

11 The Third Man

In Chapter 11, titled "The Third Man", the narrative delves into the intricate ongoing investigation of the Osage murders, with a specific focus on the insistent and rigorous efforts of Hoover and Agent White. Hoover, driven by the criticism he's receiving in Oklahoma and his own investigative inclinations, throws himself into the case despite his usual aversion to fieldwork. His eye catches on a potential lead through Necia Kenny, a white woman married to an Osage man, who implicates A. W. Comstock, a guardian to several Osage, in the conspiracy. Despite her mental instability, Hoover values Kenny's leads, suggesting a complex mesh of suspicions and investigations embodying the Bureau's efforts.

Agent White, meanwhile, navigates a thickening plot surrounding Bryan Burkhart, brother-in-law to Mollie, one of the victims. Initially appearing to have an alibi for the time Anna Brown was murdered, the narrative expands into a tale of deceit, as White learns that Bryan's alibi might not be as solid as previously thought. Through diligent investigative work, involving cross-state travel and interviews with people once close to the suspects, White uncovers discrepancies and hidden facets of the case; from Bryan's purportedly innocent whereabouts on the night of Anna's disappearance to his sighting with Anna by multiple witnesses at different locales, suggesting a sinister revisitation of the crime scene.

Hoover's emphasis on using Kenny's inside information, despite her unreliability, and White's persistent, methodical deconstruction of alibis and witness statements illustrate the Bureau's desperate attempt to unravel the convoluted skein of murder, betrayal, and conspiracy enveloping the Osage community. The chapter masterfully weaves a narrative of dogged investigation against the backdrop of a community ravaged by greed and murder, with the FBI agents navigating the treacherous waters of trust, lies, and secrets to bring justice to the fore. The revelation that Bryan was seen with Anna and an unidentified "third man" propels the investigation into new, uncharted territory, highlighting the layers of complexity and obstruction woven into the fabric of the case.