

A case conference on renaissance noblemen 'my last Duchess'

To: chief superintendent Chalmer

From: Inspector Morse

Date: November 19th 1572

Title: An investigation into the death of the Duchess of Ferera

Terms of reference

The Duchess of Ferera's death took place under very mysterious circumstances; this is why this case is being investigated. This report is to show the findings of the interview that we have had with the various people who may have been involved in her death or could help us with our enquires. The duchess of Ferera was found in the house that she shares with her husband the duke of Ferera, she was found strangled with the rope used still tied around her neck and was found by the duke himself. The coroner's report proves that she was strangled but no fingerprints were found on the rope. The main suspect is the duke of Ferera, or someone who he paid to kill her.

Procedure

After the Duchess' body was found first the coroner examined the body for any signs of a struggle and if any fingerprints were found on the body. Then we tried to find anybody who may have seen or heard anything, or anyone who would be able to help us with our enquires.

The people who we decided to interview were the Duke of Ferera, the duke of Ferera's fiancé, Miss Smith, the count, the counts servant and Fra Pandolf as well as anyone else who could help us with our enquires.

We interviewed the Duke as he found her body and he was the person we believe was closest to her. We then talked to Miss Smith as she will be able to help us determine the character of the Duke and we thought that she could have committed the murder because she was jealous of her. We interrogated the count as he could help us determine the character of his daughter, Miss Smith. We also thought that there was a chance that he could have committed the murder so he would get the dowry for his daughter quicker than if the Duchess was still alive. We talked to the counts servant as he spends time with the Duke so he may be able to help determine what happened.

I expect to find that her death is related to the counts daughter as she had motives, as she wanted to be with the Duke. I also think that that the counts servant will prove to be helpful in the course of our enquires.

Findings

First we interviewed the Duke just after he had supposedly found the body and he did not act very upset or shocked about the death of his wife. We thought this was suspicious at the time and when we asked him if he had seen or heard anything he said that he had not. He also said that he had been in the house at the time but was upstairs at the time so he did not hear anything but this seemed suspicious as he could not have been that far away at the time of her death and if someone else came in the house they would have known that he could have walked in at any time.

We then interviewed anyone who may have been walking past the crime scene or anyone that may have seen or heard anything nobody came forward to give any more information than we already knew.

We then interrogated Miss Smith, she said that the Duke 'was a very kind man who would not and could not hurt anyone.' She denied that she was in the vicinity of the crime scene at the time of her death although she did not have an alibi for the time of her death.

We then interviewed the count who said that he knew nothing about her murder and was sure that his daughter could not have been involved in the murder but this evidence is not very reliable as he is her father and is likely to try to make her look good.

We then interviewed the counts servant who said that he had noticed that the duke had been acting 'strangely' in the few days previous to the Duchess' murder but he did not believe that he would have committed the murder as he 'did not seem the type' but he did not seem too sure about this. We then asked him if he thought that Miss Smith or the count could have had something to do with the murder and he said that he defiantly thought that Miss Smith would have done this as she had been so patient in waiting for the Duke but he was not so sure about the Count but eventually concluded that he would not have done it either.

We contacted Fra Pandolf and he said that although he did a portrait of the Duchess he did not know either of them very well and we concluded that he would not be a very reliable witness as he did not say anything that was different from anybody else and nothing that was useful.

DOSSIER OF THE DUKE:

Date of birth: 10th April 1531

Age: 41

Occupation/ status: Duke of Ferera

Interest: Art

Criminal record: n/a

DOSSIER OF THE DUCHESS:

Date of Birth: 19th March 1529

Age: 43

Occupation/ status: Duchess of Ferera

Interests: nature

Criminal record: n/a

Conclusion

The conclusion of this investigation is that we cannot be sure who killed the Duchess of Ferera but we can be sure that she was murdered as there were marks around her neck from the rope and the rope was still there when she was 'found' by the duke. She could not have committed suicide as the coroner confirmed that the death was by strangulation and she would not have physically been able to do this herself.

The duke was implicated in her murder because he had the motives, because he wanted to remarry and he may not have been able to get a divorce. He would have had the opportunity to commit the murder as he was in the house at the time, also there was no forced entry to suggest that someone broke into the house and murdered her. It also did not make sense for someone to enter the house and murder her when he was in the building but all this evidence is circumstantial meaning that we cannot prove that the Duke of Ferera committed the murder unless anyone else comes forward. Therefore we cannot arrest him.