



*An Inquiry into:
"The Adventure of
Wisteria Lodge"*

"The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge" was first published in the September-October 1908 issue of *The Strand Magazine*, and in *Collier's Magazine's* August 15, 1908 issue. It is part of *His Last Bow*.

Because there is no clear agreement regarding the year, whenever we discuss this it, I give precedence to

much less the date in which this case took place, whenever we discuss this it, I give precedence to Doctor Watson's dating; in this instance, 1892.

As may be seen from the different estimates of our chronologists, there is sharp disagreement regarding the year, the reason being that Holmes vanished into the Great Hiatus between April 1891 and April 1894. During all this time, Watson (as did most of the world) believed the Great Detective to have been dead and if he engaged in any kind of investigation, the facts of it are forever lost to us.

Had the case taken place in 1892, Sherlock Holmes would have been 38 years old and Doctor John H. Watson 40.

<i>The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge</i>	
<i>Chronologist</i>	<i>Date of the Adventure</i>
<i>Canon</i>	<i>Late March 1892</i>
<i>Baring-Gould</i>	<i>Monday, March 24, 1890</i>
<i>Bell</i>	<i>Late March 1895</i>
<i>Blakeney</i>	<i>1896, or 1898-1902</i>
<i>Brend</i>	<i>March 1894</i>
<i>Christ</i>	<i>Monday, March 21, 1892</i>
<i>Dakin</i>	<i>Late March 1894</i>
<i>Folsom</i>	<i>Late March 1890</i>
<i>Hall</i>	<i>End of March 1895</i>
<i>Keefauver</i>	<i>Thursday, March 24, 1892</i>
<i>Klinger</i>	<i>1895</i>
<i>Zeisler</i>	<i>Monday, March 24, 1902</i>

Please note that Canon chronologists may differ on pivotal dates and comparative periods between cases, thus a simple majority is not necessarily correct. Most Canon scholars settle on a single chronologist's results for their research framework.

Main Characters:

Scott Eccles, a respectable, dull English bachelor. Inspector Tobias Gregson of Scotland Yard, an energetic, gallant and, within his limitations, a capable officer. Inspector Baynes, of the Surrey Constabulary. Aloysius Garcia a young Latin, living in Surrey, one of Don Murillo's pursuers. Mr. Henderson, a.k.a. Don Murillo, the so-called "Tiger of San Pedro," former brutal dictator of that country. Miss Burnett, a.k.a. *Señora* Victor Durando, one of the band of avengers pursuing Murillo.

Notable Quotes:

Notable Quotes:

“I suppose, Watson, we must look upon you as a man of letters.”

“My mind is like a racing engine, tearing itself to pieces because it is not connected up with the work for which it was built. Life is commonplace, the papers are sterile; audacity and romance seem to have passed forever from the criminal world.”

“You are like my friend, Dr. Watson, who has a bad habit of telling his stories wrong end foremost.”

“It is an error to argue in front of your data. You find yourself insensibly twisting them round to fit your theories.”

“But how come you into this matter, Miss Burnet? How can an English lady join in such a murderous affair?”

Murillo's Curious Indecision

Miss Burnet, for all the risks she was willing to take—and knowing the savagery and killing that the desperate men she was with were capable of—acted peculiarly. She claimed that she would not have given them Garcia's address had she know what they were going to do to him. The question that hangs unanswered is, of course, what else could she have possibly have thought they were going to do to him? It was very unlikely that they wanted to invite him over for tea!

Murillo's minions also were not particularly bright either. It always occurred to me (and many Canon scholars have remarked upon this fact) that Lopez acted stupidly by attacking her before she had a



Courtesy of ITV Granada



Courtesy of ITV Granada

chance to finish addressing the envelope resulting in (a) he had to force the address out of her, and (b) he ended with an envelope addressed in a different hand.

Garcia, as well, did not act very brightly. In view of the kind of prey he and his companions were after, the different writing on the envelope should have raised his suspicions. That it did not, surely led to his death.

Then there is the matter of the bodies. Why would they not see to it that Garcia's body be impossible, or at least difficult, to find? It burial was to be avoided, surely there had to have been somewhere in the country a convenient well or better yet, convenient outhouse in which to dispose of Garcia's body, which brings me to the second body—that of Miss Burnet, the body that never was.

Repulsive though it was the decision to murder Garcia was understandable. After all, the man was an immediate danger to them. Although Miss Burnet was as dangerous to Murillo and his cohorts as the

rest of her band (let us remember that it was she who led the others to him), his decision to keep her alive and not disposing of her as well makes little sense. Whichever way you looked at it, she certainly was more dangerous to them alive than dead.

A Mistaken Deduction?

Holmes comments the following to Watson: “I may add that Miss Burnet’s age and character make it certain that my first idea that there might be a love interest in our story is out of the question.” I think that our sleuth may have been a little too quick to dismiss this first impression.

In light of everything that had happened, it seems strange that the ruthless Murillo allowed Miss Burnet to live. The question must be asked, why?

Let us recall how Watson described Murillo: “He had made his name as the most lewd and bloodthirsty tyrant that had ever governed any country with a pretense to civilization.”

Perhaps in her quest to remain with Murillo in order to keep track of him, she had been willing to sacrifice herself and had become more than a simple governess in the former dictator’s household. This is a plausible explanation as to why the so-called Tiger of San Pedro did not have her promptly snuffed out, alongside Garcia. It could

have been that he priced her very personal services well-above the possible risk that her continued existence might represent; especially if her freedom was firmly under his control.

It is not a far leap to assume that with his practice in disappearing by assuming a different identity, aided by his considerable resources, leaving two instead of only one body behind would not have added much to his difficulties and risks.

While there would have been an effort by the police to find the murderers of Garcia and Miss Burnet, it probably would have assumed rather quickly the temperature of a cold case, especially as new felonies made their appearance.

The Redoubtable Baynes



Courtesy of ITV Granada



Courtesy of ITV Granada

One must give kudos to Baynes. Throughout the case, it is quite obvious that he was at least one step ahead of Holmes. Consider how he surprised (perhaps “shocked” would be a better word) the Great Detective when he identified Murillo by tracking his travels. Holmes must have thought back with embarrassment regarding the amusement he felt when Baynes arrested the mulatto. It was almost as if Baynes was making fun of him, when he stated his intent to continue on his own track when Holmes warned him of what seemed like an error.

On top of everything else, he quietly and comfortably watched Holmes (shades of “That is what you may expect to see”!) case Murillo’s house. Finally, had it not been for

Warner's decisive intervention, Miss Burnet would have been taken before our detective was able to intervene; in fact, he was preparing to attempt her rescue at the house, when she already had been taken away from it.

Even Holmes had to admit the inspector's excellence, "You will rise high in your profession. You have instinct and intuition."

Well done, Inspector Baynes!



What else happened in 1892:

Empire



Britain and Germany agree on Cameroons and sign a formal treaty.

◀ Durand Agreement defines the frontier between India and Afghanistan. Still in effect, this frontier eventually caused more problems than the ones it sought to solve.

Cape-Johannesburg railroad completed.

Matabele War.

Britain

Salisbury resigns, Gladstone forms his fourth (and last) Liberal government.

Lottie Collins, music-hall star sings, *Ta-ra-ra boom-de-ay*.

Keir Hardie, first independent Labour Member of Parliament, takes his seat.

National Mining strike.

Liverpool overhead electric railway built.

Imperial Institute opens in London

World

Franco-Russian Alliance.

In Pennsylvania a bloody five-month strike fails at one of Andrew Carnegie's steel mills.



Prince Ito becomes Premier of Japan.

U.S Marines overthrow the native government in Hawaii.

◀ Giolitti becomes Premier of Italy.

Ivory Coast becomes a French colony.

Tewfik, Khedive of Egypt dies; succeeded by Abbas II.

The World's Columbian Exposition is held in Chicago celebrating the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the New World.

In Russian-ruled Poland, unrest among workers brings an attack sent by authorities that kills 46.

Baseball is officially invented.

France captures Dahomey.

The Sierra Club is founded, with 182 charter members. John Muir is elected president. The club defeats an effort to reduce the boundaries of Yosemite National Park.

Grover Cleveland elected U.S. president.

Pan-Slav Conference held at Cracow.

“Gentleman Jim” Corbett defeats John L. Sullivan, wins heavyweight boxing title.

Art

Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite* premières in St Petersburg.



Gerhart Hauptmann publishes *Die Weber*, a German social drama.

Bernard Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*.

Monet begins his series of pictures of the Rouen Cathedral.

◀ Toulouse-Lautrec paints *At the Moulin Rouge*.

Kipling, *Barrack-Room Ballads*.

Leoncavallo premiers his opera, *Il Pagliacci* in Milan.

Munch paints *The Cry*.

Zola, *La Débâcle*.

Oscar Wilde, *Lady Windermere's Fan*.

Science and Technology

American inventor John Froelich develops and constructs the first gasoline-powered tractor.

Diesel patents his internal combustion engine.

Hermann Dresser introduces acetyl-salicylic acid, later to be known by the trade name of “Aspirin.”

First automatic telephone switchboard introduced.

Henry Ford designs his first motor vehicle.

Otto Lilienthal successfully flies a glider, crashes in 1896 after some 2,000 flights.

C.F. Cross and E.J. Bevan produce “viscose,” which will lead to the manufacture of rayon.

Next week's case: BRUC

Respectfully submitted,

Murray, the Courageous Orderly

(a.k.a. Alexander E. Braun)

“I should have fallen into the hands of the murderous Ghazis had it not been for the devotion and courage shown by Murray, my orderly...”

If you would like to join the Hounds of the Internet, email us at CourageousMurray@aol.com.