

Ernest Langley (- 17 May 1907)

Langley. On Friday, May 17, 1907, Ernest, youngest son of Mary and Aloysius Langley. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend the funeral from his late residence, 29 Virginia avenue southwest, on Monday, May 20, at 8:30 a.m., to St. Peter's Church, where a mass of requiem will be offered for the repose of his soul. Interment at Congressional cemetery.

The Evening Star, May 18, 1907, p. 12

Scuffle Ends in Death

Fatal Wounding of Boy By His Playmate

Raphael Aultman a Fugitive With Murder Charge Against Him.

Probably an Accident

Another fatality was added yesterday to what may be termed the epidemic of homicide in this city. Earnest Langley, fifteen years old, of 29 Virginia avenue southeast, was the victim, and Raphael Aultman, a boy of the same tender age, was his assailant. Aultman made his escape immediately after the tragedy, and at a late hour this afternoon the police were still without a clue to his whereabouts. Deputy Coroner Glazebrook performed an autopsy on the body of Langley at the morgue this morning and ascertained that death was directly due to a stab wound of the heart, the blade of a penknife in Aultman's hands having penetrated the right wall of the vital organ.

Murder is the charge which stands against the boy Aultman, and yet all stories told of the occurrence seem to indicate the fatality was largely the result of accident -- the outcome of a bit of rough play between two comrades. As far as the police have been able to learn, and the story of an eye-witness of the tragedy affords basis for the claim, the two boys were in the midst of an imitation sparring match, dodging around a tree on the sidewalk at New Jersey avenue and E street southeast, and striking at each other, when the fatal stabbing occurred.

Account Given by Witness

Mr. Bunting, foreman of a stable at 3d and Canal streets southwest, was passing the corner at the time, and he said one of the boys -- evidently Aultman -- had a pen knife in his hand, and the other had a piece of brick as a weapon. Suddenly, Mr. Bunting said, one of the boys cried aloud: "My God, I have killed him." And with the words one of the boys fell to the ground and the other stooped over, raised the fallen boy's head in his arms and began fanning him. Feeling sure that medical assistance would be required Mr. Bunting ran to a nearby store and telephone for an ambulance. When he returned to the corner Langley was lying in the street and Aultman had disappeared.

A minute or two later P.L. Davis of 216 8th street southwest drove past in a buggy and the wounded boy was placed in his vehicle and all possible speed made to the Providence Hospital. The physicians, however, pronounced life extinct, and Langley's body was taken to his home, whence it was later transferred to the morgue. Coroner Nevitt shortly before noon today empaneled a jury to pass upon the evidence which will be adduced at an inquest to be held after the capture of Aultman. The jury consists of William Healy, P.P. Patrick, Joseph N. Alexander, Morris A. Tanger, William H. Bunch and Claude A. Gilman. After the jury viewed the body this morning it was transferred to the Langley home, and it is understood the funeral will be held Monday.

It is said Ernest Langley and his brother Bernie were almost the sole support of their parents. Both were employed at the grocery store of Proctor & Brother, on 1st street southeast. Ernest Langley was

sent out to deliver a package yesterday afternoon, and shortly before 3 o'clock he passed the Aultman home, 448 New Jersey avenue southeast. Raphael was sitting on the front steps whittling on a stick, the police say, and when called by his nickname he got up and joined Langley and they started down the street together. No one heard any sort of altercation between them, though several persons have been found who, from a distance, saw the sparring match which Mr. Bunting described from a near view.

Following the disappearance of Aultman, and when the affair had been reported to the police of the fifth precinct and to headquarters, it was stated the boy had been seen running in the direction of the Virginia avenue tunnel. Capt. Matthews of the fifth precinct set men to guard each end of the tunnel, and others to go through the bore, but the rumor was found to be without foundation.

Was Seen in Depot

Subsequently it was learned that Aultman had been seen, about an hour after the tragedy, in the Pennsylvania railroad passenger depot. A man who lives in the same neighborhood in Southeast Washington passed Aultman in the package room at the station, and spoke to him, but at that time the general alarm for Aultman's arrest had not gone forth. His mother said he had between \$5 and \$10 in his pockets, and it is assumed he succeeded in buying a ticket and getting out of the city on one of the early afternoon trains.

With this possibility in view the police have sent descriptions of Aultman to all cities and towns for a considerable radius with the request that he be arrested and held for this jurisdiction. William Fretter, Aultman's stepfather, and his mother, with whom he lived at the New Jersey avenue address, have promised to aid the police in every way possible.

Langley's mother was prostrated by the shock of having the body of her son, whom she had last seen in his usual lively spirits, brought to the house. One report -- that Langley, too, had a knife in his hands during the playful struggle with his "buddy" -- was set at rest this morning when Morguemaster Schoenberger found Langley's penknife in the boy's pocket with all blades closed, and it was said he could not possibly have placed it there after receiving such a wound as that which caused death.

Aultman either carried his penknife away with him or else threw it away. The police searched all the surrounding ground without finding it.

The Evening Star, May 19, 1907, p. 13

Aultman Boy Caught

Slayer of Ernest Langley Found in Newark, N.J.

Raphael Aultman, the boy who is charged with having stabbed and killed Ernest Langley, is no longer a fugitive from justice. He was caught at Newark, N.J., where he went to seek the protection of his stepfather, William Fretter. Detective Evans was sent to Newark to get the boy, leaving here yesterday afternoon in time to reach Newark about 7 o'clock last night. He went away with the understanding that he would return with the lad without delay. Inspector Boardman expects him to reach home at an early hour this morning.

Capt. Mathews has had his men make a complete investigation of the affair, and he reported to Coroner Nevitt that the information obtained by the officers indicated that each boy had a knife and that they were cutting away at each other from behind a tree until the fatal wound was finally inflicted. Mrs. Fretter, mother of the boy who did the cutting, learned of his arrest yesterday afternoon and collapsed. Her condition became serious and the family physician was summoned.

The autopsy having been performed and the jury sworn, the coroner released the body and permitted its removal to the home of the mother of the deceased, 29 Virginia avenue southwest. Arrangements have been made for the funeral to take place from St. Peter's Church, 2d and C streets

southeast, at 8:30 o'clock tomorrow morning. The body will be interred at Congressional cemetery. Tomorrow morning the inquest will be held.

The Evening Star, May 20, 1907, p. 5

Was Result of Accident

Jury's View of Death of Ernest Langley

Evidence Taken at Inquest Today

Raphael Altmann, Under Charges, Dismissed From Custody

A jury summoned by Coroner Nevitt, after an inquest over the body of Ernest Langley at the District morgue this morning, declared its belief that the boy's death was the result of accident, and Raphael Altmann, who was arrested on the charge of stabbing Langley, was discharged from custody. The verdict in full reads as follows:

"We believe Ernest Langley came to his death May 17, 1907, in a wagon en route to the Providence Hospital, from a stab wound of the heart. Such wound was caused by a knife in the hand of and stabbed by one Raphael J. Altmann. We, the coroner's jury, believe that the stabbing was not due to any malicious intent, but was the result of accident."

The verdict was signed by William Healy, P.P. Patrick, M.A. Tanzer, Joseph N. Alexander, William H. Bunch and Claude A. Hillman, the jury.

Summary of the Testimony

The testimony adduced, upon which the verdict was based, as in substance as follows:

William M. Hunter, resident physician at Providence Hospital, testified he saw no sign of life whatever in the body of Ernest Langley when it was brought into the receiving room at the hospital Friday afternoon.

Detective Sergeant Thomas Hartigan, who was detailed to investigate the case, said the only information he had been able to secure was from Raphael Altmann, the boy under arrest.

"He told me he and Langley were playing," said the detective, "and each had a knife with open blade in his hand. They were cutting at each other in playful manner as they ran around a telegraph pole. Finally Langley staggered and cried: 'You have stabbed me,' and then fell in the street. Altmann said he saw blood on the knife blade, and afterward went to his home, got his coat and went away."

Called to the stand for a moment, Morguemaster Schoneberger stated he found Langley's penknife in the pocket of the boy's trousers.

Deputy Coroner R.W. Baker stated the result of an autopsy performed on Langley's body, and said the wound penetrated the heart and this was the cause of death. Dr. Baker gave it as his opinion that Langley could not have closed the blade of a knife and replaced it in his pocket after receiving such a wound.

Gifford Hickman, a colored boy of 413 1st street southeast, testified he saw the Langley boy fall on the car tracks, but he did not witness the staggng.

The knife with which Altmann did the stabbing was exhibited before the jury.

Was an Eyewitness

Declaring he witnessed the whole occurrence, Robert Bunting of 107 E street southeast, testified he was driving along New Jersey avenue and he saw the two boys lunging at each other. Both had knives in their hands, Mr. Bunting asserted, and as he approached nearer he saw them cutting at each other, but apparently in a spirit of play. As he came abreast of them he saw one boy stagger slightly and then the two turned and walked to the curb, where one fell.

"I jumped out of my buggy," Mr. Bunting continued, "and I saw the boys close their knives, put them in their pockets, and then noticed blood on Langley's shirt. As he fell I told the Altmann boy to fan his comrade while I went after water. When I returned Altmann was gone and others were taking Langley to the hospital."

"You are sure each of the boys had a knife?" queried Coroner Nevitt.

"Yes, sir," answered the witness.

"And you saw both replace the knives in their pockets?"

"I did."

Henry Jones, colored, a teamster, declared positively one of the boys had a brick in his hand and the other had a knife. He described the stabbing much as the other witnesses had one, and gave it as his impression the boys were playing.

Charles E. Buete of 518 1st street southeast saw the boys only after the stabbing occurred.

Bessie Herald of 454 New Jersey avenue southeast stated she saw Ernest Langley and Raphael Altmann start down the street together and they were not quarreling at that time.

Robert Crump, colored, testified he saw the boys shortly before the tragedy and heard one say to the other: "I will cut you with a knife." Crump said he could not identify the boy who made the remark.

Bernard Langley, brother of Ernest, testified he went to the corner of New Jersey avenue and E street southeast when he heard of the affair. Ernest died in his brother's arms on the way to the hospital.

In His Own Behalf

Placed on the stand to tell his own story, Raphael Altmann said:

"We were just fooling. Ernest had delivered an order to a house on New Jersey avenue and he was sitting on a box in front of the house, looking at a funny paper, and I went down there, too. I kicked the box, but not all the way from under him, and a little boy named Miller gave the box another kick. Then Ernest and I went down the street together. He took out his knife and I took out mine and we were letting on to stab each other. We ran round a telegraph pole and I cut him. I don't know how it happened."

Ernest said, "You have cut me," Altmann continued. "The he said it didn't amount to anything and we put our knives away and started to walk down the street. Ernest fell in the middle of the street and I went to him and saw the blood on his shirt. I fanned him with my cap, and when Bernie Langley came and they took Ernest to the hospital I got scared and ran away."

Altmann declared he had no quarrel with Langley and said they were the best of friends. The case was given to the jury shortly before noon.