



The Hounds of the Internet

"A singular set of people, Watson."

lies in the fact that Watson specifically mentions 1887 as the year in which the case took place. However, Canon scholars rightly point to an anachronism in that year: Holmes states that he had once been defeated by a woman. Because there can be little doubt that the lady he refers to is Irene Adler then the present case had to have taken place *after* SCAN. This seems reason enough for several Canon chronologists to cite 1889 as a more likely year.

In this case, however, the Canon's dating of 1887 takes precedence. In 1887 Sherlock Holmes was 33 years old and Doctor John H. Watson 35.

Main Characters:

John Openshaw, young landowner from Horsham, West Sussex, client of Sherlock Holmes. Joseph Openshaw, John's late father, developer of the Openshaw unbreakable tire. Elias Openshaw, John's late uncle, ex-member of the Ku-Klux-Klan, who immigrated to America before returning to Sussex.

Notable Quotes:

All day the wind had screamed and the rain had beaten against the windows, so that even here in the heart of great, hand-made London we were forced to raise our minds for the instant from the routine of life and to recognise the presence of those great elemental forces which shriek at mankind through the bars of his civilisation, like untamed beasts in a cage.

An Inquiry into: "The Five Orange Pips"

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"The Five Orange Pips" was first published in *The Strand Magazine* in November 1891. It is part of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

Not unusually so, our chronologists considerably differ in their estimates, this time with good reason. The problem

The Five Orange Pips

Chronologist	Date of the Adventure
Canon	Late September 1887
Baring-Gould	Thursday, September 29, 1887
Bell	Late September 1888
Blakeney	September 1889
Brend	September 1888
Christ	Tuesday, September 24, 1889
Dakin	Tuesday, September 24, 1889
Folsom	Late September 1889
Hall	On or about September 21, 1887
Keefauver	Friday September 16, 1887
Klinger	1889
Zeisler	Tuesday, September 24, 1889

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.

“I have been beaten four times—three times by men, and once by a woman.”

“I am the last court of appeal.”



The Biographer and the Self-Effacing Detective

Watson, O Watson, why do you make us suffer so? You seem to have gone out of your way to tantalize and keep us in the dark when you wrote down this case. You tell us how Holmes modestly corrected John Openshaw’s impression that he has never been defeated, informing him (and us) that he



has been bested by four men and one woman. While we may safely assume that the lady in question was Irene Adler, the men pose a problem.

Taking into consideration that even the terrifying Professor Moriarty, the very Napoleon of Crime, regardless of his mighty efforts was unable to triumph over Holmes, engaging in a struggle that eventually cost him his life, our Biographer heartlessly leaves us wondering what sort of formidable opponents those four men must have been! Not even a single hint about what kind of cases were involved, and how it was that Holmes was bested. It seems highly unlikely that these were nothing less than heavy calibre criminal cases.

Then, to make matters worse Watson proceeds to provide us with a list of the Great Detective’s triumphs that year in solving cases that—whether due to Watson’s choice or Holmes’ prohibition—never saw the light of day. In view of all this it is impossible not to wonder what was behind the Good Doctor’s decision to present us with the present case. Of all these 1887 successes—the Paradol Chamber, the Amateur Mendicant Society, the loss of the barque *Sophy Anderson*, the adventures of the

Grice Patersons in the island of Uffa, and the Camberwell poisoning case—why would he decide upon this one?

He then blithely informs us that he chose to ignore these other cases because some had already gained publicity through the papers, while others did not showcase Holmes’ “peculiar qualities which my friend possessed in so high a degree”; others were unsolved, while the rest had been only partially cleared up without a firm solution.

If these were so unimportant then, why would Watson inform us that he may sketch these out “at some future date,” but not now? His lukewarm reason: “[N]one of them present such singular fea-

tures as the strange train of circumstances which I have now taken up my pen to describe.” Is that so? Did he really think that witnessing how Holmes solved cases through the observation of the foundering of parsley aboard a bit of butter or how he discovered guilt by winding a dead man’s watch would not have been far more interesting?

Instead, he chose to regale us with an investigation that can at best be described as lackluster, in which the Great Detective’s unbelievable negligence led to his client’s murder.

Even Watsonian discretion must have had its limits!

The Reference Library

A subject for conjecture—many hours of it—is that sort of reference works were kept at the ready at 221B. Everything we read that describes that picturesque pile, indicates that although the premises were comfortable they did not offer unlimited bookshelf space. As this leads one to conclude that it is unlikely that our friends would have boasted of having more than one set of encyclopedias, why then, choose the *American Encyclopædia* over the *Encyclopædia Britannica*? In 1887, at the zenith of the British Empire, what would have made a scholarly English gentleman such as Sherlock Holmes, select *Americana* over *Britannica*? Unquestionably, the latter was a far more encompassing work.



Also, this was the time when a growing industrial United States was beginning to seriously compete with Britain. All things American were not viewed with excessive warmth by the English, which makes Holmes’ selection even more intriguing. Because neither set of encyclopedias would have been inexpensive, this would seem to indicate that Holmes had more than just a casual interest in the land of *e pluribus unum*. Possibly his practice in the United States was more extensive than what we have been led to believe.

An Inconceivable Parental Choice



While it seems that there would be very few of us who would willingly put a son in the hands of a drunkard, blasphemer, fighter, and hermit such as Elias Openshaw, Joseph’s decision to send his only son to live with such a brother borders on the deranged. Although today some might hesitate to condemn Elias because one cannot opine on someone else’s life-style choice today, back then society was considerably more inflexible.

Because we are told that he was wealthy, one might tend to think that this was Joseph’s reason—to have his son benefit from it and eventually even inherit a fortune. This seems contradictory however because, as the inventor of the unbreakable tire, Joseph had himself amassed a considerable fortune—a fortune he had no one else but his only son to pass to.

Thus, the question still remains: What was behind this apparently illogical decision to send off his son to grow up in such a household?

Bad Forensics

According to John Openshaw, his uncle was found dead, face down in a green-scummed pond two feet deep. He then added that because there seemed to be no signs of violence, the authorities rendered a verdict of suicide.

This has always disturbed me because of two facts. First, regardless of how sober or inebriated he was when the KKK minions finally caught up to him, it is unlikely that Elias would peacefully have allowed himself to be drowned in shallow mucky water.



Prolonged and unpleasant deaths such as forced drowning result in throes of desperation, struggles of a kind that would require force to overcome, producing defensive lesions on the body; it could be argued, of course, that the murderers found him already passed-out drunk. If that were so, they would have had to carry him to the pond, drag and force his head into it, which still would triggered some reflex reactions requiring force.

My second problem with this verdict lies in Elias' death having been adjudicated a suicide rather than, for example, death by accident. While it is true that suicide by drowning is a common enough means of shuffling off the mortal coil, what is patently uncommon for a man like Elias to select a two-foot-deep scummy pool to do himself in. After all, this was a man with broad military experience acquired during a long and cruel war, who doubtless owned more than just one firearm. Typically, someone like him would put an end to his days with a bullet through the brain.

The Visit That Didn't Take Place

While there is some sort of logic to the actions of these desperate men pursuing the missing—and later destroyed—papers would have sent a warning letter with five orange pips (a threat that the recipient as a former Klansman would have understood) and terse instructions, a repetition of this action with the man's relations who never were Klan members and therefore were more than likely not to be able to gauge the danger until the Klansmen carried out their threats, seems ineffectual.

KKK members were extremely secretive. Very often, even their wives did not suspect their affiliation; all they knew was that their husbands sometimes left home to attend some kind of political meeting, not that they were out in the night spreading mayhem dressed in flour sacks. The murderers could not have been sure whether Elias had revealed his activities with the KKK to his brother and nephew, thereby enabling them to understand the full import of the pips.

Had just one of them visited one of the Openshaws to ascertain status of the papers, this would have avoided two unnecessary deaths—as well as the risks taken to murder both men. Even if they thought



that such contact would have been useless with Elias, they had to realize that Joseph and John were a different matter.

By their threats and violence they also ran the risk that Joseph or John, neither of whom had any reason to fear prosecution, might have turned over the papers to the authorities, who would most likely have forwarded them on to their United States counterparts; it is well to remember that they did not know that Elias had destroyed them.

The Negligent Detective

Nowhere in the whole Canon can one find an instance in which the great Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street treated a client in such a negligent fashion that it cost him his life. It is impossible to even speculate what happened to our sleuth, particularly considering that after listening to John Openshaw's story he unerringly concluded that the young man found himself in life-threatening danger. He even comments upon it more than once:



He starts by warning John Openshaw: *"You must act, man, or you are lost. Nothing but energy can save you. This is no time for despair."*

Then, when Openshaw informs him that the official police did not take the matter seriously, Watson tells us that, *Holmes shook his clenched hands in the air. "Incredible imbecility!"*

Once again, when he found out that the policeman assigned to John is only supposed to guard him at his home our Biographer reveals that, *Again Holmes raved in the air.*

As icing on this rather macabre cake, when Holmes inexplicably sends Openshaw on his way, alone, into the dark and stormy night he warns: *"And, above all, take care of yourself in the meanwhile, for I do not think that there can be a doubt that you are threatened by a very real and imminent danger."* He reassuringly adds that, *"The streets will be crowded, so I trust that you may be in safety. And yet you cannot guard yourself too closely."*

After his young client leaves, our sleuth turns to the Good Doctor and remarks, *"And yet this John Openshaw seems to me to be walking amid even greater perils than did the Sholtos."*

What could he have been thinking? From what Watson tells us, there is no doubt that the Great Detective fully understood the extent of the deadly danger facing his client. How, then, could he send him into harm's way with only a warning to be careful? Why did he not escort him to some large, grand hotel where he would have been safe, perhaps even asking Watson to guard him, much as he did with Sir Henry Baskerville?

How could Holmes have been so negligent?

Some Legal Considerations

Indulging in self-incrimination regarding his failure to keep his client safe, Holmes says about his murder, *"That hurts my pride, Watson. It is a petty feeling, no doubt, but it hurts my pride. It becomes a personal matter with me now, and, if God sends me health, I shall set my hand upon this gang."* He then promises that *"I shall be my own police. When I have spun the web they [the police] may take the flies, but not before."* Noble as this may sound, in view of the facts, it was highly unlikely.

Holmes' reaction to the murderers of his client also bears some explaining. Even though in his initial (and mostly erroneous) assessment of Holmes Watson wrote, *Has a good practical knowledge of British law*, this does not seem to have been accurate either, for he would have known that he was legally unable to do anything about the killers.

Had the *Lone Star* had reached its home port it is difficult to believe that American authorities would have detained Captain Calhoun and his cohorts based solely on Holmes' cable that, as he put it, "informed the police of Savannah that these three gentlemen are badly wanted here upon a charge of murder."

The evidence held by the Great Detective for this charge would have been insufficient. Even the most incapable lawyer would have been able to secure the release of the KKKers after having had all charges dismissed by the court. This result would not have been different even if it had been an official cable from Scotland Yard itself. Short of a miraculous pang of conscience leading to heartfelt confessions, the three Klansmen would have been free to go and carry on with their despicable activities.

The Great Detective's *prima facie* evidence was nonexistent.

Only Holmes' departed client might have been able to testify about the evidence of the orange pips sent by the murderers. Even worse, the official conclusion did not consider the Openshaw deaths to have been a result of nefarious activity: the uncle was deemed a suicide, and the brother's death was attributed to an accident.

Everything else would have been deemed pure hearsay lacking in evidentiary value. The closest thing to tangible evidence Holmes had was the single paper that escaped the burning of the KKK documents by Elias, and it did not in any way implicate the murderers.

Therefore our detective had nothing that could be properly described as evidence, certainly nothing that would have been sufficient to start a process of extradition between England and the United States (not forgetting that at this time, the two countries did not enjoy the most cordial of relationships). Another factor to consider is that the authorities in Savannah—both criminal and judicial—being southerners themselves, would have been sympathetic towards the three men and their affiliation; lest we forget, the Civil War was still well within living memory.

Had Divine Justice not intervened, the malefactors would have escaped unpunished.

The Evaporating Fees

According to John Openshaw his uncle Elias left John's father £14,000 (≈\$5,300,000). In addition, we know that his father Joseph, as inventor of the Openshaw unbreakable tire sufficiently successful to retire "upon a handsome competence," which added to the bequest, put young Openshaw in a very comfortable financial position. Had Holmes managed to bring this case to a successful conclusion he could have demanded and received a check large enough to put a smile in anyone's face. As things turned out, there was no fee.

Except for the reason, this was not unusual. Besides those cases in which he aided the police (STUD and VALL come to mind), there were other, private cases among which are DANC, RETI, MISS, GREE, BRUC.



In the present case the absence of a fee was to be expected.



What else happened in 1887:

British East Africa Company charter awarded.



Zululand becomes protectorate.

First colonial conference opens in London.

Anglo-Russian treaty fixes Russo-Persian frontier along the Oxus River.

◀ Failure of former Prime Minister Gladstone's Home Rule Bill brings Irish affairs into prominence, Charles Parnell proposes bill for diminution of Irish rents, which is rejected. Arthur Balfour, Prime Minister Salisbury's nephew, introduces new coercion bill, which passes as a result of fabricated charges against Parnell, accusing him of complicity in the Phoenix Park Murders.

British Baluchistan, including Quetta, established.

Britain

Britain annexes Zululand.

Independent Labour Party is founded.



◀ Victoria's Golden Jubilee, 50th year as Queen, is celebrated throughout the Empire. The Queen drives in state from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey, where a Special Jubilee Service is held. This event marks the end of the Windsor Retirement.

"People's Palace" first stage, the Queen's Hall, opens in East End.

Earls Court opens at entertainments ground.

Coal Mines Regulation

Act, boys under 13 not to work underground, and under 12 at the surface.

Irish Coercion Act; Irish Land Act.

Charing Cross Road opens.

Allotments Act, Local authorities empowered to acquire land compulsorily for allotments.

Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith, opens after being bought by Metropolitan Board of Works.

Kilburn Park opens after being acquired by the City of London.

World

United States begins free mail delivery to homes of any community with a population of 10,000 or more.

China recognizes Portugal's right to the island of Macao.

Franco-German crisis over actions of Boulanger in Schnaebele case. Boulanger fails to gain office.

German Reichstag dissolved; alliance of Imperialists, Conservatives, some National Liberals—the *Kartel*—give Bismarck majority in the new Reichstag; military grants renewed.

Renewal of Russo-German "Reinsurance" Treaty; and Triple Alliance.



Expiry of Dreikaiserbund.

Bismarck refuses permission for Russia to raise loans in Berlin.

Slave revolt in Brazil takes place near São Paulo. Troops are called out but slaves take refuge in the jungle and hold their ground. This accelerates the emancipation of slaves across that empire.

◀ President Grévy resigns the Presidency of the French Republic and quits the Elysées the same evening. Riots break out in Paris when his resignation becomes public.

France advances Russia 350 million francs.

Reverend Henry Ward Beecher dies in the United States.

Italian force annihilated by Ethiopians at Dongola; designs on Tripoli conditionally supported by Britain and Germany.

Union of Indo-China formed by France.

New attempt on the life of Tsar Alexander II of Russia, Moscow is placed under martial law.



General Boulanger fails in a *coup d'état* in Paris.

Macao recognized as Portuguese by China.

◀ Bulgarian parliament elects Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg as Prince. Russia, Germany, and France withhold recognition of the Prince. By the end of the year, Russia's attitude has grown so menacing that war appears inevitable.

Yellow River floods in China, killing nearly a million people.

Four of the eight anarchists involved in the Chicago Haymarket riot are executed; two are sentenced to life imprisonment, another for 15 years, the eighth commits suicide.

The Comte de Paris, from England, issues manifesto "to the representatives of the Monarchical party in France," urging his followers in the Chambers to defend Conservative interests to show France how desirable is the re-establishment of the monarchy.

Peaceful revolution in Hawaii. American and native residents, indignant at King Kalakaua's corruption, assemble in force and proceed to the palace, where the king consents to dismiss his Ministry and submit to a constitution, by which his own power becomes nominal.

The *Opéra Comique* at Paris is totally destroyed by fire. Loss of lives is never correctly ascertained.

U.S. Interstate Commerce Act, federal control of interstate railways.

Work begins on Kiel Canal.

General Chiang Kai-shek born.

L.L. Zamenhof devises Esperanto.

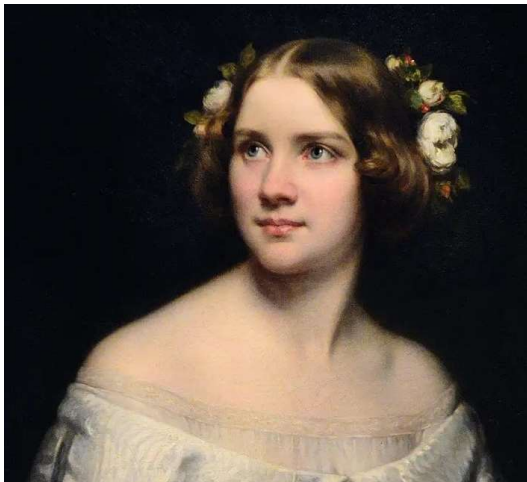
Sir Thomas Moore beatified by Pope Leo XIII. (Canonized, 1935.)

Art

Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*, first Sherlock Holmes story, published.

Sir Hall Caine publishes *The Deemster*, a novel about the Isle of Man.

Thomas Hardy publishes *The Woodlanders*, a novel.



Mallarmé publishes *Poésies*.

August Strindberg debuts *The Father*, a play.

H. Rider Haggard publishes *She* and *Allan Quatermain*.

Gilbert and Sullivan debut *Ruddigore*.

◀ Singer Jenny Lind dies at her home in the Malvern Hills, England.

Hermann Sudermann publishes *Frau Sorge*, a novel.

Emile Zola publishes *La Terre*, a bitter novel about peasant life.

L.L. Zamenhof publishes first book in Esperanto.

Cézanne paints *The Blue Vase*.

Claude A. Debussy debuts *Le Printemps*.

Monet paints *Fields in Spring*.

Sir John Stainer debuts *The Crucifixion*, an oratorio.

Van Gogh paints *Le Moulin de la Gallette* and *Boulevard de Clichy*.

Verdi debuts *Othello*.

Richard Strauss debuts *Aus Italien* and *Macbeth*, tone poems.

I. Donnelly publishes "The Great Cryptogram, Francis Bacon's Cypher in the So-called Shakespeare Play."

Chabrier debuts his opera, *Le Roi malgré lui*.

Science and Technology

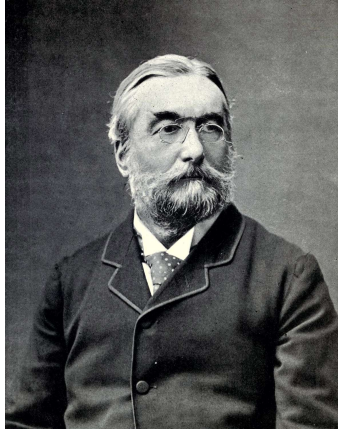
Radio waves discovered by Hertz.

Bauxite, source of aluminum, is discovered in Georgia.

Edison and Swan combine to produce “Ediswan” electric lamps for domestic use.

Ernst Mach defines the Mach Number, now used in supersonic flight.

Michelson and Morley experiment on the relative velocity of light in perpendicular directions; no speed difference found, results later lead to Einstein’s Theory of Relativity.



Daimler four-wheeled motor car produced.

Emil Berliner improves the phonograph’s sound quality.

◀ Joseph Lockyer publishes *The Chemistry of the Sun*.

H.W. Goodwin invents celluloid film.

Cyanide process used for the extraction of gold and silver proposed, ridiculed.

Svante A. Arrhenius proposes ion theory of electrolysis.

Phenacetin, an analgesic drug, discovered.

C.A. von Welsbach demonstrates practical incandescent gas mantle.

Construction of first British torpedo cruiser.

Next week’s case: TWIS.

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...”

All Sherlock Holmes photos have been published by courtesy of ITV Granada.

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

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