

Possible Accomplices

In such a situation as Lizzie is putting herself, you must act on the most pessimistic estimates of how each element and phase will pan out. All of the possibilities would be worth chancing in the context of a plan which was less dangerous and important, but hoping for passive support from certain people, is an all or nothing gamble. Anyone who is not brought in, so far as to become an accomplice, must be shut out, altogether. That precept over-rides any of the fine-line walking, suggested, here, respecting levels of involvement by Lizzie's acquaintances, before the crime.

Other Abuse Perpetrators, Victims & Relatives of Victims or Perpetrators

1) Other Perpetrators: Anyone who is guilty of such a crime as incest-rape, might be coerced to comply in just about anything.

2) Other Victims: Lizzie or Emma might have had a friend who was a victim of such abuse. It wouldn't be the first time that a friendship was based on a terrible personal secret. Both parties have something to hide, but gain some relief from their isolation, by talking to someone who shares the experience. Lizzie or Emma might have raised the subject with a friend or neighbor, to see how others felt about their situation. Perhaps they suspected that abuse was going on, in another household because they noticed closed doors and windows or personal quirks, similar to Emma's. They might have mentioned their observations, but refrained from making the connection with abuse, out loud. The other person could have been first to mention their own predicament, or that she had noticed one of those oddities of personality or habits, in the Borden household. However it came out, once it was out that both parties were victims, it wouldn't sound too drastic to say that the molesters deserve to be killed, or, even, to declare, 'I [you] should kill them'. People threaten to kill, with obvious insincerity, all the time. If such a remark were to elicit an answer like, 'he's got it coming', or just the proverbial "wink-and-a-nod", it would establish another kind of support, more substantial than merely emotional; moral support. Intentional, premeditated complicity of such a fellow victim, would be a real possibility.

3) Relatives of Victims & Perps: Many people will cover up the abuse of someone close, to protect the victim from humiliation, or themselves, from association. Lizzie is one example. They might want to save from prison or community reprisal, a man in whom they have some kind of investment. > Why would they not conspire to save a woman who had gone the other way and punished the offender, as long as she had protected the families of victims and perpetrators from shame? They would even share, vicariously, in the vengeance which they had felt forced to forego.

Foreknowledge of another abuse victim, perpetrator or their relative, is seen in **The Trip to Fairhaven**. [Pt. 4]

Emma

Lizzie threatened to expose a pillar of society, as a chronic daughter rapist, and offered

silence, in exchange for acquittal. The deal might have been made with people who had suffered from such an incident in their own family, but, even if not, high society would get aboard, collectively, faster than you can say, 'you go, girl!' She could have offered the deal, herself, to those who visited her, in jail, but that would require her to admit her own deed. That's not practical because you cannot assume that the one you tell, is amenable to a deal. She might even be trying to catch you out. Lizzie's 'Plea Bargain' would have to be conveyed by someone who could admit knowledge of the crime, without implicating herself in it. Because Emma is the only completely sympathetic character in the tale, everyone would prefer to act upon the assumption of her innocence. Even if she were not absolutely above suspicion, Emma could serve the plan as the conduit of Lizzie's offer, by telling the key people in Society, why Lizzie had done it. Emma would also be Lizzie's assurance against the proverbial "prison suicide". Emma's threat would be that, if anything untoward should happen to Lizzie, the truth would get out, anyway. To call her bluff, they would have to assume that Emma valued Lizzie's life less than her own insulation for embarrassment. That threat would be so obvious that it should not have been necessary to state it, explicitly, but, if Emma is admitting everything, she might as well have said it, out loud, too. To kill Lizzie, requires killing Emma, first, but she was protected from any temptation, the socialites might feel. The suspicious death of one daughter, on the heels of her parents' murder, so mysterious and infamous, itself, would probably generate a deeper investigation by a greater authority. Killing both, certainly would.

You can't inherit from someone, you have intentionally killed. The fortune was given directly to Emma, after Lizzie was acquitted, but, if Emma was never under suspicion, at least officially, why was it withheld from her, until the trial was over? Anyone might suspect both sisters of some part in the crimes, but Emma was definitely not an active accomplice because she was out of town. If Lizzie is controlling high society with Emma's abuse, the question of how much Emma knew, beforehand, would be irrelevant to the prosecutors. If the whole process is being manipulated to exonerate the accused, who cares who the accomplices were? You can only prosecute them, if you prosecute the killer, for real. Lizzie's acquittal would automatically exonerate her sister. Withholding the inheritance, might have been a mask on the prosecution's own plot to protect Lizzie; a pretense of suspecting Emma of involvement, until Lizzie was exonerated. They could not declare Emma's innocence without admitting that they knew the whole truth.

The role of Emma, after the fact, is seen, above. Whether she knew of Lizzie's plan, in advance, cannot be seen with certainty, in **The Trip to Fair Haven**. [Pt. 4]

The Maid, Bridgit

What the maid knew and whether and when she entered Lizzie's plot, are the most intricate and critical questions in this case, but one salient fact and the great likelihood that one preference firmly guided Lizzie, can show us what Bridgit knew at crucial moments, although not certainly, when she knew it all. The maid may have been unaware of the father's crimes against Emma, but the inheritance issue must have been in the air. Even if the economic status of an employer, ever could be a secret, it wouldn't be such a dark,

guarded secret as the abuse.

It could not entirely have left Bridgit's mind for one waking second, the whole time she had lived in the house, that her employer was wealthy, and almost no one in her financial position, would decline the kind of payment, the sisters would be able to offer.

Lizzie could have told Bridgit why she was planning the deed, as long as she protected her from knowing *that* she was planning it. 1} If Bridgit knew what Lizzie had in mind, she would have to choose between de facto complicity in one plot or another. To do nothing, would be to conspire in Lizzie's plan. In stopping her, she would join the father's plot to disown his daughters. The lesser of two evils, is the one which isn't coercing you. Anyone must resent being invited into such a plot, even if coercion isn't used. It could drive your intended accomplice into the arms of your opponent, who did not try to cajole you into a conspiracy. 2} If Bridgit were aware of the abuse, it would still be impolitic to ask her, beforehand, to take an active role in such a dangerous and gruesome endeavor. Even someone who knows of the killer's grudge, and judges her action to be justified, after it's carried out, should cringe at planning and doing it, herself. The same person who would feel like a murderer, by agreeing to abet the crime, in advance, when confronted with a fait accompli, might find it easier to adopt the attitude, 'well, they did have it coming'.

We cannot tell, from Bridgit's silence, whether she knew of the abuse. Whether or not, Lizzie had told her about it, she is still protected from the threat of Bridgit reacting, defensively. If anyone outside the house, knew of Lizzie's financial motive, Bridgit would not expect to become a suspect. Bridgit is firmly suspended above suspicion on two pillars. She has no stake in the inheritance, and she knows that others saw her, outside, at the critical time. She should not be tempted to mention the father's crime against Emma, to cast suspicion away from herself.

Mrs. Churchill saw Bridgit, outside, washing windows between 10 & 10:30.* Lizzie immediately told the police that Bridgit was upstairs during the second murder. (Spiering-p. 48) Both could be true because of the ninety minute gap. If the dosing hadn't kept Bridgit down, during the first murder, she might still be healthy until 11:00. She was able to wash windows past 10:00, because she had gotten some relief from the poison, by throwing up, but she could still have felt the effects, after a period of relative comfort. {*phayemuss.wordpress.com}

Bringing Bridgit into the plan by degrees, gives Lizzie the best chance of keeping her silent, in the minutes, immediately following the discovery. In those moments, Lizzie would be walking a tightrope in a stiff breeze. She cannot count on all those elements to occur to Bridgit, in the way I have described. It's a shocking, frightening scene.

Everything is up for grabs, mentally and emotionally. 1} Lizzie can't assume that Bridgit will hear the implicit offer of money. 2} She can't rely on Bridgit to suspend her fear of being accused, and plunge into the plot. In those first moments, she might panic and accuse Lizzie. 3} She could point the finger at Lizzie, accidentally, by saying that she had been sent out, to the opposite side of the house. Being seen, and being sent, are very

different. The first carries no import, but if Lizzie had sent Bridgit, it indicates the intent to place her, for the crucial time, in an area which is the most ideal for using the guest room, unseen. 4} The chance of making Bridgit an offer between the murders and the time they must face the police, is none. Lizzie can't guess when Bridgit will find the bodies, and until she does, she can't discuss it without confessing. (Lizzie could have pretended to find the bodies. I don't surmise anything from the fact that she did not.)

The chance of failure, seems too great for Lizzie to proceed without having cultivated a sympathetic state of mind in Bridgit. Lizzie probably wouldn't tell Bridgit, explicitly, in advance, what she has in mind, but to proceed without Bridgit knowing of Emma's abuse, increases the chance of failure, by encouraging the obvious and spontaneous reaction which anyone in Bridgit's position at that moment, could be expected to have.

Everyone knew of the financial motive. Even if Bridgit knew nothing of the abuse, she would grasp Lizzie's intent when Lizzie asked her for a bit of help, as she must have, in the week before the murders. Lizzie and Emma would have preferred to pay her because anything she takes, connects her to the crime, inhibiting any change of heart, she might feel about telling the truth, in the future. Admitting that you withheld information, or even lied, might be forgiven on the basis, 'better late than never', but, if you have taken money for withholding, your credibility is nil, and you should expect legal recrimination. (I have read that Bridget returned to Ireland in a degree of comfort, inconsistent with her station in the Borden house. I have also read that she died in Montana, but one account has her comfortable; the other, not so.)

Bridget's role in Lizzie's plot, is seen in **Why Lizzie Rented a Room**. [Part. 4] (Whether she knew of the plot, is not fully resolved.)

The Wealthy

Because of the nature of the crime, Freud's finding of 75% sounds enormous for a whole society, but, an activity might arise among a large percentage of a small minority. Lizzie might have discovered a cult of abuse, among the upper crust, which she used to get them all in line, including those who were not guilty. Lizzie could have rationally hoped that a small, self-isolating minority would protect her for their own protection. More than other groups, the "Upper Crust" can be relied on, to close ranks, even in matters of such gravity (which is not to say they always do). They are a very small group which counts, for their authority, less on their wealth, than on the common belief that they deserve that authority, merely by virtue of that wealth. They can live by different rules, as long as almost everyone else accepts it. Acceptance of the authority of wealth, requires turning a blind eye to the privileges they enjoy, and one of Lizzie's motives, shocks all eyelids, open, to the reality that sexual associations which the upper crust considers legitimate, in their own circle, are often incestuous, according to the standards by which everyone else is obliged to abide. I'm content to assume that no one in that minority sanctions father / daughter relationships, even surreptitiously, but, if the parents' crime against Emma had come to light, it would have cast a spotlight on the double standard of the meaning of incest.

Lizzie's hope to control the wealthy, means that she was optimistic about avoiding indictment. Grand juries in those days, were composed of "leading citizens", and they don't have to be unanimous in declining to indict. There must have been enough of the upper crust on Lizzie's side, because they did not indict her. (They reconvened when Alice Russell said that she had seen Lizzie burning a blue dress. Burning it, would look bad, anyway, and Bridgit had testified that Lizzie wore blue, that morning.* Lizzie's supporters on the grand jury, were cornered into indicting her.) {*Linder}

Lizzie's support from high society, is seen in **The Trial**. [Part 5]

The Coroner

If the coroner had declared that the father's murder occurred, first, the probate court would have found that his wife had inherited, just by outliving him. Her family would have gotten the fortune because she would have possessed it, theoretically, for the interim between the father's death and her own. The step-mother had no children of her own. Who might have been able to make a serious bid for the fortune? I won't guess, but their chances seem weak. It would have to be Abby's sister, but I don't know how such a challenge would ordinarily be treated, at law. Here, I'll dare to guess; neither did Lizzie. Anyway, such a legal challenge can carry on for decades, and Lizzie probably did know that. She could only have felt secure if it was clear that the step-mother had died first.

If all of the leading citizens were guided by the desire to cover for Lizzie, and, if she made it a condition of her silence, that Emma must be allowed to inherit, the coroner's assessment of the times of death, could have been contrived to oblige. Unless his opinion is rendered within minutes of the discovery, Lizzie can base her plan on the hope of dictating his finding, with the support she expects to get from the socialites. Any observations which the coroner might express at the scene, could only be overheard by other officials, present. If he said something to implicate Lizzie, we wouldn't hear of it, as long as he left it out of his first official statement.

She was protected by the influence held by High Society over officialdom and the overlapping membership of some people, in both groups. 1}Once the conspiracy was initiated, we should only expect to hear from the coroner, an assessment of the step-mother's time of death, which supports the sisters' claim to the fortune, and that is all we do hear. No one who had heard him make an incriminating remark against her, in the immediate aftermath, would have called him on it. 2}If the father was out when the mother was killed, the opinion we hear is unvarnished, and the coroner would not have to change what he had said at the scene, to co-operate in the conspiracy, or say anything he thought to be untrue. If the order of their deaths favors Lizzie, the coroner aids the conspiracy to help her sister inherit, merely by telling the truth.

The Visiting Uncle

A visitor who is not an accomplice, narrows the window of opportunity, even if he is out of the house, for a while, and he can squelch the plot by remaining in the house, during the

critical time. In planning such a deed, no one would choose a time when extra people were in the house, unless they hoped to cast suspicion on them, or receive some kind of support from them. 1} She does not want to frame anyone. She hopes to control the legal system, to protect her. Her plan is to obviate the evidence against her, by extra-legal means. It doesn't suit her for anyone else to be accused, witness the fact that she never implicated anyone else, even so far as to say that anyone else was nearby. 2} Uncle John did not come to the house to assist her. He could prove he was too far away from the house, at the time of the murders, to be involved. If he approved of her plan, but played no role in it, there would be no reason for him to come to the house.

Why should Lizzy wait for Uncle John to arrive? She should not welcome the increased risk of acting while any guest was visiting, and John poses the extra threat that the father will make his hostile will. That's apparently why John was there. Something about Uncle John's presence, must have aided her plan, without his knowledge.

It's hard to feel neutral about the parents' crime, and, if your sister's daughter is the victim, you should feel obliged to do something about it. If he knew of the abuse, it's possible he would join a murder plot, but how would he learn of it? Apparently, he did not visit very often, and Lizzie had just discovered the problem the previous year, as documented by the room exchange with Emma. I surmise that he had not visited since that happened. How would she communicate something like that without the risk of having it read by others. 1} Telegram is out. Someone else besides the intended recipient, has to read it to send it, and another probably reads it at the receiving end. 2} A letter to his home might be opened by someone else first. As I remember, he travelled quite a bit in his career as some kind of wheeler dealer, which the citations I had, only described vaguely. It could be delivered to the wrong house.

If John had intended to play a role in his niece's disenfranchisement, that eliminates the possibility that he went there to help Lizzie in her plan to kill the parents, but, if his purpose changed from helping the father, to helping Lizzie kill him, his cover story for the visit was already established. He would only have to follow through with the original plan, until the critical moment. He would arrive when expected, and talk to the father about their plans for the next morning.

How Lizzie protected her uncle, and herself from him is seen in **Uncle John**. [Pt. 6] How his mere presence assisted her plan, is seen in **Why Lizzie Rented a Room**. [Part 4]