



Mrs. Elizabeth Mary Wilde Almstedt

Bio & Character Sketch of Elizabeth Almstedt

April 4, 1874 – June 27, 1958

Age in April, 1923: 49 Age at Death: 84

Age when picture was taken: est. 48

Character Sketch

Elizabeth Mary Wilde Almstedt married her husband Hermann on August 16, 1906 in her Hometown of Rugby, England, a market town in eastern Warwickshire, close to the river Avon.

Elizabeth and Hermann resided in Columbia, Missouri where he was a German teacher at the University of Missouri and she was a homemaker who raised their four daughters, Ruth, Regina, Margaret and Elsa.

Undoubtedly, Regina's ordeal had a huge effect on Elizabeth. Feelings of powerlessness and guilt likely rocked her steady demeanor, but in typical British "upper lip" fashion, she sought to make the best of the family's ordeal and raise the children as if there had been no assault on one of the girls. This is evidenced by the fact that Regina still went to college just a few years after her attack.

Elizabeth likely did everything she could to support Regina during that horrendous spring-to-summer of 1923. From the fear and trauma of the attack and initial identifications in April, to the July re-identification of Ollie Watson and the resulting gut-punch of realizing that Regina's initial accusation of James as her assailant resulted in his lynching, Elizabeth tried to keep Regina calm and safe. She instinctively knew as a parent that kids make mistakes and most of the time the consequences are trivial, but once in a blue moon, the results can have a far greater impact.

It's not surprising that, like many in Columbia, once George Barkwell was acquitted at his trial, the Almstedts would bury this entire ordeal as deep in the past as they could. Like nearly everyone involved, the need to bury this sad chapter was essential to go on living their lives.



Summary Justice Partners, LLC

SIDE

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A thud. Shattering glass. Almstedt rushes to the entryway and finds Regina collapsed on the floor beside a broken vase. MRS. ALMSTEDT (50s, caring, pretty) rushes downstairs. They turn their daughter over to see her face. She weeps; her head rolls.

REGINA (weeping)
Oh! Mother!

MRS. ALMSTEDT
Regina?! My God, Regina! What happened?

REGINA
Beneath the bridge. He said there was a child.

MRS. ALMSTEDT
Who said that, Regina? What happened? Can you tell us what happened?

Regina stares blankly past her mother's face. Her mother examines the dirt and blood on the dress.

MRS. ALMSTEDT (cont'd)
You've fallen, Regina. I see that. Did you fall near the bridge? You're hurt. What happened? Can you tell us?

Regina thrashes and moans.

MRS. ALMSTEDT (cont'd)

I don't think she even knows where she is, Hermann.

ALMSTEDT
Let's put her in our bed. You can stay with her. I'll call Dr. Lewis.

Sheriff Blum leads Hulen and the Almstedts into a small room. A large window dominates one wall. A conference table sits beneath it. Blum pulls Hulen aside, lowering his voice.

BLUM

Watson's lip—still no mustache. He's doing something to keep the hair from growing.

HULEN

It is what it is, Sheriff.

Hulen turns to Regina, his voice steady and measured.

HULEN (cont'd)

Regina, I need you to look at a man through that window. He can't see you—to him, it's a mirror. Can you tell me if he looks familiar?

Hulen nods to Blum. Seconds later, Ollie Watson enters the adjacent room. He shifts in his seat, restless, drawn to the glass. He studies his reflection—unknowingly exposing the raw scratches still healing on his neck. Cold recognition floods Regina's face. Her hand finds her mother's, fingers white-knuckled. Watson's smile surfaces—cruel, identical to the one burned into her memory. His fate seals itself in that moment.

REGINA

It's him! He's the one who hurt me! I'm certain—he's the one! That smile... he smiled like that when he

Regina stops. Her eyes widen. The realization crashes over her.

REGINA (cont'd)

Oh God. What have I done? Mother! Father! What have I done?

Her body shakes. Hysteria takes hold.

HULEN

Regina!! This is not your fault!!

Her parents pull her close, their own tears falling.

REGINA

Yes it is! It IS! It's ALL my fault! That man was lynched because I identified him! It's like "I" killed him!

HULEN

No, Regina. He died because of me. We could have stopped the mob.

HULEN (cont'd)

We were weak. You're strong, Regina. I wish we had been too.

(to Blum)

HULEN

Sheriff, give me a few days to get this all sorted out and I'll get back to you.

NB: SCENE 123 IS DESIGNED FOR ALMSTEDT AND MRS ALMSTEDT TO SHOW YOUR BODY LANGUAGE AND FACIAL EXPRESSIONS DURING THE SCENE.