



CASE WS-2018-03-15

WHICH SARAH?

THE FULL SOLUTION FILE

CASE CLOSED

This document contains the complete solution to the case.
Do not continue until your submission is complete.

FINAL SPOILER WARNING

Prepared by Wexbridge Constabulary Case Review



MG3 – CPS DECISION

THIS DECISION WAS ISSUED ON RECEIPT OF YOUR SUBMISSION

DECISION

CHARGE AUTHORISED

Status: Full Code Test met

Case ref: WS-2018-03-15

Decision recorded by: Crown Prosecutor

CHARGES AUTHORISED

SUSPECT	CHARGE
Sarah A / Sarah Elizabeth Vale	MURDER
Rebecca Shaw / Sarah B	PERVERTING THE COURSE OF JUSTICE
Rebecca Shaw / Sarah B	FRAUD BY FALSE REPRESENTATION

CROWN PROSECUTOR SIGNATURE:

NAME: Hugh Dimbledaw K.C.



THE ANSWER IN ONE SENTENCE

The woman in custody is the legal Sarah Elizabeth Vale, who killed Daniel Mercer in his study between 14:25 and 14:45; the other woman using the Sarah Vale identity was Rebecca Shaw, the protected witness known as R.S., who arrived at 15:32, after Daniel's death, and removed the papers that exposed the borrowed identity.

MARK YOUR SUBMISSION

QUESTION	ANSWER
1 Who is Sarah A?	Sarah Elizabeth Vale, the legal owner of the identity and the woman in custody.
2 Who is Sarah B?	Rebecca Shaw, the former protected witness known as R.S.
3 Which Sarah killed Daniel Mercer?	Sarah A.
4 Which Sarah altered the scene?	Sarah B, after arriving at 15:32.
5 What did Daniel create years earlier?	A false documentary trail that allowed Rebecca to live under Sarah Vale's genuine identity.
6 Which exhibit proves the death window?	A-34, supported by the stopped desk clock and scene evidence in A-36.
7 Which exhibit proves Rebecca arrived after Daniel's death?	A-35, connected to the rail record in A-08 through wallet token 7F3A-8C9D.
8 Which exhibit proves evidence was removed?	A-38, supported by A-35 and A-39.

FINAL THEORY IN ONE LINE

Two women shared one name; the legal Sarah killed the man who had given her identity away, and Rebecca arrived too late to save him, but in time to remove the proof.



SCORING

8 / 8	Detective
6 – 7	Sergeant
4 – 5	Constable
Under 4	The file will still be there tomorrow.

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Score one point for each correct answer supported by an exhibit that fits its owner's true timeline.

2014: REBECCA SHAW BECOMES R.S.

Rebecca Shaw gave evidence in the Cross Securities fraud trial and faced threats and harassment because of it.

Daniel Mercer had reported on the case. He believed his work had helped expose Rebecca and felt responsible for what followed.

What began as temporary protection became something much more serious.

Daniel helped Rebecca establish a documentary life under the genuine identity of another woman: Sarah Elizabeth Vale.

He did not create a fictional person. He helped Rebecca live inside the records of someone who already existed.

Tenancy documents, employment records, medical registration, utilities and contact details began carrying Sarah Vale's name while referring to Rebecca's life.

The arrangement was supposed to be temporary. It lasted four years.

ONE MEDICAL RECORD, TWO WOMEN

The Sarah Vale medical record contains information from two different bodies.

Some details belong to the legal Sarah, including the historic shellfish allergy.

Other details were recorded when Rebecca attended appointments under Sarah's name, including a height of 5 ft 7, a scar above the left eyebrow, and other Rebecca-linked physical traits.

That is why the record appears to contradict itself.

The cafe receipt adds another mismatch. A prawn and avocado salad was purchased under the Sarah Vale account, despite the recorded shellfish allergy.



That purchase does not prove who ate the food. It does, however, conflict with the medical record and becomes meaningful when combined with the cafe handwriting, CCTV, device and movement evidence.

CASE The receipt alone is not identity proof. The pattern is.
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THE BANK: ONE ACCOUNT, TWO INSTRUMENTS

The bank record reveals how one account produced two separate movement trails.

In November 2017, the account's registered address and contact number were changed by telephone banking.

The caller passed the security questions, changed the address from Northmere to 18 Calder Close, changed the registered mobile number, and received the one-time verification code used to provision card 4762 into a mobile wallet.

Three weeks later, a damaged-card replacement was requested. The replacement card was sent to Calder Close.

At the following day's branch appointment, the customer signed the follow-up form in the same block-capital borrowed-name hand seen on Rebecca's cafe and florist records.

The bank did not require the original card to be surrendered, and the original card was never deactivated.

That left two active instruments: the physical card ending 4762 and a mobile-wallet credential linked to the same account.

The physical card remained with the legal Sarah. Police later found it in her purse. The wallet credential travelled with Rebecca.

On the day of Daniel's death, the physical card paid for fuel on Sarah's car route while the wallet credential was used at a Wexbridge rail gate.

CASE One account. Two instruments. Two women. Two trails.
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DANIEL CALLS BOTH WOMEN INTO THE SAME STORY

Daniel's recovered notes show that he had begun investigating the deception he helped create.

He knew Sarah Vale had discovered that another woman was using her identity; Rebecca feared losing the protected life built around that identity; publication would expose them both; and he himself was responsible for making the arrangement possible.

His research notes ask: "What did I make possible?"



His draft article shows that he intended to publish the identity story.

For Sarah, this was not merely an old betrayal. Daniel was preparing to turn the theft of her name into his own expose.

For Rebecca, publication threatened the life she had spent four years building.

At 10:06, he sent Sarah a message: "We need to talk. You are not the only Sarah Vale."

THE MEETING THAT NEVER HAPPENED

At the same time, Daniel had arranged to meet Rebecca at Northgate Parkway: "NGP main concourse 13:45. Bring the folder."

At 13:05, he created an unsent note: "If Rebecca calls, do not answer."

At 13:11, he dismissed the Northgate reminder. He had decided not to attend.

REBECCA'S FAILED MEETING

Rebecca had already ordered a bouquet under the shared name.

At 11:44, she wrote "Sarah Vale" on the florist delivery slip in the same block-capital hand seen on her other Wexbridge records.

She then travelled by rail to Northgate Parkway.

TIME	EVENT
13:43	Arrives Northgate Parkway (approx.)
13:44	Withheld call to Daniel — declined
13:47	Exit tap, Northgate Parkway
13:47	Second withheld call — declined
13:52	Return entry tap

Rebecca reached the meeting point. Daniel did not.

She waited only minutes before beginning the return journey.

Her rail movements account for her whereabouts throughout the death window. She could not have been in Daniel's study between 14:25 and 14:45.



SARAH'S JOURNEY TO HARLOW ROW

While Rebecca travelled by train, the legal Sarah followed the car route.

The evidence places her at the Merewick Garden Hotel that morning, leaving the hotel car park at 09:42, travelling north on the M11, purchasing fuel with physical card 4762 at 11:58, and reaching the Mercer Street and Harlow Row area shortly after 14:12.

Her Android handset follows the same route.

No record places her leaving that area again until 15:06.

Sarah had gone to Daniel expecting him to fix what he had done.

Instead, Daniel refused to bury the story. He intended to publish it.

From Sarah's perspective, he had handed her identity to a stranger and was now preparing to profit from revealing the damage.

The confrontation escalated.

THE KILLING

Daniel died between 14:25 and 14:45.

The scene evidence indicates a single close-range blow with the brass paperweight from his desk.

The desk clock stopped at 14:37.

The blood-pattern and directional evidence are consistent with a left-handed strike. Sarah A is left-handed. Rebecca is repeatedly observed using her right hand.

At 14:55, Sarah's Android handset was inside or immediately beside the Harlow Row property and created the recovered image of Daniel's study.

The photograph does not independently identify who held the device.

But the car route, handset route, death window, handedness and later lie all point to the same person.

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Sarah A killed Daniel Mercer.



THE BOUQUET AND THE UNSECURED DOOR

At 14:52, the florist attempted to deliver Rebecca's bouquet to Daniel.

There was no answer, and the bouquet was left at the property.

Sarah later admitted that she had a bouquet to return.

The precise sequence cannot be proved from one exhibit alone, but the most likely reconstruction is that Sarah encountered the bouquet as she left, took it with her, and failed to secure the door properly.

Her later claim that she had been running errands therefore contains a fragment of truth. She did return a bouquet. She concealed where she had obtained it and what had happened immediately beforehand.

Sarah's handwritten route note for her return journey remained behind in Daniel's study.

REBECCA ARRIVES TOO LATE

Rebecca exited at Wexbridge Central at 15:21. The street and movement evidence places her at Daniel's address at 15:32.

By then Daniel had already been dead for nearly an hour.

Rebecca entered through the unsecured door and found him in the study.

She also found the records that could expose her real name, the borrowed Sarah Vale identity, Daniel's role in creating it, and the years of documents tying the two women together.

Rebecca did not kill Daniel. But she did alter the scene.

She opened the drawer, searched the study, and stacked the papers on the desk as she sorted them, removing the contents of the R.S./S.V. document wallet.

The wallet itself remained behind, stripped of its papers.

Her fingerprint, the gold fibre and the later condition of the room link her to that post-death search.

THE ROUTE NOTE IN THE WRONG HANDS

Among the papers Rebecca removed was a handwritten route note.

The handwriting belongs to Sarah A.

The note refers to Sarah's planned return drive from Harlow Row.

It had been left in Daniel's study during Sarah's visit, lying on the desk.



Rebecca did not write it. When she gathered up the stack she had made, the note went with it. A-37 photographed that stack: “document stack, rearranged on desk.”

It was later produced among the material associated with her.

That is the final trap in the case.

**A clue may be true. A clue may be genuine.
A clue may still be attached to the wrong Sarah.**

CAS Possession does not equal authorship.
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THE TWO DENIALS

Both women were asked the same question. Both said no.

SARAH A – A-02, FIRST INTERVIEW

“Did you go to Harlow Row that day?”

“No.”

She then added the sentence that mattered: *“My phone was in the car.”* Her handset data places the Android at Daniel's property and records the study image at 14:55. The first denial was ordinary. The second was specific, and specific lies are the ones that break.

REBECCA SHAW – A-27, WITNESS STATEMENT

“Did you go to Harlow Row that day?”

“No. I didn't.”

Her rail exit, street arrival, fingerprint and gold fibre prove that she entered the study after Daniel's death.

CAS They lied about the same place. They were protecting different things. One denial hides a killing. The
E other hides four years of a borrowed life, and the papers that proved it.
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IF YOU ACCUSED REBECCA

You followed the strongest apparent motive and the most visible scene evidence. Rebecca had a reason to fear Daniel, fingerprints in the study, fibre on the drawer, a false name, removed documents, and a lie about visiting Harlow Row.

But four independent facts exclude her as the killer:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Her rail journey accounts for the death window. |
| 2 | Her first possible arrival is 15:32. |
| 3 | The killing action is consistent with a left-handed assailant. |
| 4 | Her traces belong to the later disturbance of a scene where blood had already begun to dry. |

Rebecca altered the scene. She did not create it.

IF YOU CALLED THE DETAINEE THE IMPOSTER

THE DETAINEE (SARAH A)	REBECCA SHAW (SARAH B)
5 ft 4	5 ft 7
Left-handed	Right-handed
Silver jewellery	Gold chain
Marked on the right wrist	Marked above the left eyebrow
Holder of the physical card	Linked to R.S. and Calder Close
The legal Sarah Elizabeth Vale	Writer of the block-capital borrowed name

Daniel's draft title confirms the direction of the identity fraud:

THE NAME SHE STOLE

The detainee was telling the truth when she said, "*You have the wrong Sarah.*" The mistake was assuming that being the real Sarah made her innocent.



THE PROSECUTOR'S ASSESSMENT OF YOUR FILE

Getting the right name is not the same as building a case that survives a courtroom. Here is how your submission would have been assessed.

WHERE YOUR FILE WOULD HAVE HELD

Two independent identity trails	The physical card and the wallet credential produce two separate movement records from one account. Neither can be explained away as a single woman's day.
The death window is fixed by pathology	Body temperature, lividity and the stopped desk clock converge on 14:25 to 14:45. No witness has to be believed for it to hold.
Handedness	The directional blood evidence is consistent with a left-handed strike. Sarah A is left-handed; Rebecca is observed throughout using her right. The cleanest physical discriminator in the file.
Post-death conduct is timed	Rebecca's arrival at 15:32 is fixed by rail exit and street records, placing every trace she left inside a window that opens nearly an hour after death.

WHERE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ATTACKED

The weapon was his	A brass paperweight from Daniel's own desk, one blow, in the middle of an escalating confrontation. The defence will not contest that Sarah was there. It will contest what the killing was. Loss of control is an obvious route, and on this evidence a jury could return manslaughter rather than murder. Nothing in the file establishes that she arrived intending to kill.
No direct eyewitness	The case is a sequence, not a sighting. Sequences are strong until a single link is disputed.
The 14:55 photograph does not name a hand	It places the device, not the person. The inference is sound, but it is an inference.
The original paperwork is still missing	The most probative documents in the case are the ones nobody has recovered.
Both suspects gave partial accounts	Neither denial has been tested at trial, and neither woman has yet given a full explanation of her day.



ACTION PLAN

Continue recovery of the missing R.S./S.V. originals and review Daniel Mercer's unpublished material.

CASE CLOSED

Sarah A killed Daniel Mercer.

Rebecca Shaw arrived after his death, searched the study, and removed the identity papers.

Daniel Mercer had helped create the deception that brought both women to his door.

The name was shared. The actions were not.

Thank you for working the file.

ONE OPEN QUESTION

Would you have got the murder conviction, or would you have taken the manslaughter plea? Reply and tell us. The answers go in the next case notes.

If *Which Sarah?* kept you awake past a sensible hour, the next case is already being assembled. Reply "NEXT CASE" and you will be first to hear when it opens.

— Case Review, Wexbridge Constabulary

You received this file because you scanned a code inside *Which Sarah?*

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