



Due to scheduled maintenance, you may experience intermittent access from 30 Jan (Tue), 10pm to 31 Jan 2024 (Wed), 4am. We apologise for the inconvenience.

Home > Newspaper Catalogue > The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (1884-1942) > 1934 > October > 20 > Page 3 > "CERTAIN PERSONS HAD VERY DEFINITE REASONS TO WI...



"CERTAIN PERSONS HAD VERY DEFINITE REASONS TO WISH HIS DEATH"

The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (1884-1942), 20 October 1934, Page 3

Share

Save Citation

< Previous Article Next Article >

"CERTAIN PERSONS HAD VERY DEFINITE REASONS TO WISH HIS DEATH"

Coroner's Declaration At Inquest On A Chinese

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

Kuala Lumpur, Oct. 18.

"THIS man had every reason to believe he would be murdered and certain persons had very definite reasons to wish his death."


This statement was made at an inquest opened yesterday before Mr. J. P. Biddulph, the Coroner, on a 45-year-old Hockchiu Chinese named Lim Sang Tay, a fairly prosperous pig-breeder and vegetable gardener of Gonggang, an area off Rifle Range Road, whose decomposed body, was found buried under a patch of elephant grass 300 yards from his house. It was wrapped in a blanket taken from his own camp-bed.

Owing to the high state of decomposition, no marks of injury could be seen and no trace of poison was found in the internal organs.

Gruesome exhibits were the blanket in which the body was found, and the pair of trousers and belt worn on the body.


Opening the inquest, Mr. R. O. W. M. Davis, Assistant Commissioner of Police, related that about eight o'clock on the night of Sept. 1, Lim Sang Tay





left his house on a bicycle and was seen riding towards Kuala Lumpur in company with three other Chinese who had not been identified yet. To the knowledge of the police he was never seen alive again.


REPORTED MISSING



On Sept. 3, his Hakka wife, Yap Ah Mui, reported him missing, but on the information supplied by her no suspicions were aroused. Two nights later, Lim Nong Nong, a relative of the missing man, made a report which aroused suspicions and which, the next day, led to a thorough search of the area surrounding the house.


Constables ultimately discovered, about 300 yards from the house, and in a patch of elephant grass, ground which had been recently disturbed. Excavations commenced at that spot, and after digging 3½ feet, the police found a body wrapped in a blanket. The body was sent to hospital and was identified as that of the missing man. Two marks of identification were Chinese characters meaning "Peace," tattooed on the left forearm.

CHANGKOL FOUND



About ten feet away from the grave, a changkol was found. The blanket was identified by the wife as one usually used by the deceased.

The post mortem on the body revealed nothing, owing to the high state of decomposition. Internal organs were sent to the Institute of Medical Research for pathological examination and chemical analysis but there were no traces of poison.



"Although the cause of death is not known," concluded Mr. Davis, "we will call a number of witnesses who will say that prior to his disappearance Lim Sang Tay had every reason to believe that he was about to be murdered, that certain persons had very definite reasons indeed to wish for his death, and that one of these persons absconded on the night of Sept. 5 and has not been heard of since."

During his evidence, Dr. Abdul Latiff, who conducted the post mortem, said he had also sent to the

nail, toe-nail, some hair and a portion of the ribs of the deceased. He agreed that there were several poisons which could not be traced after decomposition had reached a certain stage.

Giving evidence himself, Mr. Davis stated that Lim Sang Tay had employed a Hakka coolie named Lee Yew.

"In the course of our inquiries we wished to interview this coolie but in spite of search which has been continued up to the present he has not been found," he concluded.

POINT OF COLLAPSE

Mr. P. C. Au-Yong, who was holding a watching brief on behalf of the relative, Lim Nong Nong, questioned Mr. Davis, asking, "When the wife saw the body of her husband, did she show any signs of sorrow?"

Mr. Davis: She seemed on the point of collapse. She did not cry, but she showed much emotion.

Yap Ah Mui, the widow, said she had been married to Lim Sang Tay for 14 years, and had a son aged nine. She admitted having frequent quarrels with her husband. Lee Yew assisted her husband, but she denied that the quarrels were over him.

The man had never been her lover, and she had never given her husband cause to suspect he was her lover.

About 7.30 on the night of Sept. 1, her husband left the house to collect rice refuse intended as pigs' food. On his return he ate some rice, salt fish, and vegetables cooked by her, and at 8.30 left the house again saying he was going to Kuala Lumpur. That was the last time she saw him alive.

THE THIRD DAY

She searched for him the next day as it was not his usual practice to stay away from home at night, and on the third she made a report to the police. During her husband's disappearance, Lee Yew helped her with the pigs and in the garden, but he disappeared on the night of the fourth.

Referred to the blanket, the witness admitted having missed it from her husband's camp-bed before his body

was found but said she never mentioned the fact to anyone.

NOT IN MOURNING

In reply to Mr. Au-Yong, she admitted she was not in mourning for her husband.

Coroner: Why not?—I have no money with which to buy the cloth.

Coroner: I always thought the Chinese were particular about mourning.

Interpreter: They are not very particular.

Mr. Au-Yong (to witness): Did you attend your husband's funeral?—No.

Coroner: Why?—Because I had a pain in my legs.

Coroner: This is very peculiar; it is a very unusual thing. Did you know the time of the funeral?—Yes, I was informed and I sent my son.

Coroner: Did you make the report of your own free will?—Yes.

It was not suggested by any of your deceased's husband's relatives?—No.

Lim Soon Kong, the son who was being educated at the Maxwell Road School, was referred, in the course of his evidence, to his statement to the police in which he said that about 11 o'clock on the night of Sept. 1, while in bed, he heard two cries of pain in

the voice of his father, coming from outside the house.


"I cannot remember having said that," he replied to a direct question from Mr. Davis.

Coroner: Little boy, do you believe in filial piety? If you know anything about your father's disappearance, tell the truth. It does not matter who is involved.—(There was the same reply.)

Mr. Davis: We can leave the point, your Worship. The only reason I brought it up is because it fixes a time.


Replying to Mr. Au-Yong, the boy admitted that when he heard the cries his mother was with him, but she never left the room.

Mr. Au-Yong: Now think carefully, do you remember your mother telling you not to say anything of the disappearance of your father otherwise she would kill you?



Mr. Davis (interrupting): I would like to know if there is any evidence of that. It has been held that a question of that sort cannot be asked unless there is evidence to substantiate it. If Mr. Au-Yong can produce the source of his information—the person to whom the boy gave the information—we can then have the answer to the question. If the threat was overheard, the person who overheard it should be produced.


AN INTIMATE FRIEND



Mr. Au-Yong: If I put the question to the mother, I would anticipate a denial. Before I can produce the evidence, I think I had better speak to the person who is giving me my instructions.

The Coroner agreed with Mr. Davis that evidence should be brought which would substantiate the question.


Important evidence was given by



Tiew Kuan, a Hockchiu pig-breeder and an intimate friend of the deceased. He said that it had been his and the deceased's habit for several months to meet about 7.30 every night in a coffee shop in Batu Road.


He knew that for four months prior to his death, the deceased had been having much trouble with his wife over a Hakka man, whose name he did not know.

A month prior to their last meeting, Lim Sang Tay told him he had noticed the Hakka man courting his wife and he intended to forbid him to stay in his house much longer.



He last met Lim Sang Tay on the evening of either Aug. 31 or Sept. 1. They drank their coffee and then left the shop, wheeling their bicycles a certain distance. As he (witness) was about to turn towards his home, Lim stopped him saying he had something to tell him "from the bottom of his heart."

WARNING RECEIVED



He said he had been warned by another pigs' food collector to be very careful when he went home at night, and also to be careful of whatever food he ate which had been cooked by his

...soon cooked by his wife. Lim wept as he said those words.

"In answer to me," continued the witness, "he said he had received the warning about five or six days previously, and that from that time he had gone about at night armed with a knife. That particular night, however, he had no weapon with him. I asked him why he made no report to the police, and he replied, 'for the sake of my reputation.'

"I then asked him if he knew who would probably kill him. He answered, 'That Hakka man, his brother and another man, Lui Kow.' He added that Lui Kow was uneducated and a fool, a man who could very easily be instigated to commit such a deed."

Mr. Davis: Did he give you any instructions on the event of his death? —He told me that if I did not see him again, I would know he was dead, and I should inform his relatives and make a report to the police.

Concluding, the witness said he parted with Lim Sang Tay. The next night Lim failed to appear at the coffee shop, and he never saw him alive again.

The inquest was adjourned until Saturday.



JOHN BARRYMORE

