

R

v

James John Pluckrose

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Name of witness

Burrell, William

Deposition of deceased

Mitchell, John Phimster

Stanley, Jessie

Holdstock, Mary

Pluckrose, Edward

Tyson, Alfred

Campkin, Henry

Statement of accused

The examination of William Burrell

Taken on oath this 28th day of August in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and eleven at the Thames Police Court, in the County of London and within the Metropolitan Police District before Me, the undersigned, one of the Magistrates of the Police Courts of the Metropolis sitting at the Police Court aforesaid, in the presence and hearing of

James John Pluckrose

who is charged this day before Me, for that he within the jurisdiction of the Central Criminal Court feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought did kill and murder one Charlotte Pluckrose.

Against the peace etc.

William Burrell
Detective Inspector K

At 9.30 a.m. yesterday (27th August, Sunday) I saw the prisoner at the Isle of Dogs Police Station. I charged him with shooting at his wife. He said, "Yes, I did shoot at her. I only done it to frighten her. I did not intend to do her any harm"

He pointed to this pistol (No. 1) and said "That is what I done it with."

William Burrell

The examination and Statement of Charlotte Pluckrose

taken on oath this 29th day of August in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and eleven at the Greenwich Seaman's Hospital in the County of London and within the Metropolitan Police District.

The said Charlotte Pluckrose on Oath saith as follows:-

I lived at No. 10 Stebondale Street with James John Pluckrose, my husband. On Saturday last along from as near as I can say I was in the area. I was sitting on the steps when my husband came home. He was very drunk. We quarrelled over money matters because he went away at 12 o'clock without giving money. Jessie Stanley, the woman who assists in the house had been for a walk. She came back while we were quarrelling.

I got on to him first about the money. Asked him I'd been over the water after himself. Concerns see himself had come home.

I struck him twice with a safety pin in my hand, I had been picking my teeth with it. I don't know if it ran into him. I know I knocked him backwards against the wall. He was too helpless to get up to me.

I aggravated him and all of a sudden I saw the pistol in his hand. This is it (no. 1)

I can't say in the confusion whether it went off or not. I know I felt it round my shoulder somewhere.

Cross examined

I was outside the door on the pavement when the pistol was fired.

I don't think you intended to injure me in anyway.

He's a thoroughly good husband and a good father to his children. We've always been happy and comfortable together.

Her Mark X
Charlotte Pluckrose.

Witness Albert Lieck, Clerk Thames Police Court
In the presence of James John Pluckrose

John Phimster Mitchell M.D.

I am House Physician, Seaman's Hospital, Greenwich.

On 26th August at 10 p.m. Charlotte Pluckrose was admitted suffering from a bullet wound at the back of the neck.

I could not extract the bullet.

Her condition gradually became worse: she was paralysed from the first completely below the waist and partly above it.

On the 28th she lost control of the rectum. On the 29th she was gradually sinking and dangerously ill, and in my opinion not likely to recover and was unable to travel.

I conveyed that opinion to the Magistrate now present, who came to see her, and she then made a statement in the presence of the prisoner.

The statement was written down.

She grew worse and died on the 31st August, about 9 p.m.

I made a post-mortem by permission of the Coroner.

She was a tremendously fat woman, weighing about 22 stone, 5½ feet high, and her liver twice the normal weight, showing signs of fatty degeneration, as did both kidneys which were rather enlarged.

The lungs were congested at the bases and contained fluid. The heart was almost entirely covered with fat: the muscular wall of the right ventricle was only a line or two in thickness, its place being taken by fat. The valves were normal.

These unhealthy conditions indicated overeating and alcoholism.

I found the bullet had penetrated the back of the neck and gone downwards and inwards towards the spinal column for 2¼ inches.

The spinal cord was not injured or severed, but I found a lesion (or fracture) in the spinal column and close to that the portion of bullet which I produce (No. 2)

I found a larger piece of bullet (produced No. 3) higher up, near the 3rd vertebra, which it had not penetrated.

The lesion (or fracture) in the spinal column caused the paralysis.

I was shown the blouse (No. 4) produced, which contains a bullet hole corresponding to the position of the wound with a little blood. This broke the force of the bullet

The cause of death was primarily the bullet wound causing concussion of the spine and followed by cardiac failure and death.

Death was undoubtedly accelerated by her unhealthy condition of body.

Jessie Stanley, widow, 10 Stebondale Street E.

I am a domestic servant.

I have been in prisoner's employ many years, off and on, and he has lived 2 or 3 years with his wife (deceased) at the above address.

He is a foreman moulder at some manganese works.

Their son Edward lived at home with them.

We took our meals in the kitchen which opened out onto the front area.

The parlour is over the kitchen

The photographs (5 & 6) produced, correctly show the front of the house.

Prisoner used to give his wife nearly all his wages every week.

They quarrelled for 2 or 3 days before the accident about money affairs and she generally started it.

He did not know what became of the wages he gave her.

On the 26 August I heard them quarrelling at 5.45 a.m., I heard her say "You wicked old bastard! I wouldn't shed a tear if you were fetched home a corpse to me!"

I never heard him reply but he went out to work as usual.

He came back at 12.30 p.m. to dinner, but ate little, and went out again in 20 minutes.

His wife was sitting on the top step of the area all the time.

As he left, he said to her, "I'm going over the water."

They very often went over to Greenwich together of a Saturday afternoon.

About 4 p.m. I went over to Greenwich and saw her there looking for prisoner.

We had a drink in the "Mitre" and I left her outside.

I got home at 9.30 p.m. and found her sitting on the top area step again.

Prisoner was standing at the open front door at the top of the front steps with both hands behind him. She then got up and walked towards me speaking in a low voice.

Her back was to the prisoner and she was between me and him.

Then I heard the report of a pistol and she fell at my feet. I saw the flash come from where the prisoner was standing.

She called out, "Good God! I'm shot."

I called for help and a crowd came.

Prisoner went indoors after the report, came out again, and down the steps, and walked in the opposite direction to where his wife lay.

I spoke to him and said, "Good God! What have you done?" He made no reply and walked out of sight.

The boy Edward came down the steps soon after prisoner and I believe I heard him say, "Father, Father! What have you done?"

Mrs Pluckrose was carried indoors and the blouse produced (No. 4) was taken off her.

I know the pistol (No 1) produced and have seen it about the place all the 9 months I've been there.

The boys used to use it but I never saw prisoner handle it.

I saw it in a drawer upstairs that day at 11, in prisoner's bedroom.

I saw the deceased after her death at Greenwich Hospital.

Cross Examination

I've known the parties about 12 years

Prisoner was always a kind husband and father and very affectionate.

She was in the habit of using shocking language to him and now and again hit him.

When I came down the street at 9.30 that night, I heard her using bad language to him. She whispered to me to go to her sister's as she got up and walked towards me.

My face was turned then towards prisoner.

He walked towards the Police Station.

I never heard him use any threat to her in my life. He used to get out of her way.

Her mark X
Jessie Stanley

Mary Holdstock

Mary Holdstock, married, 83 Stebondale Street, E.

The deceased was my sister and lived at No. 10 for about 2 years with her husband.

I saw her about twice every day.

Lately they have been quarrelling and drinking a lot. My sister had a very nasty temper and drank heavily.

On the 26 August after 8.30 p.m. my daughter spoke to me and 10 minutes later I went over to my sister and found her sitting on the area steps on a chair.

Prisoner was standing at the foot of the steps. She was swearing and raving at him and was in drink.

Prisoner was very drunk.

She called him a "f---ing bastard" and said he had not given her any money. She would not come away with me and continued to abuse the prisoner.

I then went away to my house across the street.

After 10 or 15 minutes I started back again to them and met their son Edward on the way.

On getting to their house I saw my sister on the pavement and said "Get up!"

I saw the prisoner come down the steps without a hat and walk towards Manchester Road.

There was a crowd there

I helped get my sister up the front steps indoors and onto the bed. And a Dr. Melled came.

I undressed her and found a small wound in her shoulder, bleeding a little.

She was taken away to the Seaman's Hospital.

I saw her there until her death.

Prisoner has had this pistol (No. 1) for years and used it in the back yard firing at things to amuse the children.

Cross Examination

On this 26 August I never heard prisoner answer his wife back a word.

He was always a very good and kind husband and a quiet inoffensive man.

I don't believe he ever intended to shoot his wife

Re-examination

When sober she was a good mother.

Mary Holdstock

Edward Pluckrose

Moulder's apprentice

I am son of the prisoner and the deceased and lived with them.

On 26 August about 1.45 p.m. they were quarrelling in the kitchen.

She was swearing at him about money affairs, about her lending money to other people.

I had my dinner and went out leaving them at home with Jessie Stanley.

I returned at 4 p.m. and found nobody there.

I stayed till 5 and then went out.

I came back at 6

Mother came in soon after; she was in drink and laid down.

She woke up about 8.30 and was more sober but not quite.

Father came in about 9.15 and they were both in the kitchen.

She asked him for money. He was half drunk.

He said, "You'll only have other people sponging on you."

She hit him across the face with her hand; he did not hit her back.

She went out on the area steps. This was about 9.20. I was reading in the kitchen.

He went out towards the back somewhere.

After this, mother went on swearing at him.

He was upstairs somewhere.

About 9.30 I heard a report and ran out to the area and saw mother lying on the pavement

Father was in the passage upstairs: the door was open

I helped get mother in and said to him, "You've done it now!"

He replied, "Well, she should not have made me so wild!"

I went upstairs to their bedroom and saw the pistol produced (No 1) on the drawers.

In the drawers I saw some cartridges.

I put them both under a pillow on a bed in the basement.

I have seen father clean the pistol.

I never saw him fire it.

I have seen him shoot well with a gun.

Cross Examination

I never knew father to threaten or assault mother.

He was always a kind man

Edward Pluckrose

Alfred Tyson

PC282K

About 9.30 p.m. 26th August I saw prisoner outside the Police Station about 180 yards from his house.

He said to me, "I've shot my wife."

I took him inside.

I then went to his house and saw his wife lying in the passage and helped convey her to the hospital.

She said to me, "He has not shot me, he either pushed me or I fell."

I handed her blouse (No. 4) in at the station.

Alfred Tyson

PC 282 K

Henry Campkin

Detective K Division

About 9.45 p.m. 26 August I saw prisoner detained and said, "Your wife has been taken to the hospital."

He said, "Yes, I shot her with my pistol. She has asked for it a long time now. You will find the pistol on the chest of drawers in the bedroom, it is No 1 bore. I left it there when I left the house."

I went to his house and found this pistol (No. 1) some cartridges under a pillow in a basement room.

It contained 1 spent cartridge, which I removed.

The cartridge fitted it.

Henry Campkin

Statement of the Accused at Thames Magistrates Court, 19th September 1911

James John Pluckrose

"I'd no intention whatever of shooting her."

E.H. Pickersgill Magistrate.