



**Police
History
Series**

The Siege of Sidney Street

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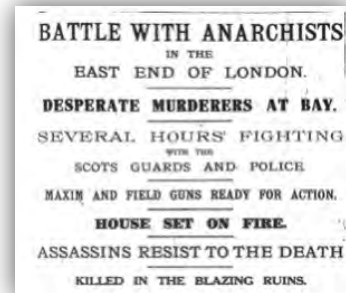
The Siege That Became Legendary

The Siege of Sidney Street justifies its place in the history of armed policing for a number of reasons. In terms of scale it far exceeded any



Peter Lorre in '*The Man Who Knew Too Much*'

armed operation that had gone before it and it was the first time that military aid had to be called for by the police to help deal with an armed siege. It was the first to be attended by a



Home Secretary in person and was the first to be recorded by newsreel cameras. Although it attracted considerable national and international criticism of the police it provided the inspiration for the climactic scenes at the end of Alfred Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* in 1934 and it was (supposedly) turned into a film in 1960.

Prelude

On Friday 16 December 1910 at about 11.30 in the evening five unarmed City of London police officers were shot when they were called to a burglary being carried out by a group of Latvian revolutionaries at H. S. Harris jewellers shop in Houndsditch. Sergeants Robert Bentley and Charles Tucker, together with Constable Walter Choate, died of their wounds and Sergeant Bryant and Constable Ernest Woodhams were seriously injured. During the confusion of the gang's escape its leader, George Gardstein (just one of the many names by which he was known), was shot by one of the other burglars.



The next morning Detective Inspector Thompson from the City got in touch with Divisional Detective Inspector Frederick Wensley at Leaman Street Police Station in the Met to say that he had just received some information and needed to go to an address in the Met's

area. Together the two detectives went to the surgery of a Doctor Scanlon at 55 Commercial Road in East London where they were told that in the early hours of that morning Scanlon had been called to 59 Grove Street. There he found a man suffering from a gunshot wound in his back. This was Gardstein and he had told the doctor that he had been accidentally shot by a friend. He would not take the doctor's advice that he needed to go to hospital and so Scanlon arranged for the collection of some pain-killing medication from his surgery and he then left promising to return at midday.



59 Grove Street

When Scanlon had his attention drawn to the newspapers, which were giving massive coverage to the murders in Houndsditch, it was only then that he contacted the City Police. Wensley later said that he suggested that Scanlon return to 59

I beg to report that in the early hours of the morning of the 17th of December last, Dr J, J Scanlan who was acting as an assistant, to Dr Bernstein, of 55 Commercial Road, E, was called to No 59 Grove Street, E, by Road Trassjonsky and Luba Milstein, and there saw a man now known as George Gardstein, lying on a bed in the first floor front room.

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Grove Street and 'take note of the surroundings without arousing suspicion and under no circumstances to give publicity to same. This was agreed to. We then arranged to meet at the surgery about 12-30 p.m, which we did. Dr Scanlon informed us that the man was lying dead on the bed,

and to our astonishment added that he had communicated with the Coroner's Officer: this made it imperative that we should go at once which we did and had only been there a few minutes when a large number of newspaper reporters assembled in the street, undoubtedly due to information supplied them either by the Doctors or the Coroner's Officer'.

Photographs of the dead man were circulated and a reward was offered for information. Since the crime had been committed in the City, and most of the enquiries were taking place in the Met, Wensley continued to act as liaison officer and during the morning of 2 January 1911 he was asked to go to Old Jewry Police Station in the City. There he met the Commissioner of the City Police, Sir William Nott-Bower, together with Detective Superintendent John Ottaway and Superintendent John Stark. A person had come forward with information on the location of two associates of Gardstein,



Fritz Svaars and William Sokoloff (known to the police at the time only as 'Joseph'). It was thought that the two would be moving that evening and they asked Wensley 'to come over if you can to assist to mature plans for their arrest'. Wensley agreed and left.



Nott-Bower

At about 6.30 that evening Wensley was back at Old Jewry to be told that the two suspects were believed to be at 100 Sidney Street and that they intended to move in a couple of hours time to a house in Nelson Street. Wensley 'agreed to go with large numbers of plain clothes officers in closed vans to the neighbourhood of Sidney Street, the officers being armed with revolvers'. After several hours the two men had still not come out and when the informant was contacted again he said that they had changed their minds. They would be moving the next evening instead. All the police withdrew and Wensley returned to Leman Street.

Shortly before midnight he got another telephone call from Ottaway this time saying that they did not like the look of things because the informant 'was not all that can be desired and seems shifty'. There was no guarantee that the suspects would wait until the next night to move and he proposed that they take action straight away rather than risk losing them. Wensley agreed but when he heard that Ottaway was not just bringing detectives with him into the Met, he was bringing 100 City uniformed officers as well, he had second thoughts. Police



Wensley



Leeson

officers from one force area, especially uniformed ones, did not operate in another force's area without senior officers in that police area knowing about it and so he suggested a meeting of interested parties at Arbour Square Police Station before matters were taken any further. In one of the wisest moves of his long and distinguished career (he would retire as Chief Constable of the Met's CID in 1929) he then sent Detective Sergeant Ben Leeson to explain what was being proposed to the superintendent of the local division, who was at his home not far away in Commercial Road. His name was

John Mulvaney and he had been in charge of 'H' Division since at least 1902 when he had been awarded the silver Edward VII Coronation Medal. He was about to start a day that would haunt him for the rest of his life.

At just after midnight on Tuesday 3 January 1911 Mulvaney had a meeting with Wensley, Stark and Ottaway at Arbour Square. According to Mulvaney: 'It was known that

It was known that they were desperate men and would not be taken alive. We decided to establish a blockade of the house, No,100 Sidney Street, where they were believed to be, rather than sacrifice valuable lives in attempting their capture by rushing the place, which must inevitably occur by the latter plan and which would also have afforded opportunities of escape in the confusion.

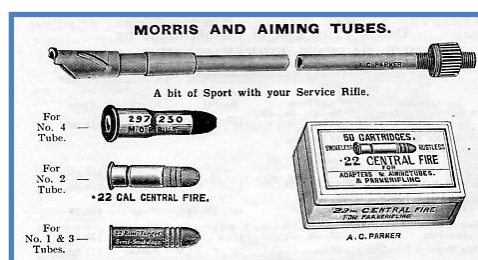
they were desperate men and would not be taken alive' and so it was decided to 'establish a blockade of the house ... where they were believed to be, rather than sacrifice valuable lives in attempting their capture by rushing the place. ... Consequently 200 men of the City and

Metropolitan Forces established cordons and every avenue of escape from front or rear was guarded by armed police. Armed Constables were also placed in the front room of No. 111 Sidney Street ... immediately opposite 100 Sidney Street. Armed Constables were also placed in the doorways of houses where practicable in Sidney Street'. Wensley was rather more circumspect about the reliability of the information. He later said that: 'We were not of course sure that they [the suspects being sought] were located, or that they were the right men'.

The weapons available to the Met were Webley .450 calibre gate-load revolvers that had first been supplied in 1884. By 1911 there were two revolvers kept at each police station although reports in 1909 and again in 1910 had suggested that they were no longer fit for purpose and recommended that they should be replaced by a more modern self-loading pistol (see *The Tottenham Outrage – 1909*). It was



Webley .450 'British Constabulary' gate-load revolver



therefore a mixed blessing when Mulvaney managed to get nine old revolvers for his men by drawing them from store. Some City officers also had revolvers and in addition a few had what Mulvaney described as 'Morris Tube rifles'. The original Morris tube was a rifle barrel that could be fitted inside the barrel of a .577/450 calibre Martini-Henry rifle so

that it could fire Morris .297/230 calibre training ammunition. Its main advantages were that a full-bore rifle range was not needed for target practice (an indoor 25-yard small-bore range would suffice) and the ammunition was much cheaper. However, reducing the calibre also



Police with revolvers at the back

significantly reduced the distance at which it was accurate, to say nothing of the greatly reduced stopping power of the bullet. It was not intended for use other than as a training aid or as an economy measure by a shooting club.

Once everyone was in position Mulvaney agreed that Wensley should 'try to get in touch with a woman in No. 100, through the occupants of No. 102'. Wensley later said that: 'We had a Jew named Wagner with us as interpreter. I saw the landlady of No 102 [who had already had police officers traipsing through her home to get to the rear of No.

100] and soon ascertained from her that she was on very bad terms with Mrs Fleischman, the landlady of No 100, and was not inclined to render any assistance. But I got from her the fact that apart from this Mrs Fleischman was a respectable woman and Mrs Blumstein the landlady of No 102 agreed to allow us to use the lower portion of her house for any purpose we wished. I also ascertained that Mrs Fleischman and her husband slept in the front room on the ground floor. We then got Wagner to knock on the front room shutters and a woman's voice answered. Wagner spoke to her in Yiddish'.



Police with 'Morris Tube rifles' and revolvers at the front

Mr. Fleischman, after being shown a truncheon (and a revolver as well according to his spouse) to prove that the police were who they said they were, came out of the house with his wife and they were taken into No. 102 where they explained that they had four children in the house. There was also an elderly man and woman by the name of Clements on the ground floor, Mr. and Mrs. Scheinmann and their four children on the first floor and a woman by the name of Betsy Girshon in the front room on the second floor. Wensley later said that he then told Mrs. Fleischman that the police believed that there were two men in the room with Mrs. Girshon and, being a respectable woman, she would not tolerate such a thing. He suggested that she go upstairs and see for herself and if they were there she should turn them out. Mrs.

Fleischman refused (both Mr. and Mrs. Fleischman later said that the police asked the husband to do it and that it was he who refused) but then Mr. Fleischman began coughing badly and Wensley suggested she go upstairs and 'ask Mrs Girshon to come down as your husband has been taken very bad and you want her to help you. This she agreed to do and went up to the 2nd floor to call Mrs Girshon and brought her down'. Although Mrs. Fleischman had knocked on the second floor front room door she had received no answer and Mrs. Girshon had appeared from a back room, making the excuse that she was not feeling very well and that she had been about to put a penny in the slot meter for the gas.

At first Mrs. Girshon indignantly denied any knowledge of two men but when



Fleischman family

Wensley said that he was going to look for himself, and that if he got killed she would certainly hang, she reluctantly admitted that they were there. She claimed that they had arrived the previous evening and had refused to leave. There was some doubt that this was true because Mrs. Fleischman remembered smelling

cigarette smoke three days earlier and she knew that no one in the house smoked. Nevertheless, Mrs. Girshon insisted on her story and added that to make sure that she couldn't tell anyone about them they had made her remove her skirt and boots.

Wensley decided that the next step was to remove the other occupants and so Mrs. Fleischman was persuaded to bring out her



Mr and Mrs Clements

children. She then did the same with Mr. and Mrs. Scheinmann



Scheinmann family

and their children. Mr. Fleischman went in to rouse Mrs. Clements who left of her own accord but Mr. Clements posed more of a problem. He refused to move and Wagner was sent in to help carry him out. By 4.45 in the morning the house was empty apart from the two suspected men and one of the City superintendents

was overheard by Wensley to remark that: 'If this turns out that these are not the right men we shall be a laughing stock'.

The Siege

At about 7.30 in the morning Wensley suggested to Mulvaney, who was with Ottaway and Stark almost opposite No. 100 in a large alleyway leading to a yard at the back of a shop at No. 109 Sidney Street, that 'it was daybreak and our difficulties would increase when people began to come out and if a resistance took place people may be shot'. Mulvaney agreed and so Wensley picked up some pebbles, which he also distributed to several other

I beg to report that at 7-30 a.m, 3rd inst, with the concurrence of the three Superintendents I threw a few pebbles up to the 2nd floor front window of No 100 Sidney Street, E, with a view to attract the attention of two men, Fritz Svaars and Joseph -----, who were suspected of being concerned in the Houndsditch murders and believed to be sleeping in that room.

officers who were in the yard, and the little group then went out into Sidney Street. They threw the pebbles at the second floor front window and then returned to the alleyway.

Wensley was no more than a few paces back into the

alleyway when six shots were fired in rapid succession from a first floor window of No. 100. One of the bullets hit Leeson 'entering his chest on the left side and passing out at the right'.

There is an inconsistency between the accounts surrounding the attempt to wake up the two suspects. Wensley later claimed that at about 7.20 in the morning Sergeant George Weston had walked across the road and knocked on the still open front door of No. 100. 'I heard him knock and saw him do it', he said. Weston on the other hand claimed that he 'rushed across the road and knocked at the door' while 'some of the men were in the act of throwing stones' at 7.30. Mulvaney said that: 'Before the gravel was thrown I know that an officer had knocked on the door. It was I think P.S. Weston'. Sergeant Albert Boreham also thought that: 'Someone knocked at the door before - but I couldn't say who'. Wensley's version is undoubtedly the correct one and some deviation between accounts is only to be expected but in this instance there may be more to it than that. It is possible that Weston felt indirectly responsible for the shooting of Leeson when he realised later that his unauthorised action may have prematurely alerted the suspects. In his account he therefore tried to blend his knocking on the front door and the pebble throwing into one concurrent event when in reality they were ten minutes apart.

Leeson was carried into a back room of 109 Sidney Street and Louis Levy, who kept his coffee stall in the yard, was sent over the roofs of several outhouses at the back of the shops to fetch Doctor Nelson Johnstone who had to use much the same route in reverse to get to his patient. The doctor dressed Leeson's wounds and gave him some brandy which Boreham had managed to fetch from the nearby Rising Sun Public House. Leeson gave his revolver to Johnstone, telling him to give it to Wensley, and the doctor put it in his hip pocket. He then conferred with Wensley as to how to get Leeson to hospital. Wensley had already climbed to the top of one of the walls surrounding the yard and managed to attract the



Bischoffsheim hand ambulance

attention of several men working at the Mann & Crossman brewery which backed onto the yard. He asked them to fetch the brewery's ambulance and when it arrived it was lifted over the wall into the yard.

The word 'ambulance' did not have the same meaning in 1911 as it does today. The London Ambulance Service was not formed

until 1915 and the conveyance of persons to hospital at the time was generally a police responsibility. The City Police had been using an electrically-driven ambulance since 1907 but in the Met reliance was still placed on a hand-operated three-wheeled cart with a detachable stretcher about nine feet long with a small oilcloth cover and hood, although large companies like Mann & Crossman often kept one for their own use in case of accidents.

Wensley thought that: 'It was impossible to take Sergt Leeson out on the ambulance into Sidney Street without considerable personal risk to all concerned, and after surveying the place I concluded that the only way would be by getting him on the ambulance and over into the brewery yard. To do this we pushed a van within four feet of a wall of a stable, some twelve feet high, then placed a ladder in a slanting direction from the van to the wall. The ambulance [Boreham uses the word 'stretcher' at this point and this makes more sense to the modern reader] bearing Sergt Leeson was lifted onto the van and then on to the ladder. We had nearly got him on to the wall when a City constable, who was in uniform, mounted a ladder from the brewery yard and evidently attracted the attention of the two suspects, who immediately commenced to fire upon us, many bullets passing close to our heads, this

continued for nearly ten minutes, during the whole time we were endeavouring to get Leeson into the brewery yard. It was bitterly cold and a blinding sleet was falling at the time. Leeson who was evidently suffering the effects of the weather as well as the wounds, seeing our difficulties, rolled off the ambulance and was assisted down the ladder into the brewery yard, when he was again placed on the ambulance and taken to London Hospital by Sergt Boreham'.

After seeing Leeson on his way (he recovered from his injuries but was medically retired) Wensley found that he couldn't get back to the ground because of the 'rapid and well directed fire' from No. 100. He was forced to remain in a gutter (getting increasingly cold and wet) for about half an hour until the attention of the suspects was directed elsewhere. He then went home to change into dry clothing before returning to Sidney Street. Doctor Johnstone remained in the yard until mid-afternoon in case his services were needed again. Presumably he handed over Leeson's revolver before he went home.

Military Aid To The Civil Power

Meanwhile Mulvaney and Stark had discussed the situation and they came to the conclusion that: 'It was palpable that these men dominated the situation, there was no



Mauser C96

approach to the house but by the front door ... [which] would have resulted in a great sacrifice of life. Their weapons were far superior to our revolvers, of which at this time we only had a few. It was therefore decided that Military aid be sought as more effective weapons were required'. The weapons they were up against were

two 1896 model (C96)

'Broomhandle' Mauser pistols and a 7.65mm Browning pistol. The Mausers fired 7.63mm ammunition and had 10-round fixed magazines fed by stripper clips. They also had adjustable rear-sights graduated for distances of 50-1000 yards.



Browning

Mulvaney and Stark made the precarious exit from the yard behind No. 109 over the outhouse roofs and, after failing in an attempt to contact Scotland Yard from the Mann &

Crossman brewery, Mulvaney went to Arbour Square. The Commissioner of the Met, Sir Edward Henry, was away at the time and so he spoke on the telephone (private telephone lines were installed between divisions and Scotland Yard in 1903) to an Assistant Commissioner, Major (later Sir) Frederick Wodehouse. After speaking to the Home Office which in turn had consulted the Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, Wodehouse gave authority to call on the army. Whilst waiting for the reply at Arbour Square Mulvaney also telephoned the superintendents of the neighbouring divisions to ask them to send to Sidney Street any revolvers with ammunition that they had together with men trained in their use. Word must have spread around the whole of the Met because by midday up to sixty more officers with revolvers had turned up.

Mulvaney went personally to the Tower of London where: 'I saw the officer in command of the [1st Battalion] Scots Guards there and made my request for help telling him the facts and said I had Commissioners authority to make my request. He then consulted

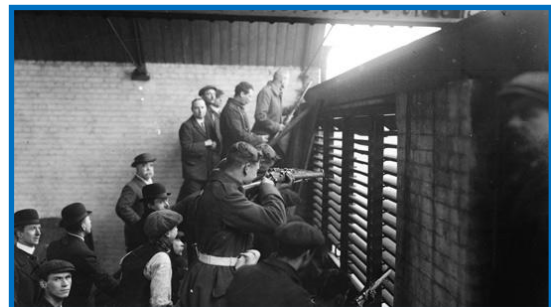


other officers and telephoned the [General Officer Commanding] and obtained his authority'.

Mulvaney returned to Sidney Street with Lieutenant Ross, two NCOs and seventeen men who were equipped with Short Magazine Lee-Enfield (SMLE) .303 calibre rifles. These were fitted with webbing slings that had been blanched white (no doubt large quantities of 'Brasso, Blanco

and Bull' had been expended on the uniforms as well) since their only use at the Tower would have been for ceremonial duties.

Nevertheless the weapons would have been perfectly functional and the men were 'placed in positions of vantage and replied to the fire of the men in the house'. They would expend about five hundred rounds according to a report to the House of Commons on 16 February.



At some point after the arrival of the army Mr. Sydney Holland (later 2nd Lord Knutsford) arrived in a hackney carriage with some shotguns and cartridges. Mulvaney had these distributed to men who had been in the armed forces and who, he assumed, would therefore know how to use them.

Mulvaney had a string of visitors during the morning including Major Wodehouse and Sir William Nott-Bower together with the head of the Met's Criminal Investigation



Department Sir Melville Macnaghten and the head of Special Branch Superintendent (later Sir) Patrick Quinn. At about 12 noon he was told that Winston Churchill had arrived. Despite claims in the media (which persist to this day) that Churchill 'took charge', as far as Mulvaney was

concerned: 'I explained to him the position of affairs. He gave us no instructions beyond suggesting that the cordon at the Mile End Road and Sidney Street should be placed further back – which was



done'. Churchill later wrote that: 'I thought it my duty to see what was going on myself, and my advisers concurred in the propriety of such a step. I must, however, admit that convictions of duty were supported by a strong sense of curiosity which perhaps it would have been well



to keep in check. ... I should have done much better to have remained quietly in my office. On the other hand, it was impossible to get into one's car and drive away while matters stood in such great uncertainty, and moreover were extremely interesting'.

One anecdote that frequently appears in accounts of the siege is that a gunman's bullet passed through Churchill's top hat, coming within inches of killing him. This is not supported by any official documents although both Mulvaney and Wensley made a point of recording that a bullet passed through the brim of the hat being worn by Inspector Allam from the City early in the siege. In Churchill's own colourful (and in places highly inaccurate) account he makes no mention of his supposed brush with death. The 'bullet through Churchill's hat' is a myth.

The presence of Churchill provided a magnificent photo opportunity, as did the arrival, to Mulvaney's astonishment, of Captain Wickham with more Scots Guards and a Maxim machine-gun. He was even more astonished at



Maxim machine-gun

the arrival of an officer and thirty-four men of the Royal Horse Artillery with two 'Quick

Firing' 13-pounder field guns but by then the siege was more or less over and they got no



QF 13-pounder field gun

further than the Whitechapel end of Sidney Street. Even two weeks after the event Mulvaney still had no idea of who sent for them although he suggested that it could have been Major Wodehouse. It may be significant that Wodehouse was the son of a former Royal Artillery colonel and he himself had also served in the Royal Artillery as a lieutenant and as a captain before being promoted to the rank of major while serving with the Suffolk Artillery Militia.

Some officers constructed a dummy and dressed it police uniform. This was then held up periodically in order to encourage the two men to shoot at it thus exposing themselves as a better target for the police and the army. However at about 1 o'clock in the afternoon smoke was seen rising from the upper floors of the house and Mulvaney thought that 'the men inside caused it, possibly with the idea that means of escape



Dummy dressed in police uniform as a target

might be afforded by the smoke and confusion attendant on a fire'. The Fire Brigade was sent for and according to Mulvaney he 'awaited their arrival at the Mile End [Road] end of Sidney Street and explained to the officer in charge what was happening and told him the object was



Churchill with the Fire Brigade officer

to prevent the fire spreading to the other buildings but it was not safe for his men to proceed then as firing was still in progress from the ground floor of No. 100. The officer agreed and made his preparations to use his pipes alone when opportunity offered'.

Mulvaney may have been tactfully trying to distance the Home Secretary from any direct involvement in events in Sidney Street in his account because Churchill later wrote: 'The inspector of police [Mulvaney] forbade further

progress, and the fire brigade officer declared it his duty to advance. A fire was raging, and he was bound to extinguish it. Anarchists, automatic pistols, danger-zones, nothing of this sort was mentioned in the Regulations of the London Fire Brigade. When the police officer pointed out that his men would be shot down, he replied simply that orders were orders and that he had no alternative. I now intervened to settle this dispute, at one moment quite heated. I told the fire-brigade officer on my authority as Home Secretary that the house was to be allowed to burn down and that he was to stand by in readiness to prevent the conflagration from spreading’.

By 2.30 in the afternoon the firing from No. 100 had stopped and the ending of the siege was well reported by the *Guardian*: ‘The next thing that happened was curious. From



Detective ‘stuck close to the wall’

the group round Mr. Winston Churchill a little man in dark clothes was seen stealing along the side of the building. He stuck close to the wall, a revolver in his hand. He was a detective officer, and he was the first man to approach the blazing house. When he got to the door he put out his arm and pushed it gingerly. Then he quickly retreated. Other men with revolvers were seen to creep round from the other side and go to the side exit from the buildings. They were there ready to meet a possible rushing out of the murderers. Another interval, and then suddenly all the watchers seemed to take courage’.

The *Guardian* continued: ‘We saw the Guards who had been firing into the house all day come out on the pavement and stand in a line pointing their rifles at the house. Then they moved the fire engine a bit nearer, and half a dozen firemen brought up a tall red ladder and placed it against the top window. Just about this time the roof fell in, and the street was strewn with burning timbers. A plucky fireman walked up to the gaping ground floor window and turned a stream of water into it. We half expected to see him drop, but as he did not everybody at last felt that there was no more danger, and people began to move up opposite the house. But Mr. Churchill came near before anyone felt sure whether the

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creep round from



Watchers ‘seemed to take courage’

murderers were dead or alive. Firemen broke down the door and went in, but it was too hot to stay in long. Others mounted the ladder and played into the bedrooms’.



This was not quite the end. While the firemen were inside trying to extinguish the flames another section of the building collapsed burying five of them. District Officer Pearson had his spine fractured and was pinned to the ground. He clung to life for six painful months before he died. Two charred and unrecognisable bodies were found in the house.

Although about 100 Met and 100 City officers were employed on the initial police cordon, another 300 Met officers had to be drafted in, some of them mounted, to control the enormous crowds ‘that assembled over a large area of the locality in the neighbourhood’ once news of the siege started to spread.

The Aftermath

At the time it was by no means certain what part the two men in Sidney Street played in the Houndsditch murders – or indeed that they were involved at all for that matter – and information on possible suspects continued to flood in

from all over the world. However, one letter to Scotland Yard from Pinkerton’s National Detective Agency must have been particularly galling. Giving details of three burglars who



had jumped bail in the US it said that: ‘We are sending you this for what it is worth, as we think that the men may be identical with the men who were concerned in the Houndsditch attempted burglary and murder’.



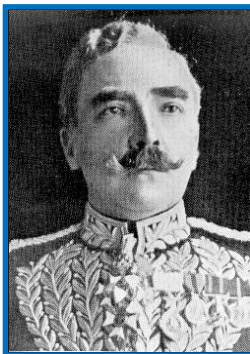
The Rising Sun Public House where Boreham obtained brandy for Leeson after he had been shot and showing the police holding back some of the onlookers with soldiers just in front of them

Unfortunately there was a lot more to the letter than this apparent demonstration of inter-agency cooperation. It went on to say that: 'The raid of the Sydney Street [sic] house received considerable mention here, and I am enclosing you a copy of an article which appeared in the New York Sun, under date of January 5th, this to give you an idea of the publicity the matter received in this country'. Under the heading: 'May Be War In London', readers were told that: 'The inquest on the bodies of the two men who stood off 1,700 policemen and soldiers in their fortress on Sydney Street [sic], Stepney yesterday will open today. ... John Bull seems to be beginning to believe that his martial anti-burglar campaign in Stepney had made him look ridiculous. Many of his newspapers tell him so ... if Stepney had been New York a small contingent of Pinkerton men would have managed the business quietly and without disaster'. What the Commissioner thought of this hypocritical poke in the eye with a sharp Pinkerton stick is not recorded but it was the least of his worries.



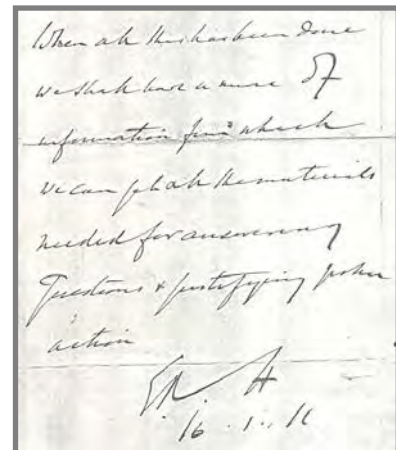
Churchill giving evidence at the inquest

One newspaper sarcastically suggested that if any more suspects were cornered then 'an opportunity might be given to the Navy to share in the credit of the extermination of the Houndsditch murderers'. A 'torpedo boat destroyer' should be anchored at the nearest point in the Thames and it could then bombard the desperadoes' lair. In another, the President of the Berlin Police was quoted as describing the procedure used in Sidney Street as 'shooting sparrows with cannons. ... No circumstances could have led Berlin to make such an exhibition, but then the Berlin police are all trained soldiers, who know how to act in the moment of danger. They would have considered it their first duty to catch the criminals alive, not mow them down with machine guns'.



Henry

Sir Edward Henry found himself under considerable pressure for answers but it was 16 January, nearly two weeks after the siege, before he directed that 'Mr. [Chief Constable Frederick] Bullock should arrange ... to take at Leman Street statements from the various persons who have knowledge of the facts. ... When all this has been done we shall



For Full Document see [Appendix IV](#) or [Click Here](#)

have a mass of information from which we can get all the materials needed for answering questions and justifying police action'. It was far too late. The damage had already been done but the result provides a fascinating contemporary account from the perspective of individual participants.

Peter The Painter

Another enduring myth of the siege concerns Peter Piatkow (sometimes spelt Piaktow), also known as 'Peter the Painter'. He and Svaars shared the rooms in which Gardstein was found after he had been shot and he was known to be on friendly terms with those concerned (as were other people but none had such a memorable soubriquet). He was circulated by the City Police as being wanted as a result but he was not in 100 Sidney Street either before or during the siege. He was never traced but even if he had been arrested there was little or no evidence upon which he could have been convicted of anything. Nevertheless, over the years he has been transformed into the mastermind behind the gang's activities. Some of the responsibility for this rests with Churchill who later wrote: 'It was ascertained in the days that followed [the Houndsditch murders] that the murderers belonged to a small colony of about twenty Letts from Baltic Russia, who, under the leadership of an Anarchist known as "Peter the Painter" had ensconced themselves in the



heart of London. It was in fact, in the language of later years, a "germ cell" of murder, anarchy and revolution'.

However it was the film, *The Siege of Sidney Street*, in 1960 that really created 'Peter the Painter'. In the film's opening sequence the audience was told that: 'The main characters and incidents in this film are true. The producers

acknowledge with thanks the help of the City of London Police in the preparation of the screenplay'. This was by Alexander Baron, a prolific writer of television dramas, and Jimmy Sangster, one of the creative forces behind the horror films turned out by Hammer Studios.

The good name of the City Police was used under seriously false pretences because there was scarcely a hint of any attempt at historical accuracy. Piatkow was a decorator, not an artist, but he was depicted as being the latter in the film thereby guaranteeing him a romantic appeal that his occupation would not otherwise have merited. He was portrayed by Peter Wyngarde as a committed revolutionary and the planner behind the robberies carried out by the gang to provide funds for the cause and which, just for good measure, also included the robbery at the Schnurmann rubber factory two years earlier (see *The Tottenham Outrage – 1909*). It seems that he escaped from 100 Sidney Street by digging a hole (without anyone hearing or discovering it later) through into the attic of No. 102. After starting the fire as a diversion and apparently unseen by the police, the residents and the evacuees from No. 100, he then used the stairs of No. 102 to reach the ground floor. Still unseen he then slipped out of the front door into the crowds, which for some reason were not being held back by the police cordon at the time, and disappeared.



Door (arrowed) through which 'Peter the Painter' is supposed to have escaped unseen after starting the fire

Another of the film's 'main characters', who it seems was prominently involved in the pursuit of those responsible for the robbery at the Schnurmann factory and who then single-handedly discovered the hideout of the gang in Sidney Street, was an 'Inspector Manning' from 'The Yard' played by Donald Sinden. Even the guns were wrong. Leaving aside the 'police shotguns', which were shown being distributed in large numbers before the siege had even started, the police were armed with Webley 'top-break' revolvers that would not be on general issue in the Met for another forty-five years. The film was complete fiction from start to finish.

Given the fraudulent claims made at the start of the film it is not surprising that film-goers were left believing (and the residual influence of the film is such that many people still believe) that Piatkow had not only been in No. 100 but that his audacious escape had actually happened as well. So much so that in 2006 Tower Hamlets Community Housing Trust named two blocks, now called 'Peter House' and 'Painter House', after 'the antihero of the nearby Sidney Street Siege in 1911'.



Councillor Peter Golds was quoted in the *Daily Mail* as saying that: 'It's extremely unfortunate that they've chosen to commemorate a murderer rather than cherish the memories

of the three policemen'. However the Chief Executive of the Trust, Mike Tyrell, said that: 'There is no evidence that Peter the Painter killed three policemen, so we knew we were not naming a block after a murderer. There is some doubt as to whether he existed, but [his] is the name that East Enders associate with the siege of Sidney Street'. He could have added that this was entirely down to the inventive literary talents of Messrs. Baron and Sangster.

Weapons And Equipment

The obvious deficiencies in the weaponry available to the police resulted in media



speculation on what guns would now be bought for police use. There was a lot of truth in what was being reported because on 12 January 1911 fourteen modern pistols were tested at the small-bore rifle range of the 24th (County of London) Territorial Battalion at Kennington. Among those present were Winston Churchill, Sir Edward Henry and the gunsmith Robert Churchill. With the assistance of the Chief Inspector of Small Arms, Lieutenant-Colonel Tisdall, the weapon eventually chosen to be the new Met handgun was the .32 Webley & Scott self-

loading pistol (a few minor alterations were made to the standard model and it would become known as the 'M.P.' model), with 100 of the .22 single-shot version being ordered for training purposes.



Webley & Scott .22 single-shot



Webley & Scott .32 M.P. model self-loading pistol

By August they had still not been delivered and the Home Secretary, who retained his personal interest in seeing to it that the police had a modern firearm available, wrote on the Home Office file: 'This matter has dragged interminably. Please report when the police are actually to be armed with the pistol'.

During the last two months of 1911 a total of 920 Webley & Scott pistols were distributed to all divisions in London.

In later years the company would try to benefit from the notoriety of the siege by claiming that the pistol ‘became the official weapon of the Metropolitan Police, after proving its worth in the Sidney Street Siege in 1911’ thereby creating yet more historical confusion as a result. In 1912 all the old Webley .450 gate-load revolvers (including those that certainly hadn’t proved their worth at the siege) were collected and put into storage so that they could be sold, or at least that was the plan!



The Webley .32 Automatic Pistol, 1909.

Perhaps stung by newspaper articles in 1899 which asserted that British revolvers were going to be replaced in popularity by foreign-made automatic pistols, Thomas Webley hastened the development of a fine range of British-made self-loaders. The .32 shown became the official weapon of the Metropolitan Police, after proving its worth in the Sidney Street Siege in 1911, and was also adopted by many overseas police forces. It's of a unique recoil-operated design, simply and strongly constructed, and although small it's highly accurate.

One final development probably attributable to the siege is the delivery to Liverpool City Police of two ballistic shields in 1929. The Chief Constable, Mr. Lionel Decimus Longcroft Everett, may have read Churchill’s account of the siege, which was first published in 1924, in which he described how, shortly after his arrival in Sidney Street, he believed the siege could be resolved: ‘My own instincts turned at once to a direct advance up the staircase behind a steel plate or shield, and a search was made in foundries of the neighbourhood for one of suitable size’. This is the only reference to such a search being made and whether it is true or not is a matter for conjecture but Everett evidently decided that his force should be in a better position than the Met had been to deal with a similar siege.



Everett



Shield folded

According to *Police Review*: ‘Mr Robert Gladstone [has designed] at the special request of the Chief Constable of Liverpool, a shield which is devised to protect the Police against pistol fire. ... The truck shields, which are intended to be used in pairs, are in the form of folding steel screens, mounted on a handy truck with



Shield raised

two rubber-tyred wheels, and fitted with narrow eye slits and an aperture (with cover) through which a revolver can be fired, if necessary [Liverpool City Police had .32 Webley & Scott M.P. model self-loading pistols in 1929]. A removable box for tear-gas bombs – if permitted – or for spare handcuffs, batons etc., is provided. The truck also carries a portable hand-shield of convenient size, which can

be used when entering a house, or in places where the truck cannot be wheeled. ... Shields which have been tested [,] successfully withstood the Webley Service revolver (.455), the Webley "M.P." automatic pistol (.32) and the well known Mauser pistol (.30) at practically point-blank range, namely five yards'.

The manufacturers, Messrs. Fawcett, Preston and Co., Ltd., of Liverpool, explained that: 'Fortunately we do not often have anything like the notorious "Sidney-street Battle" ... but we certainly ought to be prepared for such occurrences. ... On that occasion the police were completely baffled ... simply because they had no "movable cover" and therefore could not face the terrific pistol-fire from the house'. However the company made sure that it had itself covered by pointing out that: 'Great care is taken in the manufacture of these shields but the sale of them must not be understood to imply any kind of guarantee'.

Note:

A well researched (and arguably the definitive) account of the participants in the burglary and their subsequent fate can be found in *The Houndsditch Murders and the Siege of Sidney Street* by Donald Rumbelow, a former City of London police officer, which was first published in 1973 and reprinted by The History Press (2009).

Forty Years of Scotland Yard by Frederick Wensley, which was published in 1931, provides a straightforward factual account together with a few anecdotes. One such was that after the fire started a 'rumour that gained currency was that the men had broken through a wall into one of the adjoining houses, but, in fact, there were ample men there to deal with them', thereby scotching once and for all any suggestion that attempting to use this means of escape would have met with success.

There are also a number of fairly dreadful versions. Some of the myths associated with the siege have already been noted but one recent 'meticulously researched' history of the Met Special Branch has it that its officers were 'called in' to investigate the Houndsditch murders after 'a gang of burglars were surprised in a police trap'. It appears that Gardstein 'shot himself before he could be arrested' and that it was a Branch informant who led the police to 100 Sidney Street. In similar vein, after the robbery at the Schnurmann factory 'the Branch's search [for one of those responsible] ... led them to a cottage in Walthamstow' and it was a detective sergeant from the Branch who called on the man to surrender before he shot himself. Sadly for historical research purposes this is all about as accurate as the film.

Then there is Ben Leeson's *Lost London – The Memoirs of an East End Detective* which was published in 1934. He describes the events leading up to the siege although it seems that his contribution was rather more than he had been given credit for nearly a quarter of a century earlier – 'eventually my investigations led me to a certain house in Sidney Street' etc. He then explains how he came to be shot: 'I had crossed to the house ... to put some coins in the automatic gas meter in order that we might see anyone attempting to leave when, contrary to instructions, someone threw some pebbles up at the window. No sooner was this done than the desperadoes opened fire'. In fact it had been Wensley and Detective Inspector Collinson from the City who 'went in to look at the gas' two hours before Leeson was shot and no one entered the house after that but having retold the story countless times for more than twenty years Leeson may have convinced himself that his version was what really happened.

However, he then tells us that he was advised to take a long sea voyage as a part of his convalescence. When his ship stopped at Albany in Western Australia he was approached by 'two foreign-looking individuals' who Leeson thought were 'agents of Peter the Painter' trying to track him down. He managed to persuade them that he was not the man they were looking for but they must have been following him because he saw them again when the ship docked at Melbourne. When the ship reached Sydney he decided to catch a train to go sightseeing and who should he see in the booking-hall at the Central Station but none other than 'Peter the Painter' himself. Not only that but when his train made its first stop the 'Painter' entered his compartment and he was obviously armed because there were 'sundry strayings of his hand to his hip-pocket, as if to assure himself of the readiness of his gun to his hand'. Quite why the gang had gone to so much trouble to find him is a mystery because when Leeson reached his destination he was allowed to leave the train unmolested with 'Peter the Painter' remaining on board to go 'who knows where'. He ends his account with an open letter to Winston Churchill expressing his regret at not bringing 'to your notice these particulars at an earlier date'.

According to '*The British Police*' by Martin Stallion and David Wall published by The Police History Society (1999) there were 174 forces in England, 19 in Wales and 63 in Scotland in 1911. Were there any developments to do with police firearms in your force/area or its predecessors during this period of history? If so please contact mike.policehistory@yahoo.com.

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METROPOLITAN POLICE.

SPECIAL REPORT.

Leman Street STATION.

" H. " DIVISION.

SUBJECT Finance

17th day of June 1911.

With reference to the attached.

REFERENCE TO PAPERS.

6 6 8 0 5 0.

15.

I beg to report that in the early hours of the morning of the 17th of December last, Dr J, J Scanlan who was acting as an assistant, to Dr Bernstein, of 55 Commercial Road, E, was called to No 59 Grove Street, E, by Road Trassjonsky and Luba Milstein, and there saw a man now known as George Gardstein, lying on a bed in the first floor front room. He found him to be suffering from a bullet wound in the back, ^{the} bullet having entered the back and lodged in the chest, and it was evident that the man was dying. Gardstein told the Doctor that he had been accidentally shot by a friend and would not accept the Doctors advice of being removed to the hospital.

Dr Scanlan after making some arrangements for one of the young women to call at the surgery for some medicine promised to call again at 12 noon. In the meantime his attention was called by Dr Bernstein to the Daily Papers, giving an account of the City Police Officers having been shot, and the escape of the assailant, with a result between 11 and 12 noon they communicated with the City Police and with Det Inspr Thompson of that force who spoke to me on the matter. That officer and I at once interviewed the Doctors, and when they communicated these facts ~~saying~~ they added that they were most anxious that nothing should be said or done to cause anyone to believe that they had given any information, as it would be ruinous to their practice in consequence of the peculiar views held by

by foreign Jews on the subject. I told them their wishes would be respected as far as possible and then suggested to Dr Scanlan, that he should pay his promised visit to No 58, and take notice of the surroundings without creating suspicion, and under no circumstances to give publicity to same, this was agreed to.

We then arranged to meet at the surgery about 12-30 p,m, which we did. Dr Scanlan informed us that the man was lying dead on the bed, and to our astonishment added that he had communicated with the Coroners Officer: this made it imperative that we should go at once which we did and had only been there a few minutes when a large number of Newspaper Reporters, assembled in the street, undoubtedly due to information supplied them either by the Doctors or the Coroners Officer.

Dr Scanlan's action in this matter was most extraordinary, he was called to a dying man, suffering from a bullet wound that he knew could not possibly have been self inflicted. In addition to this the surroundings were of such a character that they must have aroused the strongest suspicion in the Doctor's mind of foul play; yet he did not inform Police until hours after his first visit, when the man was dead. This want of action might have resulted in an undiscovered crime, and as it was through the Doctors neglect Police were considerably hampered throughout the enquiry.

Dr Scanlan was paid as a professional witness for his attendances, when giving evidence at the various Courts.

J. Wensley D:D:Inspr.

Submitted, The Doctor did nothing at the time he was called in the early hours of the morning of December the 17th, to aid the cause of justice, when he found

New No. 732.
Old No. 282A.

found a man dying from a bullet wound that could not by any possibility be self inflicted. A prompt intimation to Police at this period would probably have had a material effect on the case. At no period during the enquiry did he do anything for which the public service is indebted to him, as far as Metropolitan Police are aware.

The Coroner commented on the want of action of the Doctor at the time he gave evidence. His present position as asserted by himself, might more reasonably be attributed to his want of action, rather than to anything he did in the matter.

He was paid his professional fees for his attendance at the Courts mentioned, the same as any other professional gentlemen engaged in the case.

Recommended to be referred to City Police for any further observations.

W. Mahony Superintendent.

✓
STATION.

"H"

DIVISION.

Reference to Papers.

7th January, 1911

I beg to report that at about 12-30 a.m. 3rd inst, I met Superintendents Stark and Ottoway of the City Police, and Divisional Detective Inspector Wensley, "H" Division, at Arbour Square Police Station; the whereabouts of two men wanted for the Houndsditch murders had been located and a conference was held as to the best means of effecting their arrest. It was known that they were desperate men and would not be taken alive. We decided to establish a blockade of the house, No, 100 Sidney Street, where they were believed to be, rather than sacrifice valuable lives in attempting their capture by rushing the place, which must inevitably occur by the latter plan and which would also have afforded opportunities of escape in the confusion. Consequently 200 men of the City and Metropolitan Forces established cordons and every avenue of escape from front or rear was guarded by armed police. Armed Constables were also placed in the front room of No. 111 Sidney Street, which, with yard adjoining, is occupied by Mr. Dickholtz, a carman, and which house is immediately opposite 100 Sidney Street. Armed Constables were also placed in the doorways of houses where practicable in Sidney Street.

Superintendents Stark and Ottoway, with Chief Insp. Willis, "City", and Divisional Detective Insp. Wensley, "H" Division had in the meanwhile secured the removal of the other residents of 100 Sidney Street. These arrangements were complete by 4 a.m.

At about 7-30 a.m. it was resolved to call upon the men to surrender, and some gravel was thrown up at the window of the room they were believed to be in, and a volley of bullets was the reply. They fired through the window below
into

into the gateway of 111 Sidney Street, where the City Superintendents, Insp. Wensley, myself, Sergeant Leeson, and other officers were standing. Leeson was shot in the chest and dropped saying, "I'm done". A doctor was sent for, who attended at great risk.

The firing from the house continued, and Supt. Stark, City Police and myself discussed the situation from all points of view. It was palpable that these men dominated the situation, there was no approach to the house but by the front door, the roofs were of the kind known as gable and unapproachable. It was equally plain that any attack by the front door would have resulted in a great sacrifice of life. Their weapons were far superior to our revolvers, of which at this time we only had a few. It was therefore decided that Military aid be sought as more effective weapons were required.

Having obtained authority of Major Wodehouse, Assistant Commissioner to do so, I proceeded to the Tower of London and requested Military aid, which was granted. Lieutenant Ross, 2 Non-commissioned Officers and 17 men being furnished, they were placed in positions of vantage and replied to the fire of the men in the house, which had the advantage of drawing their fire and thus exhausting their ammunition and preventing any possible escape from the front, also the possibility of wounding them and securing their arrest.

After P.S. Leeson's wound had been dressed, it was deemed necessary to remove him to the London Hospital. To do this, he had to be taken up a ladder on to the roof of a workshop, across same and down another ladder into a yard where the ambulance was. While this was being done, the men in the house kept up a hail of fire on the roof, and it is a wonder that the officers engaged, and the Doctor who attended Leeson, escaped death.

About 1 p.m. the house was observed to be on fire.

Dense volumes of smoke rolled upward for a considerable time. How the fire originated is not known. It is not thought to be due to the firing, but that the men inside caused it, possibly with the idea that means of escape might be afforded by the smoke and confusion attendant on a fire. I sent for the Fire Brigade, who were in readiness to prevent the fire spreading. The upper floors of the house were first burned. It will be proved that the men were on the ground floor up to the last prepared to shoot, as they did, I am informed, when a fireman attempted to bring a hose in through the back. It was soon after this - about 2-30 p.m.- that the last shots were heard, when presumably they shot themselves. It would not have been safe to allow the firemen to approach the house before this time.

It will be borne in mind that it was open to these men at any time to leave the burning house, and surrender by coming into the street without their weapons and putting their hands up in the usual manner as a sign of surrender, or as a fact at any time during the morning.

The large numbers of Police employed outside the cordons which consisted of 200 only, was due to the immense crowds that assembled outside the area cut off, and which necessitated their presence to avoid crush and accidents.

Amongst the occupants of 100 Sidney Street removed during the night, was a woman named Betsey Gershon who had been sheltering and feeding these men. She at first denied their presence but eventually admitted it. She was arrested by the City Officers and will be dealt with by them.

There was a number of men, women and children in the house at 100 Sidney Street, also in the adjoining house. A considerable amount of loss of goods and chattels has occurred which I presume will have to be made good. In this matter the City Authorities may be willing to help defray the cost.

New No. 731.
Old No. 282.

Appendix III

METROPOLITAN POLICE.

SPECIAL REPORT.

Leman Street STATION

" H. " DIVISION.

SUBJECT Shooting

10th day of January 1911.

of P,S,Leeson &

With further reference to the attached:-

his removal to

the hospital.

REFERENCE TO PAPERS.

I beg to report that at 7-30 a,m, 3rd inst, with the concurrence of the three Superintendents I threw a few pebbles up to the 2nd floor front window of No 100 Sidney Street, E, with a view to attract the attention of two men, Fritz Svaars and Joseph -----, who were suspected of being concerned in the Houndsditch murders and believed to be sleeping in that room.

At the time I threw the pebbles there were about a dozen officers of the Metropolitan and City Police standing just about and inside a yard adjoining No 109 Sidney Street and opposite No 100. I went a few paces into the yard for the purpose of getting some more pebbles, when six shots were fired in rapid succession, from the first floor window of the house in question, one of the bullets ~~entered~~-striking Sergt Leeson, entering his chest on the left side and passing out at the right, one bullet struck the rim of the hat of Detective Insp Hallam, City Police, making a hole through it. Many of us narrowly escaped being hit by the other bullets.

Sergt Leeson called out: " I am shot," and staggered up the yard, Sergt Richardson assisted him to the back of a van, I went up almost immediately when Leeson said: " Mr Wensley I am dying, they have shot me through the heart, Good bye, give my love to the children, Bury me at Putney." We embraced each other and I said: " We will be with you till the last." He said: " I know that"

We carried him into the back room of No 109 Sidney Street.

In the meantime Louis Levy, of 16 Buckeridge Street, E, a coffee stall keeper, who keeps his stall in the yard, climbed over the roofs of a number of houses into Oxford Street and called Dr Nelson Johnstone, of 78 Mile End Road, who came immediately, passing through the Police cordon, entering a yard opposite Hawkins Street and by the aid of a ladder he got on to the roof of an outhouse, then passing over the roofs of about half a dozen other outhouses into the yard at the rear of 109 Sidney Street.

While this was taking place I got on to a wall of Messrs Mann & Crossman's brewery, which is adjacent, and called out to a number of men employed at the brewery, to fetch their ambulance. I then returned into the house and the Doctor having examined Leeson, stated he was suffering from two bullet wounds in the chest, probably the entrance and exit of the same bullet. He plugged the wounds, and then Leeson who appeared to be sinking, asked for some stimulants and the Doctor requested someone to fetch some brandy. Sergt Boreham thereupon climbed over the roofs of various outhouses and obtained some brandy from a public house. The ambulance arrived and was lifted over into the yard of 109 Sidney Street. During the whole of this time firing at short intervals from the house in question was taking place, but so far as I know there was no serious personal risk to any particular individual.

It was impossible to take Sergt Leeson out on the ambulance into Sidney Street without considerable personal risk to all concerned, and after surveying the place I concluded that the only way would be by getting him on the ambulance and over into the brewery yard. To do this we pushed a van within four feet of a wall of a stable, some twelve feet high, then placed a ladder in a slanting dir-

direction from the van to the wall. The ambulance bearing Sergt Leeson was lifted into the van and then on to the ladder. We had nearly got him on to the wall when a City constable, who was in uniform, mounted a ladder from the brewery yard and evidently attracted the attention of the two suspects, who immediately commenced to fire upon us, many of the bullets passing close to our heads, this continued for nearly ten minutes, during the whole time we were endeavouring to get Leeson into the brewery yard. It was bitterly cold and a blinding sleet was falling at the time. Leeson who was evidently suffering from the effects of the weather as well as the wounds, seeing our difficulties, rolled off the ambulance and was assisted down the ladder into the brewery yard, when he was again placed on the ambulance and taken to the London Hospital by Sergt Boreham.

I remained on the wall until all those that were engaged in removing Leeson had got under cover. I then found it impossible for me to leave owing to their rapid and well directed fire, and I laid in the gutter for upwards of half an hour, leaving as soon as they had directed their fire in another direction.

The officers and private individuals engaged in the removal of Sergt Leeson and their respective positions are as follows:-

On the wall:- D,D, Inspr Wensley, Sergt Boreham, Louis Levy, and Frank Gascoyne, of 196 Fleming Road, Walthamstow, a labourer in the employ of Messrs Mann & Crossman's.

On the front of the van:- Sergt Richardson, Sergt Weston and Dr Johnstone.

At rear of van and on the ground:- Detective Inspr Hallam, Collison and Thompson, City Police.

Gleensley D:D:Inspr.

Submitted, it will be seen that all concerned run considerable risk particularly those on the wall & the front of the van. Dr. Johnstone had a narrow escape a bullet grazing and scorching his forehead, also Dr. Dupresley who had to lie in the gutter for about half an hour (not through) to avoid the shots.

Serj. Bouham[#] & Louis Lery were on the wall, but each had prior to his personal material assistance, the P.S. in climbing over roofs to obtain brandy & Lery in doing likewise to fetch Dr. Johnstone.

J. Mulhany P.S.



It seems desirable in view of the many questions that may be asked when Parliament has assembled that we should have on record as accurate an account as may be possible of every incident in connection with the Sidney St. affair in order to get this Mr. Bullock should arrange in consultation with Sup: A to take as many direct statements from the various persons who have knowledge of the facts

665050
July 19 18



Such personally explain to
Mr. Bullock the kind of particulars
a rather the kind of particulars
upon which information is
desired

When all this has been done
we shall have a mass of
information from which
we can get all the materials
needed for answering
questions & justifying proper
action

[Signature]
16. 1. 11

METROPOLITAN POLICE.

STATEMENT OF WITNESS.

Keenan Street Station. H. Division.

19 day of Jan^{ry} 1916.

Name Supt. John Mulvaney

Address Keenan Street

Age _____

Occupation _____

Statement: Q. Will you please state in detail the facts that led up to the robbery in Sidney St. on the night of Jan^{ry} 2nd?

A. About midnight on the 2nd inst. I received a message by telegram brought home by P.S. Leeson that the whereabouts of the Hornum ditch murderers had been ascertained, and that Supt. Clark of the City Police was on his way to see me. I was at home in my house 527 Commercial Road. I met him by arrangement at Arbours Square Police Station at about 12.30. am on the 3rd inst. They had said that they were going to the Commercial Square. I went straight to Arbours Square, and I got there first.

Supt. Clark, Supt. Ottaway came then about a quarter of an hour later, & S.D. L. Connelley and some young officers followed.

I then learnt from the City Officer that two men wanted for the Hornum ditch murder were believed to be at 100 Sidney Street Stepping. We then held a conference as to what steps should be taken. P.S. Girdler of the C. (D) Dept. who had a good knowledge of the block of buildings off Sidney Street was present & drew us a rough sketch plan of the buildings and we then upon decided to send for sufficient men to surround it.

Signature J. Mulvaney

In Albany con.

I sent for 100 men & the City men sent for 100 men. I think they arrived about 1.30 am. at Arbone Square.

Then P.S. Gidder having selected about 30 or 40 men to guard the rear of the house in Sidney St. took him away to place as he had a knowledge of the place.

I said the City Officer left Arbone Square about 1.50 am. and proceeded with the rest of the uniform men to Sidney St. and posted London at the corner of Sidney St. & Oxford St. and London at the corner of Sidney St. & also at the ends of Dundas & Hamilton St. so as to surround the block of buildings at all four corners.

P.S. Gidder was instructed by means of his plan, to place about 100 men in the yard of the house & the rear of 100 Sidney St. & he acted on his own knowledge.

He posted the remaining men to cut off all chances of escape round the block of buildings. They were all in position soon after 2 am. In the meantime Mr

Wensley the City Officer should have been considering the position under the plan armed constables in the house immediately opposite 100 Sidney St. The City men were armed with horns with rifles & some with revolvers.

and they were selected to occupy the house. Two of them were placed in the 1st floor front room & three in the point of venting with some of my men. I think any men, some ^{nine} of them had revolvers which they had carried to King's Row. All their dispositions

of posting were carried out silently & completed about 3.00 am. but no one in No. 100 Sidney St. had up to that time been roused.

About 3.30 am I think we went to 102 Sidney St. in the rear of which we had already placed men and Mr. Wensley with the City Officer then decided to try & get into which with a woman in No. 100, through the occupants of No. 102.

Murphy

I then in No. 102 with the Slais and Shaws had arrangements
 were made through Mr. Heischman the Landlady of No. 100
 to come into No. 102. and through her to get Mr. Fisher
 who was harboring the men in No. 100 to come out with
 No. 102. This was carried out, & he it was arranged to
 get the other people out of the house through Mr. Heischman
 and this was also carried out. Up to this time no
 Police Officer entered No. 100: & it was not definitely ascertained
 that the men were there, to our knowledge. The people
 were gradually got out except an old man named Campbell
 who was said to be 80 or 90 years old on the ground floor.
 He was obstinate & refused to come out, & we were
 afraid of his making a noise. We had a Giddish
 speaking Jew named Wagner with us. and he went with
 the old man to room & carried him out & carried
 him out. Having got all the people we had ascertained
 from Mr. Fisher with some difficulty that there were
 two men on the 2nd floor front room, who had resisted
 the last night, and were still there. She spoke in broken
 English and I don't know exactly what she said.
 When all this had been finished it was nearly 5.00 am.
 I returned to the Green Square on the Left side of the C.P.
 about 5.30 am. to order fresh men to relieve the
 night duty men who were employed. There was no crowd
 about him and so far as Shaws no Police Officer had
 been ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ No. 100. Went back to the duty at
 about 6.45 am with some fresh men. I
 found everything quiet & the place surrounded.
 About 7.30 am I and Sgt. Slais, Ottawa, Constable, Nelson
 Borcham - Constable, Insp. Allan of the City Police were all
 in the gateway of No. 100. Constable of No. 100 keeping
 observation, and then we decided to draw the attention
 of the men in the house by throwing gravel at the windows

Mulroney

Mulvaney Cont.

Before this pistol was thrown through the window an officer had
knocked at the door. It was I think P.S. Weston. No
one answered the knock. Then it was decided to blow
down the 2nd floor front window. The windows
were all closed. Almost directly the pistol was
thrown shot was fired through the closed window
of the first floor. I saw no one myself firing.
P.S. Weston was hit & the City Corp. Man had a
bullet through the brain of his hat. I noticed shots
striking the stones in the yard. I saw Weston fall.
He was standing just outside the door. He was at once
gripped in by P.S. Richardson out of range & the door
of the gallery was closed. I then went up stairs into
the room in which the City men were posted with their
rifles to ascertain if they had seen the man, or returned
their fire. I found that they did not see him, & had
not fired up at that time. The men in No. 100 began
to fire again very soon at the window of that room
in which the City men were posted, and I heard shots
coming into the room. They broke the ch and sheet.
I then went down stairs to see after Weston who had
been removed to the kitchen at the back of the house.
I sat by him till a doctor came, which was about
20 minutes later. A Dr. Johnson who came in from the
outhouse at the back. The conference with Capt. Smith
and considered the position. Because the conclusion
was with our arms & the sort of arms the prisoners evidently
had was they dominated the position. and decided
to ask for Const's authority for the help of soldiers
with more effective weapons. This conference with Capt
Smith took place on the premises of No. 109, Sydney St.
On deciding this we left Log Sidney St. by way of the roof
over the outhouse into Mrs. Mann & Croxman's yard.

Mulvaney

and went into the Brown Office & Anderson's to get C.O. by the telephone. Being unsuccessful we left & went to Caborn's Gun Station, this was about 8.30 am.

I then sent a telephone to Comd. through C.O. that I would the Howard's men had been located & were surrounded and had opened fire on us & wounded P.J. Luson severely and washed authority to go to the Tower and ask of the help of soldiers. Major Woodhouse replied and told me what had occurred. He then gave me authority to go to the Tower for the soldiers.

I then went to the Tower, calling on W. Luson on my way to let her about her husband, on arrival at the Tower I saw the Officer in Command of the Scots Guard then and made my request for help telling him the facts & said I had Comd's authority to make my request. He then consulted the Officer & telephoned H.Q. Comd. & obtained his authority & informed me that he had sent Lieut. Ross, his own Comd. Officer & 17 men, which he did. & I proceeded with them to Sidney St. We arrived as far as I can remember at 10.02. at Sidney St. I then found the firing at St. W. Ross St. This firing was & with the permission of Lt. Ross I strengthened the cordons of Police at each point with soldiers. I asked Lt. Ross to direct the soldiers to strengthen the Police cordons so as to prevent the escape of the ^{Culprits} ~~culprits~~ in any direction. None of the soldiers that I took for the purpose were in a position to fire on the house. I left some of the soldiers with Lt. Ross which I saw to post the men at the cordons. I took about 9 or 10 men leaving Lt. Ross with the rest at the corner of Oxford St. & Sidney St. and posted the men as follows. Roughly 3 at corner of Oxford St. & Sidney St. 2 at the end

Mulberry

Museums

of bastion 2, 2. at corner of building 5. & 3 at
 the East End End of Sidney St. I then returned to Lieut
 Ross, and it was I think this time I first saw Major
 Woodhouse on the scene. At this time I am in charge
 of the operations and Supt Clark was with me.
 Did not go back at all to Log. Sidney St. I could not
 get back owing to the constant firing. I don't know
 the fact of how soon after this got away, as I left
 before this time left the soldiers. After I met Major
 Woodhouse I accompanied him to the Brewery of Messrs
 & Co. on the upper floor where some soldiers
 had been posted to demolish the windows of No. 100.
 Talked the matter over with Major Woodhouse & walked
 all round the scene of operations & discussed the
 ground. Major Woodhouse spoke to Lieut Ross and
 W. Clark, & eventually he said to me that he was going
 back to Co. to consult the Home Office. I can't say
 what time it was when he left, or when he returned
 exactly. After he left I saw Mr. A. Lee and Dr. Duce & I
 included Macrae & Mr. Dutton & accompanied
 them round the scene of operations. This was about
 12.00. I went. I omitted to say that when at
 Arbore Square at 8.30 am. I had telephoned to
 Supt J. K. & R. to send on as many workmen with
 ammunition as they had with men required to the care of
 them; and as a result some 60 men with workmen had
 come about 11. or 12. am. I did not see them all
 but my subp^m informed me of their arrival &
 posted them. Mr. Sidney Holland also came on the
 scene, but I don't know when exactly. Got the door open
 in a cab with some shot guns & cartridges & offered
 them to me for our use. The guns were distributed
 to some men who had been in the army & knew how to use them

Shelley

& they were put in the cordons. They were told ^{to} turn to the
 the Culparis of King tried to escape. I can't say
 exactly when, but I think about 12. ~~was~~ I heard that
 Mr. Churchill the Home Secretary was on the scene - &
 I made way with Sir A. D. & Mr. D. & I went to him
 at the corner of Dudley St. & Sidney St. & I explained
 them the position of affairs. He gave me no
 instructions beyond suggesting that the cordon at
 the end of Dudley St. should be placed
 further back - which was done. Shortly after this
 smoke was seen coming out of the top of No. 100 Sidney
 St. I was then walking in the Museum Yard. I asked
 a man very near the house & that in flame issued for a
 long time - but it was evident that the house was on
 fire. I sent P.C. 279 to call the Fire Brigade. I was
 then around at the mile end of Sidney St.
 and explained to the Officer in charge what was
 happening; and told him the object was to prevent
 the fire spreading to other buildings - but it
 was not safe for his men to proceed then, as firing
 was still in progress from the ground floor of
 No. 100. The Officer agreed & made his preparation
 to use his paper when an opportunity offered -
 I stopped his going forward in Sidney St. because
 of the certainty of his men being shot if he went on.
 I then went round to the Oxford St. end of Sidney St.
 and found the Engineer's van had been stopped by
 W. Stark. I returned to the mile end end - where
 Mr. Churchill had been standing & remained with
 him. Meanwhile the fire continued in No. 100 -
 & when it was in a position to blow the house off left
 alive in the house & no man firing in the front -
 as allowed the Fire Brigade to proceed to their work.

Mulvaney

MacLean

The fire was put out quickly & I was sent for by the fire department to view the body of a man - which was soon found. I went & arranged for a truck to convey it to the mortuary. I and Mr. Buckley went into the house which appeared to burn out in front. The back kitchen was practically intact. All the floors had been burned except one portion which fell in a chimney some of the firemen, just as I & Mr. Buckley got out. We left the firemen to deal with the house - having placed Police around to keep the crowd back. The body was subsequently found by the firemen.

Q. How many Police were on the spot. Do you know?

A. I think ~~for~~ about 4000 - Los City, Constable plus about 100 were engaged in Sydney St. Hill & the rest engaged in keeping the crowd back.

Q. How many soldiers were there?

I can only speak of the 20 men I brought - I know their names - but I never asked for their names - I do not know how they came.

Q. Do you know anything about the Artillery & Sappers coming?

I did not ask for them - but I heard that some were directed to go to Artillery Square St^h from Co.

Q. Did they arrive?

The Sappers never arrived - The artillery with I think 2 pieces I did see at the White Chapel end of Sydney St^h.

Q. Do you know the sent for them?

No I don't. but I suppose Major Woodhouse may have done so. but I don't know.

Q. Have you any knowledge of any Police Officer being shot?

No personal knowledge, but I heard Mr. Buckley & a City Officer shot.

MacLean

Q. Do you hear whistles at night when you are removing the windows of No. 100 Sidney St. The culprits were asleep or awake. No. I have no knowledge of what was going on in the house.

I could not hear them myself I was at the door.

Q. Now as to the firing at No. 100 Sidney St. from what points was it directed?

From the top floor of the Brewery Building - a from No. 109, Sidney St. from the gateway of No. 103. & from several 2000 yards in Sidney St. at the high end and the west. The whole road way from Oxford St. to Hawes Road, in Sidney St. was full with this firing was going on.

Q. At the back of No. 100 in ten yards how many men were posted to prevent escape of culprits. About 12 men all of whom were armed.

Q. Did you at any time contemplate entering the house & arresting the men?

No. We decided that it would be too certain death to attempt to enter the house and that we had better block it.

Q. What was your first intention?

To have them out. We thought it better to have them out than to have them in.

Q. Have you any knowledge of how the fire broke out?

No. Except that I believe that the men set it on fire, because if the fire does not seem likely to have done so: & the fire broke out at the top floor & descended floor by floor.

Q. Why do you think they set it on fire?

A. Because they probably thought the fire brigade would catch it & they would have the opportunity of escape & they were in the confusion & such.

M. H. M. H.

Q Do you know any thing of the information by which
they were located.

No but I was satisfied that it was correct. It
was information obtained by the City Police.

Q Had you any knowledge of Lord's army at before?
Only a general knowledge, that they were in the
Hull Kings - with a look that of 187.

Q What position were affairs did Capt. Stark occupy
He came to me for assistance in my duties to
help him arrest criminals for the Hounds Hill
murder, and I gave him my assistance personally.
He only controlled his own forces, and I
controlled my own men & took general charge
of the operations.

Q As to Major Woodhouse leaving the Home - Do
you remember seeing him in the Brewery Yard
before walking round with Sir A. Home & Mr. Dyer?

A Yes. This was the last I saw of Major Woodhouse.
He was across the Brewery Yard out of the Hall
& I did not speak to him then - & on going round
the side of the yard found he had left &
had gone to C.O. as I am told.

J. S. Dyer

Andrew

METROPOLITAN POLICE.

STATEMENT OF WITNESS.

Station. _____ Division. _____

_____ day of _____ 191_____.

Name Det. Frederick Looney

Address D. D. Insp. 1500 Street

Age _____

Occupation _____

Statement: Will you state all you know of the facts leading up to the death of the two men at Sidney St.?

Ever since the Howard Ditch murders I have been acting with the City Police to find & arrest the culprits. On the 2nd inst. at 11 am. or so I received a telephonic message from Supt Otway asking me to attend at Oldway P. S. at once. I did and I then saw the Comr, Supt Stark, Supt Otway. The latter said to me that a person had come forward & we think we have located two of the persons wanted for the Howard Ditch murder. They are being moved this evening, and we will like you to come over if you can to assist to make your plans for their arrest. I agreed & left after talking it over.

About 6.30 pm the same evening the conference was resumed owing to a message I got from Oldway. I was then told that the two men suspected were believed to be at No. 100 Sidney St. & that they were going to move at 8.30 pm the same evening to Nelson St.

Signature F. Wenseley D. Snoff

We agreed to go with a large number of plain clothes
 officers in closed van to the neighbourhood of Sidney St.
 The Officer King arrived with 2nd Lt. for the van to
 Sidney St. + Nelson St. + surveyed the position. I got
 out of the van + showed W. Stewart + W. Ottaway
 looked - the position of the house. The two men who were
 wanted did not come out as expected. The informant
 whom I personally did see, then said that they
 had altered their minds, and were now going to
 move on Tuesday evening - viz the next evening.
 We accordingly withdrew at the time + agreed to renew
 the Conference the following day. I don't know how
 the information was got - or by whom. All the information
 was with the City Officer. I was only assisting
 indirectly; and this was many informants about.
 We left with the van, and I went back to Queen St.
 Shortly before midnight W. Ottaway spoke to me
 on the phone at Queen St. He said "we don't like
 the look of things, the informant is not all that
 can be desired & seems shifty. It will never do to
 let these people slip through our fingers now. Their
 work is an lie but they will know how to do it right
 We propose, if you agree to act tonight. I said
 definitely agree, + will help you all I can. They
 said "How many men will you bring - I said
 All my detachment. He said I think 10.
 bring some of our uniform officers. I said "I
 had rather you had some come on to bar board
 at the time in case I will be the Supt Mulvaney
 we will discuss the situation. I said this because
 it was desirable that Supt Mulvaney should know
 of uniform officers were coming in. we discussed.
 He agreed - + shortly after midnight I went.

Supt. Mulvaney
consulted

John Henry D. Dwyer

to Colonel Squier & some Supt. Malvany whom I had already
communicated with, and told him the news.

Some 15 minutes later Mr. Stark & Mr. Ottaway arrived followed
by a large number of other officers, probably about 100.

The three Supts & myself then discussed the best means
to affect the arrest of the suspects. We were not
of course sure that they were broken, or that they were the
right men. From my experience I suggest the best
course w. to place men in the adjoining houses on
either side and at the house to the rear. This plan was
adopted, and we left the Station. One of my sergeants
P. J. Girdler knew the block of houses and the tenants
were selected to place 12 men four in the yard
of each of the three houses soon named. The other officers
in plain clothes of both forces many of whom were
armed with revolvers were placed in opposite doorway
on the other side of 100 Sidney St. in construction plain
to them and the fact. The uniform officers were placed
under direction of their own officers to surround
the North of building. This was all accomplished
about 2.30. am.

I walked all round the block with the Supts - including
the front of 100 Sidney St. & we came to the conclusion
that it w. be an advantage to get access to N. 109. This
is immediately opposite N. 100. P. J. Girdler
knew the occupier, a chemist named Cohen. I
sent him to his house & asked him quietly. This he was
unable to do without arousing the street. So we
got a false key & entered the wicket door of the
adjoining yard & shortly we were got to the rear
of Cohen's house & arrested him. He offered no very
further as he did the occupier of the yard.

J. W. S. & D. S. M.

Suspicion

Occupation
N. 109

from Mr. Jerson, and as we were informed that
 Mr. Fleckman was a respectable woman & her husband
 tolerable such a thing. I suggested she should go up and
 see for herself, and they were then to turn them out -
 Mr. Fleckman, I ^{said} would do it for £5000 - not let
 my husband do it. We then inferred she knew something
 about it - & her husband being then complaining badly,
 I said go up & ask Mr. Jerson how down & your
 husband has been taken very bad & you would ^{be} help
 you. This she agreed to do, & went up to the 2^d floor
 to see Mr. Jerson, & brought her down. Mr. Jerson
 had on us thick - only a pair out his boots.
 I told her she was asked she then was up stairs
 with her. She did not mention having any one
 then - I told her to know that there were two men then
 and I was going up to see. After if I got behind
 the certainty, & he ^{was} ~~was~~ as she knew she had been.
 She then said she then was a cousin of her husband up
 then & reluctantly admitted a 2^d man being there -
 & said they had called then the previous evening
 & stayed by her that they occupied the room &
 made her take off her skirt & her boots & leave her
 in the room they occupied - while she occupied
 the next room. We then thought it best to send
 her away at once to the Police Station, as she
 appeared to be accomplished. This was done.
 I can't say if the men on the 2^d floor were then
 around or not. They made us sign the receipt for it.
 The next thing we decided on was to get every one
 out of No. 100. Mr. Fleckman's former children
 were first brought to No. 102 by their parents.
 Mr. Clements was next brought in - but the old
 man required a lot of persuasion & was finally carried in.

to sign of
 men being arrested
 in 100.

G. W. W. S. D. D. D. D. D.

by Mr. Waquer. The children had been brought from the
 1st floor. Mr. & Mrs. Clements from the back room
 of the ground floor - a Mr. and Mrs. Fleischman from
 the front room of the ground floor - then remained
 no one else in the house except the two men on the
 2nd floor. During this time no one but Mr. & Mrs.
 Fleischman & Waquer went into No. 100 - but the
 gas was lit in the front room ground floor - the kitchen
 span up & the door was kept and open.
 The gas appeared to be getting dense & it was
 thought it was a 1500 meter & for fear of an explosion
 I went in with Capt. Conison of the C. P. & went
 all over the ground floor to find the meter - and
 also in the back yard - I did not go up stairs &
 I can definitely say no police officer went upstairs
 no one entered No. 100 after I left it. During all
 this time the two men upstairs made no indication
 of their presence - not even when Mr. Fleischman went
 up to take Conison to see a plumber.
 All these people were placed in No. 102, except Mr. Clements
 who was carried away somewhere.
 The work was accomplished by 4.45 am. After
 this was an action taken for some hours - till about
 7.20 am when after waiting in the yard opposite
 No. 100 - P. J. Weston went & knocked at the door of No. 100.
 I think he acted at the instigation of some officer - but I
 don't know. I then & there looked & saw him do it.
 It had no effect & was one attempt - but at 7.30.
 I went to the 3 Supp. who were in the yard & reported
 out it was a dry brick & one dependent on the ground
 Some people began to come out & if a villainous
 with plain people & to show. There was ought to take
 action to remove the men in the house.

Door of 100
open.

Entry of
house by a Commission
of ground floor
only.

P.S. Weston knocked
at door of No. 100.

Ground to
be shown.

Deveney D.S. Prop

They agreed - so I went - for a number of stones & small
pavel which I distributed to several Officers who were in the
yard - & we then went into Sidney St. & tried to pass
the 2nd floor window. When we went back into the
yard to get some small stones - I had hardly got
into the yard when I heard six shots in rapid
succession - from No. 100 - I afterwards learnt
it was from 1st floor. P.S. Leson - Prof. A. Mann
stated this Officer ran in the yard towards
me - - Leson said I am shot. Richardson caught
hold of him & helped him to the rear. Miss Ann
threw me his hat, which we perforce let along the rain.
We closed the door of the third - every one taking shelter
as best they could. I then sent Louis Perry a Jew
into the yard for a Doctor. He climbed over the roof
of outhouse & fetched Dr. Johnson of the Post
Road. He came back by a side in route through
a neighbouring house & over the outhouse - into the
yard of No. 100. It was impossible to go down Sidney
St. without being shot, because there was a regular
shooting going on - I expect Perry was going
back - but I don't know. I never saw any one in the
house No. 100 - but I saw the shots coming out.

On the Doctor's arrival he pronounced Leson & plucked
the wounds - whilst this was going on I went over
the outhouse & then the driveway behind & got
some of Mann & Brownman's employees to bring
an ambulance - This was put over the wall - the
Doctor ordered Leson's removal to the Ho. where
at once - I surveyed the premises & found no safe
other means of going except over the outhouse &
I never went. I got a van in the yard & packed
it up with a drum fire & a ladder which he placed

Deveney D. D. D. D.

5/1
5/1

was a stunt from the ran to the wall. I was on the ground
 on a stretcher & lifted from the ground into the
 ran by Capt. Colverson. Thompson & Allan of the
 C.P. D. Johnson, P.S. Richards & W. H. L. were
 in the ran & they both helped. P.S. Boreham
 took my & a man named Gascogne of the
 Crown's men on the tank - helped P.S. Johnson
 on the tank. Some uniform officers got up on
 the tank from the top of the trench & the firing
 began again - and bullets pained below us &
 over us & this continued for 10 minutes - then
 we lay down in the gutter of the road in the
 trench during our difficulties I had help
 over of the ambulance & got on the steps & was
 carried down by a number of Dragoon men
 into the yard. We let the ambulance down
 & P.S. Boreham took me away - to the
 hospital. The firing continued & we
 all got away into the yard after a time - some
 we only had an hour on the road before I got down
 I was too rough and was wearing a helmet -
 I went away home & changed my clothes.
 In about 10 minutes I returned & the firing
 was still going on and I went into the
 yard again by another way through the
 Dragoon yard. By pulling some wood work
 down. During all this time of the shooting I was
 in the yard in No. 109. but afterwards left
 by the Dragoon yard.
 Had nothing to do with the consultation about
 standing for orders - but I continued to make
 inquiries - both after my men. The orders came
 I went a little after 11 o'clock but I had nothing

Oliverley D. D. D. D.

Q.

to do with the poisoning of the soldiers. I saw him
after this, for with this powder.

At any time was it seriously proposed to hold the house
below & arrest the two men?

I suggested it to the two Superintendents after we got
out. Herston out of the house this we might be quickly
up & occupy the room. Herston had vacated since
the officers might go up to the attic - so that if
they came out we could arrest him - but the Super
said this was far too risky - it is to certain that
a loss of life is to be sure & the circumstances did
not justify it, and we were to maintain the sufficiency.
I think now that they were right, because in the light
of subsequent events it is manifest that they set
fire to the house, & as it has been found to be the case
or as it has been shown if he tried to escape.

Had no further active part in the matter after the
fire began, but it was put out.

Q.

During the whole night did you have any knowledge that
this had been done & knowing. No one had seen
we knew nothing for certain as to who they were - &
the Chief Superintendent said "if it turns out that they are
not the right men to blame for a lamp being struck,
which shows that there was a doubt as to who they were."
They made no noise all night, and the first we
knew of them was their firing from the 1st floor
which shows they had come down from the 2nd floor.
The fire had been burning all night in the passage
after we cleared the house, & the front door was
open wide, so that we could see right up the stairs
case it was open till after the firing began when
it was on fire, & was shut after that. It was
shut by one of the men inside - It was raining & sleeting

W. E. D. D. D. D. D.

it is impossible to see. I am sure none of our men shut the door - so I conclude one of the men inside came down & shut it - which he could have done by crawling down quietly. I feel quite certain none of our men shut it - It was open when we threw the pebbles up. I never saw the man myself. I could not see the weapons they used but they fired like repeating rifles. It was seen that all the windows in the house were shut & they were firing through them.

The house began to over fire in the attic about 1.00. I think & looked down floor by floor - as far as I could see the fire on one floor had no connection with the other - so I believe the fire set fire to the house as they descended.

J. Wensley D. D. Insp^d

J. Wensley D. D. Insp^d.

I wish to add to my statement previously noted that I omitted to mention that a W. & H. Skinneman & four children occupied the 2nd floor front room & back kitchen - & they were also brought out with the others from No. 100 S. 5th. I meant that included the same position that the front door was open when P.S. Larson was shot about 7.30 am. & that the culprits were then on the 1st floor. Though during the night when the occupants were being taken out of No. 100 they were on the 2nd floor - but they must have come down later. I think it was about 5.30 am when I went in to look at the gas - with Carlson: & it must have been long after that the men came down the 2nd floor probably at the night 7.00. Then they discovered the house was surrounded & deserted.

J. Wensley D. D. Insp^d

METROPOLITAN POLICE.

STATEMENT OF WITNESS.

Station. _____ Division. _____

day of _____ 191_____.

Name P.S. Borsham. (Albert).

Address Reman Street Police Station.

Age _____

Occupation _____

Statement: What do you know of the Sidney St. affair in detail?
On the night of the 2nd Jan 17. I went down to Carbow Square
Police Station about 12.10. am by direction of Insp?
Worsley. I was at Reman St. Police Station to do so.
I found several other officers - P.S. Gyles - P.S. Mason
P.S. Lonsdale & others - collecting this - a shortly after
Supt Mulvaney came & also Supt Clark. Supt. Ottaway
of the City Police. They went into the Insp's office.
After about 1/2 hour Supt Mulvaney decided us to
go to the corner of Broadwin St. and Sidney St. where
was about a dozen of us. altogether. We were
awaiting directions then. We only knew it was in
connection with the Hornet & Ditch case - but we
know nothing more. We remained there quietly
looking down Sidney St. We were about 2 doors
from Sidney St. N. 100, and I saw a W. Cooper
who had been with some of the P.S. officers
knock at the window of 100 Sidney St. &
speaking to some one inside - and after this

Signature Albert Borsham

Borcham

a woman came thru door & went in to No. 102 next door.
 Insp. Lonsley then called me, by beckoning to No. 102 - & I went
 about in the doorway of 102. I remained here on guard
 till just as one came out of 100 - except that she
 was being removed. I saw a man & three children I think
 removed - and an elderly man & woman & a 1st person.
 taken out. After they had all been removed I went across
 the road to No. 109. I saw no one go into No. 100 except
 Mr. W. G. who went in to assist the old man out.
 The gas was lit in No. 100: & I could see the passage
 in and the stairs but not going down. I heard no one
 except that she was being brought out. I don't think
 any one went upstairs - not to my knowledge.
 I remained in the yard of No. 109 till about 5:15 opposite
 No. 100 after which I went with P. S. Lison - Boston. Insp.
 H. Atham of the C.P. Insp. Thompson C.P. & Mr. Lonsley & Supt.
 Mulcahy &c. We remained here for about 2 hours
 till about 7:30. an old Mr. Lonsley flung a pebble
 up at the window of 100. I think that some one pushed
 at the door upon. But I could not say who. After Mr.
 Lonsley through a pebble, he came into the yard to pick
 up some more pebbles - as he came in a volley of
 shots was fired from the first floor window of No.
 100. P. S. Lison called out "I am shot" I am hit
 in the chest" & he went quick with the back of the yard
 & I helped him into the stairs into the shelter of the yard.
 He leaned up the back of the van. He did not fall.
 But kept saying he was dying & said Good bye to us.
 We took him into the back room of No. 109. & I buttoned
 his jacket. One of his legs shot in the chest was
 by him at the time. In about 20 minutes after
 a doctor came & examined him - Lison said he
 felt very faint. The Doctor said he might have a stent
 180000-9-09. M.F.

Albert Borcham

Talked over with the police and the said Brandy. Then
went to the back of the yard & got on to roof of
outhouse of 98 - or 96. I passed along it & dropped
into yard of No. 94. I went into Sidney St & turned
to the right & got a quartain of brandy from
the Rising Sun P. H. at corner of Sidney St & Oxford St.
I returned the same way & gave the Doctor the brandy - Was
given a balloon. During this time the woman fainting
faintly but I can't say if it was much or little
when I went to the Rising Sun I ran across the
road quickly to get into the. After I used the
brandy the Doctor was anxious to get him to the
hospital and he decided that he must take him
over the roof at the back to yard of Hamel Brown.
He was placed on a stretcher & he carried him &
by means of a van got him on the roof & on to an
adjacent roof. I heard some one say look at
the Police man on a ladder & a shot was fired
which struck on the back of the Policeman & he was by
shoulder him to get down. he tried to run P. H. Lison
along & so got him within 3 yards of the back of
Hamel Brown's yard when two or three men who
were fired some of the bullets hit the back
P. H. Lison "My wife down in how - There was another
shot she worked him self off the ambulance
climbed to the back & he arrived into the yard
by the back door. I then ran to the other side of road
& accompanied P. H. Lison to the Hospital.
I remained at the Hospital & I heard his wife then
& did not return to the scene, the two hours had caught
fire. The door of No. 100 was left open after fire
burning after was left. he did see the ground floor
but the upper floors were dark.

Albert Braham

Q. I can't say if any Policeman went into No. 100
before daylight. I went & stood in the yard of 109
afterwards - I can't say if in No. 100. I slept before.
Before 12-01. When I went to Arbours Square I had been
by W. Lewis by order to the back of the London Hospital
about 9.02. & waited then - in some time to go back to
Leman St. nothing occurred & I have nothing of the
reasons for going. I can't say why
Pebble was shown at the window - but I suppose it
was to check up any one in the house who had been
men suspected of the Harold Ditch murder case in it
I have nothing of the residents of No. 100. Had a window
most for her. Albert Borham

METROPOLITAN POLICE.

STATEMENT OF WITNESS.

Station. _____ Division. _____

day of _____ 191____.

Name George Weston Police Insp:

Address Arbours Square. H. Division.

Age _____

Occupation _____

Statement: What do you know of the Sidney St. operations

At 12. midnight I proceeded at Arbours Square P.D. Station
by direction of Insp. Buckley and at about 1.30. am I
went with other officers of our own the City Police and
Insp. Buckley to Sidney St. We went off to N. 100
Sidney St. I was with Insp. Collinson & Thompson of the C.P.
a & other names I don't know. Supt. Hart & Mulvaney
were conferring together. N. 100 Sidney St. is dark
at this time as lights lit there. About 3 am. I saw
Supt. Mulvaney & other officers go to the adjoining
house N. 102. Then Insp. Buckley came up to me & asked
if there was any chance of our getting into the
yard of No. 102, adjoining Cohen's at 102.
I said yes. He said Cohen's. I then rapped at the
door of Cohen the Chemist - but got no answer - but
shortly after P.D. Guiden joined me & I said Frank
can we get their wicket door of the yard open.
& together we opened the door to lead Insp. & others but
any one the door for us, & he refused.

Signature George Weston

New No. 729.
Old No. 64.
Woburn

Supt. Mulvaney - Clark & Dan O'Brien came into the doorway
 & P.S. Leeson & myself left operation on 100 - from the
 door. At this time Insp. Worsley Coleman & Wagner
 & went across to 102 Sidney St. it was about 3:00
 & from when I was I could see the two conveyances
 from No. 100 to the adjoining house 102 Sidney St
 when they were removed. I saw all of them come
 out & a man named Wagner came to Supt. Mulvaney
 & said that there were two old people in the back
 room who refused to come out. & Supt. Mulvaney
 said he must get them out at all costs
 & shortly after they were brought out by Wagner
 Insp. Worsley & O'Brien & were in the passage
 of the house. At this time the lights were burning
 on the ground floor of No. 100. I went say
 she let the gas - I think it was the woman
 Pleishman. After the house was emptied
 I stood with P.S. Leeson in the doorway of the
 yard in 109. Nicholas doorway. About
 7:30 am the Supt. & the O'Brien came to the
 yard & it was supposed that the people suspected
 to be in the house should be aroused - Some of
 them were in the act of throwing stones, then
 I rushed across the road & knocked at the door
 to be wide open, but I could see no one
 inside. Then a brick being thrown at the
 first floor window I was standing by P.S.
 Leeson who received a volley of 11-0's
 from the 1st floor window. Leeson said
 "Jack I am hit" & ran into the yard - I
 saw him stopped by Insp. Worsley & O'Brien &
 I went back with P.S. Dorcham & closed
 the door - I saw him engaged with P.S. Leeson

George Proctor

for 1/4 of an hour till a Dr. Johnson arrived being
brought over the roof of the out-house of the Chemist's
shop about 30 yards away. Miss. Wensley was
looking after Leon Dan. Dr. Johnson - if we d'
get him to the Hospital we might save his life.
We then proceeded to try & get him over the
roof at the back by means of a tan skirting
on a manure bin and a ladder. Leon was
put on a stretcher & handed up & we pulled him
to the party wall. As we got the stretcher on the
wall & Leon on our outer wall then suddenly struck
the tiles & I saw Leon handed down in the yard
& jumped down in the manure bin when I was in
the bin. I thought he would have got down - in the
yard - but I saw him 20 minutes after come out
of the gutter of the roof about 15 inches deep.
After this I got into a loft in the yard overlooking Co's Sidery
St. I could not see any one in Sidery St. but I saw
shots coming out of the loft above windows.
I remained here till the storm wind about 10.30.
and then was directed to take Serj. Kitchen & four
others to the top floor of Mann & Crossman's Brewery,
and show them which windows in N. 100 Sidery St.
to shoot at. Then went back to Nicholas's Yard
again to the bed room over Cohen's shop with four
soldiers & shortly after arrived from near
Kandlers bed room to the left of Nicholas's Yard.
At 10.45 I conducted about 12 soldiers to
positions overlooking Co's Sidery St. when they
took up sheltered positions & shot into Co's Sidery St.
P.S. Walsh was grazed while shooting on the hand.
but not seriously. I saw nothing of the man
who was shooting in N. 100 Sidery St.

George Poston

Did you see any Police Officer Peter Coe Sidney St.
I saw Insp. Winstley a Mr. P. Colverson - a man named
Wagner go on to the ground floor of No. 100. Being
if the fire was going out. No one went upstairs.
I spent nearly all my time in the gate way opposite
No. 100. & the banner Dick was fired at as went through
the door - but was sheltered behind the jamb.
I saw nothing more till the fire broke out about 12.30.
When the upper story took fire - and I saw smoke
coming out of the top floor & 2nd floor.
The fire continued till the ground floor was
reached. & the soldiers kept shooting at the
rooms. After wards the firemen came out
sprayed on the flames - & went through No. 102
Sidney St. to the rear of the premises - when I
saw a crash & the firemen were brought out
again.

George Weston

METROPOLITAN POLICE.

STATEMENT OF WITNESS.

Station. _____ Division. _____

day of _____ 191_____.

Name P.S. Girdler (Frank)

Address Arbours Square Police Station. H. Divⁿ.

Age _____

Occupation _____

Statement: Will you tell me what - when you were with what - you know of the operations in Sidney St. on Jan^y 2^d - 3^d.

About 12. midnight on the 2^d Jan^y I was at Arbours Square Station when I received a message by telephone from D. I. Wansley to wait there till he came. I waited till he came with Supr. Mewany about a few minutes later.

We waited together till some City Police and an Ordnance collector. I was called into the front office by P.S. Dawson at Wansley's orders. On going in I received orders to go knowing the block of houses

the residents in Sidney St. & the vicinity of the

State 12 Police Officers of C. I. Dept. City Police in plain clothes & plain men to the rear of 100 Sidney

Street for the purpose of preventing any one fleeing from 100 Sidney St. by the rear. The 12 officers were divided

two. I divided them into parties of four & directed. Most then to the corner of Richardson St.

at Sidney St. They were all armed with revolvers. Girdler carried a revolver.

Signature Frank Girdler

Lindley

Had four men leaving & standing about to N^o 3
 Hardwin St. where I gained admission by knocking at
 the window of N^o 2 flat ground floor & was admitted
 by Mr. Hester Rubenoff whom I knew by sight. She asked
 no questions & sent me back to bed. She made no
 demand but went back into the room. I went through
 the passage & passed into the yard at the back
 onto the four men - whom I decided to climb over
 a low wall into the yard of N^o 1. Hardwin St.
 which was directly opposite the rear of 100
 Sidney St. Having posted them I returned to 98 Sidney
 St. the corner house of Sidney St. & the back & next
 door to N^o 100 Sidney St. I knocked & got admittance
 from Dr. Samuel Kirschen. He passed through his
 dispensary. I mean I was accompanied by 4
 other men into the back yard whom I posted them -
 Having posted them I returned to the third &
 went to 102 Sidney St. & knocked & was admitted
 by Kate Bluestone & I passed through her
 passage with the remaining four men & posted
 them in the back yard commanding the back
 of 100 Sidney St. I then took up my position
 at the corner of Lindley St. & Sidney St. All the
 time no one was disturbed in N^o 100. Because
 I only tapped at the window except at 102. Where
 Kate Bluestone answered my peep.
 It was a little after 2.00. am when I finished my
 arrangements to post the men to guard the rear
 of 100 Sidney St.
 It was about 3.00. am when I opened the gate
 of 100 Sidney St. opposite N^o 100 - with a key
 I had. I am sure that it I forgot by whom.
 I then went back to Lindley St. P.T. Weston was with me

I don't know who went into ~~London~~ N. 104 Sidney
I saw W. Wensley near it. I stopped & kept my post
in Ludlow St. I saw ~~nothing~~ taking maps for
Capt Mackenzie most of the time - I saw no one in N. 100.
but I could see the people coming out of it
from my position in Ludlow St. The last I saw come
out was W. Clements who was led out & away
this was about 4.45. am I think.

I was still at my post in Ludlow St. about 7.30. or so
it was day break - and I saw flashes & heard reports
of a pistol from the first floor of N. 100 Sidney St.
I heard nothing in the house. I could not see if
the door of the house was open. I don't see to any
one hit, & I don't know of P. J. Lemon the other
D. O. who it was only a rumor.

I know nothing else of importance, till I saw the soldiers
come up Richardson St. & Ludlow St. this was a
brigade & four men after took position across
Sidney St. outside the Sidney corner - They remained
there in position - they began to fire but I could not
see the result of their shots as I was round the
corner. I saw the fire begin about 100.
I saw it from the corner of Ludlow St. & it seemed to
come from the 2nd floor.

I heard nothing of the two men. I don't know
W. Fleishman except that about 3 or 4 years ago
he gave a man into my custody for stealing.
I can't say if any Police Officer entered N. 100.
I know nothing more bearing on the case.

Frank Girdler

METROPOLITAN POLICE.

STATEMENT OF WITNESS.

Station. _____ Division. _____

day of _____ 191_____.

Name M^{rs} Rebecca Feischman.

Address 120. Sidney St. Washington Heights N.Y.C.

Age _____

Occupation _____

Statement: On the night of the 2nd Jan^{ry} I was in bed in my room at 120 Sidney Street. It was on the ground floor in the front of the house. I went to bed at 12 o'clock midnight and so did my husband. My children were in my room sleeping in the back room of the first floor - and one was with me in the front room of the ground floor. I had gone to sleep when I was awake by hearing a tapping at my window. It was a loud knock - and I thought it was the milkman. I replied, "I don't want any milk". They said NO - the milkman was in the Police. I got to the window & pulled up the blind & said being alarmed - It is not the milkman, it is somebody else - get up. My husband got up and went & looked out & then he or someone said in Yiddish "Comrades - what is come out." My husband then went & he called the street door & he asked him to show that they were Police - so they showed him a bunch of a revolver & took him in next door to 102. I followed him as soon as I had put on a skirt & jacket. I had us taken to the property. Then they asked me how many lodgers I had in the place. I was told to be asked me

Signature Rebecca Feischman

W. H. Schuman

I said I had been told for an old couple named Clements
 in the back room ground floor, next to my bed room - and
 on the 1st floor front room - kitchen a husband & wife named
 David Shuman & M^r. Shuman & four children -
 & my own children in the back room 1st floor, and
 a M^r. Jackson occupied the front floor room. They
 asked about M^r. Jackson & I said she on a tall
 thin woman with glasses - they said Do you know if
 she has got any strange men up with her,
 I said No - but that I know of - they said bring
 husband M^r. Shuman you must go & fetch the
 woman Jackson down - He said, No not for a bit
 I don't. He is a very nervous man, & telling a lot of
 nonsense on lower flights. Then they said bring
 then M^r. Shuman - you must go & fetch M^r. Jackson down
 I said nothing - but I went. I went up stairs to the
 2nd floor front room, the stairs were dark - but I
 knew my way - as I had lived in the house a year.
 I knocked at M^r. Jackson's door, the front room door,
 I said M^r. Jackson home. She replied from my back
 room which I call the stoik room - I said you are
 out of the wrong room. She said you don't feel well
 from going to put a penny in the slot. I said give
 me a little help - my husband is bad too! She then
 came down with me. M^r. Jackson had been living with her
 for 18 months - she was a dress maker & for all I know
 she lived alone. She said her husband was away in
 Russia & come etc. No one answered me from the front
 room when I knocked - & I saw it was dark became no light
 came from the bottom. M^r. Jackson & I went down stairs
 & M^r. Jackson took us into N^o. 102 when we got down.
 Inspector Lonsley then told us to go for my children
 to the 1st floor front room. M^r. Lonsley first asked M^r. Jackson

if she had any men upstairs. She said yes she had one
man, named Joseph, her husband's cousin. His or her name
was Joseph - He admitted that was another man & then
Don took her & got my children & I went out.
I went alone upstairs to get my children. No one accompanied
me. I then went out to Mr. Shurman's & told her quietly
to get up & make us noise - I said that was some danger
and she must take her husband & children & come quietly
down stairs. She said all right - I took two babies
and she and her husband brought the girls & on
call came down to No. 102. Then lesson went in
with my husband & David Shurman to get Mr. Clement
out, because he didn't want to come out & it was
more. He was fond of his bed. So when lesson
went in & brought him out. I don't know that
any other policeman went in. I did not go in, but
I saw Mr. Clement on my husband's back. I did not
see any other man there. After that we sat in the
back kitchen of No. 102. There were a lot of policemen
in the back yard. Nothing else happened except
that was all sat in the back kitchen. Mr. Clement was
taken to his house. All this was done by about
6 a.m. We had been called at 3.30 a.m.
I heard us work in the front ^{2nd} floor room. But
I had noticed on the previous Friday that the
keyhole of the front room on the 2nd floor was dark -
I had said to my husband - I can't make it out.
But Mr. Furston's keyhole is dark - he said perhaps
the bars hanging a cover. I also smell CO gas in
the house on Saturday. I had not seen any one before.
Mr. Furston used to go out at 8 a.m. & come back
about 8 p.m. It was about 7.30 a.m. that I heard
the firing begin - but I did not see it, because

Rebecca Fleishman

729
6a
Mrs. T. Reichman

we were all sitting in the kitchen of 102.
My husband saw no one - he said looking through
He was in the kitchen ^{on Monday the 2nd} in the stairs above the
2nd floor - making samples - He is a ladies tailor
& works for himself. & manufactures his own cloth.

Q. I am quite sure no one went up to the 2nd floor
that night except myself. & what I went up as
one last night for the first time - then we were
in reply to my work in the front room.

Does not frighten because I never had any
There was a man who spoke to me in Yiddish & seemed
somewhat young & he was right & was the same.
I don't know his name - I never saw him before - he
did go in to his evidence w. Clements to come out
in Yiddish - I forget him.

Rebecca Reichman

19892

New No. 992.
Old No. 148.

METROPOLITAN POLICE.

STATEMENT OF WITNESS.

Station. _____ Division. _____
day of _____ 191 _____.

Name Samuel Fleishman

Address 100 Sedney St.

Age _____

Occupation _____

Statement: I come from Roga, which I left 25 or 26 years ago. I married 18 years ago. I have lived in Sedney St. 16 years. I remember the night of 2nd Jan^{ry}. I went to bed between 12.11. or 12. am. I went to sleep and I heard some one knock at the window - about 3.30 am. My wife says to me "That's the milkman" I said I went for up. Going as you arrange for the milkman. She got up by the window to see on the ground floor - front bedroom - and she said she did not want any milk. She thought it was 7. o'clock. The man outside said he wanted to see Mr. Fleishman. I got up & looked out of the window. I saw a man outside - I said he does not want any milk. He said I am not a milkman - I am from the Police. I said I don't believe you he showed me a commission - I said in Yiddish "Dont be afraid - Come out. I said to my wife. Put on some dress & come out of the front door. I went out to see the man said to me in Yiddish - Dont be afraid - keep quiet & come out - with some in your lap. I he took me in next door to 102 Sedney St. On going in I found the man

Samuel Fleishman

Signature _____

Mr. Hirschman

packed with Poiu. My wife followed me. My sister
 told down on chair - & they said to me - Go up stairs
 to see up Mr. Jackson. On looking round & seeing
 so many men in the room I saw them are something
 nervous - & I said "I would not go up if you fear
 too. Then I said to Mr. Wensley: "Why don't you go up
 I am not sure if it was W-wensley" & may have been that up.
 The lady told my wife to go up - stairs & wake up Mr.
 Jackson & his two kids your husband & not with
 a span with go for a doctor, while Mr. Jackson would be
 & my wife agreed to go up stairs & went into No. 100.
 and she came down with Mr. Jackson in a short a minute.
 Then Mr. Jackson was brought into No. 102. & she was
 asked "How many men have you got up stairs - she
 said first one man - but after that she said she
 had two men. I am not sure if I could find Mr. Jackson
 a pair of boots & a coat - & I gave a pair of boots to
 my own & my wife's coats. Which I got by coming into
 No. 100 with the ground floor kitchen. After this
 they took Mr. Jackson away. & they told my wife
 to go up stairs and bring down the children. So
 she went up & brought them down from the 2nd floor
 bed room. Then they sent her up again to wake up
 the woman David Shinsman & his wife & children -
 and she did so. - four children. After this they
 told me to go & wake up my old lodger who wife she
 lived in ground floor bed room at the back. I went
 in & told the old man to get up. He refused to get up -
 so I went & told an officer - He told me to go & make him
 so I went in again & told him but please come in
 the place - I am he did not hear me - he is rather deaf
 I then sent the Poiu to get you - & after some difficulty
 I dressed him and I got another man who helped to carry

him out. We carried him out the chock into N. 102.
After this as far as I knew there was no one in the
house. but of course Mr. Jackson had both in there
was two men in it. All the rest of the night we
all stayed in the kitchen of N. 102. All our bodies
the people of N. 102 & some Poni as well. I
was Poni too in the back.

We heard some firing at about 7:30 a.m. I saw
nothing. for we could not go out nor was at the
back. We were told that the men were firing.
I don't know how the house went down except fire.
I know nothing about the two men.

I had known Mr. Jackson for 18 months - He had
lived in our house 2nd floor front for that time
I had spoken to her some times. I don't know if she
had visitors. I think the two men had been in the
house two or three days - because my wife had some
suits of Ceylonese or Suluise by her.

I did not go upstairs, because I suspected something
wrong - I saw so many Poni - No Poni was
went upstairs, also one the time except my
wife, when she came to see Mr. Jackson.

I think Mr. Jackson knew anything - because she took
them the room. *Samuel Jelichinsky*

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