

Lizzie andrew borden



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Lizzie Andrew Borden (July 19, 1860-June 1, 1927) It is best described by the closing arguments for Lizzie Borden's defense, made by her attorney, George D. Robinson: The Lizzie Borden case has mystified and fascinated those interested in crime for over a hundred years. Very few cases in American history have attracted as much attention as the hatchet murders of Andrew J. Borden and his wife, Abby Borden. The bloodiness of the acts in an otherwise respectable late nineteenth century domestic setting is startling. Along with the gruesome nature of the crimes is the unexpected character of the accused, not a hatchet-wielding maniac, but a church-going, Sunday-school-teaching, respectable, spinster- daughter, charged with parricide, the murder of parents, a crime worthy of Classical Greek tragedy. This is a murder case in which the accused is found not guilty for the violent and bloody murders of two people. There were the unusual circumstances considering that it was an era of swift justice, of vast newspaper coverage, evidence that was almost entirely circumstantial, passionately divided public opinion as to the guilt or innocence of the accused, incompetent prosecution, and acquittal. Not much is described of Lizzie Andrew Borden's childhood. On March 1, 1851, Emma Lenora Borden was born to Andrew and Sarah Borden, and on July 19, 1860, Lizzie had arrived. While Lizzie was at the young age of two, Sarah died of uterine congestion. In 1865, Andrew Borden wed Abby Durfee-a short, shy, obese woman who had been a spinster until the age of 36. Abby's family were not as well off as the Bordens. Lizzie suffered from psychomotor epilepsy, a strange seizure of the temporal lobe that has one distinct symptom: a "black-out" in which the patients carry out their actions in a dream state, aware of every action without knowing what they are doing. Lizzie Borden seemed to have two entirely different personalities: the <https://assignbuster.com/lizzie-andrew-borden/>

good daughter (a member of the Congressional Church, and a brilliant conversationalist), and the bad daughter (deeply resentful of the patriarchy). These two personalities could be explained by the families' contradiction about their social statuses. She also had a habit of stealing from the local merchants. The Borden family of Fall River, Massachusetts, was well known-not only because of Andrew Borden's wealth, but also because of the New England name. Lizzie was the ninth-generation on her father's side to live in Fall River. Andrew held many positions throughout his life, which included president of Union Savings Bank, director of First National Bank, director of Durfee Safe Deposit & Trust Company, director of Globe Yarn Mill Company, director of Troy Cotton & Woolen Manufacturing Company, and director of Merchants Manufacturing Company. They led a modest life in the south part of town near factories and City Hall. Despite this crowded neighborhood and closeness to the police department, none of the neighbors saw anything helpful on the morning of the murders. What makes the Fall River murders so confusing is that the motive, the weapon, and the opportunity for such a crime are all absent. They found no money or jewelry missing, not even small amounts of change were taken in the daytime break-in at the Borden home a year earlier. The home had been locked up as usual, the maid Bridget Sullivan-an Irish immigrant, 26, that had been working at the household since 1889-was washing windows, and daughter Lizzie was inside the house reading a magazine. Even if both were involved for some reason in this shocking crime, what became of the blood so conspicuously missing from the bludgeoned corpses? Furthermore, the prosecution never proved the weapon was an axe. When Officer Mullaly asked if there were hatchets in the house, Lizzie replied with, " Yes, they are everywhere."

Bridget and Mullaly went down to the basement and found four hatchets: one rusty claw-headed hatchet, two that were dusty, and one that had dried blood and hair on it (later determined as cow's blood and hair. One of these was without a handle and covered in ashes. The break on the handle appeared to be recent so it was submitted as evidence. Yet microscopic examination of this blade revealed no traces of blood. Mrs. Borden was struck with a " heavy, sharp-edged candlestick," yet no axe, hatchet, or even candlestick could be found to uphold these theories in court. The contrarities of the case caused more than 1, 900 divorces (according to a New York Times poll at the time) in which husbands and wives, argued over the innocence or guilt, decided that they were mutually incompatible. By nine thirty August 4, 1892, Abby Borden's head was nearly torn off her shoulders by a blunt instrument as she lay face down in the upstairs guestroom. Forensic experts at the time judge that she had seen her attacker when struck. When examined by Dr. Bowen-a friend, physician, and neighbor-he found her head crushed by 19 axe or hatchet wounds in the back of the scalp. Because of the lack of blood, it has been determined that Abby died from the first blow, and with death her heart had stopped pumping blood. The 200-pound victim lay sprawled out on the knees face down to be discovered two hours later. For 30 years Abby and Lizzie lived together under one roof, yet on the day of the murder Lizzie gave no indication that they ever got along. Deputy Marshal John Fleet testified that on the day Abby died he asked Lizzie " if she had any idea who could have killed her father and mother." Lizzie responded with, " She's not my mother, Sir. She is my stepmother. My mother died when I was a child." " I did not regard her as my mother, though she came there when I was young. I

decline to say whether my relations between her and myself were those of mother and daughter or not. I called her Mrs. Borden and sometimes Mother." Edmund Pearson's famous description of the scene where Andrew Borden-70, a tall white-haired grim man, known for his business abilities and wealth in Fall River-was found dead: " This was a small room, nearly square, with but two windows, both on the south side. The floor was covered with the usual garish, flowered carpet, customary in such houses at that time, and the wallpaper was of a similarly disturbing pattern. The furniture was mahogany or black walnut, upholstered with the invariable black horsehair. On the north side of the room, opposite the windows, was a large sofa, and on this lay the dead body of Mr. Borden with his head and face so hacked as to be unrecognizable even to his friend and physician, Dr. Bowen. Borden's head was slightly bent to the right, but his face was almost unrecognizable as human." One eye had been cut in half and out of its socket, his nose had been severed, and there were eleven distinct cuts within a fairly small area extending from the eye and nose to the ears, four of them crushing the skull. The wounds were so severe that the first eleven must have killed him. When the police finally arrived after the murders, Lizzie acted more like a concerned citizen rather than a daughter in shock. Many suspects had been eliminated, but it was inevitable that Lizzie would become the prime one, especially that after they learned she had tried to purchase ten cents worth of prussic acid poison the week before from Eli Bence, a clerk at Smith's Drug Store. Adelaide Churchill, the neighbor who stayed with Lizzie until the doctor arrived, testified in court that she did not see any blood on Lizzie's dress when she left at noon. According to Mrs. Churchill, " I stood in front of her, rubbing both her hands and fanning her, and I did not see any blood on

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her face, nor any disarrangements of her hair. Such a spotless appearance seems impossible if Lizzie had committed the crime, for she had at best 20 minutes after her father fell asleep to strike him eleven times about the head, hide the murder weapon, and clean all evidence off her clothes and body. At 3: 00 p. m. the bodies of Andrew and Abby were carried into the dining room, where Dr. Dolan performed the autopsies. Emma Lenora Borden returned just before seven from visiting friends in Fairhaven after hearing of the occurrence by telegraph. The police continued to investigate for weeks to come, but nothing of significance was found. The morning after the funeral, Miss Russell-a neighbor-witnessed Lizzie burning a dress in the kitchen stove, she claimed that it was stained with paint and was of no use. It was because of this testimony that Judge Blaisdell of the Second District Court charged Lizzie with three counts of murder (oddly, for the murder of her father, the murder of her stepmother, and the murder of the both of them) and if found guilty, faced death by hanging. The trial was set for June 5, 1893. This was the Victorian era, when women were " certainly not capable of killing anyone." You must remember that Lizzie was of a wealthy family of high status. After only an hour, the 12 jury members declared Lizzie to be not guilty. It is said that it only took 15 minutes to decide, but out of respect for the prosecution, they waited another 45 to inform the court of their choice. Lizzie was legally free, but in the public's opinion, she was still guilty. After the acquittal, Lizzie legally changed her name to Lizabeth, moved out of the house on 92 Second Street. Emma and Lizzie inherited \$200, 000. 00 each from their father's death; their first purchase was a lovely home on The Hill at 7 French Street, the most fashionable place in Fall River, in which Lizzie named Maplecroft. Lizzie enjoyed the theatre, and met <https://assignbuster.com/lizzie-andrew-borden/>

a stage/silent film actress by the name of Nance O'Neil. It was a party thrown for Nance and her acting members that caused Emma to move from Maplecroft in 1905, she simply could not abide by Lizzie's new rowdy friends. After Emma moved to Newmarket in New Hampshire, Lizzie and her had little or no communication and the two sisters never saw each other again. Lizzie died on June 1, 1927, at the age of 67. Emma did not attend the funeral, because on the day of Lizzie's death, she had fallen and suffered a broken hip. Emma died on June 21, 1927 at the age of 76. Both were buried in the Borden family plot in Oak Grove Cemetery. Andrew Jackson Borden lies between Sarah and Abby, while Lizzie and Emma are at his feet. Lizzie Andrew Borden is forever linked with one of history's greatest unsolved mysteries. And now thanks to Martha McGinn (president of TILBA, The International Lizzie Borden Association) for \$150 per night, members of the public will be able to actually sleep in the house where the murders took place. The Lizzie Borden House Bed and Breakfast Museum was to open on, appropriately, August 4. The breakfast includes food eaten the morning of the murders, such as bananas, johnnycakes, sugar cookies, and coffee with the management dressed as and playing the part of the Borden.

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