

Ida Elizabeth Pumphrey

(- 3 Jan 1895)

The Evening Star, January 3, 1895

Found Dead Today

Sad Ending to Ida Suit's Short Career

Daughter of James Pumphrey

Asphyxiated in a Disreputable House This Morning

Inquest Necessary

A woman clad in her nightdress, with a heavy robe thrown carelessly about her walked into the fourth precinct police station this morning about 6 o'clock and notified the officer on duty that there was a dying woman in Belle White's house of ill-fame, on B street. Illuminating gas, she said, had rendered the woman unconscious and a physician was wanted. Dr. Child was soon found and although he worked on the asphyxiated woman, he failed to get her in a condition in which she showed any signs of life. Later in the day Sergeant Daley learned that the woman was Ida Suit, a divorced woman, daughter of James W. Pumphrey, the retired livery stable keeper, who lives at 477 C street. She was about twenty-eight years old and handsome.

During her younger days Ida Pumphrey was not only handsome, but was well proportioned, and her neat figure made her an unusually attractive woman. Several years ago, it is said, she married Arthur Suit, and was afterward divorced from him. Since then she has lived at her father's home. She was a young woman of a lively disposition, and it was suspected by some of her acquaintances that her mode of life would bring her to a sad ending sooner or later.

Last evening while the snow was falling and the wind blowing there came a knock on the door of Belle White's gilded palace and this unfortunate woman and a male companion were ushered in and shown a room on the upper floor. The man who was with her was a comparatively young man of heavy build. He wore a light suit of clothes and his general appearance gave the impression that he was a German.

The Man Left

It was early in the evening when the couple appeared at the house and the man left some time about midnight. Before he left the house, he was asked to pay the room rent, which he did not do, but told the proprietress that the woman would pay the bill. When the couple reached the house they appeared as if they had been drinking, the woman being worse off than her companion, but this caused no uneasiness, for it is a frequent occurrence for such people to be under the influence of liquor. For this reason no attention was paid to the woman, and it was not until 6 o'clock this morning that Belle White knew there was something wrong.

Found Dead

The odor of escaping gas then attracted her attention and when she went to the room she found the woman in her night robe lying across the bed. In the room there was a bottle of whisky, only a small portion of its contents having been removed. There was a gas stove in the room that had been used early in the evening, but there was no light in the stove and the gas was turned on.

Such was the condition of affairs when the proprietress of the house reached the room.

As already stated, the police were summoned, and Dr. Childs was soon at the woman's bedside.

Clue to Identity

When he had determined beyond doubt that the woman's life was extinct the police looked about the room for evidence of identity, and found pinned to the collar of her undergarment a pawn ticket. This Sergt. Daley took to Burnstine's pawn shop, and there he learned that the woman had pawned an article of jewelry under the name of "Annie Suit," and her residence was given as 477 C street.

When the officer called at the house and saw the woman's mother she exclaimed: "That's my daughter Ida."

She went to the house in South Washington, where she identified the body of the dead woman as that of her daughter.

Undertaker J. William Lee was sent for and he took charge of the body and removed it to his establishment on Pennsylvania avenue. This was done by direction of the coroner, and an autopsy is to be made at 4 o'clock.

A rumor to the effect that foul means had been employed in the case was set afloat in police circles, but the investigation made by the officer failed to reveal anything of this nature.

The identity of the man who went with the woman to the house is not known, but in police circles this afternoon it was stated that the man is probably a prominent merchant.

The Evening Star, January 4, 1895

The Suit Case

In the case of the woman, Ida Suit, who was found dead in the house of Belle White on B street southwest, yesterday as published in yesterday's Star, the autopsy showed that death resulted from the inhalation of gas. Coroner Hammett decided that an inquest was unnecessary and gave a certificate of death.