

Two forks medical mystery

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Nora and I went over the main facts and details of the events that led to the infection in order to find some clues. I also interviewed all the people who handled the food served to the under-treatment patient, Cam Watanabe. All? Well almost all.

During my initial inquiry as we drove to the hospital, I asked Nora Watanabe about what led to his fever. She described the details of her older brother's similar experience less than a month ago. It struck me then that the carrier who had infected Cam had possibly infected his older brother Cord. Nora was unable to listen to my reasoning as most cases of the Paratyphi-type are passed through visibly-uninfected carriers also known as 'Typhoid Mary'. Since it was very early in the investigation (I had not yet interviewed the town's people) it could not be ascertained that this was a case of 'Typhoid Mary' but nonetheless was a strong possibility.

It appears that Cam Watanabe fell sick after possibly eating and drinking the food served at the restaurants on the fourth of July celebrations. Nick, one of Cam's friends, accompanied Cam and their other friend Adam that very day. As he recollected in the County Sheriff's car, he told Nora, the deputy, and me what had happened. The boys went to a total of four eateries but I noticed Nora's frown when Nick mentioned Grapplin' Bear. He noticed it too and abruptly ended the conversation. That gave me a hint as to selecting the most possible restaurant that gave Cam the bacterium.

Interviewing Adam for a second time led me to a very strong clue about Cam's infected food. The boys had not visited Grapplin' Bear for as 'short' a

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while as he had told Nora. According to him, Moira Talljones, the owner's daughter, had served watermelon (possible contaminant) to Cam while they were dining. Salmonellosis/Enteric Fever is a result of unhygienic working conditions or methods in handling food or drink. The owner, Grizz Talljones, informed me that Hammet Wolf was the only person handling food at his restaurant. His daughter Moira occasionally helped with the bookkeeping upstairs and did not handle the food. How did she serve Cam that day then?

All the people who served food to Cam and his friends on the fourth of July were tested for the same fever. Their results were negative but the only ones not tested were Moira Talljones and Hammet Wolf. It so happens that Grizz Talljones was the only person representing his restaurant while the other restaurants had two members each present. He also did not want Dr. Hummers to elaborate further about the Salmonella bacterium and was nervous when asked about Hammet Wolf's whereabouts.

Through deductive reasoning, I knew that Moira Talljones was the silent carrier. She had infected Cord with the quesadilla that she prepared on Memorial Day and the watermelon she cut for Cam was infected too.