

A Redividerdrome Mystery

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Famed palindromist Leona Lila Noel was found murdered at her desk, a knife stuck in her back. What fink could have perpetrated such a heinous crime? Ace Logophile Detective Anastasia Katz had three suspects, all of whom were seen in the vicinity during the time of the crime by observant neighbor Syd Algernon Kravitz. The three suspects: husband Omar Noel, coworker Nora Ann Aaron, and friend Thomas Mott. The clue: a mysterious, hand-scrawled palindrome, written by Leona herself according to the police handwriting experts. Here is Leona's mysterious message:

Ward Ian, aide: model ire, pastel lab. Al lets ape rile dome, Diana. I draw.

After half an hour of careful study, Detective Katz smiled. Leona had identified her murderer in her final palindrome. Who did Katz arrest? Omar Noel, Nora Ann Aaron, or Thomas Mott?

Katz realized that a renowned palindromist like Leona would never have written such an unintelligible palindrome unless it had some other additional constraint hidden within it.

Leona, in her last gasp, had composed a rare redividerdrome, a double palindrome in which a second palindrome may be derived from the first. By changing the spacing and letter-groupings, the exact same letter sequence can be turned into two completely different palindromes. After a bit of thought, Katz figured out the hidden message:

War, Diana? I demo deli repast, Ella! Ballet's a peril, Ed! O median aid, raw!

In this redivided version of Leona's final palindrome, Katz discovered a hidden acrostic in the first letters of the last four words of the message: **O Median Aid Raw**: OMAR, and promptly arrested Leona's husband, Omar Noel. He readily admitted to the crime upon arrest: "Dammit, I did it! I'm mad!" citing overwhelming emotional distress caused by the recent realization that his palindromist wife Leona married him solely because of his last name.

The above mystery was partially inspired by Walter Shedlofsky's November 1972 Word Ways article "The Case of the Acro-Double" and is meant to serve as an introduction to "redividerdromes," a combination of palindromes and redividers (charades). I find redividerdromes to be fairly tricky to construct. Ideally, both versions of the divided palindrome should make some sort of sense (or have some other kind of generally accepted palindromic merit). My best redividerdrome efforts so far are probably the following:

May an eve remit timer? Eve? Nay: a.m.
Maya: never emit. Tim: er, even a yam?

Now "esse" won. (An idealist triumph?)
No, Wes, sew on.