

TAMPA MORNING TRIBUNE

TAMPA, FLORIDA

THE TAMPA MORNING TRIBUNE, SATURDAY, MAY 29, 1909

CONVICTION IS DEEMED CERTAIN

STATE RESTS IN TRIAL OF ORNIFERIO CHIRAMENTE

*Chain of Circumstantial Evidence Has Been Forged Together Link by Link
in Convincing Manner*

That Orniferio Chiramente is certain to be convicted of the murder of B. LaBella was the consensus of opinion when the state rested in the famous case yesterday afternoon after a day of the most convincing and damaging testimony against the defendant. Even Chiramente seemed to feel that there is no hope for him as he has sat silent and restless, hardly daring to meet the eye of anyone, and seen his doom forged link by link in a chain of circumstantial evidence of a most unusual order.

The feature of the day took place just before the noon recess when the jury adjourned in a body to examine Chiramente's wagon which stood in the court yard a mute but eloquent witness against him. The defendant watched with shifty, uneasy eyes and features as the jurors went over every inch of the vehicle, noted the big blood stain in the wagon bed which, it is alleged, Chiramente tried in vain to remove with soap and water, noted the blood clots underneath and fitted the bloody standard into its groove.

Brack Finds Weapon

Probably the principal witness put on yesterday was Deputy Sheriff Brack, who, some time after the body of LaBella was discovered, found the weapon with which the murder was committed while searching in a palmetto clump. This was a wagon standard stained with blood. Brack took the standard to the county jail where Chiramente's wagon had been taken and fitted the standard into one of the grooves made for the purpose and fitting a nail which had been driven through the standard into the hole from which it had been drawn.

Marshal Logan, who was with Deputy Sheriff Spencer at the time that he arrested Chiramente in West Tampa, told of the latter's peculiar actions and looks on that occasion. Mr. Aiken, a countryman, told of meeting Chiramente and a stranger driving away from the place where LaBella's body was later found. In spite of the cold weather, they were coatless and hatless and bore every evidence of haste and excitement. They were trotting Chiramente's horse at a very brisk pace up a hill. Aiken later told a Mr. Jackson and Buck Ellis of the matter. They suspected something wrong and searched about the woods for some time without finding out anything.

Saw LaBella with Chiramente

One of the most interesting witnesses on the stand was M. Valenti, at whose house LaBella stopped while in this city and who was arrested as a suspect at the beginning of the affair. Valenti declared that the last time he ever saw LaBella alive was when he drove off with Chiramente on the afternoon on which the murder is supposed to have been committed. Chiramente returned about 8 PM and Valenti asked him what had become of LaBella. Chiramente replied that he did not know. LaBella was to have left that night on the 9 o'clock train for New York.

Chief of Police Woodward and Tom James testified to Chiramente having been arrested on one occasion for peddling without a license and of LaBella paying his fine of \$15. The state rested about 3 PM and the defense announced that it was not ready to open as some important witnesses could not be present yesterday afternoon. Court adjourned until 9 o'clock this morning, when the defense will open with a number of witnesses. What tactics the defense will take is not known, but it is believed that an attempt will be made to prove an alibi. The state has several witnesses in rebuttal.