camaraderie as school mates will. Emily Bennett used this, and took matters into her own hands.

On Saturday, August 26, 1893, Anna finished her chores at the Russie’s, took a bath and cleaned herself up, then left to visit with Arthur Hill’s wife. On the way, she met T. P. Low and his wife, spoke with them for a bit, then continued on her way. While visiting with Arthur Hill’s wife in the kitchen of their home, she sat in a chair against the open door. When Arthur Hill came home, Anna was still visiting. T. P. Low and his wife, saw Anna in the doorway of Hill’s home on their return trip home after visiting with friends.

At 10:00, Anna left to go back to Russie’s. It was a beautiful moonlit night with just a slight breeze and she probably wouldn’t have had a care in the world. It was not at all unusual for her to go visiting at Hill’s in the evening after a full day’s work, so this night was really no different than any other. As she was passing through the area of the slough, Emily Bennett, dressed in overalls and with a knife that was in the pocket of the overalls, stepped out and stabbed Anna deeply in her right side, then another quick stab. Obviously, the pain would have taken Anna by surprise and she would have screamed, then turned to face her assailant. At this point, Anna would have begun to fight, knowing that Emily was out for blood. In an attempt to protect herself, she would have gone for Emily’s hair, grasping it and pulling Emily’s head downward, but Emily would have retaliated by scratching at Anna’s face. Anna was taller than Emily, so she may have been able to hold her off at arm’s length, but not quite enough as Emily was able to stab Anna shallowly three times between Anna’s left breast and arm.

This is where we believe Si Bennett entered the picture. Emily had more than likely told him that she would handle Anna, but upon seeing his wife in distress and possibly near losing, his first instinct was to help her despite what she was doing. Si Bennett stepped forward and cracked Anna over the hand with the maple club to make her let go of Emily’s hair. The club, being made of soft maple, would have broken for the first time. Anna let go, but her hand pulled some of Emily’s hair out as she did. Turning to face Si Bennett, Emily had the opportunity to stab Anna again. When Anna turned to attack

Emily again, Si hit her again with the club in the temple, thus the breaking of the club in the second spot.

At this point, Anna must have assumed she was out numbered and turned to run, but Emily, not giving up so easily, followed and stabbed her in the back several times. Another hit on the top of her head caused her to stumble and fall to her knees. Another hit with the club to the back of her head would have made her fall forward, and at this point, she was basically unconscious. The last hit would have broken the club again – thus finding it in four pieces. Her head would have been bleeding profusely as head wounds do and left a pool of blood where she lay. The abrasion on her chin may have been caused by the impact of falling forward on the slough grass.

Knowing that the job must be finished so that Anna did not tell, Emily stepped forward with the knife, pulled Anna's head back, but was not able to get a good clean cut, thus the small cut below the one that actually killed her.

Yanking Anna upward and back – nearly to sitting on her butt with her legs basically straight out (more than likely with Si Bennett's help) Emily again tipped Anna's head back, and with her left hand, slit Anna's throat from ear to ear. There would not have been much blood on Emily, despite the fact that the cut was deep on the right side as it would have been done so quickly that Emily's hand would have been out of the way before too much blood covered her. What blood she did have on her hands would probably have come from holding Anna's hair which was covered with blood from the head wounds. At that point, the blood would have gushed from Anna's throat saturating the front of her body.

Letting her drop backward, they then left the scene quickly through the barbed wire fence and back for home. Anna was found lying with her head to the south and the largest pool of blood at her feet which is why we believe she fell forward first causing that pool of blood from her head and was flipped back (the only way her throat could be cut) to be found lying on her back with very little blood under her head. The majority of the blood from her throat covered the front of her body.

Anna was murdered about 10:15. Emily and Si Bennett had time to get back to the house and close themselves into their room before Arthur Sherlock arrived a few minutes before 11 o'clock, when Arthur Hill showed up to tell them of Anna's death. Arthur Hill states that Si Bennett came to the door in his overalls and shirt, but Si Bennett claims they were in their night dresses. We believe Arthur Hill. No one saw Emily Bennett as Si Bennett did not fully open the door.

Knowing that they had clean up to do, Emily sent Arthur Sherlock to help search for Anna while she and her husband washed the overalls and cleaned themselves up.

Emily's attitude during the trial explains how she was able to view Anna's body without flinching before burial and to attend the funeral without any problem. She only began getting fidgety and nervous when the Sheriff's began investigating their fence, the

doorknob, the casing, and then, her house. Knowing that she must find a way to divert their attention away from her, she began telling the neighbors how ill she was, how weak she was, and how she was unable to use her left arm. It is possible that the strain of fighting with Anna did cause her problems with her left arm after the fact. Of course, Si Bennett would have covered for his wife, being an accessory to the crime, by saying that her arm was not very useful and that he had to help her dress and undress.

Arthur Sherlock may have been told about what his mother and step-father had done, but we're not entirely convinced of this. His testimony states that when he came home on the Sunday before the murder, his mother was out in the road talking to Anna. This could well have been true. It is possible that Anna came in to tea as Emily's first story stated and that she actually overheard a conversation from the kitchen between her husband and Anna, but was embarrassed by this and told Mrs. Sprecker it was Anna and Arthur Sherlock who had the conversation. Also, Arthur Sherlock stated that when he came home the night of the murder, his father asked him if there was any mail and if it was going to rain. He said that he did not see or talk to his mother. He went upstairs to go to bed and heard the call from Arthur Hill. When he came downstairs, he saw his mother dressed in her night dress and says that Si Bennett was not in overalls, but did not say what he was wearing. We don't believe that Arthur Sherlock had any reason to harm Anna and that he was probably quite surprised at some of the testimony that he heard from his parents during the trial. Had he had any interest in Anna at all, someone in the small vicinity would have known, just as they knew he'd been seeing the other girl for several years.

Si Bennett may have been ill the day of the murder, but we believe that it was more in his head. Emily Bennett may have concocted the murder beforehand, having had a fight with her husband over the conversation she had heard them have in the kitchen, and threatened to leave him if he didn't help her do something about it. The thought of murdering someone can't sit well with someone with a conscience, but it obviously would not have affected Emily Bennett who seemed to have a heart of stone.

Obviously, what we have written here is based on much speculation because no one really knows for sure what happened that night. However, using the testimony from the trials, the evidence, and the actions of certain parties, we believe this is what happened to Anna Wiese.

Had the murder happened now, it would not take long for the authorities to determine the murderer even without a path to follow. We've come a long way in forensics and it would have taken very little time to gather fingerprints from the club, to determine if the stains found were actually blood and to find out whose hair Anna held in her hand. Those pieces of evidence alone would have been enough to convict the murderer or murderers. Too bad for Anna and her family that forensics was just in its infancy at the time of her death.