



This criticism of Byrnes & the investigation of the murder was published in Philadelphia 2 weeks prior to the opening of the Coroner's Inquest. Not sure if the reporter was Louis Megargee, publisher of 'Seen & Heard' whose scathing review of Byrnes' retirement in 1895 has been included in East River Echo Number 187. It wasn't the only article found in a Philadelphia paper that was critical of the investigation, the case against Ali, and the resulting conviction.

Philadelphia Inquirer May 3, 1891

CHAT OF NEW YORK

"Jack the Ripper" and Byrnes, the "Modern Vidocq"

HE IS NOW SOMEWHAT BAFFLED

How the Work for the Northeastern Elevated in This City Is Compared to a Bit of Enterprise in the Metropolis.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE OF THE INQUIRER. NEW YORK, May 2.—Inspector Byrnes is a very crafty man.

I do not mean an able detective. But he is foxy enough to fool not only the people of New York but nearly all its newspapers into the belief that he is a detective "sans peur, sans reproche." The public eulogies which have been passed upon this man by the New York press are amusing to those familiar with his real status. With a corps of detectives and a police force at his command, without a rival, in numbers at least, in this country, with a power more autocratic than that enjoyed by the Mayor of the metropolis—a power which is granted by no legal right, but which ignorance and the carelessness of public opinion permit him to exercise—it would be small wonder indeed if at times his dragnet did not make heavy hauls of criminals. When his vaunted powers were taxed by the so-called "Jack the Ripper" mystery, the New York press with one accord triumphantly shout'd that now the Scotland Yard detectives who had failed in a similar search would be obliged to hide their diminished heads, that the great American Vidocq would have the perpetrator of this ghastliest of crimes in custody within forty-eight hours. Fulsome

editorials congratulated him in advance upon his success. The Inspector smiled proudly as compliments were showered upon him and in the graceful wreaths of his cigar saw visions of increased power and still wider fame. Forty-eight hours and twice forty-eight hours elapsed and still "Jack the Ripper" had not felt the clutch of the law.

Soon it became apparent that the detective hunt was nothing more more than a blind search.

One hundred and thirty-three arrests were made and of this great number of vicious men hauled for a moment to the surface of public notoriety all but one have been released. They were gathered in principally in the vicious and depraved district known as Cherry Hill and for a couple of days it looked as if an annex would have to be built to the station houses to hold the swearing, shouting, protesting throng. As there could be only one guilty man it was natural the 132 innocent men should curse the police, and demand satisfaction for the outrage. Ghastly as the crime was, there was a species of grim humor in these arrests that was undeniable. Every man with scowling look, a black mustache, and wearing a brown overcoat, a turn down collar and a Derby hat was almost sure to be seized if he ventured within a stone's throw of the boundary of the Cherry Hill district. The detective force formed the theory that the murderer would, several days after the crime had been committed, return to the vicinity thereof, and walk up and down the streets, wearing the same clothes, and having the same general appearance as he had on the night of the murder. It may have been a good theory, but no one but a detective would think so.

The one prisoner held in confinement was known as "Frenchy No. 1," and Inspector Byrnes, in emphatic terms, stated that this man's cousin, known as "Frenchy No. 2," was the murderer, and would be arrested within forty-eight hours. After some days "Frenchy No. 2" was discovered in Jersey City and promptly proved an alibi and re-

vealed himself as a fellow of rather good character. Then, for the first time, the New York press began to grumble at their detective idol; for the first time the utterances of the Delphic oracle at police headquarters were questioned. The Inspector's prestige was in danger, and then it was that his craftiness asserted itself and he proved the variety of his resources.

One week after the gruesome murder, when praise of him was giving way to jeers, he boldly announced that he had had the murderer in custody all these days in the person of Frenchy No. 1. Knowing, however, the ridiculous weakness of his changed theory, he qualifies it by saying that while he presents a number of facts tending to show that the man is guilty, he does not accuse him of the crime, and yet, most inconsistently, he has officially asked for his indictment for murder. This entire movement is simply intended to hoodwink the public and to save Byrnes from disgrace. Whether or not Frenchy No. 1 was drenched in human blood, whether or not the room in which it is claimed he slept was bespattered with human gore; whether or not he is the lowest, most vicious, most depraved, most infamous of God's creatures, Mr. Byrnes and every sensible man knows full well that the prisoner could not be convicted of the crime unless the man who brought the murdered woman to the vile lodging house is produced and his innocence substantiated. Until that is done Mr. Byrnes should talk less and work more, and if he takes my advice he will send to Philadelphia for Captain Robert J. Linden and take a few lessons in honest, intelligent, unselfish detective work.

It is about time Byrnes heard some plain talk.
