

Title:Dr W S Kendrick Sworn In For The Defendant, 119th To Testify
Category:LEO FRANK TRIAL BRIEF OF EVIDENCE

DR. W. S. KENDRICK, sworn for the Defendant.

I have been a practicing physician for thirty-five years. I was Dean of the Atlanta Medical College. I gave Dr. Harris his first position there. If a young lady between thirteen and fourteen years of age died and a post-mortem examination was made within eight or ten days after death, by a physician who makes a digital and visual examination to determine whether there is any violence to the vagina or not, and inserts his fingers for the purpose of deciding, and the body is embalmed, and after nine days it is disinterred and another post-mortem performed and the physician performing the post-mortem takes a half dozen strips and sees nothing with his naked eye by way of congestion, but by the use of a microscope finds that some of the epithelium is stripped from the wall of the vagina, I don't think that the finding of the epithelium stripped from the wall would indicate anything unusual. I don't think that would indicate any act of violence. A female's menstrual periods brings about congestion and hemorrhages of the blood vessels every time. The congestion gradually subsides within two or three days. That would not be any indication of violence, nor could you tell how long before death the violence had been inflicted. If a young lady had a wound on the back of the head about an inch and a half long cutting to the skull and the skull was open and a small hemorrhage was found, that did not involve pressure on the brain and the brain itself was not injured, I am positive that no man examining the body nine or ten days after death could have any way of telling whether that wound would produce unconsciousness or not. It would be a pure conjecture if he said anything on that subject. Skulls are sometimes fractured without unconsciousness. Each stomach is a law to itself. It is a known fact that some stomachs will digest different substances quicker than others. I don't think that there is an expert in the world who could form any definite idea by either chemical analysis of the liquids of the stomach or by the condition of the cabbage lodged in the stomach as to how long it had been in the stomach.

CROSS EXAMINATION.

I am not a specialist of the stomach, but I am and have been teaching diseases of the stomach and all these cases come under my jurisdiction. Dr. Westmoreland is a surgeon, not a stomach specialist. Dr. Hancock is not a stomach specialist. If you find starch granules in the stomach undigested and cabbage undigested and thirty-two degrees of hydrochloric acid in the stomach and no dextrose and no maltose, the small intestines for six feet absolutely empty, the sides and glands of the stomach all normal, I would not have an opinion as to how long that cabbage was in the stomach for the reason that each case will order itself. Yes, there are certain general principles dealing with these matters. Hydrochloric acid appears early during digestion and in small quantity, and goes up. The main things in the stomach are pepsin and hydrochloric acid. As soon as a piece of cabbage or bread gets into the stomach the hydrochloric acid begins to attack it and works until it has a clear field and leaves nothing in the stomach, and thereafter the hydrochloric acid descends. I have made no effort whatever to find out how rapidly hydrochloric acid

descends and ascends. I should think though that whenever you find no hydrochloric acid the process of digestion is ended and that if you find undigested things in the stomach and hydrochloric acid in a small degree, that the process of digestion had not been finished. That's the general rule. That does not apply in all cases. For instance, I can't digest cabbage at all. It will put me in bed. Each stomach is a law unto itself, so far as digestion goes, any statement to the contrary is incorrect. There are certain basic laws that apply to most people. I haven't read a work on digestion in ten years. If there be four different stages of digestion, I think it would be impossible for an expert to tell by an examination what stage of digestion certain things were in. There are so many exceptions to the rule. As to whether the cabbage had been digested or not, if whole pieces of cabbage were there I could tell, but if you could not find the cabbage either with the naked eye or the microscope, I would say that it had been digested. I don't know how long it takes an ordinary stomach to digest turnips. If a 13-year-old child ate cabbage and bread on Saturday and her body is found that night about three o'clock, with the tongue out, deep indentations in the neck, a small flow of blood from a wound in the back of the head, a discolor of blood over her pantlets, one of the drawers legs torn, the stocking supporter torn loose rigor mortis had set in since 16 to 20 hours, all blood had settled down in that part where gravity had taken it according to the way the body was lying and the small intestine was clear six feet below the stomach, the stomach was normal, and there was no mucous and every indication was that the digestion was progressing favorably and this cabbage was found with the naked eye in the stomach and unmistakable evidences of undigested starch granules and thirty-two degrees of hydrochloric acid, I say emphatically that no man living in my judgment could say how long that cabbage had been in the stomach. If Mary Phagan was alarmed concerning her surroundings, or knew that certain facts were upon her, digestion then and there would have almost been completely arrested. If she lived six or eight hours after this alarm, I say that no digestion could have continued up to the time of her death. Any kind of mental or physical excitement would largely arrest digestion, probably completely. I could tell by looking into the stomach that day, but if I examined that ten days afterwards, and found the cabbage in that state and I had said that death or excitement had arrested its digestion I would consider that I had stated one of the greatest absurdities of the day. I don't believe it is possible to tell a thing in the world of the contents of the stomach of a person that had been dead six or eight or ten days. Yes, that looks like cabbage (State's Exhibit G).

RE-DIRECT EXAMINATION.

That cabbage doesn't look (State's Exhibit G) as if it had been chewed at all. Cabbage chewed that way would be hard to digest.