

State of Cluedo v. Scarlet Haven

It was a cold, rainy night on February 17th, 2025. Professor Plum of Cluedo State University was hosting a small gathering at his estate for the students in his Victorian Literature course.

As the students poured into the dining room around 8:35 p.m. and laughter filled the room, a scream suddenly echoed through the air. Startled, the guests began to wander the halls in search of the source. Near the west end of the house, in the bathroom, Professor Plum discovered the body of his student, Rebecca White.

The guests immediately called the police at 9:20 p.m., and by 11:00 p.m., the FBI had begun investigating. By February 19th, 2025, investigators ruled the cause of death as manual strangulation.

Through witness interviews, suspicion began to form around two of the victim's classmates. Brandon Peacock, a known rival of Rebecca's since grade school, had long competed with her academically. He claimed to have been in a taxi on his way to the party at the time of her death, though no taxi services in the area could confirm this alibi.

Scarlet Haven, a friend of the victim, had recently been announced as a co-finalist with Rebecca for a nationally recognized internship at Covenant Literary Publishers, known as The Mustards. At the time of the murder, Scarlet claimed she had been taking a nap in a spare room due to a headache. Several witnesses recalled seeing a body, though not her face, lying down in a room toward the west end of the estate. However, no one could pinpoint having seen her at the exact time of death.

Lead investigators ultimately chose to focus their attention on Scarlet Haven, citing her proximity to the victim and her potential motive, as outlined in Exhibit 2. The State is now charging Scarlet Haven with first-degree murder. The defense maintains she is not guilty, asserting that she has a clear alibi and that the State's investigation is incomplete, having failed to properly consider other potential suspects.

Witness Statements

Plaintiff Witness: Professor Plum

“Good evening. My name is Professor Plum. I have been a tenured faculty member at Cluedo State University for over twenty years, specializing in Victorian literature. On February 17th, 2025, I hosted a small class gathering at my estate. At approximately 8:35 p.m., as my students were settling in for dinner, I heard a sudden scream. I immediately left the dining room to investigate and, near the west-end bathroom, I discovered my student, Rebecca White, unresponsive.

I called the authorities right away, and they arrived shortly after 9:20 p.m. Based on my interactions that evening, I recall Scarlet Haven excusing herself before dinner, claiming she had a headache and needed to rest. I did not see her again until after the police had arrived.

I should note, however, that as a literature professor, not a forensic expert, my observations are purely circumstantial. I have known both Scarlet Haven and Rebecca White for several years, and I’ve seen them compete fiercely in class, though I never sensed any hostility beyond healthy academic rivalry. Still, the fact that Scarlet was unaccounted for when the murder occurred raised understandable concern.”

Plaintiff Witness 2: Inspector Mustard

“My name is Inspector Mustard. I’ve served with the Cluedo Police Department’s Major Crimes Division for over fifteen years. I was the lead investigator assigned to the February 17th homicide at Professor Plum’s estate. Upon arrival, my team secured the scene and conducted interviews with all guests present. The victim, Rebecca White, was found in the west bathroom. Preliminary analysis confirmed the cause of death as manual strangulation.

During the investigation, several witnesses placed Scarlet Haven’s belongings, a coat and phone, near the west wing close to the scene of the crime. In addition, text messages retrieved from the victim’s phone (Exhibit 2) show tension between Rebecca and Scarlet in the days leading up to the party regarding the Mustards Literary Internship. While the texts were recovered as grainy, I believe this was done on purpose to throw investigators off a common strategy used by criminals.. Based on Scarlet’s proximity to the crime scene, potential motive, and inconsistent recollection of her whereabouts, we determined there was probable cause to arrest her.

I’ll admit my department faced time constraints due to jurisdictional overlap with the FBI. While we interviewed other students, we did not fully pursue Brandon Peacock’s alibi, as his account appeared consistent with traffic camera footage near the estate (Exhibit 3). Someone, either a taxi or Uber driver, appears in the driver’s seat, with Brandon in the passenger seat. This was sufficient evidence to move on with our investigation, considering the expenses required to further pursue other leads. I will disclose that the sooner I solve cases, the sooner I can be up for a promotion.”

Defense Witness 1: Vincent Green

“My name is Vincent Green, and I’m a senior lecturer at Cluedo State University. I’ve taught both Scarlet Haven and Rebecca White in previous courses and found them to be bright, hardworking young women. On the night of February 17th, I attended Professor Plum’s gathering and recall seeing Scarlet lying down in one of the spare rooms around 8:30 p.m. She mentioned she wasn’t feeling well and needed to rest.

Later, when the scream echoed through the house, I remember Scarlet still being in the west wing area, though I cannot say I saw her face at that exact moment. I did, however, see a figure matching her clothing in that room. I actually took a picture of her in the room (Exhibit 1) because I thought it looked aesthetic. Plum’s house is really nice!

To my knowledge, Scarlet and Rebecca were friendly competitors, but respectful of one another. I know Brandon Peacock, on the other hand, had long-standing resentment toward Rebecca for surpassing him academically. It surprises me that the police did not pursue him more thoroughly. Still, I understand my memory of exact times might not be perfect; the night was chaotic and emotionally overwhelming.”

Defense Witness 2: Dr. Burch

“My name is Dr. Burch, and I serve as a forensic psychology consultant for the Cluedo Public Defender’s Office. I was asked to review the investigative reports and statements in this case. After examining the evidence, I found that much of the State’s case relies on circumstantial evidence and inference rather than direct proof. No fingerprints, DNA, or conclusive physical evidence link Scarlet Haven to the act of strangulation.

Furthermore, the investigative team seemed to dismiss other plausible suspects too quickly. Brandon Peacock’s supposed taxi alibi lacks verification; no official record supports his claim. Additionally, the FBI’s analysis of cell phone data shows Rebecca and Brandon exchanged several heated messages the same day as the party.

However, I do acknowledge that Scarlet’s account has small inconsistencies, such as differing times when she said she went to lie down, which could raise questions for a jury. Still, from a psychological standpoint, it is common for individuals under distress to misremember exact details. In my professional opinion, the investigation was incomplete and does not meet the threshold for guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.”

Exhibit 1



Exhibit 2

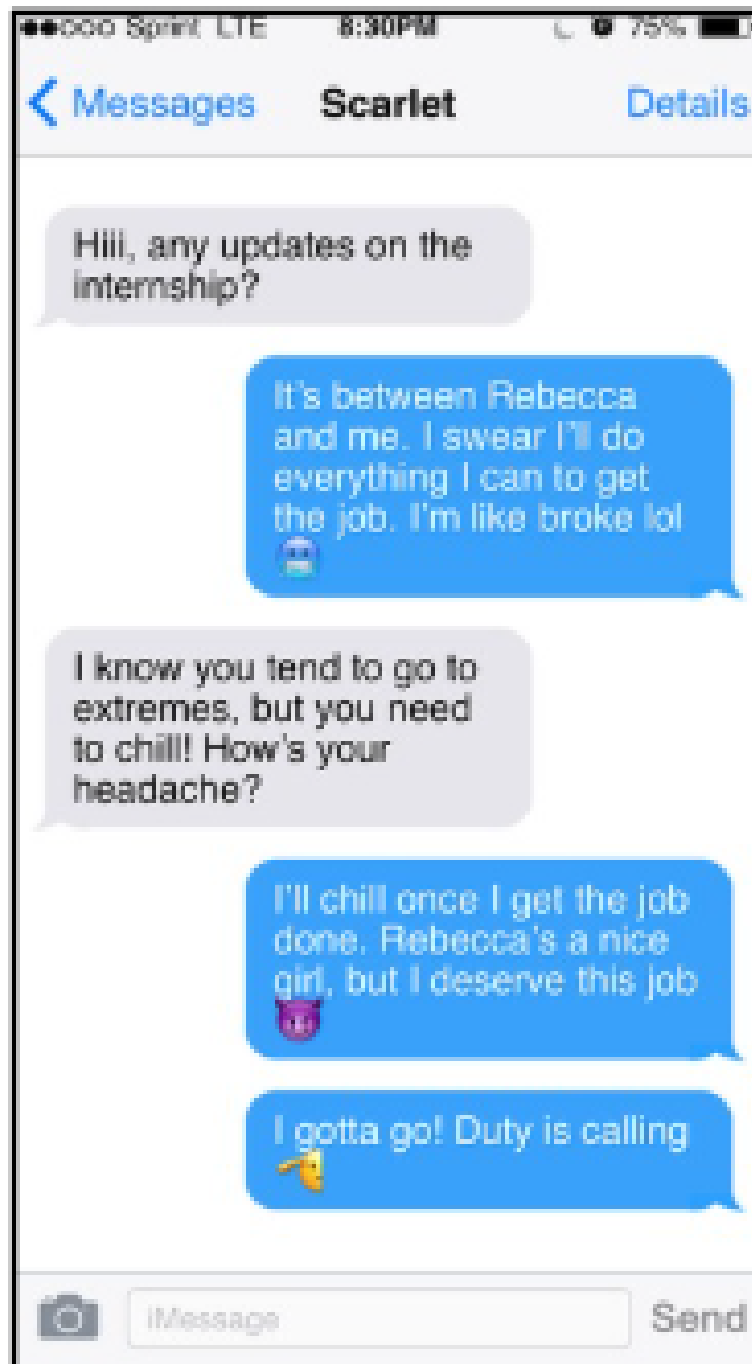


Exhibit 3

