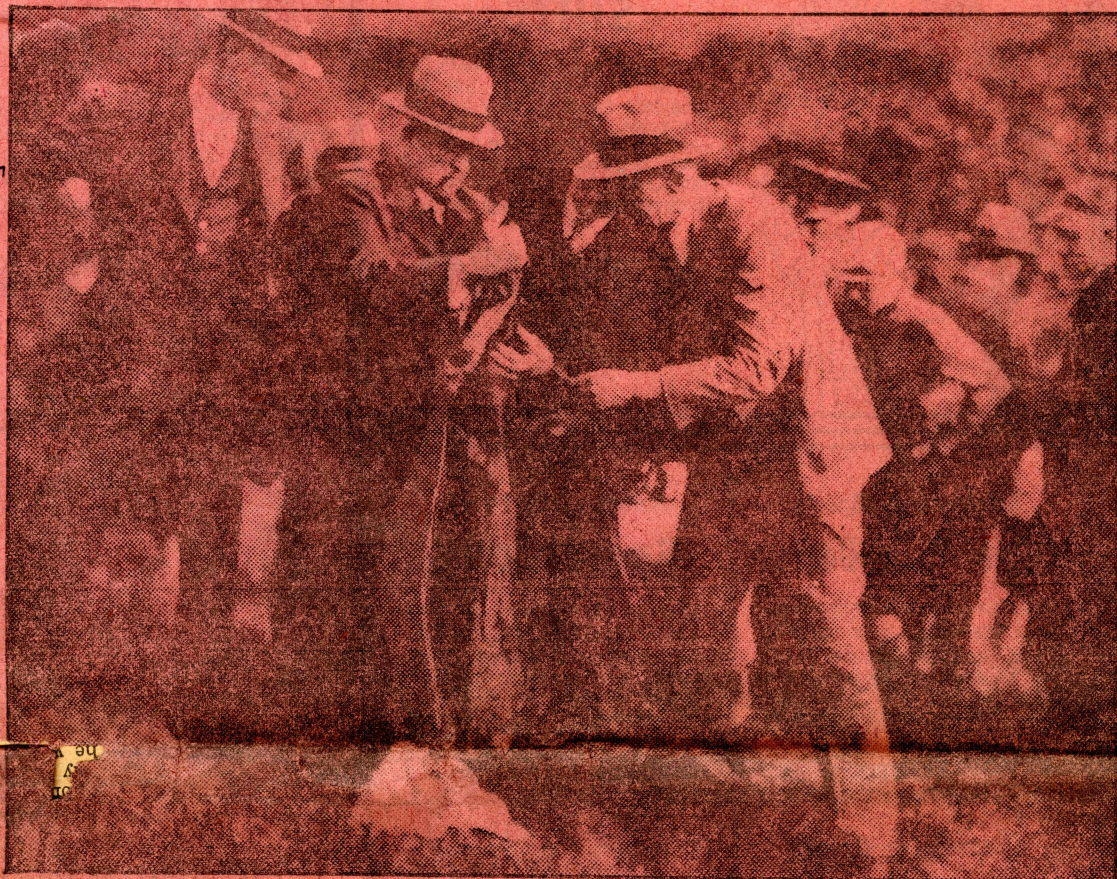


# WOMAN CLUE IN DEATH PROBE

## Sedan Seen Near Slough Where Body Was Found

ASHLEY DEATH MYSTERY, AS  
TOLD BY THE CAMERA



Victoria police officers examining clothing found in the slough where Stewart Ashley's body was discovered Sunday night. The clothing was done up in a bundle and weighted with a stone. In foreground, left to right: Detective William Stark; Inspector John Boulton; Detective Jack Rogers.



ELVA ASHLEY

"Surely my brother is exonerated  
by what has happened?"

YOUTH TRACED  
TO NANAIMO

NOT KIDNAPPED  
POLICE DECLARE

By BOB BOUCHETTE

A mystery woman trailed across the scene of the Stewart Ashley death drama today as the sinister figures of a kidnapping gang made their exit.

It was disclosed this morning that on Friday afternoon around the time that the 19-year-old Vancouver school teacher's body entered the slough in the industrial reserve in the heart of Victoria, a large closed-in car was parked at the edge of the pond and a man and a woman holding what appeared to be a sheet stepped out.

In Vancouver, meanwhile, following the identification of Ashley's body as that of a man seen in Victoria on the afternoon of April 21, Chief Constable John Cameron stated positively that he had ceased to consider the kidnapping theory as a possible solution of Ashley's death.

And as these developments caused the Ashley mystery to assume some of the weird character of the famous Paul Berry death case in Hollywood a year ago, the bereaved Ashley family strove consistently to protect the memory of the youth who disappeared from the city on April 13, whose father received a ransom-demanding note from alleged kidnappers on April 15, whose body, bearing indications of carbon monoxide poisoning, was found last Sunday evening.

John Abbott, Victoria city fireman, reported to the Victoria police that he observed the closed-in car as he was driving into the city. It had parked on the bend where the road curves around the end of the small slough, and Abbott was forced to turn outsharply to avoid striking it.

Looking back in annoyance he saw a man and a woman standing at the edge of the slough.

They had what appeared to be a sheet in their hands.

Thinking they were tourists stopping by the pond for a picnic, Abbott gave the matter no further thought until he read of the discovery of Ashley's body there several days later.

### NO FOOTPRINTS OF ASHLEY

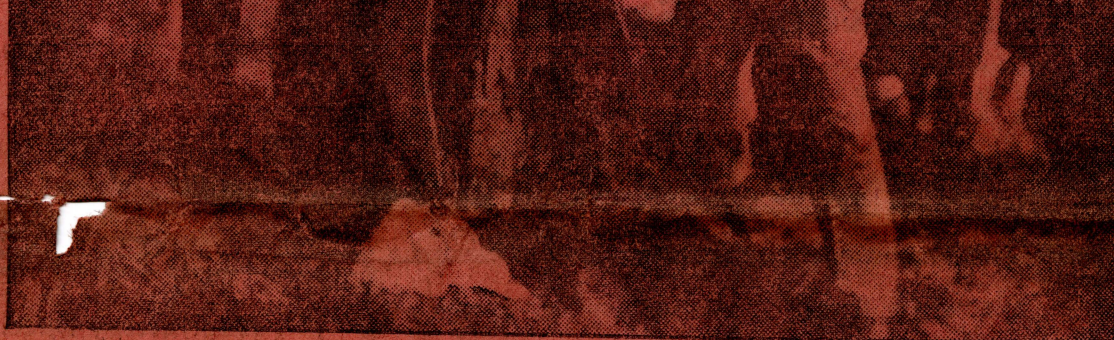
As the car was beside the slough in broad daylight, police today were careful not to over emphasize the importance of this information, but they were following it up as the first real clue they could sink their teeth into.

Discovery by Dr. Vance in his investigation yesterday of clay imbedded in the heels of Ashley's shoes was followed today by new search of the vicinity in hopes of locating footprints.

On the first search after the discovery of the body no signs of footprints corresponding with Ashley's shoes was found either on the grassy slope or in the clay at the edge of the water.

Last night, while the body of Stewart Ashley was being laid out in the Mount Pleasant Undertaking Parlors at 306 East Eleventh Avenue, police were interrogating the Ashley family in their home at 425 West Tenth Avenue as to the finding of a bundle of clothing in the death slough yesterday afternoon.





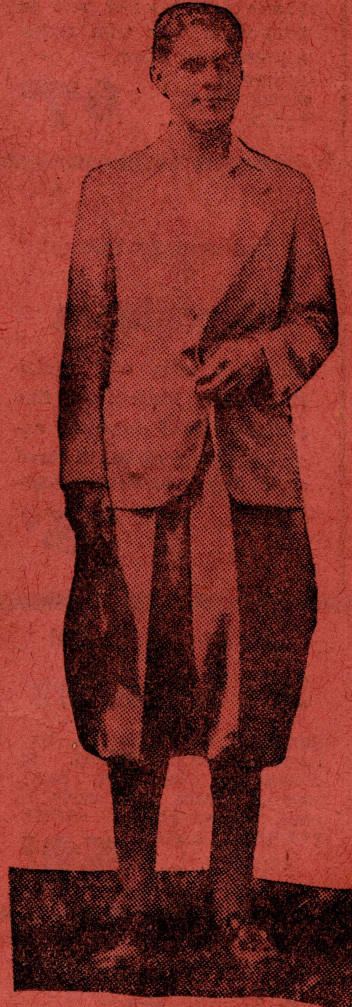
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ELVA ASHLEY

"Surely my brother is exonerated by what has happened?"

That was the plea of Elva Ashley, younger sister of Stewart Ashley, when questioned on the theory that the young teacher had committed suicide.



STEWART ASHLEY

This is a picture of the dead Vancouver school teacher taken a short time before his disappearance.



IRMA ASHLEY

Twenty-two-year-old sister of Stewart Ashley. She denied that clothing found in the Victoria slough from which the body of her brother was taken, had belonged to the young teacher.



J. F. C. B. VANCE,

Vancouver city analyst, wizard of the test tube and the microscope, is making a scientific search for traces of poison in the stomach of the young teacher.

Murder, accident, suicide!

Which was responsible for the death of Stewart Ashley, 19-year-old Vancouver school teacher, whose body was found lying in a scum-covered slough at Victoria, B. C., Sunday, after he had been missing for a week?

Was he kidnapped as a note received by his father the day following his disappearance, demanding payment of \$5000 would indicate?

*the standard of my factory.*

*Yours sincerely*

*S. F. Ashley*

The signature of Stewart Ashley. Police request that all rooming, boarding-house and hotel proprietors check their registers for writing resembling that pictured above. They are attempting to trace the movements of Ashley from the time of his disappearance, April 14, to the finding of his body, April 23.

Did he leave home of his own accord and travel to Vancouver Island?

Was he murdered by abductors? Did he meet an accidental death by carbon monoxide poisoning

while a prisoner in their hands, his body being later thrown into the slough?

These are some of the grim questions police of Vancouver and Victoria are attempting to answer.

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Identification of this clothing as having belonged to young Ashley, coupled with the statement of a trainman that he saw Ashley on Vancouver Island Friday, would tend to cloud the theory that Ashley was murdered by kidnappers who wrote a ransom note to his father on April 15, authorities state.

## FATHER DENIES CLOTHES BELONGED TO SON

Much depends on the examination today of the stomach contents by Inspector J. F. C. B. Vance, city analyst, who arrived from Victoria this morning. Vance suspects that he may find traces of poison.

Holding stoutly to the belief that his son was kidnapped and done to death, David T. Ashley, a notary public, denied last night that the sweat shirt, trousers and cap, recovered from the slough 10 feet from where Ashley's body was found, could have been the youth's property.

The bundle was weighted with a boulder and made fast with a cord.

On the waistband of the trousers police noticed a laundry or cleaner's mark, 40 over (a line) 6062.

Checking at the Ashley home, detectives found one of Stewart's coats which bore corresponding numerals.

All the members of the Ashley family denied that Stewart had ever possessed clothing of the sort described.

"I can't understand why the numbers should be the same," said Miss Irma Ashley, 22-year-old sister of the dead youth, "but I know that Stewart never had any such trousers."

Her younger sister, Elva Ashley, said brokenly: "There has been a lot of talk that Stewart went away of his own accord. Surely he is exonerated by what has happened. Surely no one could believe that he would leave us without a word."

## MOTHER PROSTRATED

The strain of two week's worry and speculation is telling heavily on the Ashleys.

Mrs. Ashley, a woman of nervous temperament, has been prostrated since the finding of the body.

Up to this morning the major developments in the case were:

1. Trainman Allan MacLaughlin of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway, saw Ashley's body in the

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# Clothing Find Deepens Ashley Mystery

Continued from Page One

undertaking parlor this morning, identified it as that of a man he saw at Nanaimo April 21.

2. Discovery of a bundle of clothing, weighted with a boulder, in the death slough.
3. Denial by the Ashley family that the clothing could have belonged to Stewart.
4. Affirmation of Frank S. Filmer, athletic director at the Y.M.C.A., 590 Cambie Street, that he had never seen Ashley, while attending gym class, wearing a sweat shirt.
5. The statement by Glenn Nixon, Y.M.C.A. secretary and the last man to see Ashley alive in Vancouver, that when the youth left the building on the night of April 13 he was carrying a parcel which Nixon presumed to contain Ashley's towel.

Nixon, speaking from memory, does not think that the parcel he saw under Ashley's arm that night was large enough to contain a sweat shirt, trousers and cap in addition to the towel.

6. Establishment of the fact that, contrary to a previous police report, the ransom note was not written on Y.M.C.A. stationery or on a Y.M.C.A. typewriter. The typed note which David T. Ashley received on the morning, April 15, read: "Get \$5000 by April 20 or your son will die. You will hear again on the 19th."
7. Disclosure of a motive for a kidnap-for-ransom attempt in that David Ashley, in connection with his notarial practice, was also in the loan business. The suggestion is that kidnappers would adjudge him as a man able to raise \$5000 in an emergency.
8. The reiteration by Ashley's friends and acquaintances of their disbelief in a suicide theory.
9. Chief Cameron discards kidnapping theory.

Working on the suggestion by Inspector Vance that Ashley may have died as a result of poison other than carbon monoxide, as indicated by the blood condition yesterday, Victoria police yesterday afternoon searched the death slough embankment for a bottle that might have contained poison.

## PULL UP CLOTHING

Rubber-booted and stripped to the waist, constables waded in the pond close to where the body was found.

After an hour's search they struck the clothing bundle.

It was made fast with a three-play cord around a 15-pound boulder.

Upon the heels of this discovery came Trainman MacLauchlin's report. MacLauchlin said that on the afternoon of April 21, as the train was about to pull out of Nanaimo for Victoria he noticed a man in the railway yard. The description of this man

was that of Ashley, MacLauchlin affirmed.

## POSITIVE OF IDENTIFICATION

This morning, MacLauchlin came to Vancouver and accompanied by Chief Constable John Cameron visited the Mount Pleasant Undertaking parlor.

After viewing the body, which was fairly recognizable, MacLauchlin said that he was sure that it was that of the man he saw five days ago in the Nanaimo railway yard.

It was after MacLauchlin's identification of the body that Chief Cameron stated that he had dropped the kidnap theory.

Informed of the identification of his son's body, David Ashley would make no comment.

Mr. Ashley, together with the other members of the Ashley family, has held to the kidnapping theory up to now.

## "IT IS UNTHINKABLE"

The Ashley sisters, whose affection for Stewart was deeper than that obtaining ordinarily among brother and sisters, had no doubt, yesterday, that the youth was a victim of foul play.

"I can't understand how it happened," said Miss Irma, "but I am sure that Stewart never went away of his own accord. It is unthinkable. We were so close to one another."

## WAS TO HAVE MET SISTER

Miss Irma related that on April 14 her sister, Elva, was returning to town after a trip up-country. Stewart was to have met her, she said.

"Stewart and Elva were constantly together," said Miss Irma, "and I can never believe that he would have run away on the very night before he was supposed to greet her."

Both Miss Irma and Miss Elva said that Stewart neither smoked nor drank and went about very little with girls.

Frequently he would take his sisters to dances, and in the winter-time he accompanied them skating.

Skating was one of his favorite diversions.

## REFUSED RIDE HOME

"There is not a single night that I can remember," said Miss Irma, "that Stewart has not spent at home. He was very fond of studying and reading and latterly about the only evenings when he was not with us were Monday and Thursday, when he attended gym class at the Y.M.C.A. He had absolutely no reason for wanting to go away."

Officials at the Y.M.C.A. yesterday also expressed the opinion that the boy was a victim of criminals.

"He came up from the gymnasium at 10 o'clock on the night of April 13," said Secretary Glenn Nixon. "He had a parcel under his arm which I took to be his towel. I offered him a lift home. He looked up at the clock and said that he thought he'd take a street car. You see, he would have been obliged to wait until 10:30 if he wished to drive with me."