

Coroner's Jury Returns Verdict Of 'Foul Play' on Towarak Deaths

The circumstances surrounding the strange disappearance of Ambrose Towarak family took a dramatic turn when the inquest jury unanimously concluded that the triple death was

caused by foul play.

The conclusion by the inquest was made last Friday afternoon in Fairbanks.

Ambrose Towarak, his

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Towarak Family Death . . .

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wife Helen and their five-month old baby son Andrew disappeared mysteriously on the evening of August 4, 1967.

The bodies were discovered last month on June 16 after a person in a small plane sighted a submerged car in a gravel pond as he flew over.

The result of the inquest has spurred on a further investigation into the Towarak mystery.

The further probe is the direct result of Acting District Attorney for the 4th Judicial District Fred Crane's refusal to believe that the Towarak's family death was an accident.

"I just wouldn't buy it. I don't think it was an accident," Fred Crane had said two weeks ago.

The investigation will continue, Fred Crane told the press last weekend.

"As I've said I wasn't satisfied," Fred Crane told the Tundra Times. "There are too many people who seemed to know the family was dead in the car."

The most important one in the otherwise rather slim leads seems to be a letter written to the Fairbanks Search and Rescue dated March 24, 1968. Although the body of the letter is legible, the signature is not.

The coroner's jury was told the signature might represent a Williams, Willson or Williamson. The first name indicated that it started with the letter "E."

The letter stated that the Towarak family was in the river near Pike's Landing and that, "They mistook the road and could not stop in time and went into the ice."

Pike's Landing, however, is something less than a

mile from the gravel pond where the Towaraks were discovered.

The mysterious letter apparently led the coroner's inquest panel to return a verdict of foul play.

It was thought that the writer of the letter might have been a witness to the tragedy and that his mention of the "ice" might have been meant to mislead the police and that the car had gone into the "river."

The Towarak family disappeared on August 4 during the very wet month and just ten days before the great flood hit on August 14 in Fairbanks and other communities.

It was also revealed that a good friend of the family last winter had once said that the family was dead in their car. When located and questioned, he said he had been drinking and denied the validity of the remark.

Other bits and pieces of information received by the police have it that "unknown persons" had been "irritated" by Ambrose Towarak's taking a job in Nome shortly before he and his family disappeared.

It was also reported that a threat on Towarak's life had been made by a cousin but the cousin has denied that he had made such a threat.

The bodies of the victims were examined by Dr. Raymond D. Evans but he was unable to find anything conclusive because of the advanced stage of deterioration of the bodies.

When the Towarak car was found, the headlight switch had been on an on position.

When the Towaraks were last seen alive, they had gone to the Fairbanks International Airport to see a friend off.