

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 06, No. 01 - January, 2018
*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the
Barque Lone Star*



PLEASE NOTE:

February 4th Meeting NOTICE

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, February 4th, at 1:00 pm. at LA MADELEINE COUNTRY FRENCH CAFE, in Addison.

The restaurant is at 5290 Belt Line Rd #112, just east of the Tollway.

We will be reading "The Adventure of the Retired Colourman." The quiz will cover this tale.

Cindy Brown will present "He needed killin'"

And we will conduct the annual "State of the Society."

Each monthly meeting will also include toasts as well as general business, introductions, and general fellowship.

With this issue, we start our 6th year of publication. We appreciate all the support from our society members.

The BSI Weekend

Last weekend, the Baker Street Irregulars hosted their annual Sherlock Holmes Birthday weekend.

Hundreds of Sherlockians from our the country, Canada, and the rest of the world gathered together to celebrate the Great Detective.

Our society, the Crew of the Barque Lone Star, was very represented, with Rusty Mason and myself, Don Hobbs, Dean Clark, Sandra Little, Jen Liang, Jim Webb, and Stu Nelan.

... and a very special congratulations to our own Dean Clark, who received his investiture into the Baker Street Irregulars. His Baker Street investiture is "Watson's Journal," which is extremely appropriate as Dean served as a journalist for years, and continues to write both fiction and non-fiction pieces.



For more information concerning our society, visit: <http://www.dfw-sherlock.org/>

You can follow us on Twitter at: @barquelonestar

You can friend us on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/BarqueLoneStar>

Who dunnit:



Third Mate
Helmsman
Spiritual Advisors

Secretaries
Historian
Webmaster

Steve Mason
Walter Pieper
Don Hobbs, BSI
Jim Webb
Cindy Brown, Brenda Hutchison
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Our Website: www.dfw-sherlock.org

Our Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/BarqueLoneStar/>

The image is a collage. On the left, there are several lines of text in a cursive font, likely from a book: "That will await him when he enters port," said he, chuckling. "It may give him a sleepless night. He will find it as sure a precursor of his fate as Openshaw did before him." "And who is this Captain Calhoun?" "The leader of the gang. I shall have the other..." "How did you trace it, then?" "He took a large sheet of paper from his pocket..." "I have spent the whole day," said he, "over in January and February in '83. There were attracted my attention, since, although it was..." "Texas, I think." "I was not and am not..." "What then?"

In the center, there is a screenshot of a website. At the top left is a circular logo with a star and the text "THE CREW OF THE BARQUE LONE STAR". Below the logo is a navigation menu with items: Home Page, About, Crew Investigations and Awards, Newsletters, Crew Meeting Logs, & Society Pastiches, Papers, Many Faces of Sherlock Holmes, and Ephemera -- General. To the right of the menu is a search bar and a social media icon. Below the menu is a photograph of a building with the text "Baker Street Elementary" overlaid. At the bottom of the screenshot is the text "THE MAY MEETING".

On the right side of the collage, there is more text in a cursive font: "...vessel which touched at Pondichery of these, one, the Lone Star, instantly of the states of the Union."

At the bottom of the collage is a screenshot of a Facebook page. The page is for "The Crew of the Barque Lone Star" (@BarqueLoneStar). The profile picture is the same circular logo as seen in the website screenshot. The page has a cover photo with the text: "A SHERLOCK HOLMES LITERARY SOCIETY Monthly meetings every 1st Sunday @ 1pm La Madeleine Country French Café". The page includes a navigation menu on the left with items: Home, About, Photos, Events, Likes, Videos, Posts, and Reviews. There is a "Create Ad" button. The main content area shows a "Write something..." prompt and four options: "Share a photo or video", "Advertise your business", "Get messages", and "Create an event". There is also a "You Have Unread Messages" notification and a "Page Tips" section on the right.

THE SEVENTEEN STEPS TO "THE RETIRED COLOURMAN..."

Brad Keefauver, Sherlock Peoria

AND NOW, THE END IS NEAR...



Sherlock Holmes begins this last tale with a sad soliloquy: "But is not all life pathetic and

futile? Is not his story a microcosm of the whole? We reach. We grasp. And what is left in our hands at the end? A shadow. Or worse than a shadow -- misery."

Why is Holmes so down? Isn't this the same guy who said his career would be complete if he just freed London of Moriarty's influence? Was it Amberley's story that depressed Holmes so? If so, why?

THE CARD HAD SEEN A LOT OF CALLING

We are told Amberley left Holmes "a rather soiled card." Which was worse etiquette in Victorian London: arriving with no calling card or presenting someone with an old, dirty card? Would a card see that much reuse? What amounts did Victorians get them printed in? We are told Amberley is a "pathetic, futile, broken creature," but how pathetic is handing out dirty cards?

THAT MYSTERIOUS AMBERLY CHARM

"Early in 1897 he married a woman twenty years younger than himself--a good-looking woman, too, if the photograph does not flatter." Josiah Amberly is a nasty-looking old miser with a shabby home and a bad temper. So how did he ensnare a young and attractive wife? Certainly the future Mrs. Amberly would have had other prospects, wouldn't she? (It's interesting to note that Holmes

himself is calling her good-looking -- quite a change from his early days.)

HE'S A POET AND HE SURE KNOWS IT ...

Watson, who seems almost to be wearing a puffy shirt and wielding an ostrich feather quill pen, says: "You know that particular quarter, the monotonous brick streets, the weary suburban highways. Right in the middle of them, a little island of ancient culture and comfort, lies this old home, surrounded by a high sun-baked wall with lichens and topped with moss, the sort of wall--"

While we've seen Watson write like this before, in this case he's actually speaking this way, which is an entirely different thing. (Just try speaking



those lines aloud, as if you were telling Holmes about it.) Does this seem in character for the old army doctor? Might he have been reading from a write-up he

did on the way back? Or was it within his character to wax airily aloud about the scenery like that?

THE AMBERLY BODYBUILDING PLAN

"Yet he was not the weakling that I had at first imagined, for his shoulders and chest have the framework of a giant, though his figure tapers away into a pair of spindled legs." How did Amberly get such a body? Something in the work of a colourman? Disease? Something that connected with his lost leg?

THE WATSON/ERNEST TRANSITION

"What of Dr. Ernest?" Holmes asks the good doctor. "Was he the gay Lothario one would expect? With your natural

advantages, Watson, every lady is your helper and accomplice. What about the girl at the post-office, or the wife of the greengrocer? I can picture you

whispering soft nothings with the young lady at the Blue Anchor, and receiving hard somethings in exchange." The switch from Dr. Ernest's womanizing to Dr. Watson's way with the ladies seems a little too natural. Did Watson become more of a womanizer in the 1890's? What were his "natural advantages"?

THE CONSULTING DETECTIVE COMES FULL CIRCLE

"Thanks to the telephone and the help of the Yard, I can usually get my essentials without leaving this room." Early in his career, Holmes saw his profession with a somewhat Mycroftian view. Clients would bring him their problems, and using his great knowledge of crime, Holmes hoped to advise them without ever leaving his consulting room. As technology advanced, his original thought of simply consulting seems to become more real. Could Holmes have worked in the modern day without ever leaving his sitting room? Might his retirement to Sussex been simply a ruse to cover long-distance work by telephone?

THE MADONNA OF THE VICTORIAN WORLD

"Carina sings to-night at the Albert Hall, and we still have time to dress, dine, and enjoy." What do we know about this single-named "Carina"? What sort of thing would she have sung at Albert Hall? Any chance she was not a person, but the 1888 comic



opera "Carina" written by one Julia Woolf?

THE SOURCE OF THE TELEGRAM

"Dispatched at 2:10 from Little Purlington," Holmes says of the telegram we later find to be bogus. Did Sherlock have to go all the way to Little Purlington to send his phoney telegram? Or could he have arranged the matter locally?

AMBERLY'S ATTACK OF THE AIR

At the case's climax, Holmes confronts Amberly with the question, "What did you do with the bodies?" Amberley then acts most peculiarly: "The man sprang to his feet with a hoarse scream. He clawed into the air with his bony hands." Why that reaction? Was he outraged by the accusation and clawing at Holmes? Was he having a sitcom-style, Fred Sanford, over-dramatized fake heart attack?

THE OMINOUS WHITE PELLET

When confronted with his crime, Josiah Amberly also pops a white pill, which Holmes immediately jostles lose by twisting Amberly's head to face the ground (by placing his hands on Amberly's throat, no less). Was that anything close to a real method for getting a pill out of someone? Could the pill have been something other than poison, like some stress remedy? And if it was poison, what would Amberly have been most likely to be using to escape justice?



AND WHY DO WE HAVE THESE LAWS...?

Holmes tells the Scotland Yard inspector, "You, for example, with your

compulsory warning about whatever he said being used against him, could never have bluffed this rascal into what is virtually a confession." If the police couldn't bluff Amberly into a confession, what validity would Holmes's use of that tactic have in a court of law? And what was Holmes's "virtual confession"? Amberly taking a pill?

And if that wasn't enough, next Holmes himself confesses to burglary in front of Inspector MacKinnon -- and a full, true confession at that. This case surely wouldn't have stood up in court today. Would it have worked at the turn of that earlier century?

THE IRREGULARITIES OF MR. BARKER

"He has several good cases to his credit, has he not, Inspector?" Holmes says of Barker. "He has certainly interfered several times," the inspector replies... "His methods are irregular, no doubt, like my own," Holmes suggests, seeming not to be too sure of what Barker's methods are. What might Barker's irregular methods have been, and how might he have been interfering with police investigations? All we see of him in this tale is that he watches Amberly's house until he sees someone sneaking out of it, which doesn't seem much of a method at all. Why did he suspect Amberly to begin with, instead of trying to track the runaway couple?

COVERING THE SMELL OF GAS

Okay, for starters, natural gas has no smell except for the scent added to alert people to its presence in the air, correct? Was the same scent added in Victorian Lewisham as today? How hard was it to get out of a small room that took only two minutes to asphixiate someone in? Was Amberly's supposed painting ruse even necessary,

especially as he didn't paint over the one place he might have wanted to -- the "We we --" in indelible pencil?

THE CLUE NOBODY SEEMS TO HAVE NOTICED

The paper says, "the subsequent inquiry which led to the discovery of the bodies in a disused well, cleverly concealed by a dog-kennel." If merely painting a room was suspicious, why was it that no one fussed over the new dog kennel? Did Amberly, a miser who didn't even care for his yard, have a dog? Or was the kennel there from previous owners, in which case one must wonder how Amberly even knew of the well.

THE QUESTION OF MOTIVE

While the motive for Amberly's supposed crime seems obvious enough, what I have to wonder is what Holmes and Barker's motives might have been for a possible framing of the retired colourman. Given all the questionable tactics, railroading, and general tomfoolery involved in this case, can one not help but wonder if Amberly had been set up. Is there any scenario wherein the former colourman might have been innocent? Could this have been what made the case "the debate of all England" a week later?



THE KEEPER OF THE ARCHIVES

"You can file it in our archives, Watson," Holmes tells the doctor. "Some day the true story may be told." Is Watson acting more like Holmes's secretary in the later tales than he did early on? Have the individual records and mementos of the two men merged by this time?

PARSON, VICAR, OR RECTOR?

Liese Sherwood-Fabre

Eight stories in the canon refer to men of the cloth, with four stories each using either the term “vicar” or “parson.” In “The Adventure of the Valley of Fear,” Holmes uses a local rector’s library for research.

While both Holmes and Watson call J.C. Elman in “The Adventure of the Retired Colourman” a vicar, Watson uses at one point “parson” instead.

All three of these terms indicate they are Anglican.

The term “priest” appears only once in the canon and is used for a foreigner (Catholic or otherwise). (1)

The Church of England was, and continues to be, the established, or state, church, linking the two through the monarch who serves as the Supreme Governor of the church.

When taking the throne, the new king or queen promises to maintain the Church during his or her coronation oath.

The church structure involves two Archbishops (one in the north, York, and one in the south, Canterbury) who oversee forty-three dioceses (each with a Cathedral, the seat for the assigned bishop), which, in turn, are divided into archdeaconries (run by archdeacons).

The archdeaconries are divided into deaneries, which cover a group of parishes. In other words, for everyone in England, there is a parish church and a rector or vicar. (2)

The Archbishops and twenty-four of the bishops also serve in the House of Lords and are responsible for such civic responsibilities as state weddings, funerals, and coronations.

Whether the local churchman is a “vicar” or a “rector” depends on how they are funded, although their duties are the same. Vicars are paid through tithes on major crops collected and managed by a lay corporation or individual.

Rectors receive tithes directly. This is called a “living” and explains the note “living of Moosmoor” at the end of Elman’s signature in the telegram Holmes sent in “The Adventure of the Retired Colourman.”

In addition to the tithes, the rector or vicar also has a “glebe”—a piece of land he can farm or lease out. (3)

Such position and funds are for life, and, as such, those with more lucrative resources are highly desirable and quite competitive. Those with the best patronage and connections are more likely to get better posts.

Appointment is decided by an individual, the lay corporation, the bishop, or a college at Oxford or Cambridge, depending on who controls the specific parish or church. (4)

While the parish parson is expected to be married and can be ordained at age twenty-three, they have to wait until their appointment comes through to have the income to do so—often at much older age than a recent graduate. (5)

While this system was well supported when the country was primarily agrarian, the shift to an industrial economy with most moving to the city led to major shifts in the church.

Tithes and glebes diminished, leading to a dependence on fees, pew rents (for those who don’t want to sit at the back of the church), and

collections. Church attendance decreased, and other denominations and religions grew.

By the end of the century, the majority of the population did not attend services and the decline continued over the next century. In 2002, about 1% attended church on Sunday. (6)

During Victorian times, the individual parson had a great deal of freedom within the parish with respect to how services were run, what outside activities (such as Sunday schools to teach poor children to read) were offered, and oversight of any local religious celebrations.

Often one of the few locals with a college education, they were sought for advice on any number of subjects—a trait not ignored by Holmes

when he needed to consult some references concerning Vermissa Valley to determine the identity of a murder victim in *The Valley of Fear*.

As a person of learning who was well-connected to village life, Holmes recognized the role the parson played as a source of information both local and referential.



Liese Sherwood-Fabre will be presenting on "Law and Order: Victorian Style" at The Agra Treasurers' Holmes, Doyle, and Friends March 9-10 gathering in Dayton, OH.

- (1) Sally Mitchell, *Daily Life in Victorian England*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996, page 244.
- (2) http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/cofe/cofe_1.shtml
- (3) Sally Mitchell, editor, *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia*, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988, page 157.
- (4) Ibid
- (5) Mitchell, *Daily Life*, page 248.
- (6) http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/cofe/cofe_1.shtml

You can check out more of Liese Sherwood-Fabre's writings at www.liesesherwoodfabre.com.

The first 24 of Liese Sherwood-Fabre's essays are now available in *The Life and Times of Sherlock Holmes*, both paperback and ebook. Retailers are listed on her Webpage (www.liesesherwoodfabre.com).

By Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD. You can read more about this award-winning author's writing (as well as her previous articles in the *Bilge Pump*) and sign up for her newsletter at www.liesesherwoodfabre.com. A non-Sherlockian adventure can be downloaded at: <http://www.liesesherwoodfabre.com/extras.html>

CARPET DIEM: A "RUG"GED PROFILE

By Rosemary Michaud, Sherlockian Scholarship, The Holmes & Watson Report, January, 1999

Before we get down to carpet tacks, let me explain that the idea for this article occurred to me while I was attending the wonderful "Game Is Afloat" Sherlockian symposium in St. Louis a few weeks back.

I was sitting in my hotel room in the early morning, my Eastern-time sense having awakened me well before my Central-time Sherlockian friends could be expected to rise and shine.

In order to pass the time until everyone else woke up, I started to jot down a few notes from the Canon, using the time-honored system of opening a page at random and seeing what phrase might catch my eye.

At one point in my note-taking, I happened to drop my pen.

When I reached down to retrieve it, the thought suddenly occurred to me that Sherlock Holmes would have had a field day with a hotel carpet.

No matter how thorough the housekeeping staff tried to be, it is a sure thing that Holmes would have been able to read half the life histories of the previous guests by crawling around on the floor for a few minutes.

Surely the Canon would provide countless examples of

important clues found by Holmes upon the carpets.

On the flight home from St. Louis, and on my subway rides to and from work during the ensuing week, I searched for instances of these carpet clues.

The further I went with this exercise, the more my disappointment grew.

More than half the stories contain no specific mentions of carpet whatsoever, and in the stories where carpets are mentioned, at least half of those references are little more than descriptions of the decor.

In only two adventures is the carpeting of paramount importance to the solution of the case: "The Second Stain" and "The Golden Pince-Nez."

In another, "The Resident Patient," the footprints on the carpeted stair and the traces in Blessington's bedroom are important indications, but they are not the only vital evidence by any means.

And in some stories where I had expected to find important clues on the carpets, such as The Sign of Four, there turned out to be virtually no specific mention of carpet clues.

My frustration reached its peak, however, with "The Three Students," in which Holmes examined the carpet and simply declared, "There are no signs here."

And yet, there seems to be a pattern to the carpeting after all, though perhaps it reveals more about the storytelling methods of Dr. Watson than it does of the detecting methods of Sherlock Holmes.

In the stories where floor-covering is mentioned, Watson leaves a great many literary clues for his readers to follow, and they are not always the "home and comfort" symbols that you might expect.

Watson, whose experience of crime rivaled that of Sherlock Holmes himself, shows us that floor-covering may have a great many other associations as well.

For instance, in SIGN, Holmes and Watson find that "cocoanut-matting" was used in place of a stair carpet in Pondicherry Lodge.

Cocoanut-matting was also present in the hallways of Professor Coram's house, the scene of GOLD.

In both of these stories, the murder has been committed by means of a small wound near the ear.

What does cocoanut-matting have to do with small wounds near the ear?

Damned if I can figure that one out! Perhaps more to the point, the murders of Bartholomew Sholto and Willoughby Smith have their origins in past events which

took place on foreign soil, events in which these two victims themselves took no part.

Cocoon-matting is itself a foreign import, and in each instance the matting was to be found on a corridor leading to the murder room, even as those foreign matters led to violence at home.

Another signal of foreign influence is the presence of rich, plush carpeting, the kind that the feet sink into.

Thaddeus Sholto had such carpeting in his home.

The Beckenham house used by Wilson Kemp and Harold Latimer in "The Greek Interpreter" had a similar deep carpet.

When carpeting is used to conceal an aperture in the floor below, you can be sure that the contents of that aperture will be of serious concern to the government of England.

From the sick-room hiding place of "The Naval Treaty," to the letter from the foreign potentate in "The Second Stain," to the counterfeiters' equipment in "The Three Garridebs," secret cubby-holes under the rug invariably indicate the concealment of items of grave public consequence.

Indeed, Percy Phelps thought of a trap-door when he was first looking for the missing naval treaty, but the carpeting on the floor in his office eliminated that possibility.

Somebody should have thought to look for the Bruce-Partington plans under the rugs!

Bodies upon the carpet - living or dead - are the sure Watsonian sign of a dysfunctional family.

Sir Eustace Brackenstall of "The Abbey Grange," a drunkard and wife-beater, was left lying on a tigerskin hearthrug.

Eduardo Lucas, whose blood provided the stains in "The Second Stain," was killed by his wife, who was driven mad by his infidelities to her.

Baron Adelbert Gruner, who murdered one wife and surely had similar plans for his fiancée Violet DeMerville, "fell upon the carpet" after Kitty Winter doused him with acid.

Surely the vivid description of Dr. Thorneycroft Huxtable's collapse upon the bearskin rug at 221B Baker Street is Watson's way of telegraphing the true culprit in the disappearance of Lord Saltire: the boy's envious half-brother James Wilder.

Contrast these bodies on the carpeting with the description of the late Hilton Cubitt, "whose huge frame lay stretched across the room."

Watson might just as easily have mentioned the carpeting in this picture, but he chose not to do so.

This is an early clue from Watson that Cubitt was shot by a person from the outside, and not by his loving wife Elsie.

The footprints of the killer were outside in the flower bed, rather than on the carpeting in Cubitts' happy home.

As I mentioned above, one of the most important carpet stories is "The Golden Pince-Nez," in which Holmes leaves a layer of cigarette ash around the suspicious bookcase where he thinks the intruder has taken refuge, so that her tracks might be visible when he returns to the room later on.

In "The Norwood Builder," Holmes left a carpet "littered with cigarette ends."

The carpet was in his own rooms, and at the time of his making the cigarette mess Holmes apparently had no idea that Jonas Oldacre was hiding behind a false wall in Deep Dene House, but it is intriguing that cigarettes and their ashes should be strewn upon the carpets in two adventures where people were to be found lurking in secret compartments.

In The Valley of Fear, John Douglas emerges from his secret hiding place bemoaning his abstinence from tobacco.

Did Watson associate smoking with a claustrophobic atmosphere?

I suppose the years of living with Holmes might do that to a person, even a man who was himself a smoker.

When Watson describes the planks and boards of a bare floor where carpeting once lay, or where it probably ought to lie, then it seems that evil-

doers are doomed to meet a harsh justice.

Does the bare floor represent the unadorned truth?

Or are the planks an indirect allusion to the scaffolding of a gallows?

Enoch Drebbler (STUD) met his death upon the "bare-planked dusty chambers" of Lauriston Gardens, and Black Giorgio (REDC) died upon the "deal boards of a carpetless floor."

Arthur Pinner (STOC) attempted to hang himself in the "uncarpeted and uncurtained" offices which he used as part of the plot that resulted in the murder of a guard at Mawson and Williams.

The floor of "The Empty House" was bare planking.

The counterfeiter/murderers in "The Engineer's Thumb" escaped the arm of the law, but their coin press was destroyed by the fire in the

house that had "no carpets" above the ground floor.

Jephro Rucastle was out of doors when he was attacked by Carlo the mastiff, but Watson telegraphed the incident to us by passing on Violet Hunter's description of the "unpapered and uncarpeted" passage to Alice Rucastle's place of imprisonment.

Bare planks are bad news indeed, but linoleum flooring has an entirely different connotation.

Linoleum in the Canon has a straightforward quality.

It shows impressions very clearly, and it cannot easily be raised and replaced to conceal items underneath.

The corridor leading from Percy Phelps's office was linoleum-covered, and sure enough, no one in the linoleum-covered Foreign Office had anything to do with the disappearance of the naval treaty.

The most significant reference to linoleum floor-covering is found in "The Crooked Man," and it is in no way connected with a crime.

This linoleum is in Watson's own home!

Holmes deduces from the marks of boot-nails that Watson has had "the British workman in the house."

Good old Watson: the linoleum is his conscious or unconscious acceptance of his own symbolic references.

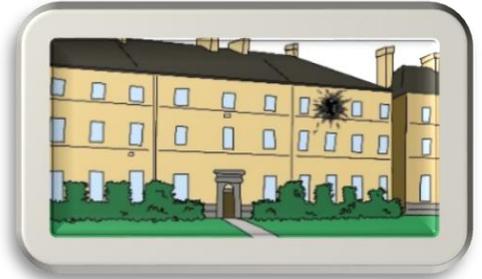
No deep and treacherous foreign plush, no bare and dusty boards, no bloody druggets, no deadly cocoanut-matting, not even a politically incorrect animal-skin hearthrug – not for our Watson, the ever honest and true!

No, linoleum is Watson's style: simple, uncomplicated, open to every impression, and capable of being read like a book by Sherlock Holmes.

And that just about covers it.

Baker Street Elementary

Created by: Joe Fay, Rusty & Steve Mason
The First Adventures of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson



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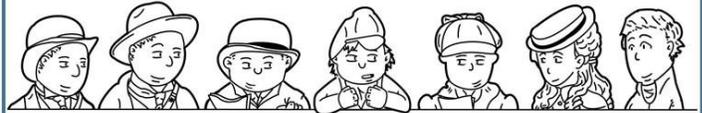
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SO, YOUR TURN STAMFORD... IS
STAMFORD YOUR GIVEN OR SURNAME ?



< um... >
ACTUALLY, IT IS BOTH MY FIRST
AND LAST NAME... MY FATHER
HAS A WEIRD SENSE OF HUMOR.



HE CONVINCED MY MUM I WOULD
LEARN TO WRITE MY NAME FASTER
THAN MOST CHILDREN, SINCE I
ONLY HAD TO LEARN ONE NAME...



... AND IT WOULD BE CHEAPER TO PURCHASE
MONOGRAM SHIRTS AND OTHER ITEMS,
SINCE I WOULD ONLY NEED THE LETTER
'S'
I BELIEVE THIS EXPLAINS A LOT...

