

**MASTER
DETECTIVE'S**

**CINEMA MURDER IN
WARTIME DOVER**
Private Horror Show At The Plaza

**BONNIE'S DATE
WITH A FRENZIED
AXE-KILLER**

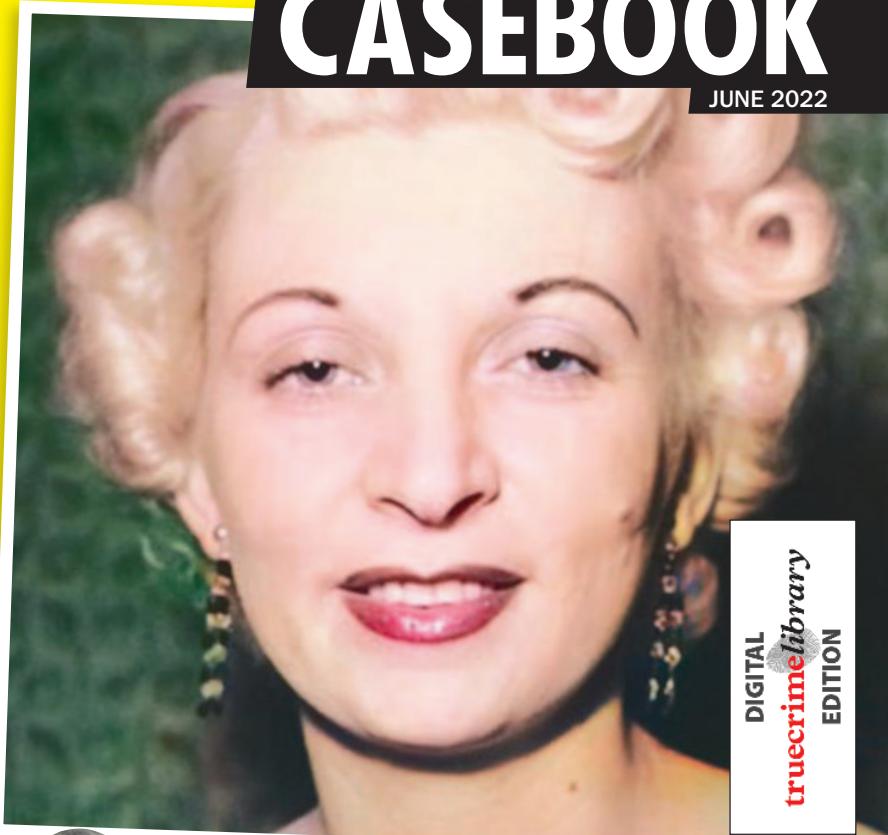


CRIME CASEBOOK

JUNE 2022

HOW RUTH BECAME THE LAST TO HANG

**CRIME OF PASSION –
OR SOMETHING DARKER?**



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**FAMILY
ROCKED
BY SECOND
BRUTAL
MURDER IN
FOUR YEARS**

**TEACHER
LAURA
BEATEN TO
DEATH BY
CONVICTED
KILLER**



**Suffolk's
"Body In
A Suitcase"**
The Mystery Deepens...

InsideMD

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June 2022

Ruth Ellis, the dyed-blonde drinking-club manageress and killer, went to the gallows 67 years ago yet her story continues to fascinate. She was the last woman hanged in Britain and her case is the final one to be featured in our series on executed women. Was she a cold-blooded murderer or the provoked victim of a cad who should only have been found guilty of manslaughter? Turn to page 12 and *Women On The Gallows – How Ruth Became The Last To Hang* for the full story.

North London teen Bernie Oliver disappeared in January 1967. Ten days later his dismembered remains were found dumped in two suitcases in the village of Tattingstone. Who killed him remains a mystery. See page 21 and *MD Forum – Suffolk's "Body In A Suitcase."* Finally, don't miss the puzzling case of *The Last Man Hanged At Derry*. See page 47.

Enjoy the read!

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Obsessed with Dexter, he made life imitate art

47 LAST MAN HANGED AT DERRY

Convicted murderer William Rooney went to the gallows at Derry Jail in February 1923. Was he the victim of a miscarriage of justice?

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The senseless 2015 slaying of Alabama mom Miranda Lynch was an awful tragedy. Then, in 2019, daughter Willoe Watkins fell victim to the cruellest of killers...

FACT PROVED tragically stranger than fiction for a grandmother in Alabama when her daughter and granddaughter were tortured and died in horrific but unrelated murders that were uncannily similar.

Kathy Harrison felt as if her world had ended in 2015 when she lost her daughter, but four years later she had

**Case Report
By Mark Davis
and Francesca Morrison**

to face the same nightmare again, and wondered if she could possibly survive the agony of a second loss in such terrible circumstances.

It began one swelteringly hot week in August when a neighbour in a trailer park in Bessemer, an impoverished suburb of Birmingham, heard women shouting and screaming in a nearby mobile home. Eventually, he called the police.

The ruckus had been going on for several days, but Bessemer has the second-highest violent crime rate in America and people living there tend to shrug off disturbances that would unsettle more affluent communities.

When police arrived, they found the pummelled body of 34-year-old Miranda Lynch hunched in a slick of blood on the bathroom floor. She was riddled with fractures and bruises and had a broken neck. The autopsy showed she'd been thrashed and beaten over at least two days, and forensics found her blood on a washing machine, fridge and aircon unit in the trailer.

Miranda and her boyfriend had been staying in the trailer with their friend Karen Kirby, 57, while they found somewhere to live. That afternoon Ms. Kirby lent Miranda's boyfriend her car to go and collect his EBT or Electronic Benefits Transfer, a government-issued

FAMILY ROCKED BY SECOND BRUTAL MURDER IN FOUR YEARS



Above, Willoe Watkins. Right, inset, her mother and fellow-murder victim Miranda Lynch

debit card that has replaced food stamps in the US. It's worth around \$200 a month.

The boyfriend (who has not been named) may have been driving while drunk or drugged because witnesses who saw him crash headlong into an 18-wheel truck say he suddenly swung the car without warning onto the wrong side of the freeway. He was critically injured and

taken to intensive care where doctors said he might not survive.

Not surprisingly, Miranda was distraught when she received the news. But Ms. Kirby's priorities proved very different. Outraged that her car had been written off, she exploded angrily at Miranda that the least she could do was offer some compensation. Her daughter, Susan Otts, and another friend, Tamara

Giarusso, agreed.

Assuming the boyfriend would die, the three women plotted to steal his benefits by making a duplicate EBT card. To do this, they needed his social security number and other ID, and asked Miranda to provide them. But she refused.

Susan Otts and Karen Kirby both had



convictions for drink, drugs, theft and violence so they may have turned on Miranda in a spaced-out rage. Tamara Giarusso had no criminal record, but was probably present for at least some of the assaults. However, she was never convicted.

For at least two days, Ms. Otts and Ms. Kirby kept Miranda a prisoner and battered her with anything that came to hand: rods from a broken bird cage, a wooden paddle, a drawer from a cabinet, and smashed chunks of china. Ms. Kirby said in court that Miranda had died during a final fight in the bathroom when she wrapped her legs round the wounded woman from behind and beat her head on the floor until she stopped struggling.

Randy Christian, the police deputy who covered the case, said: "This wasn't a simple, angry argument that took Miranda's life; it was her so-called friends gripped by and driven by sheer greed. It's hard to believe they could be capable of this, and so sad to think this poor woman lost her life for some lousy food stamps."

The district attorney declined to charge Ms. Kirby and Ms. Ottts with capital murder, but ringleader Ms. Kirby pleaded guilty to murder during the course of a robbery and was sentenced to life. Her daughter, Susan Ottts, admitted second-degree assault and received a 15-year suspended prison sentence with one year's probation. She was credited with the 534 days she'd already spent in jail. Charges against Ms. Giarusso were dropped.

Why Miranda suffered appalling injuries and sacrificed her life rather than give the women what they wanted remains a mystery.

Four years later, having buried her daughter, Kathy Harrison would find her life plunged again into darkness and horror when her beloved granddaughter Willoe Watkins went missing in June 2019.

Wiloe had endured her own sorrows, of course, with the murder of her mother – plus her father's death a few years before. The losses had brought her and her grandmother very close as Wiloe had been only 16 when her mother died.

Until Miranda's death, Wiloe had been a promising student and popular cheerleader. But after leaving school she fell in with the wrong crowd and, apart from her grandmother, had no stable influence in her life to help fight off her demons.

When she disappeared, Tuscaloosa County police were swamped with tip-offs and social media speculation about her whereabouts, but right from the start they were very concerned for her safety as her mobile phone and bank cards had not been used.

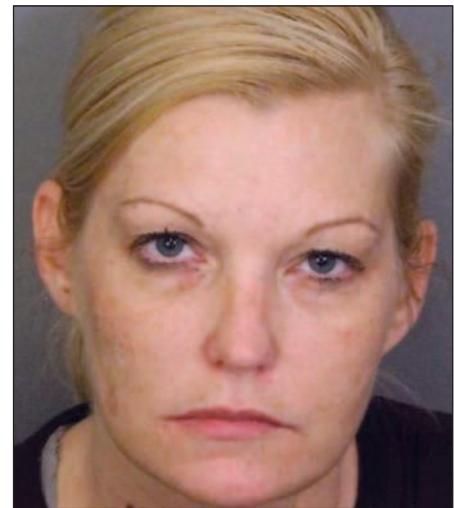
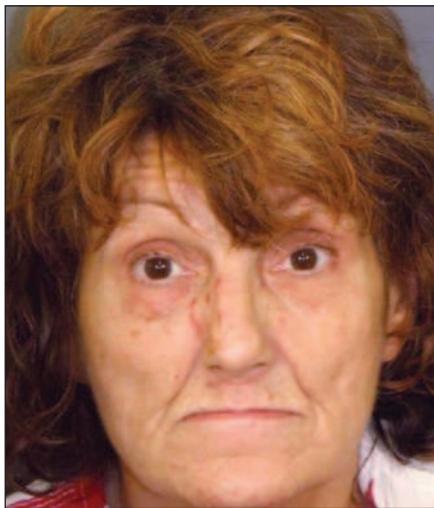
Tuscaloosa is a dynamic and thriving city, home to Alabama's state university and scene of some of the 1960s' fiercest civil rights battles. But it wasn't in the social mêlée that investigators at last located Wiloe. She was only 12 miles away from her grandma's home in Bessemer.

The voice on the Crime Stoppers hotline said Wiloe could be found at an abandoned house which had a well in its grounds. By now she'd been missing for six weeks and police raced to the property hoping she might be squatting there. Fearing the worst when there was still no sign of her, they called in a team of road workers to excavate the well.

It took two days of drilling and hoisting to find Wiloe's body. She'd been stuffed in bin bags, thrown 35ft down the shaft, and buried under



Above, police outside the trailer in Bessemer, Alabama, where Miranda Lynch was beaten to death. Below, killers Karen Kirby and Susan Ottts



concrete blocks and quick-setting cement.

Her grandmother had never given up hope of finding Wiloe alive, but now she wept again for another heartbreaking murder in her family, tears and the glare of Alabama's media spotlight blinding her.

Within hours, police announced the arrest of three men in connection with the crime: Joseph Nevels, Devon Hall and Tyler Battles. It seemed that Wiloe had been staying the weekend with Battles and his wife Monic at their home.

In their initial interview with detectives, Tyler and Monic Battles said they'd left Wiloe there briefly with Nevels and Hall while they went to a

"Most murders are done in moments of panic. But disposing of Wiloe was not done in a hasty fashion. It was carefully thought through"

doctor's appointment. Monic Battles said she realised "something had happened" when they got home, but wasn't sure what it was as she'd "gone to sleep."

Each man's account of what happened next was little more than a blame-game to distance himself from the appalling violence they'd all inflicted on Wiloe. Who did what was impossible to disentangle.

Nevels claimed Wiloe had stolen his phone some months earlier and he was angry because it contained photos of his grandmother who had since died. He admitted hitting her on the head with a shotgun, then said the other two joined in, smashing her repeatedly with an aluminium baseball bat.

The orgy of sadistic violence apparently continued with Battles, Monic and Hall kicking and punching Wiloe as she cowered on the ground. Many of her bones were broken and her teeth knocked out. Nevels said he thought Hall had been the one to actually kill her by strangling her with a cord.

"But as far as I was concerned they were all up to their necks in it," said police chief John Hall. "What's more, they had to give considerable thought as to how and where to dispose of her



Above, police tape at the site of the abandoned property where the body of murdered Willoe Watkins was found down a well and buried in concrete. Below, killers Tyler Battles (left) and Joseph Nevels



body in the hope she would never be found.

"Most murders are done in moments of panic without forethought or planning. But disposing of Willoe was not done in a hasty fashion. It was carefully thought through, and had we not had a tip-off about where Willoe was, they could well have gotten away with it."

"Her mother was murdered over some food stamps, and then Willoe was killed over a stolen phone. It's incredible."

Such was the outrage and heartbreak in the local community that a GoFundMe page was set up, raising nearly \$10,000 for Willoe's funeral expenses.

Devon Hall was the first of the killers to try and make a deal with the authorities by offering to testify against Nevels and Battles in exchange for a lighter sentence. In return he received 30 years behind bars instead of life without parole.

At different points in the investigation he said Nevels and then Battles had strangled Willoe to death, but either way his testimony placed both men at the murder scene as participants in her torment and later in planning how to dispose of her body.

In separate trials, Battles and Nevels were convicted of murder and abuse of a corpse, and each sentenced to life without parole.

For Kathy Harrison, the trials were another chapter in the ongoing nightmare of her daughter and granddaughter's deaths. Family and friends all wore T-shirts printed with a photo of Willoe, and hearing the most upsetting sections of testimony almost brought Kathy to her knees. After the highly-charged proceedings, Willoe's relatives shouted at some of the attorneys: "How can you defend murderers?"

Charges against Monic Battles are still uncertain, but will include either murder or conspiracy to kidnap and murder. Her husband, Tyler Battles, had been prosecuted for domestic violence and her attorney has argued that his controlling behaviour would have affected her actions.

Perhaps the most disturbing truth about these murders is not their similarity, but that each was motiveless and driven by trivia, leaving Miranda and Willoe to suffer at the hands and psyches of men and women unable to understand the atrocities they were perpetrating.

Paul Donnelley's

MURDER MONTH

June

Matricidal rock star...James Beck "Jim" Gordon had a glittering career culminating in him drumming alongside Eric Clapton in Delaney & Bonnie and then Derek and the Dominos.

After deciding not to go to university Gordon had begun playing with the Everly Brothers. He also worked on *Pet Sounds* by the Beach Boys and *The Notorious Byrd Brothers* by The Byrds. At his peak he was so busy that he flew from Las Vegas to Los Angeles to work in studios before flying back to Sin City the same night to play at Caesar's Palace. In 1970, he toured with Joe Cocker and the following year with Traffic. In 1972, he played with Frank Zappa and Helen Reddy.



Jim Gordon (far left) with Derek and the Dominos

His career ended when he became schizophrenic and began to hear voices. They told him to starve himself – which stopped him sleeping and playing the drums. His illness was misdiagnosed and he was treated for alcoholism.

On the afternoon of June 3rd, 1983, Gordon drove his white Datsun 200SX five miles from his Van Nuys condominium to his 72-year-old mother Osa Marie Gordon's bijou North Hollywood apartment. She was out so he went home to wait. He returned to North Hollywood at 11.30 p.m. and saw a light was on.

He knocked on her front door and, when she opened it, he launched an attack, hitting her with a hammer four times before using an eight-and-a-quarter-inch butcher's knife to stab her in the chest three times. He left the knife in her body.

After he was arrested and charged, the authorities finally accepted his schizophrenia. He said he had been told by a "voice" to murder his mother. The voice said to hit her with a hammer first, so she would not suffer when he stabbed her with the knife.

When Gordon went on trial, the court agreed that he was mentally ill but he was not allowed to claim he was insane at the time of the killing because of the Insanity Defence Reform Act.

Found guilty of second-degree murder, Gordon was sentenced to 16 years to life in prison on July 10th, 1984. "I really don't feel that crazy," he added. "I get along with people. I think I'm pretty normal."

By 2018, Gordon had been refused parole 10 times. He remains incarcerated at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville.

EUROPEAN



CRIME REPORT

TEACHER LAURA BEATEN TO DEATH BY CONVICTED KILLER

Laura was over the moon about her new job at a school in the mountains. Only one thing bothered her – the proximity of a leering neighbour as he watched her every move along the street

BLUE-EYED, attractive Laura Luelmo, 26, had every reason to be thrilled with her new job as a visual arts teacher at a Spanish secondary school. High on a hillside, the school overlooked the rifts and valleys of the Sierra Huelva. Laura's rented apartment was close by – and the views everywhere were idyllic.

The newly qualified professor couldn't have wished for a better location to live and work. But there was one blot on the landscape – the cheesy next-door neighbour, Bernardo Montoya, 50. With his trim moustache and goatee beard it was clear this was a man whose ego was greater than the canyons between his ears.

Montoya parked himself permanently on the doorstep of his dilapidated home with a coke burner to keep warm. He never seemed to go to work. Whenever Laura passed, he watched her intently. "I don't like the way he looks at me," she told her boyfriend Teofilio.



Mindful of a criminal's human rights, Spanish law doesn't consider protecting the rights of innocent women that predatory brutes like Montoya line up as their next victim.

Laura started work at the school on December 4th, 2018. A week later she



Police and forensic officers at the scene where the body of murdered Laura Luelmo (left) was discovered

There was no way she could know, of course, that the leering neighbour was a convicted killer, for which he had served a prison term before being released on to the streets.

was looking for a local store to stock up on groceries, and there was Montoya loitering in the street.

"Is there a supermarket near here?" she asked.

Delightedly he directed her through a maze of lanes. New to the area, she had no idea this would lead up a blind alley. Up one steep lane and down another, she began to realise the only way home was the way she had come.

At that moment a car stopped behind her. Montoya, the driver, leapt out, grabbed her and in his own words, "smashed her head into the boot." He tied her hands behind her back and wrapped her in a blanket before driving back to his home next to hers.

He would later tell police: "I took her clothes off from the waist down and tried to rape her, but I didn't manage it even though she was unconscious."

After that, he beat her with his fists and feet and "a long blunt instrument" for more than an hour according to magistrate Jessica Sotelo. Then, with her arms still tied behind her back, he sealed her mouth with masking tape, dragged her into his bedroom and attempted to rape her again. Finally he knocked her unconscious with a heavy blow to the head.

"He subjected her to unnecessary suffering, and suffering more intense than was necessary to cause her death."

Checking that the street was deserted, Montoya bundled Laura, still alive, into the back of his Alfa Romeo and drove her to an isolated spot at the foot of the mountains where he dumped her in a ditch near the 346 national highway.

"The post-mortem results suggest that there were two or three days when Laura was missing but still alive," said Ms. Sotelo. Which is a nice way of saying that she lay in agony in the freezing temperature for two days and nights, unable to move because of her injuries, until mercifully death ended her appalling suffering.

When Laura was reported missing by her father the next day the villagers rallied to search for her. Montoya was quickly identified as a suspect, but the evidence was missing until five days later, when her half-naked body was discovered in the ditch among the colourful rockrose of the mountains.

The evidence trail led back to Montoya, but he was no longer ensconced by the coke burner outside his home. He had vanished.

A search began, and days later he was arrested in the small village of Cortegana. This was the place where in 1994 he stabbed to death a woman in her 80s – a murder, which was his only connection with the village. For that he served 17 years and seven months in jail.

On parole in 2008, he was sentenced to a further 18 months for pulling a knife on a hairdresser.

At first Montoya confessed to police that he beat, raped and killed Laura. "I took her clothes off and tried to rape her," he said, but later he withdrew his confession, denying everything and saying it was impossible that he raped Laura because he was impotent.

He was brought before a nine-member jury of five men and four women at the Huelva Provincial Court in November 2021, where the prosecutor demanded a sentence of "reviewable permanent prison." This unusual sentence is reserved for the most egregious of crimes where only one victim is involved.

Prosecutor Alfredo Flores explained why the prosecution stopped short of demanding life imprisonment. "There are many categories of sexual crimes," he said. "In extreme cases, where a



Bernardo Montoya

violator is impotent, there is room for a slightly lesser sentence than life imprisonment."

Montoya pleaded not guilty. He said his ex-partner, Josefa Carmina, killed Laura because she was jealous. "I only helped to remove the remains," he added. The prosecution said that Carmina was never a suspect. In fact, her alibi was perfect – she was resident in a detox centre under close observation on the evening of the murder.

He beat her with his fists and feet and "a long blunt instrument" for more than an hour. Then with her arms tied behind her back he attempted to rape her. Finally, he knocked her unconscious

Occasionally Montoya made his views heard by calling out in court, "I am innocent," and "I love you, Pilar" – the latter apparently addressed to his current partner.

The jury deliberated for five days before finding Montoya guilty of killing Laura. He was sentenced to "reviewable permanent prison" for the murder; 20 years for kidnapping and 12 years for sexual assault.

As the brutal killer was led off to the cells there were some people in court who wondered why on earth the Spanish don't throw all such monsters into prison for life.

Curiously, Montoya's twin brother Luciano is also a murderer. He was sentenced to 15 years in jail for killing a 35-year-old woman in 2000 after she reported him for the theft of a purse. He was released from prison the same day that Laura Luelmo's body was discovered.

MURDER MONTH

June

Judge murdered – on orders

Jof judge...At 10 a.m. on June 15th, 1955, veteran Judge Curtis E. Chillingworth was due for a hearing at West Palm Beach court in Florida. He was also a stickler for timekeeping, and when did not turn up his staff were alarmed. They called the police and then went to his home at Manalpan, an area 12 miles from Palm Beach.

When the staff and police arrived, there was no sign of the Judge or his wife. At the back of the house, police found a smudged footprint, a broken lamp, two rolls of sticky tape and spots of blood.

Despite the couple not being good swimmers, police surmised they had gone for a dip and drowned. Helicopters, planes, boats and divers began a search at sea but nothing was found.

The police then decided that the couple had been kidnapped and awaited a ransom note. Family and friends raised \$113,000 to be paid in the event the kidnapping was confirmed. But the kidnapping angle did not seem to make much sense as the judge was not a wealthy man. The case remained open.

Then in 1960 James Yentzer, a sheriff's aide, was offered money by a friend called Joseph Peel to kill Floyd Holzapfel, a career criminal. Yentzer contacted Holzapfel and, wearing a wire, met him in a hotel room where much drink was taken.

Once he was drunk, Holzapfel confessed a secret. He said that, at the behest of a powerful pillar of the Floridian community, he had murdered Judge Chillingworth who had upset the wrong people. Holzapfel said that he and a confederate had broken into the house intending just to kill the judge but he had caused a commotion and woken his wife, so she was beaten into unconsciousness. She and her husband were gagged and dragged to a nearby boat.

Out at sea, chained and weighted down, Mrs. Chillingworth was thrown overboard, sinking immediately. Her husband, even when wrapped in chains and weights, did not sink but began to swim to the shore. The killers rowed after him and split his head open with an oar, finally killing him.

Holzapfel was arrested for murder on October 4th, 1960. Judge Joseph Peel, who was behind the murder of Judge Chillingworth, was sentenced to two life terms.

Holzapfel's death sentence was later commuted to life and he spent 39 years behind bars.



Judge Curtis Chillingworth and his wife Marjorie

THE BODY IN THE ICE-BOUNDED CAR

A murder trial refused to believe the businessman was murdered by his former lover for his money, and set her free. But another court had a different view – and now the ex-lover will spend years behind bars

LIFE BECAME something of a high-speed roller-coaster for Carina Heed when the body of her former partner Tommy Sörensen, 50, was found inside a burned-out car in a forest at Hedlandet, 40 miles west of Stockholm.

For Sörensen, the Swedish cops decided, was murdered. And top of the frame in the list of suspects was Carina, whose life as a mother of four was already complicated by an aggressive custody battle with her former husband.

The forest of pines where the body was found is a major attraction for summertime hikers. But this was December 16th, 2018. The frozen ground was dusted in powdered snow and the vehicle was smothered in ice.

There wasn't much left of Tommy Sörensen, whose disappearance had been reported by his family 10 days earlier. But there was enough for the medical examiner to identify that he was high on sedatives before he died.

Sörensen was owner of a luxury hostel for hikers and holidaymakers located deeper in the forest. Police discovered that the hostel's bank account had been emptied by no less a person than former partner Carina Heed. Money, they decided, was no doubt the motive for the murder.

It was known that while Carina Heed's relationship with Sörensen lasted it was a stormy affair. She claimed that he sexually assaulted one of her daughters, but there was no evidence of that, nor was it ever reported to the police. She doubtless had some sort of grievance – but was it enough to incite murder?

Yes, was the official answer, so the former lover was charged with fraud and murder. No pictures of the victim were made available in a country where privacy is more of an issue.

"She killed him in the basement of the hostel," declared prosecutor Anna Asköf. "Afterwards she repainted the floor, changed the lock and cleaned the room thoroughly. She changed the drain in the basement floor and bought two cans of petrol. Throughout all this she had a van parked outside. It was seen by neighbours."

"This is nonsense," replied Maria Wilhelmsson, defending. "There is



The frozen burned-out car in which the body of Tommy Sörensen was discovered 10 days after his mysterious disappearance

no blood, no DNA, or anything else that would indicate that the victim was killed or even restrained. Or even that his body was in the basement. There is no trace of him at all, and if there were it would have been detected by technicians or dogs.

"So what, if she bought two cans of petrol. She was in the process of

"She killed him in the basement of the hostel. Afterwards she repainted the floor"

moving home and it was natural for her to buy cleaning materials, refuse bags and the like."

While in custody awaiting trial Carina Heed changed her name. She now became Elisabeth Andersson. She had to appoint a new lawyer because Ms. Wilhelmsson could no longer continue due to a conflict of interest. She was assisting the plaintiff in another case in which Elisabeth Andersson was accused of assault.

When the murder case finally came to trial in May 2020 the prosecution argued that in the course of a few days Elisabeth Andersson, as she now was,

threw away Sörensen's mobile phone, bought large quantities of cleaning products, firewood, petrol and matches and in various ways stored, transported and finally burned Sörensen's body after killing him.

By and large the witnesses were not on Elisabeth Andersson's side. One of them, Andrea, the daughter of a former partner, told the court that when her father planned to move in with Elisabeth Andersson she was told by her that she must share a room with her two daughters.

When Andrea complained Elisabeth Andersson bombarded her with verbal abuse to such an extent that her father quickly turned tail on the relationship and ran.

It seemed the trial was going nowhere when a surprise witness turned up. This was an elderly woman who told the court she was walking her dog outside Elisabeth Andersson's home on the night Tommy Sörensen vanished.

"I saw a man in the basement. He was loading something on to a trailer. A woman was standing next to him. I thought it was strange that they were working completely in the dark."

This was the first indication of a helper, and it seemed to catch everyone

by surprise. Sceptically, the prosecutor began asking questions, such as, why did she not tell the police this before? "It was in the statement I gave during my police interview," the woman replied stiffly. After a flurry of pages, the prosecution was forced to agree.

Later in the proceedings, the prosecution admitted they didn't know exactly how Sörensen died – there were few remains and the fire destroyed most of the evidence. Without knowing how he died, the defence questioned whether intent could be proved.

Elisabeth Andersson sat patiently during the proceedings, her hands clasped, her feet tucked beneath her. The court convicted her on the charges of fraud and forgery. She was sentenced to two years, which equated to time already served, and walked out of court a free woman.



Carina Heed. She changed her name to Elisabeth Andersson

Then came the Parthian shot. The prosecution appealed and in November 2021 Elisabeth Andersson returned to court – this time the Svea Appeals Court. Unusually, this court overturned the District Court's decision. Elisabeth Andersson was found guilty of Sörensen's murder and sentenced to 16 years' imprisonment.

Justifying the decision, the Appeals Court chairman Sven Jönson said: "The evidence is sufficient to conclude when the man died and that only the cohabitant was present at the time. The measures taken by Andersson after the man's death, including cleaning up and burning the body, and the fact that the man was drugged at the time of his death, put beyond reasonable doubt that the woman intentionally killed the man."

Elisabeth Andersson may once have thought she had committed the perfect murder. On November 29th, 2021, she was taken to her cell to begin her sentence, leaving behind some intriguing questions: who was the man the neighbour saw in the basement? Was it Tommy Sörensen before his death, or was it an accomplice who really has got away with murder?

HOLIDAY ISLAND RAPE-KILLER WAS "SOLDIER OF GOD"

After terrorising residents and tourists he savagely attacked a woman visitor. Now women's rights campaigners are reacting with fury

ABNER AQUILINA, 20, called himself a "Soldier of God" and said he acted in response to "orders from frequencies" in doing God's work, although currently the Devil appeared to have more to do with his life than the deity.

In Malta where he lived, most people who knew him didn't see him as a divine creature. They thought he was the biggest sex pest on the island, and possibly dangerous with it.

Two young women who were enjoying a day out in Malta's famous nature park at Marsaxlokk on New Year's Eve, 2021, can testify to that. They were resting on a park bench when Aquilina came up to them and started making lewd remarks.

"We politely asked him to leave," one of them said. "He was darting around the bench, back and forth, running around in quite an odd way. He eventually came up behind us and started hitting his head on the rocks – there was even some blood.

"We asked him again to give us some space and he began shouting, telling us he wasn't going to move away. He called two friends before running off and leaving. His friends did come and apologise to us, telling us that he was dealing with some personal issues.

"It was a really unnerving incident that really shocked us when we heard the news two days later."

The news two days later, on Sunday, January 2nd, 2022, began when Paulina Dembska, 29, a visitor to Malta holidaying in a youth hostel, rose early to take a day trip to Independence Gardens in Sliema, on the coast.

Paulina knew the island well. She went there regularly to improve her English and on social media called it "the most beautiful place on Earth."

The attraction at the gardens in Sliema was the colony of feral cats that are a feature of the park. Paulina was a cat lover, and there is no shortage of them in Independence Gardens.

"At night the park is alive with cats!" wrote one visitor. "We walked there



Abner Aquilina. He has been charged with the murder in Malta of 29-year-old Paulina Dembska (below)



every evening and got to recognise some of them. They are well looked after and have dried cat food and water under the benches and beds to sleep in. We saw people taking fresh food to them too. Some are very friendly and like the attention."

Cats are an essential part of Maltese culture. There is even a statue of a 12-foot-high cat in the gardens. The cat statue sits proudly on a toilet block, and some Maltese say it is a cat god looking out for the cats in the garden.

Paulina arrived there at 6.15 a.m. The park was quiet and she was isolated when Aquilina approached her. There was no one nearby to hear her screams as he raped and strangled her. Her body was found 15 minutes later by a

● Continues over page

● Continued from page 9

passer-by, semi-naked and face-up on a ramp.

The Maltese Women's Rights Foundation reacted with fury. "There is no other way of putting it, the cause of her demise and those of others before her is men," they said in a statement. "We can talk about laws, we can introduce new and tougher punishments, but until we deal with the root cause we are a far cry from ensuring that women will not be abused and killed on account of their gender."

After the attack Aquilina ran to nearby Balluta Church, where he overturned some seats and made his way to the altar. He hinted to a cleric who approached him that he had attacked someone. He was dragged outside the church by some men and was arrested half an hour later.

Paulina's parents heard of her death



Paulina's body is removed from the Independence Gardens

from their Italian-based daughter who picked it up from Maltese media. "She found information about her sister's death on the internet and called us in the middle of the night," her mother

"We can talk about laws, we can introduce new tougher punishments, but until we deal with the root cause we are a far cry from ensuring that women will not be abused and killed on account of their gender"

said. "She said she was very sorry, but our Paulina was murdered."

Her mother added: "Paulina loved the island. She loved animals. She loved cats. She loved Malta."

Aquilina was sent to Mount Carmel Hospital for psychiatric assessment. At his forthcoming trial he is expected to



Aquilina in police custody

plead not guilty by reason of insanity.

When this intention was revealed it caused a backlash among advocates for mental health. "This has nothing to do with mental health," declared lawyer Lara Dmeitrivie. "Do not stigmatise people with mental health problems. There are thousands of women with mental health problems living in Malta. You do not see them raping, bludgeoning and killing random men."

Meanwhile, Aquilina's career as a sexual pest was being aired. Several women and girls as young as 14 came forward to accuse him of sexual harassment; threatening to show up at their homes or place of work if they didn't comply with his demands; leaving messages by phone and online. On one occasion he threatened suicide if he didn't get his way.

Complaints were made to the police but they dithered in their reaction. "Paulina's death is an example of what happens when we don't take inappropriate comments and catcalling seriously," one woman said.

The two young women accosted in the nature park on New Year's Eve were bound to agree. They still can't believe how lucky they were to escape with their lives.

TRUE CRIME JUNE ISSUE

"MURDER MOM... DISMEMBER DAD"



- Lying Son's Desperate Plan



"ONE OF THE MOST REVOLTING CRIMES COMMITTED IN ESSEX" – BUT...



Should He Have Hanged For Maud's Murder?

THE GRIM SECRETS OF EDGWARE'S CLAY LANE



KILLER WITH 100 FACES

In France, he was treated like Robin Hood – but he claimed to have killed 39

The Secret Head Of LA's "Underworld Government"



YARMOUTH HOLIDAY HORROR

The Terrible Snatching Of Leoni



MURDER UNDER COVER OF WAR

WW2 SOLDIERS WHO WENT TO THE GALLOWS



TWO WIVES, TWO MISTRESSES... ONE MURDER
SAGA OF THE SOMERSET RAKE

Middlesbrough's Only Police Murder



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Join us next month for further astonishing European cases

Intriguing Case Well Told

Thank you for inviting comment on the Michelle Lodzinski case ("Is This Woman Guilty Of Child-Murder?" – May).

Rather than focus primarily on my opinion of her guilt or innocence, can I first pay tribute to authors Mark Davis and Francesca Morrison for achieving what must seem at times to be well-nigh impossible: that is, to present the details of a case in such a careful, balanced way – and omitting the slightest hint of bias – that the reader, at the end of the story, feels genuinely empowered to come to a conclusion totally unencumbered by any doubts as to the probity and veracity of the writers, and without any suspicion of being coerced into "thinking this or that." It is immensely gratifying and a huge privilege to be able to share the results of great writing. Many thanks to you both.

As for Michelle Lodzinski: well, I am minded to believe in her guilt, a belief reached after reading such an accomplished, crystal-clear and helpful presentation of evidence. Would that many court cases avoided muddy waters so well.

Stuart Davies, Barnstaple

Sheriff's Tragic Shooting

I always believed Alan Freed coined the phrase "rock'n'roll" in 1951 so the new series (*US Executions: – The "Rock'n'Roll Years"*) hit its stride for



Murder conviction overturned: Michelle Lodzinski

MDviewpoint

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me in May's MD – J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, released that year, inspired Mark David Chapman to kill John Lennon. Chapman wrote, "This is my Statement" in his copy of the book. Chapman signed it with the lead character's name, Holden Caulfield. He wanted to change his name to Caulfield and quoted a passage from the book during his sentence hearing. Robert John Bardo, the killer of actress Rebecca Schaeffer, carried the Salinger book when he killed her on July 18th, 1989.

Great story too ("Beware The Jealous Brother-in-Law") – showing Sheriff Charles Griffin Middleton cracking a case in languid style. Sadly, Middleton was gunned down two years later on a forest trail in hot pursuit of a suspect. Griff was 46 years old. Jackson County voted Griff's wife, Selma Reid Broome Middleton, into office to take his place as Sheriff.

Mention of the *Goon Show* launch in 1951 reminded me of Spike Milligan's ad in *Private Eye*: "Spike Milligan seeks rich, well-insured widow. Intention: murder." He got 48 replies.

Andrew Stephenson, Newhaven

Horrors Of A Stepmom

Cases such as that of Emani Moss, a defenceless 10-year-old child beaten

and tortured to death through starvation and neglect, are occurring all too often in so-called civilised countries ("Death Sentence For Wicked Stepmother" – April).

Prior to meeting and marrying his second wife in 2009, Eman Moss was raising Emani on his own. A year after their marriage, his new wife Tiffany emerged as the stepmother from Hell.

Despite a school nurse reporting finding multiple cuts, bruises and scabs on Emani's body, and Emani's disclosure of being thrashed with a curtain rod at home, consequent police involvement proved useless. Tiffany Moss pleaded guilty to first-degree child abuse and got six months' probation. The only effective punishment was Tiffany Moss losing her job as a pre-school teacher. Predictably, this acted as a catalyst for Tiffany intensifying her cruelty towards Emani.

Any questions asked by social services when Emani ran away from home were answered by Tiffany saying the child was a fantasist looking for attention. An anonymous tip-off to social services in 2013 that Emani looked neglected and very thin went without response.

Tiffany, while continuing to cook for her husband and the two children of their marriage, had begun starving Emani and locking her away. Death by starvation and dehydration ended Emani's torture.

Incredibly, Eman Moss agreed with his wife to deny any hope of medical help when it was clear his child was dying. Then he helped her dispose of the little girl's dead body, which they attempted to burn like a bag of rubbish.

Eman Moss got life without parole and Tiffany Moss is currently on Death Row. Personally, I'd rather she was left there to die the slow painful death, without food or water, that she inflicted on a poor innocent child.

There was much less justice for little Arthur Labinjo-Hughes, murdered by his evil stepmother. His equally evil father encouraged her. They were given 29 years and 21 years respectively. Britain's Attorney-General has referred the case to the Court of Appeal because she rightly believes the sentences were too lenient.

Child-killers have no right on this earth. Opponents of the death penalty should read the case histories of these poor innocent victims.

Ann Nicholl, Strabane



Above, Tiffany Moss. Below, victim Emani Moss



MD COMP: WIN DARK CITY

The blackout went into effect three days before the declaration of war and transformed nocturnal London into a criminal's paradise. As the city pulled together in the face of terrible adversity, the bomb-ravaged streets became the stalking grounds for killers, rapists, looters and gangs.

The number of bodies retrieved during the Blitz made it impossible for the authorities to autopsy them all, providing cover to those who worked with blades, guns and more sinister tools. Scotland Yard – its resources stretched to the limit – did its best to tackle a rogues' gallery born of bombs and blackout, and crimes that continue to fascinate from history's darkest corners. In *Dark City – Murder, Vice And Mayhem In Wartime London*, crime writer Simon Read paints a vivid picture of the other side of wartime London, from the Blackout Ripper and the Acid Bath Murders to the notorious Rillington Place killer and his house of corpses.

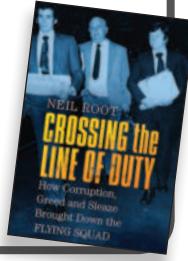
For a chance to win a copy of *Dark City* (published by The History Press; ISBN 978-0-7509-8985-5; £10.99) by Simon Read, just answer this question: In which year was the infamous Acid Bath Murderer John George Haigh hanged?

1946

1947

1948

1949



Send your answer, with your name and address, to MD June Competition, PO Box 735, London SE26 5NQ, or email masterdetective@truecrimelibrary.com, using the subject line "MD June comp." The first correct entry out of the hat after the closing date of **June 11th** will win. The winner will be announced in the August 2022 issue. The winner of the MD April competition, with the correct answer 1972, is Chloe Cobb from Chichester. Well done! Your prize of a paperback copy of *Crossing The Line Of Duty* by Neil Root will be with you soon.

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WOMEN ON THE GALLOWS

PART FOURTEEN

IN THE mid-1950s Britain was slowly improving as a place to live in. The burden of years of rationing had finally been sloughed off, and while the swinging 60s were still a few years off a feeling of vibrancy and enthusiasm for the future abounded.

But the past is like a coin; it has two sides. And on the grim side, in the 50s Britain still hanged both men and women for murder. In its way, though, that age-old practice would soon help hasten social change.

When Ruth Ellis was hanged in 1955, there was so much fuss over her hanging that probably more than any other single event it changed the climate of public opinion against judicial execution. After Ruth the country's executioners could look forward only to the inevitability of redundancy, which came to them 10 years later.

Ruth was a sometime call girl – what we might now call a sex worker – who had failed as a model, the manageress



David and Ruth at a Brands Hatch race meeting

to spend all their lives trying to get away from each other, only to be pulled back by an emotional lodestone neither could escape.

When the seething cauldron which was their affair finally boiled over, 28-year-old Ruth hung about outside the Magdala pub in Hampstead, and when Blakely came out with his friend Clive Gunnell, clutching bottles of beer for a party, she took a .38 Smith and Wesson from her handbag and pumped

dead by "emptying that revolver at him, four bullets going into his body, one hitting a bystander in the hand, and the sixth going we know not where."

He told the jury: "In a word, the story which you are going to hear outlined is this, that in 1954 and 1955 she was having simultaneous love affairs with two men, one of whom was the deceased and the other a man called Cussen, whom I shall call before you.

"It would seem that Blakely was trying to break off the connection. It would seem that the accused woman was angry at the thought that he should leave her, even although she had another lover at the time. She says in a statement which she signed, '*When I put the gun in my bag I intended to find David and shoot him.*'

"But let me tell you that you are not here in the least concerned with adultery or any sexual misconduct. You are not trying for immorality, but for murder, and the only importance of these movements between the defendant and these various men is that it will help you to see the frame of mind she was in when she did what it cannot be denied in fact she did."

Mr. Humphreys ended: "There in its stark simplicity is the case for the Crown and whatever be the background and whatever may have been in her mind up to the time when she took that gun, if you have no doubt that she took that gun with the sole purpose of finding and shooting David Blakely and that she then shot him dead, the only verdict is wilful murder."

Nor was the shooting to be denied, the

HOW RUTH BECAME THE LAST TO HANG FOR CRIME OF PASSION - OR NOT

of a seedy drinking club, a dyed blonde, a mother with a string of lovers who dropped her aitches and aspired to a higher class. In the merciless parlance of the day, she would have been called a slut.

David Blakely meanwhile was a public schoolboy, a former officer in the Highland Light Infantry, a failed racing car driver, a womaniser and a drunk. A cad is what society might have called him those far-off post-war days.

When she first met him she didn't like him. She thought he was stuck-up. After that they loved to hate each other, and hated loving each other. They seemed

six shots at him. Her trial for murder took just over one day. She didn't appeal the verdict, arrived at in 23 minutes, and she went to the gallows with incredible bravery.

Case recalled by JOHN SANDERS

The world held its breath in awe when Ruth stood in the dock at the Old Bailey's Number One court on June 20th, 1955, while Christmas Humphreys QC opened the case against her, describing how she took the gun which she knew was loaded, and shot Blakely

jury were told straightaway by Ruth's defence counsel, Melford Stevenson. "Let me make this abundantly plain," he said. "There is no question here but that this woman shot this man. You will not hear one word from me, or from the lady herself, questioning that."

It seemed like an open-and-shut case of cold-blooded murder. There was no need for forensics. Apparently no one else was involved. But half a century after it happened, the one-day trial of the nondescript call girl, chronicling her love for the pathetic wimp, their rows, their fights, their cheating, their drinking, and – running through it all like a

disconnected live electric wire – their entrenched class consciousness, still has power to enthrall.

Something of the torrid turmoil of Ruth's love life emerged from the evidence of Desmond Cussen, her "alternative lover," who was among the first witnesses called for the Crown. He told the court that he and Ruth were lovers for a short time in June, 1954. In cross-examination by Mr. Stevenson he agreed that David Blakely was away at the time, at the Le Mans race in France.

Mr. Stevenson: "Were you much in love with this young woman?"

Cussen: "I was terribly fond of her at the time, yes."

Mr. Stevenson: "Did she tell you from time to time that she would like to get away from Blakely, but could not, or

he helped to disguise the bruises on her shoulders.

Mr. Stevenson: "Were they bad bruises?"

Cussen: "Yes. They required quite heavy make-up."

Mr. Stevenson: "I do not want to press you for details, but how often have you seen that sort of mark on her?"

Cussen: "It must be on half a dozen occasions. On one occasion I took her to the Middlesex Hospital. She had been badly bruised all over the body and she was in a very bad condition."

But which of the two, Ruth or Blakely, was trying hardest to leave the other, the jury must have wondered? For the next Crown witness was another of Blakely's friends, Anthony Findlater. He was an important marginal note in the case, because Blakely was paying him money

substance of that conversation? What was it about?"

Findlater: "He asked me if I could assist him to leave Mrs. Ellis."

Mr. Humphreys: "Was it in the accused's presence that he said this?"

Findlater: "Yes."

Mr. Humphreys: "Could you help him to leave?"

Findlater: "Yes."

Further details of the turbulent Ellis-Blakely love life emerged during Ruth's evidence from the witness-box. She recalled a night when, as they were going to bed, she noticed love bites all over his neck and back. "Someone bit me in the neck while I was playing darts," Blakely explained disingenuously. Ruth replied: "Get out of my bed and get out of my flat."

"He did not like it, but he went," she

**She hated loving
David Blakely,
and loved hating
him. Theirs
was a magnetic
attraction that
was fated to end
in catastrophe**



Ruth Ellis and below, the .38 Smith and Wesson that fired four shots of unerring accuracy to kill David Blakely

words to that effect?"

Cussen: "Yes."

Mr. Stevenson: "And at that time did she repeatedly go back to him?"

Cussen: "Yes."

Mr. Stevenson: "At a time when you were begging her to marry you if she could?"

Cussen: "Yes."

Mr. Stevenson: "Have you ever seen any marks or bruises on her?"

Cussen: "Yes."

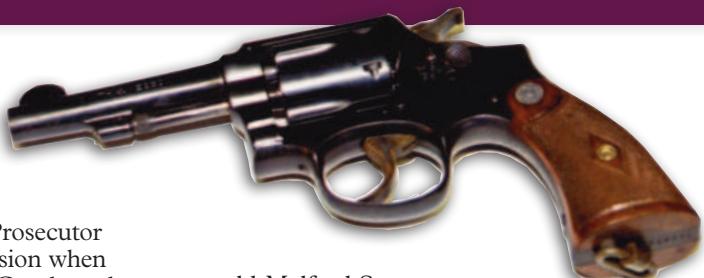
Mr. Stevenson: "How often?"

Several times, he replied, the most recent being when he was taking her to a dance a few weeks before Easter when

from an inheritance to build a racing car called the Emperor, which they hoped would go into production and make them rich.

Findlater was asked by Prosecutor Humphreys about an occasion when he went to visit Blakely at Goodwood Court, the West End apartment of Desmond Cussen, where Ruth had moved in temporarily. Blakely was in the apartment with Ruth at the time, and Cussen was out. He had a conversation with Blakely.

Mr. Humphreys: "What about the



told Melford Stevenson.

"How long did he remain away?" she was asked.

Ruth replied: "He phoned about an hour after he left the premises, and he phoned early in the morning and told me he had spent the night at Islington, and he was very cold and miserable."

The relationship, more and more fuelled by jealousy, deteriorated. Gradually it dawned on Ruth that Blakely would never marry her because a chasm existed between their different classes

Islington was where Blakely was renting a garage where his Emperor racing car was under construction. Like everything else about David Blakely it was a lost cause. It blew up on its first major circuit outing.

She went on: "He asked if he could come back and I said no. He returned [to the Little Club in Knightsbridge, where she was manageress] as soon as the bar opened at 3 o'clock, and went into my bar, and asked my barmaid if he could see me, and I had already instructed the barmaid that I was not at home to him.

"He phoned then from the box just in the entrance to the club to my place upstairs, and asked if he could come up, and I said no. After half an hour he came upstairs. He was very emotionally upset, and he went to his knees crying and saying, 'I'm sorry, darling, I do love you. I'll prove it,' and asked me to marry him, and I said, 'I don't think your mother or

defence because she wanted a divorce. "I decided not to claim any maintenance or defend myself in any way."

Mr. Stevenson: "You say you did that on the ground that you were going to marry David. Is that right?"

Ruth: "Yes."

But the relationship, more and more fuelled by jealousy, deteriorated. Gradually it dawned on Ruth that Blakely would never marry her because a chasm existed between their different classes. Six months before she killed him the situation was becoming hopeless.

Mr. Stevenson: "By October 1954 was there a further change in his behaviour towards you? How did he treat you physically?"

Ruth: "He was violent on occasions."

Mr. Stevenson: "What sort of violence?"

Ruth: "It was always because of jealousy in the bar. At the end of

go, and not come back, sort of thing, but whether I meant it or not, I said it anyway."

Mr. Stevenson: "When you said that, did he ever go?"

Ruth: "No."

Ruth, it should be said, wasn't lying about the beatings. The regulars in the Little Club corroborated her evidence. Running right through her evidence at this stage is her ambivalent attitude towards Blakely: "I bruise very easily," and, "whether I meant it or not." Even when she was on trial for her life she couldn't decide whether she loved or hated him, hence almost every thought was hedged about with uncertainty.

Christmas 1954, the last Christmas before Blakely died and she was hanged for it, provided no respite. Blakely celebrated the season by drinking heavily and reminding everyone for the



David Blakely and Ruth together. They shared a passion that could easily turn to fury – but was she really driven to murder?

family will agree to this."

Mr. Stevenson: "What did he say about that?"

Ruth: "He said that if there was any trouble with his family we could be married secretly."

While all this was happening Ruth was going through her divorce with George Ellis, an alcoholic dentist she had married in 1950. She had at first decided to defend the case, but then dropped the

the evening when he got upstairs it was always about the things he had been seeing me do, and so on and so forth. He used to hit me with his fists and his hands, but I bruise very easily, and I was full of bruises on many occasions."

Mr. Stevenson: "When he complained about you working in the club and exhibited this jealousy, how did you take it?"

Ruth: "I often told him to please



The Magdala pub. Blakely was confronted by Ruth and shot on the pavement outside

umpteenth time that he wanted to leave Ruth. He told a friend: "I'd give anything to get away from her, but as soon as we meet it all starts again."

She in turn was complaining to everyone about his unfaithfulness. "I've given him some money and he's out somewhere, probably poking the arse off some tart," she announced.

Things weren't helped in the love triangle when Desmond Cussen found a hotel bill in the wastepaper basket at Goodwood Court. It was in the name of Mr. and Mrs. David Blakely and it was of course one of many, but this was the one she had forgotten to destroy. Desmond Cussen knew that Blakely was sleeping with Ruth, but he didn't want evidence of it left in his wastepaper basket, and in the event, he preferred to accept her denials.

When the New Year arrived Blakely went with Ruth to Penn in Buckinghamshire where, he grandly

told her, he was "the social light in the county." The purpose of the visit was to call upon his mother who lived there, but it was made clear to Ruth that she would have to stay in the car while he went into a pub to have a drink with his mother.

The effect of this was to wind her up like a taut spring. She was aware that her lover was putting her in her place – and her place was below the salt. If she needed any evidence that he wouldn't marry her, this was surely it.

Frustrated, angry and determined, she took him on a sex and booze spree that lasted for days. But in no time they were fighting again, each recriminating against the other for sleeping with someone else, which both knew to be true. After one physical bout both sported black eyes and additionally Ruth was limping.

The fights spilled out into the street, and friends were brought in to pacify them. Anthony Findlater's wife, Carole, saw Blakely's back, covered with welts and bruises. "Ruth is madly in love with me but I hate her guts," he said.

At Goodwood Court Desmond Cussen helped Ruth get into bed and noticed that she had bruises all over her body. On this occasion she refused his advice to go to hospital; she wanted, she said, to go to Penn and "get an apology out of that bastard."

A couple of weeks later Blakely blandly told Ruth: "Everything will turn out all right. No one is going to part us. I do love you so much, Ruth."

She wrote later: "*I was growing to loathe him. He was so much in love with himself.*" After the Emperor racing car blew up at the Oulton Park circuit, taking with it all his hope and aspirations for the future, he told her he didn't have enough money to pay the bill for the hotel where they had been staying. She gave him £5, and on the way downstairs to the car she saw him writing a cheque for the bill.

How did that make her feel, she was asked at the Old Bailey?



Ruth Ellis. She was certainly no innocent but in the climate of the 1950s having dyed hair, working in a seedy club and being a single parent were grave marks against her character

She answered: "I just thought it was a mean way of getting money from me when he had sufficient to pay the bill himself, or appeared to have."

Once when he came home late after drinking without her he was still saying everything would be all right, and, said Ruth, "talking about marriage again."

That night, she told the court, he gave her a photograph of himself. He wrote on it: "*To Ruth with all my love, from David.*"

Some days later Blakely confided to the Findlaters that he had to take sexually enhancing drugs because of Ruth's incessant demands in their love life. "I can't stand it any longer," he said. "I want to get away from her."

If Ruth's courtroom account is to be believed, Blakely's behaviour in the few hours before that Easter weekend of 1955 when she killed him is incredibly bizarre when it is set against his behaviour immediately afterwards.

On the Thursday evening before Good Friday they went to the cinema together.

In court Ruth recalled: "All through the cinema, which was rather annoying, he was telling me he loved me and all kinds of things. He seemed very attentive to me."

Mr. Stevenson: "Did you discuss any plans on that occasion as to what you were going to do the following Easter weekend?"

Ruth: "Yes. I understood we were going motor racing on the Monday."

Mr. Stevenson: "How were you going to spend the remainder of the Easter weekend?"

Ruth: "We were going to take Andre out – we were going to take my son out. Mr. Blakeley was very fond of my son."

Mr. Stevenson: "Now on the morning of Good Friday, the 8th, did he leave in the morning?"

Ruth: "Yes."

Mr. Stevenson: "What did he say he was going to do?"

Ruth: "He left me about 10 o'clock in the morning and said he was going to meet Anthony Findlater."

Mr. Stevenson: "On what sort of terms did you part on Good Friday morning?"

Ruth: "On the very best of terms."

The alternative view about that Good Friday parting, propounded by Blakely's friends, was that he was desperate. He was trying to think of anything to get himself away from Ruth. He went to the Findlaters and told them he was supposed to be calling for Ruth at 8 o'clock that night and he couldn't face it. Where could he go? "I daren't go back to Penn," he said. "If I do she'll come down there again."

And when Carole Findlater told him to pull himself together, because he could leave Ruth if he wanted, he replied darkly: "It's not as easy as all that. You don't know her, you don't know what she's capable of."

If this conversation is even half true it is irreconcilable with the one he had

Melford Stevenson (left) and Christmas Humphries



MURDER MONTH

June

Double life of the all-American boy...In June 2001, Texan school football coach David Temple married fellow-teacher Heather Scott. The nuptials came just 18 months after the brutal murder of Belinda Lucas, Temple's first wife.

Temple and Belinda had met at Stephen F Austin University at Nacogdoches, Texas, and he had proposed on the football pitch. She, too, was a teacher. They seemed very happy.

On January 11th, 1999, Temple went to the shops with his 3½-year-old son Evan. He got back at 5.35 p.m. and later told police that initially he could not find his wife. Then he went upstairs and saw blood emanating from a wardrobe. He opened the door and found 30-year-old Belinda's corpse


David Temple
— a single shotgun blast to the back of her head had snuffed out her life. The police described the blood-soaked scene as resembling a slaughterhouse.

The prime suspect was next-door neighbour Riley Joe Sanders, 16, whom Mrs. Temple had reported to his mother for smoking marijuana and skipping school. He'd had access to a shotgun and twice failed a polygraph test but police could not prove his guilt.

Police turned their attention to David Temple, who was known to be close to Heather Scott, a blonde teacher at his school. Mrs. Temple's friends told police he had been a "very controlling" husband who spent time in bars and strip clubs. His friendship with Heather Scott had become sexual although Temple claimed it was just sex and said he'd "loved his wife very much."

The case went cold until November 29th, 2004, when police discovered gunshot residue on Temple's jacket and he was arrested for Belinda's murder. The trial began in October 2007 and the defence had the gunshot evidence thrown out, suggesting Riley Joe Sanders was the real killer. Temple was guilty of adultery, not murder, claimed his lawyer, but the jury returned a guilty verdict.

The defence claimed prosecutorial misconduct such as withholding evidence and misleading the defence, and after nine years behind bars Temple was released on December 28th, 2016, to face a new trial. Four days before the trial began on June 20th, 2019, Heather Scott announced she was divorcing him.

The jury again found him guilty on August 6th, 2019, but could not agree on a sentence and the judge called a mistrial for that part of the case. David Temple remains in jail.

had with Ruth only hours earlier – "telling me he loved me and all kinds of things" – and with parting from her that morning on "the very best of terms."

But believing he was very depressed, Carole Findlater came up with a bright idea. "Spend the weekend at home with us," she said. The Findlaters lived at No. 29 Tanza Road, Hampstead, where they employed a resident nanny named Francesca. Carole indicated that if Ruth caused any trouble during that weekend, she and her husband Anthony would be there to protect Blakely.

Ruth soon cottoned on to where Blakely had gone off in hiding. She told the court what happened when she phoned the Findlaters' flat, and Anthony answered.

"I said to him, 'Anthony, is David with you?' He said, 'No.' So I said, 'I am very worried because he should have been back to meet me. Do you think he is all right?' Mr. Findlater replied, 'Oh, he is all right.'"

Mr. Stevenson: "Did he tell you where he was?"

Ruth: "Yes. He said he had seen David

Below, the Findlaters, Carole and Anthony, pictured with Ruth and David at the Little Club. It was from their flat on the second floor at 29 Tanza Road (right) that Blakely embarked on his fatal journey to the Magdala

was midnight when she arrived

The first thing she recognised was Blakely's Vanguard car parked in the street. She rang the doorbell but no one answered. She went to a phone box and called the Findlaters and the phone was hung up. She went back to the house and rang the doorbell again.

She thought she heard a woman giggle inside the house and such was the state of her paranoia that she decided Blakely must be having an affair with Francesca, the Findlaters' nanny, who had a habit of giggling. Nothing was farther from the



earlier but that he had left."

Mr. Stevenson: "When you were told that he had left, did you believe it?"

Ruth: "Not the way he said it. He said it rather cocky, as though, you know... well, I do not know quite how to say it."

What Ruth was unable to say was that she had already tumbled to the fact that Blakely was at Tanza Road and hiding from her, and that she felt she was being made a fool of.

For the next few hours she repeatedly dialled the Findlaters' number, and each time the receiver was replaced when her voice was recognised. Seething, she decided to visit Tanza Road personally. It

truth – most women were Blakely's type, but not Francesca.

Ruth told the court: "I was absolutely furious. I just wanted to see him and ask for the keys [to her flat] back. All kinds of things were going on. I just wanted him to jump in the lake, or go and lose himself."

Mr. Stevenson: "What did you do next?"

Ruth: "My intention was to make a noise to make them come and open the front door. I was feeling just a little – in a peculiar mind then; rather a nasty mood to make them open the door, that was all."

Mr. Stevenson: "What did you in fact

do?"

Ruth: "Well I knew the Vanguard windows were only stuck in with rubber, so I pushed at one of them and it came clean out with the rubber. It did not break, just made a noise. I did the same with two other windows. I just pushed them in."

Anthony Findlater, in his pyjamas, then came to the front door. Ruth asked him: "Where is David?" Findlater said he didn't know. Ruth said: "I know where he is. Ask him to come down."

The police had arrived meanwhile, and were examining the damaged Vanguard car. "It belongs to me as much as to him," Ruth explained. Findlater said: "Mr. Blakely doesn't want to see her," and Ruth replied: "I shall stay here all night until he has the guts to show his face."

The police advised Ruth to go home, and left the scene. Ruth didn't leave; instead she hung around in the vicinity of the damaged car. Findlater phoned the police again, but by the time they returned, at about 2.30 a.m., Desmond Cussen had arrived to take Ruth back to her flat.

Mr. Stevenson asked her what sort of night she had after that.

"I did not go to sleep," she said. "I just smoked. I was still in a temper. I was very upset about the whole thing to think that David was behaving so disgustingly now. I was not well."

She phoned the Findlaters again next morning, Easter Saturday, but the receiver was hung up on her, so she went back at once to Hampstead, hiding in a doorway in Tanza Road so that she could see anyone coming out of No. 29. At 10 a.m. Findlater and Blakely came out and went off in the Vanguard, and Ruth continued to call the Findlaters' flat. Presently she left the scene, and returned again with Desmond Cussen about 2 p.m. Blakely's Vanguard was now parked outside the Magdala pub.

Ruth hid again, keeping watch for a couple of hours until Cussen returned to pick her up. In the evening she was back again at Tanza Road, keeping up her surveillance on No. 29.

"Obviously a party was taking place then," she said in court. Asked by the judge, Mr. Justice Havers, where she was at this time, she replied, "Oh, just up the road. Just standing in the road."

The front window of the flat was open, she went on, and a lot of noise was coming from it.

Mr. Stevenson: "Did you recognise any voice?"

Ruth: "Yes. I heard David's voice."

She also heard other voices coming from the open window, and at about half past nine she saw Blakely, Francesca, Anthony Findlater and another woman coming down the front steps. "If they had turned round they would have seen me," she recalled.

The foursome went off in a car while Ruth lingered on. She left briefly and returned, by which time she assumed that the foursome had arrived back at



Desmond Cussen and Ruth

the flat. Answering Mr. Stevenson, she said she remained outside the flat until 12.30. It was then Easter Sunday, and the party was still going on.

Ruth, keyed up in a state of soundless hysteria, drew a sinister inference from the fact that the nanny appeared to have gone to bed in the front bedroom, after pulling down her blind and turning off the light. She was asked: "Rightly or wrongly, what did you think was happening?" She replied: "I thought David was up to his tricks he was always doing."

What sort of tricks did she mean, she was asked? "Knowing David, I thought he might be having an affair with someone else. I thought the nanny might be the new attraction."

She went home "ultimately," and again she didn't sleep.

She was asked: "What state of mind were you in?" and she replied: "I was very, very upset."

On Easter Sunday morning she kept on phoning the flat. Finally Anthony Findlater answered.

Ruth told the court that she told him: "I hope you are having an enjoyable holiday, because you have ruined mine."

Later, she said, Desmond Cussen again picked her up and took her back to his flat. She was still hoping Blakely would phone, but he didn't. Eventually she went back to her own flat and put her son to bed.

Asks by Melford Stevenson what she did next, she replied: "I was very upset and I had a peculiar idea I wanted to kill him."

Mr. Stevenson: "You had what?"

Ruth: "I had an idea I wanted to kill him."

When couples split up, their friends often take sides. Desmond Cussen was for obvious reasons on Ruth's side. Anthony Findlater emerged as being on Blakely's, for quite apart from

attempting to "shelter" Blakely over that fatal Easter weekend, he appeared to be a hostile witness to the defence at the Old Bailey.

This was evident when Melford Stevenson asked him about the call he received from Ruth on Saturday evening. Not many in the court would have imagined that Ruth was sanguine when she made that call. But apparently Mr. Findlater thought she was.

Mr. Stevenson: "Was it quite plain when you spoke to her on the telephone that she was in a desperate state of emotion?"

Findlater: "No."

Mr. Stevenson: "What?"

Findlater: "I said no."

Mr. Stevenson: "Do you mean she was quite calm? Do you really mean that?"

Findlater: "It was just a telephone conversation. She rang me up, as she had done hundreds of times, and asked if I knew where David was. It was just a telephone conversation."

Mr. Stevenson: "I know it was just a telephone conversation. Just bear in mind what she said and the way she said it and the fact that she afterwards pushed out those windows. Did you observe no indication of her being a very desperate woman at that time?"

Findlater: "No."

Mr. Stevenson: "Never mind about the word 'desperate.' Was it obvious to you that she was in a state of considerable emotional disturbance?"

Findlater: "Well, I did not get that impression over the phone. She might have been."

In the final analysis it wouldn't have made much difference what Anthony Findlater thought about Ruth's state of mind when she phoned asking for information about Blakely. She took the gun and deliberately killed him, there was no argument about that. If Mr. Stevenson was trying to show that she was insane when she did that he would

have found it easier to push water uphill.

Ruth was adamant that she was a murderer. She was asked in cross-examination by Mr. Humphreys: "When you fired that revolver at close range into the body of David Blakely, what did you intend to do?" and she replied: "It was obvious when I shot him I intended to kill him."

So what did one of those experts who are so adept at distancing themselves from emotions make of it in a clinical assessment? Step forward Dr. Duncan Whittaker, a psychologist called for the defence. Ruth, he said, was "definitely disturbed" on the day she shot Blakely.

Mr. Justice Havers: "In what way?"

Dr. Whittaker: "The situation was now absolutely intolerable for her. She considered that he was being unfaithful at that moment, but she was convinced that he would return and she would not be able to resist him. She both hated and loved him."

Mr. Stevenson: "When you get that duality of emotion, what does it indicate, so far as the patient is concerned?"

Dr. Whittaker: "Some degree of emotional immaturity – not intellectual, but emotional."

These answers seemed only to create confusion that was only finally cleared up, not for the first time during the trial, by Prosecutor Humphreys, who asked simply: "Was she at the time, within the meaning of the English law, sane or insane?"

She was sane, the psychologist replied.

David Blakely spent his last day on earth doing what he liked best – drinking and partying. At lunchtime he went with the Findlaters to the Magdala pub to meet Clive Gunnell and another friend, and in the afternoon they went to the fair on Hampstead Heath. After that there were more drinks at the Magdala. They took alcohol from the pub back to No. 29 Tanza Road and danced to gramophone records.

Around 9.30 p.m. Carole Findlater ran out of cigarettes and Blakely went off with Gunnell to the Magdala to buy her some. The beer was running short, so they took the Vanguard car in order to bring back more.

While they were away Ruth arrived in Tanza Road, resolutely prepared to set in motion her "peculiar idea." Noting that the Vanguard was not outside the house she guessed Blakely must be at the Magdala. The car was there, so she waited for him to come out. When he appeared, carrying beer for the party, she took the gun from her handbag and closed in on him.

For someone who had never held a .38 before, let alone fired one, Ruth made a pretty good fist of it. She wounded Blakely with the first two shots. He ran screaming to get away, spilling blood on to the Vanguard. She fired again and he fell to the pavement. She stood over him and calmly fired

again, inches away from where he lay.

Blood was pouring from his mouth as Clive Gunnell ran to his stricken friend, cradling his head. Ruth said: "Now go and call the police."

There was by odd coincidence an off-duty policeman, PC Alan Thompson, drinking at the Magdala that evening. He came out to the murder scene and stayed by Ruth until reinforcements arrived to take Blakely



Ruth was adamant she was a murderer. When asked her intentions during cross-examination she replied: "It was obvious when I shot him I intended to kill him"

to the morgue and Ruth to Hampstead police station, where, next morning, she was charged with murder.

Mr. Justice Havers summed up the post-mortem result at Ruth's trial. He told the jury:

"You will remember that Dr. Hunt, the pathologist, said there were four bullet wounds in the body. He said there was an entry wound of a bullet in the lower part of the back to the right and there was a track leading from this through the abdominal cavity perforating the intestine and liver and ending in an exit wound below the left shoulder blade, and from this track ran upwards through the chest perforating the left lung, the aorta, and the windpipe, and the bullet was lying in the deep muscles of the right of the tongue.

"The next injury was just above the outer part of the left hip bone penetrating the skin and underlying fat only, and there was an exit wound quite close to that. He said there was also a shallow mark on the inner side of the left forearm. He could not be quite sure whether these last two injuries were caused by one bullet or by two. So that there was a minimum of three wounds, or possibly four. In the opinion of the doctor, the cause of death was shock and haemorrhage."

Today, in all probability, Ruth would have been found guilty of manslaughter rather than murder. There are still plenty of people who believe that should

have been the case in 1955. With the jury absent from court, Mr. Melford Stevenson initiated a lengthy discussion on the issue of provocation.

After legal debate between the judge, the prosecutor and the defence, Mr. Justice Havers decided not to allow a verdict of manslaughter, thereby ruling that that question could not be left to the jury. Many believe that by that ruling he set himself up as judge, jury, defence and prosecution.

The jury retired to deliberate. Few observers expected it would take them long to reach a verdict, but none expected it in the short time of 14 minutes, and the jury made no recommendation for mercy.

She never flinched as the judge moved slowly through the ritual of donning the black cap, sentencing her to be hanged on the morning of Wednesday, July 13th, 1955.

Her counsel made every effort to win her a reprieve, and a petition bearing 25,000 signatures was formally presented to the Home Secretary, Mr. Gwilym Lloyd George. But he declined to recommend a reprieve, and on the afternoon of July 12th Ruth was allowed to see her parents and her elder brother

for the last time before her execution the following day.

Earlier she had issued a statement in response to requests from reporters. "Only a woman could really understand my state of mind on the night I shot David," she said. "And only a woman who had led a life similar to mine could understand how I was irresistibly compelled to do what I did."

On the morning of her last day on earth, the matron brought her breakfast, but Ruth barely touched it. Afterwards, Charity Taylor, the governess of Holloway Prison, went to her cell for the formality of informing Ruth Ellis that the sentence of the court was about to be carried out.

For a fleeting moment, Ruth's calmness cracked and she sobbed, "I don't want to die!"

Then she composed herself to face the hangman Albert Pierrepoint and his assistant when they came to tie her hands behind her back.

On the scaffold the executioner's assistant lashed her trim ankles together, then slipped a black hood over her head. Pierrepoint dropped the noose over her head and adjusted the knot behind her left ear.

Outside, a hush fell over the assembled crowd of thousands as the hands of the clock on the prison tower reached nine o'clock. Inside, the hangman sprang the trap and Ruth Ellis plummeted to her death.

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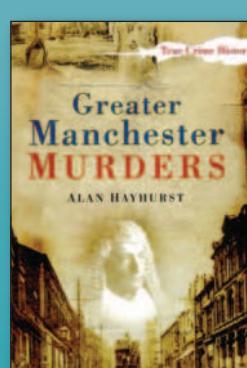
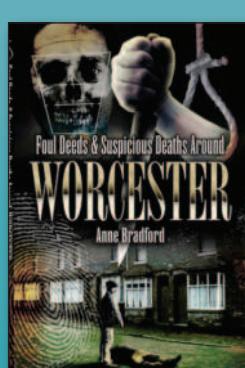
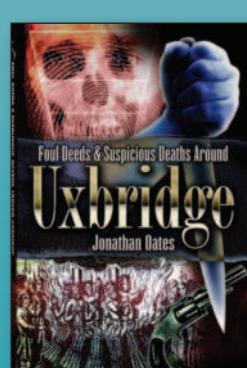
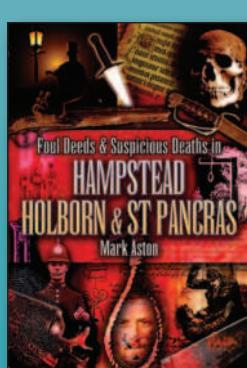
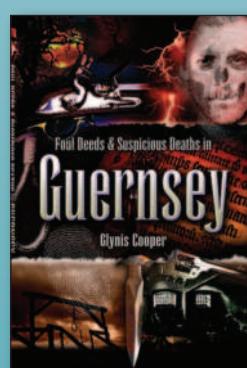
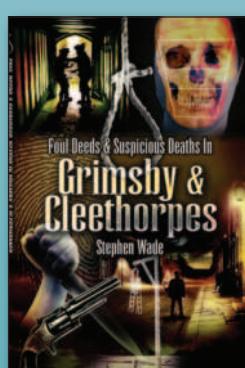
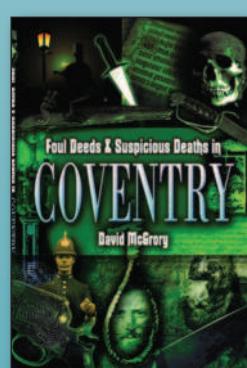
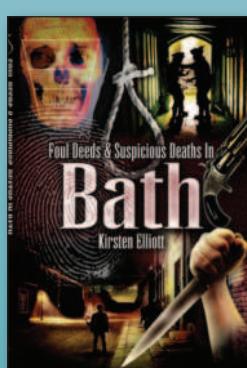
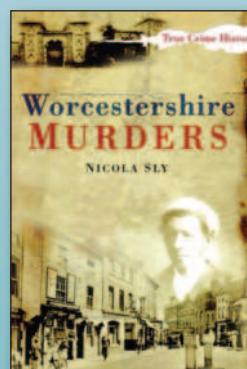
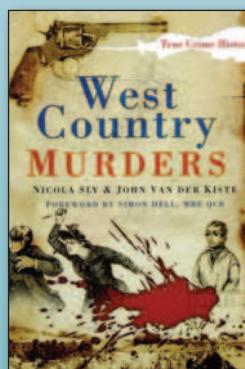
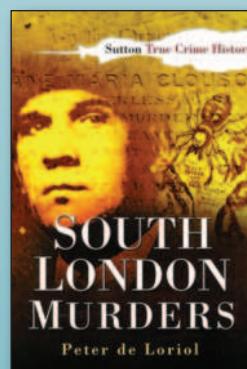
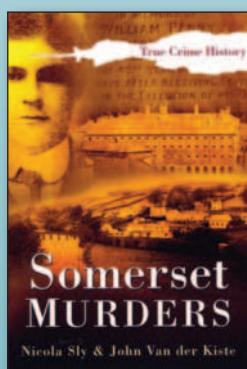
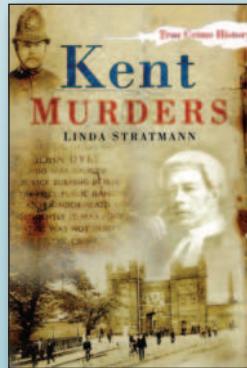
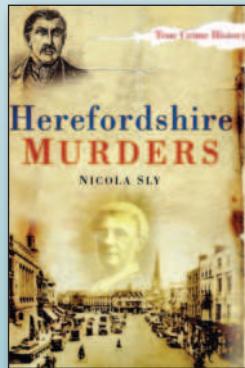
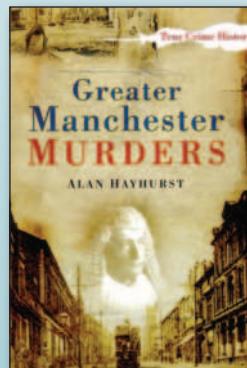
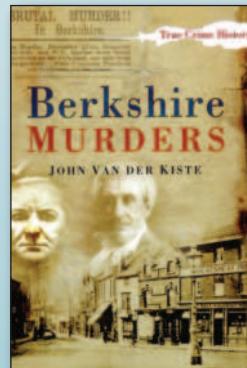
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Reader **Andrew Stephenson** got in touch, prompted by an account in Paul Donnelley's *Murder Month* (February) of the bizarre case of Joe Meek. In particular, he wanted to know more about the murder of Bernard Oliver. We're pleased to oblige, with this newly researched account by **Donald Carne**

t was a diamond of a day. Crisp, clear and chilly, January 16th, 1967, was a perfect winter morning in the fields near Tattingstone, Suffolk, a classic English village roughly five miles south of Ipswich.

Well, it was a perfect morning right up until the point that farm worker Fred Burggy, 42, found two suitcases beneath a hedgerow.

"At first I thought it was rubbish," he said. So he gave a shrug and ignored them. For an hour or so, he carried on with his tasks for the day, but after an hour or so, he came back.

"When I took a second look, that was enough for me."

It would have been enough for pretty much anyone – the cases contained the dismembered remains of a young man, along with some clothing which had been neatly folded.

Who was it? Why had both suitcases been placed so close – after all, if you're going to do something like that, trying to throw police off the scent, and make it harder for them, then surely you put the cases in two different places?

Regardless, news spread through the village like wildfire.

"The crime was so alien to the sleepy village," said local photographer Dave Kindred. "It was as if the body fell from the sky."

The post-mortem showed that the victim had been strangled and sexually

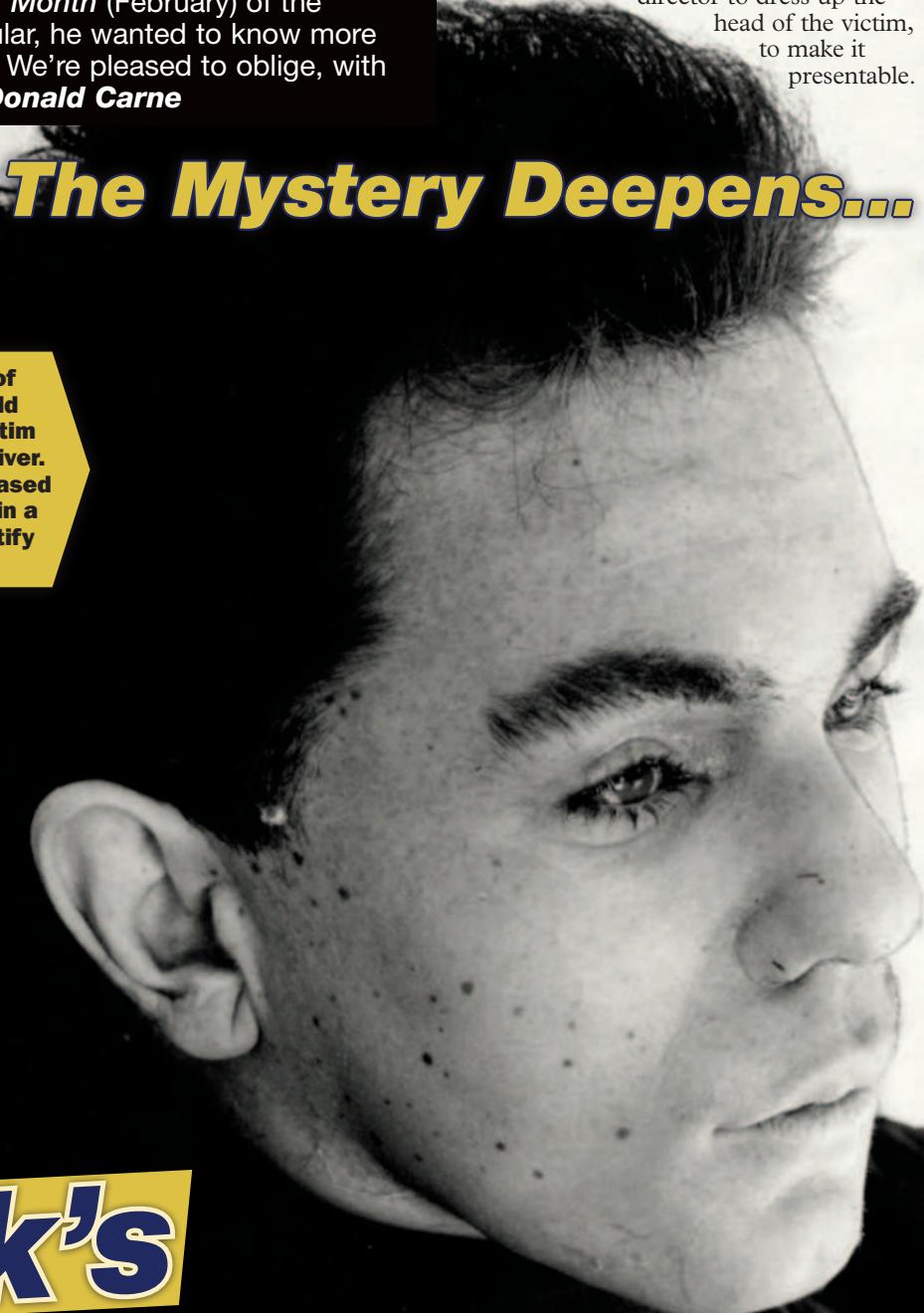
assaulted before his death roughly two days earlier.

So the first task for East Suffolk Police was to identify the victim. Scotland Yard's Detective Superintendent Harry Tappin and Detective Sergeant Reg Sillwood came up from London to help out.

And Harry Tappin was keen to get a result as soon as possible. Not for him the sleepy pace of a country village police station.

After a couple of false leads went nowhere, he asked a local funeral director to dress up the head of the victim, to make it presentable.

The Mystery Deepens...



The head of 17-year-old murder victim Bernard Oliver. Police released the photo in a bid to identify him

Suffolk's "BODY IN A SUITCASE"

For more than 55 years, the murder of Bernard Oliver has been unsolved. No one knows who did it or why, and all the police have had to go on is a series of ever wilder conspiracy theories...

Then he had a photo taken and released it to the press, hoping that someone, somewhere, would recognise the young man and get in touch.

It worked like a charm – the next day, the Tattingstone Suitcase Murder was headline news all over the country.

Soon, 53-year old north Londoner George Oliver came forward to say that he'd last seen his son, Bernie, 10 days before.

He'd reported Bernie missing when he failed to come home from work in Muswell Hill, near Alexandra Palace.

"He was a normal boy," George said. "He had little or no interest in women or girls. I asked him how he got on at work and he said he was happy. I cannot understand it. There was no indication he would go away."

Bernie was just 17, and worked in a warehouse. He spent much of his spare time on the fringe of local music clubs and studios. He was known to hang



Joe Meek at his home recording studio in the 1960s

wrong for him to have been so horribly treated?

In the days before serious forensics, detectives had very little to go on. As a starting point, they decided to take a close look at the suitcases.

One was dark, the other light. The dark one had the initials PVA pencilled on a Union Castle label pasted to the outside and what looked like an "R."

Could they be the initials of the owner? Or could the killer have added them to throw out a false trail?

A tea towel found amongst the clothes in the suitcases carried the laundry mark QL42. There was also a box of matches with an Israeli brand.

So could the cases have belonged to a traveller or a seafarer of some kind? The type was certainly popular with merchant seamen at the time.

At the time, Union Castle was a well-known travel firm, specialising in trips between Europe and Africa.

Officers began the painstaking task of checking the passenger lists for the previous 18 years, but found nothing of note.

It would have been very difficult to get much of a result, though. Paper-based systems of the time were often inaccurate and it was easy for passengers wanting to start a new life, and who knew where to ask, to get themselves a second passport in those days.

So nothing of any significance came up.

Next, detectives set themselves an ambitious target of interviewing "every gay man in London."

This wasn't just a mammoth task, it was a controversial and potentially emotive one, too.

Although homosexuality would soon be legal, at the time it was still a serious taboo, and these were dark times to be gay in Britain. Even in London you could be arrested and have your life ruined for being caught indulging in "lewd behaviour" – you'd be thrown out of your job, publicly humiliated and the exposure could be truly crushing.

One of the most prominent people that Bernie had met who was worried about being exposed was Joe Meek.

He'd already been humiliated by the law – in 1963, he was convicted of importuning for immoral purposes in a public toilet – so he was understandably nervous about his reputation.



Above, the suitcases where they were discovered. One contained the victim's head, the other seven body parts neatly dismembered. Below, police remove one of the suitcases from the hedgerow near the village of Tattingstone, Suffolk.

around the then legendary producer Joe Meek's studio on Holloway Road, occasionally stacking and cataloguing tapes for him in the flat that Joe had converted into a studio.

It had been one of Bernie's brothers, Christopher, who had identified him from the newspaper photo.

"My mate went 'Chrissy, that's your brother, isn't it?' I looked at it and I just knew straight away. There was no mistaking it."

Bernie's brothers described him as quiet and gentle. At only five foot three tall, he was the shortest of the siblings, but he didn't let that mean he was going to be ignored.

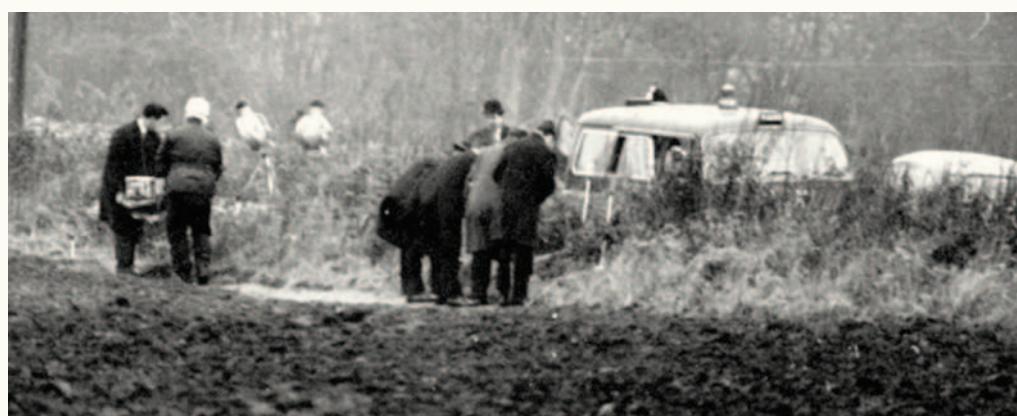
"When he did speak up, he had a great sense of humour."

But on January 6th, Bernie had set off with some friends for a night out and never returned.

Now the police knew who the victim was, the next problem was trying to work out why he'd been murdered.

After all, no one had a bad word to say about the young man. He was pleasant, witty, friendly, apparently without an enemy in the world. If anything, he was regarded as being young for his age, maybe even too naive.

What on earth could have gone so



After all, here was a man with a string of hits behind him, several of which are still remembered even today: John Leyton's "Johnny Remember Me," the Tornados' "Telstar," the Honeycombs' "Have I The Right?" and over a dozen more.

However, by 1967, with his musical success on the wane, and an amphetamine and barbiturate habit that had left him racked by depression and paranoia, Meek was desperate to protect his reputation in the music industry and with the public.

So when he read about Scotland Yard's intention to interview all the gay men in London, knowing how often Bernie had visited his studio and helped out, it could well have tipped him over the edge.

On February 3rd – eight years to the day after his idol Buddy Holly, along with Richie Valens and the Big Bopper,



Above, Police closed off the road to traffic as their investigations continued.
Below, Detectives look for clues where the suitcases were found



died in a plane crash – Meek killed his landlady and then himself with a single-barrelled shotgun.

Any connection between Bernie and Joe died on the same day.

The Yard's first theory was based on the idea that Bernie had no connection with the area where his body was found.

Had the killer driven Bernie there for some reason and then killed him? Or was it more likely that he'd been killed elsewhere and then the suitcases had been dumped in as remote a part of the countryside as the killer could find?

Working together, the Suffolk police and Scotland Yard uncovered a network of gay men within the county who would rent a cottage for the weekend and hold parties. They would bus in what were then known as rent boys from London.

Could Bernie have been involved in something like this, they speculated, and come to a bad end when the party went

sour?

Slowly, two main suspects started to emerge, both of them doctors.

Martin Reddington, 35, had a surgery in Muswell Hill, where Bernie was from.

In 1965, Reddington was charged with buggery and indecent assault on a male, but before the trial he fled to South Africa – a popular destination for Union Castle trips.

The problem was that even though he was known to have made several trips back to the UK in the intervening time, the chances were that he'd try to claim he'd been out of the country at the time Bernie had been killed.

But the trail to Reddington ran cold and then, in 1973, he migrated to Australia permanently, hoping to make a new beginning.

Instead, he only lasted four years before being charged with indecent assault on a male, in 1977.

In the same year, a private investigator from London claimed that he recognised the suitcases that Bernie's

body had been found in as belonging to Reddington.

But this simply wasn't strong enough evidence to have him extradited from down under, and he stayed there, finally dying in 1995 aged 63.

The other suspect was John Roussel Byles, who was 33 at the time.

Byles also left Britain in the early 1970s for Australia, where he was arrested in 1974 for indecently assaulting a boy.

He absconded on his A\$2,000 bail and was found dead in his room at the Prince of Wales Hotel in Proserpine, Queensland, in 1975, having overdosed on prescription drugs.

Byles left two suicide notes. One was to Reddington, and the other was to Scotland Yard. Although his note to the police apologised for his actions towards the young boys he had been accused of abusing, neither note held much in the way of useful information in Bernie's case.

Both men were also suspects in another murder before they left the UK for good, this time of a young boy in London in 1973.

In addition, after Byles died in 1995, allegations were made that in the 1960s he would often invite young boys to his surgery in south London.

There he would ply them with drink and drugs, and then sell indecent photos of them to a Danish pornographer.

He was also alleged to have confessed to killing and dismembering a gay cabin boy.

The problem for the police, though, was that none of this had any solid evidence. It was all smoke and rumour, leaving them as much in the dark as ever.

Another theory put forward was about the most notorious pair of thugs from the 60s, the Krays.

They had strong connections to Suffolk – as children, they'd been evacuated there during World War Two, and they knew the area well.

Later, as successful gangsters, they bought themselves a property in Bildeston, part of a fantasy they often entertained of retiring as country gentlemen when their days of violence and thuggery were over.

The pair's love of show business meant they would often hang about music clubs, venues and musicians, desperate to have the glamour of the swinging 60s rub off on them.

Ronnie, who was an infamous homosexual predator, would often focus on the bright-eyed, ambitious young men on the fringe of the recording industry at the time.

And they were rightly terrified of him.

"You had to keep your wits about you if you were a young man and Ronnie really fancied you," said singer Jess Conrad. "Word used to go out that the Krays were on their way to a certain pub and all the good-looking young boys used to piss off – because otherwise, if he asked you to go back to the house you had to go back and that was it."

Long after the pair had been arrested and brought back to earth, a former cellmate of Reggie Kray claimed that Reggie had confessed to him that he'd killed "a young gay boy."

Detectives believe that he was probably talking about a completely unconnected murder, that of Edward "Mad Teddy" Smith, which also happened in 1967, because otherwise there was virtually no evidence to link the Krays to Bernie's death.

For some time, though, the police still believed that there may have been some sort of link to Joe Meek or, if not, then the music industry generally.

At one point in their investigation, they sailed out into the Channel to the MV *Galaxy*, a former USN minesweeper anchored off the coast of Frinton-on-Sea.

The *Galaxy* was the base for the pirate radio station Radio London, which helped to launch the careers of future stars such as Tony Blackburn, Ed Stewart, John Peel and Tommy Vance, among others.

Bizarrely, this notorious law-breaking was funded by the Worldwide Church of God.

But it wasn't their flouting of the Post Office Act that the police were interested in. One of the DJs on the boat was said to be a close friend of Joe Meek.

David Hawkins, an engineer for the station, was initially confused when officers asked for a list of Dutch crew members, but then he realised that they might have been trying to locate someone with a Dutch name from the initials PVA – P van A, perhaps?

"Their basic mission was to find out which of the Dutch crew had come off the ship immediately before the murder took place and had perhaps gone on to

Holland later," David said.

Additionally, one of the medical suspects, John Byles, was known to have had contact with Amsterdam pornographic circles.

But once again, all of this came to nothing.

There was no suggestion that anyone on the boat had had anything at all to do with Bernard Oliver's death.

So the police were back to square one, which is pretty much where they've been ever since.

The most recent theory came from graphic novelist Pat Mills, who grew up in Ipswich.

He has speculated that Bernie may have fallen victim to part of a wider network of paedophiles focused around Reddington and Byles.

This eventually came to be known as the Holy Trinity paedophile ring after three men were jailed in 1975.

Rev. John Poole, a vicar at the Holy Trinity Church in Huddersfield, Raymond Varley, a former child care worker from Leeds, and schoolteacher Clive Wilcock were found guilty at Leeds Crown Court of contravening the Sexual Offences Act, the Obscene Publications Act and the Post Office Act.

A fourth man, who was described as the ringleader, was none other than John Byles. But as he was in Australia by then, he was both literally and figuratively out of reach. Even so, the convictions happened just six months before his death.

Pat Mills believes that Bernie Oliver was a victim of the group, and was dismembered in Ipswich outside an office block on Salthouse Street.

Mills believes that an article in the *Ipswich Star* from 2012 paints a picture of what could have happened.

"A witness, Mr. Thurston, came forward to say that between 1 a.m. and 2 a.m. in early January 1967, he had

seen a man wearing surgeon's gloves, standing inside the entrance to the offices in Salthouse Street, Ipswich. At his feet were two cases."

The problem is that there is no other evidence to link Bernie – or indeed, the mystery man with the two cases – to the Holy Trinity ring.

Even the sighting in Ipswich may actually have been of Bernie himself.

In 2018, the *Ipswich Star* reported that after they'd printed an article about the case, a woman had come forward to say she'd seen Bernie in Tattingstone.

Alive.

Now in her 60s, the woman said that her daughter had persuaded her to come forward after hearing what she'd got to say.

"I was 16 at the time, and worked as a groom at Reston. One of my jobs was to exercise the hunt horses.

"On this morning, I was out with two horses – riding one, leading the other.

"I came up the hill in Tattingstone. As I got to the White Horse, I saw a young man walking towards me, and he was carrying two suitcases.

"He was someone I had not seen before and his face was covered with freckles.

"In those days, you got to recognise all the locals and everyone would say 'good morning'.

"A few days later, I saw his photograph in the paper and immediately thought, my God, that's the chap I saw.

"I still think it was him. I always felt he must have been murdered close to the Tattingstone area and that someone else must have seen him."

Even with a potential sighting like this, the police have virtually no evidence of any kind, even now, to connect anyone with Bernie's death.

And so, 55 years after he was murdered, the mystery of who killed this gentle, friendly young man remains bafflingly unsolved.

Not that the police have ever given up looking, at least not officially.

"The Joint Major Investigations Team has its own team of police staff who routinely review unsolved crimes from Suffolk and Norfolk," said a police spokesperson. "It is never too late for people to come forward with any information they think may help this inquiry, even though the crime occurred more than 50 years ago."

So if you think that you or someone you know may have any information that might help to bring closure to Bernie Oliver's family, however minor or insignificant you think it may appear to be, please contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

The call is free and anything you say will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

It could help to put a family's mind at ease, and help them lay to rest once and for all the demons around not knowing what happened.

An artist's impression of a fat-faced, wavy-haired suspect



HANGED AT STRANGEWAYS

THE MANCHESTER PRISON'S 100 EXECUTIONS 1869–1964 • PART 7

They had very different occupations. One was a Preston market trader, another a Bolton night-watchman and the third a Blackburn iron-moulder. But they had one thing in common: they were all hanged at Strangeways Prison in the late 1920s. Starting with the 62nd execution at this Manchester gaol, we continue our series chronicling each Strangeways hanging...

62

"SHE DESERVES IT!"

On completing 23 years' Army service in December 1924, 41-year-old **Patrick Power** took lodgings in

the home of Sarah Sykes and her husband in Whit Lane, Pendleton, Salford.

Jobless and on the dole, at the beginning of the following April Power borrowed £5 from Mr. Sykes, and on the morning of April 11th Mrs. Sykes pressed him for repayment, telling him he must leave if he didn't settle the debt that day.

After lunch Mr. Sykes went out to his work as an ice-cream salesman, and at 3.30 p.m. Power went to Pendleton

police station. "I wish to give myself myself up," he told the desk sergeant. "I've



killed my landlady. I hit her on the head with a hammer. If she is not dead now she is near it, and she deserves it."

In her sitting-room, Mrs. Sykes, 46, was found lying on the floor with a severe head wound, and she died shortly after admission to hospital. She had seven skull fractures, three broken ribs and a broken jaw.

He couldn't remember attacking her, Power said later, but on finding himself standing over her he realised what he had done.

At his trial for murder, Mrs. Sykes was said to have been a spiritualist and medium, and it was suggested that Power was under her influence when he assaulted her

The jury, however, took only 10 minutes to find him guilty.

"Nobody is happier than me that tomorrow is the day," Power told his girlfriend on the eve of his execution, and William Willis duly hanged him on May 26th, 1925.

63

SHE WOULDN'T TAKE "NO" FOR AN ANSWER

It was the last thing that 25-year-old **James Makin** wanted; he simply wasn't in the mood for it. Having just lost his job at a Manchester bleach works, he had gone to his local pub on the afternoon of May 4th, 1925, to drown his sorrows, only to be pestered by a prostitute who wouldn't take "No" for an answer.

Unwisely, he had given 24-year-old Sarah Clutton some encouragement by buying her a drink, and then he couldn't shake her off. When he left the pub she followed him to his wife's uncle's house in Cross Street, Newton Heath, where he and his wife rented a room.

Telling Sarah Clutton to go away, he went in and closed the front door firmly behind him, only to be embarrassed then by her persistent knocking. He noticed a shopkeeper across the street watching the girl with interest, so he let her in to avoid a scene. When Makin's wife returned from

This month we move from the brief period when William Willis (left) conducted most of the Strangeways hangings into the "reign" of Thomas Pierrepont (below). But it was Willis alone who hanged Patrick Power (above)



work at 5 p.m., her screams brought her uncle running upstairs. Sarah Clutton lay on the couple's bed, her face and neck slashed and three of her fingers deeply gashed. She was obviously dead, and the uncle ran for the police.

Meanwhile, Makin had gone to the city centre and met an old friend. Over a drink, he told him what had happened. Then he went to the police.

He told them that after having sex with the prostitute he was horrified to see blood on his penis. He asked her if she had a venereal disease, and she wouldn't say. She just burst into tears, and in his rage he broke a bottle over her head before cutting her throat.

At his trial for murder, the court heard that Sarah Clutton was menstruating at the time of her death. Makin had killed her, the prosecution submitted, through fear and ignorance.

Found guilty and sentenced to death, he was hanged on August 11th, 1925, by William Willis and Robert Baxter.

64

A SOFT SPOT FOR SEAMEN

Twenty-three-year-old Beatrice Martin fancied sailors, but although she was well-known in the pubs of Salford's dockland she was not a prostitute. She was just a good-time girl who was generous with her favours.

When **Samuel Johnson**, 29, began courting her, her parents welcomed this, hoping it would persuade her to settle down. Before he could marry her he had to get a divorce from his estranged wife, and he was arranging to do this when Beatrice suddenly announced she had changed her mind. She no longer wanted to get married, she told him.

He soon learned that she was seeing another lover, a sailor named John Hunter. Waylaying her in the early hours of July 27th, 1925, as she returned to her parents' Stretford home after a night out with the seaman, Johnson stabbed her in the back and she died on the doorstep.

He then went to the police, and at his trial for murder he pleaded guilty, saying, "I refuse to be defended."

On the eve of his execution he asked to spend five minutes with the hangman, explaining that he didn't want to upset him. The request was refused, and at 8 a.m. on December 15th, 1925,



Beatrice Martin.
She died on her own doorstep, stabbed by Samuel Johnson (left)

wooden leg as its owner made his way down the stairs.

Leaving her bed, Mrs. Godfrey rushed to the next room where Frances lay with blood pouring from a deep gash in her throat. "Thorpe!" she managed to gasp to her mother, and within minutes she was dead.

Arrested at his lodgings, Thorpe had made two suicide attempts. First he threw himself in front of a tram, its driver braking and avoiding hitting him. Then he tried to drown himself in a canal, but couldn't keep his head under the water. When police arrived he was about to cut his throat.

Found guilty at his trial for murder, Thorpe was hanged by William Willis on March 16th, 1926.



James Makin (above) couldn't shake off prostitute Sarah Clutton (left) – so he had sex with her, then killed her

Johnson was hanged by William Willis and Thomas Phillips.

65

A FAMILIAR TREAD ON THE STAIRS

A one-legged ex-soldier, 45-year-old **William Thorpe**, made his girlfriend Frances Godfrey, 39, pregnant but refused to marry her. To her relief another man, William Clarke, made her his wife despite her pregnancy, and moved in with her at her 70-year-old mother's home in Bolton.

This upset Thorpe, who now felt he had missed out. He resented someone else having Frances, and he became embittered and depressed. On November 19th, 1925, after finishing his work as a watchman at a Bolton building site, he went on a pub crawl, and at about 5.30 the next morning Mrs. Godfrey was woken by a scream coming from her daughter's room.

Clarke had gone to work half an hour earlier, and Frances's cry was followed by the familiar tapping of a

wooden leg as its owner made his way down the stairs.

Leaving her bed, Mrs. Godfrey rushed to the next room where Frances lay with blood pouring from a deep gash in her throat. "Thorpe!" she managed to gasp to her mother, and within minutes she was dead.

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Found guilty at his trial for murder, Thorpe was hanged by William Willis on March 16th, 1926.

66

LOUIE'S TELLTALE FOOTWEAR

She was short, not much to look at, and to the Leeds Police who often arrested her for soliciting she was Louie Gomersal. The Salvation Army, who sometimes paid her fines and whose meetings she attended in a stolen uniform, knew her as Louie Jackson, and it was under that name in 1925 that she became Arthur Calvert's live-in housekeeper at his home in the city's Railway Place.

He worked as a night-watchman, and he made both Louie and her young son so welcome that she soon became his mistress. When she lied to him that she was pregnant, Calvert had no doubt that he was the father. He promptly married her, and to sustain her deception **Louie Calvert** packed a bag and told him that for her confinement she was going to stay with her sister in Dewsbury.

But she spent long enough there only to send a telegram saying she'd arrived. Then she returned to Leeds, and as housekeeper/lodger moved into the Amberley Road home of Mrs. Lily Waterhouse, a 40-year-old widow.

Louie also resumed her career as a prostitute, and a few days later she answered an advertisement which offered a baby girl for adoption. Informing her husband of her impending return home, she arranged to collect the child on March 31st, 1926.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Waterhouse suspected her of theft, and on March 30th she went to the police and took out a summons. The next evening neighbours heard sounds of a disturbance at the Amberley Road house, and shortly afterwards Louie emerged carrying a large bag and the baby, with whom her husband was delighted when she rejoined him in Railway Place.

Early the next morning she was back in Amberley Road, where she was seen leaving Mrs. Waterhouse's home with a suitcase. It contained baby clothes, she told her husband on her return to Railway Place.

Later that day the summons that Mrs. Waterhouse had taken out came up in court and, when she failed to appear, two policemen went to her home to investigate. They found her in a back



Louie Calvert: she confessed to another murder while awaiting execution



Left, the execution of self-confessed double-killer Louie Calvert as depicted in the popular press of the time. Above, Eleanor Pilkington, victim of Blackburn's bonfire night stabbing. Below, her killer, Frederick Fielding. He'd announced his intentions when buying the murder weapon



bedroom, beaten and strangled to death. Her boots were among her belongings that were missing, and the discovery of a letter to Louie Calvert sent detectives to Railway Place.

The door was answered by Louie, wearing boots several sizes too large for her. They were Mrs. Waterhouse's, and so was cutlery, crockery and other items found in the suitcase.

Tried and convicted of murder, Louie attempted to avoid execution by claiming she was pregnant. Medical examination showed that she was lying, and while awaiting the hangman she admitted another murder.

In 1922 the body of a Leeds man named John Frobisher had been found floating in a canal, his skull fractured by a severe beating. She was his housekeeper, Louie said, and it was she who killed him.

Aged 33 when she went to the gallows on June 24th, 1926, she was hanged by Thomas Pierrepont and William Willis.

67

STABBED IN THE NECK

"I've a murder to do and I've come to buy a knife!" **Frederick Fielding** announced at an ironmonger's counter in Rishton, near Blackburn. As he made his purchase and left the shop, the staff assumed he was joking. A week later, they knew better.

A 24-year-old iron-moulder, Fielding had taken to drink and lost his job after his girlfriend Eleanor Pilkington, 23, ended their four-year relationship. She was responsible for his troubles, he decided, and he determined to do something about it.

First he smashed a window at her parents' house in Rishton. Then a few days later, on November 5th, 1927, he waylaid Eleanor as she made her way home from a bonfire night dance with two girlfriends. He wanted a word with her, he told her, grabbing her arm and pulling her into a shop doorway.

Then as Eleanor broke away to rejoin

her friends, he stabbed her twice in the neck. Her friends' home was just a few doors away, and they managed to get her there before she collapsed and died within minutes.

An hour later Fielding surrendered to a policeman on patrol in Blackburn, and at his trial for murder he claimed he had been too drunk to know what he was doing. But there was evidence of premeditation, and he had seemed sober when arrested within an hour of the stabbing.

Found guilty and sentenced to death, he was hanged by Thomas Pierrepont on June 28th, 1928.

68

"I'LL GET YOU NOW!"

Walter Brooks was a 48-year-old Preston market trader, and not an easy man to live with. He was so difficult, in fact, that in 1925 his wife Beatrice obtained a three-day warrant committing him to a mental institution as temporarily insane.

In the event, the order was suspended because Brooks calmed down and his

behaviour became more reasonable. But the improvement was not maintained, and two years later his wife and two children left their home in Grimshaw Street, along with the couple's lodgers, and moved to 39 Avenham Road.

Brooks moved into lodgings in Tithebarn Street, and began to brood. One of his former lodgers, he became convinced, was having an affair with Beatrice. The lodger was 50-year-old Alfred Moore, and Brooks decided he was responsible for Beatrice's departure.

A fellow-market trader sold Brooks a revolver, and on April 4th, 1928, he ambushed his wife and Moore as they returned to Avenham Road after spending the evening together in a pub.

"I'll get you now!" Brooks shouted, shooting both of them. Moore died on the spot, Beatrice in hospital, and Brooks was arrested for their murder.

At his trial his counsel sought a



Chung Yi Miao. When told his wife was dead, he seemed to know too much

verdict of guilty but insane, citing Brooks's mental history. But the jury were unimpressed. They found the double-murderer guilty as charged, and on June 28th, 1928, he was hanged by Thomas Pierrepont.

69

NEWLY WED & NEWLY DEAD

In the summer of 1928 **Chung Yi Miao**, a 28-year-old Chinese law graduate, was honeymooning with his bride Wai Sheung Sui at the Borrowdale Gates Hotel in the Lake District. Wai was the 29-year-old daughter of a wealthy merchant, and the couple had met and married in New York.

At 2 p.m. on their second day at the hotel, June 19th, they went out for a walk, Miao wearing a brown overcoat as the weather was chilly. He returned alone two hours later, saying his wife was feeling the cold and had gone to Keswick to buy warmer clothes.

She was not back by dinner time, so he dined alone, showing no concern until 10 p.m. when he asked one of the hotel's staff what he should do as Wai had not returned. He was advised to inform the police, but did not do so.

Later that night he was roused from his bed and told that Wai had been found. A farmer on his way to a pub had spotted her lying on the ground at a nearby beauty spot as if asleep, and when he mentioned this to an off-duty policeman the officer had gone to investigate.

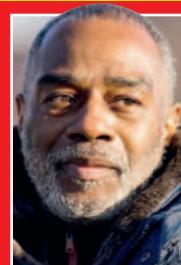
He found that Wai had been punched in the mouth, which was bleeding, and had been strangled with a piece of window-blind cord that was still round her neck. She also appeared to have been raped, for her skirt was pulled up and her knickers had been removed, along with two rings taken from her fingers.

Told only that she had been found dead, Miao immediately aroused suspicion by saying it was terrible that Wai had been robbed and murdered. A length of white cord found in his room matched the piece used to strangle his wife, her rings were discovered in two film containers in his bedside drawer, and there was blood on his overcoat.

Arrested and charged with murder,

TRUE DETECTIVE

WORLD'S NO.1 TRUE CRIME MAGAZINE



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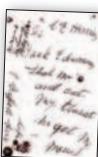
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CECILIA'S LETTER OF HORROR



Shot in the face,
her throat cut, she
wrote the note
that would seal
her killer's doom

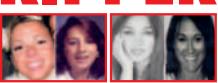


ADELAIDE SHOCKER

Wife's Body Was In Three Parts



From "Boy Next Door Killer" To HOLLYWOOD RIPPER



100 YEARS AGO... Hammer-Murder At A London Hotel



"Millionaire Seeks Slim Young Woman"

SMALL AD SPELLED ROSE'S DOOM



CLEVELAND'S CHRISTMAS MURDER – STILL UNSOLVED TO THIS DAY



Miao pleaded not guilty at his trial, claiming that two Orientals had been shadowing him and his wife. Witnesses testified that on the day of the murder they had seen two Chinese men in Keswick, but the prosecution suggested that this was just a coincidence, the presence of Orientals in Keswick at the height of the holiday season not being unusual.

The court heard that a scrap of paper found amongst Miao's possessions bore incriminating words in his handwriting: "Don't do it on the ship, consider on arrival in Europe." Miao was unable to explain this, and the prosecution claimed that "it" was murder, the note clear evidence of premeditation.

After an hour's retirement the jury found Chung Yi Miao guilty, and he was sentenced to death. His appeal was dismissed, and on December 6th, 1928, he was hanged by Thomas Pierrepont.

What was his motive? After his execution a statement purporting to be his confession was published by a



It was only when his daughter asked why he had blood on his hands, said George Cartledge (below), that he realised he'd murdered his wife Nellie (above)

Sunday newspaper. It said that after his marriage Miao discovered that his bride couldn't have children, so he killed her in order to remarry.

70

"I MUST HAVE HIT THE MISSUS"

It was with an arm waving wildly through her bedroom window that 25-year-old Nellie Cartledge signalled for help. It was just before 9 a.m. on January 2nd, 1929, and her need was urgent.

She lived in Oak Street, Shaw, near Oldham, and a woman neighbour soon came into view. "Is something wrong?" she asked.

"Yes," Nellie shouted down, asking her to call the police and an ambulance.

But by the time they arrived Nellie lay dead on her bedroom floor, her throat slashed by a razor lying beside her. On the bed, her 27-year-old husband **George Cartledge** sat looking dazed. "I must have hit the missus," he told the police.

It was only when his six-year-old daughter asked him why he had blood on his hands that he went upstairs, he said, and realised he had attacked his wife.

He had a string of convictions for assault, and this was not the first time he had attacked Nellie – he had once tried to strangle her, but she had refused to bring charges.

Now accused of her murder, he pleaded not guilty at his trial, his counsel submitting a defence of insanity.

In the previous December, the court was told, Cartledge had consulted a doctor, saying he had severe headaches, couldn't concentrate and had trouble sleeping. But when he went to the doctor again three days before Nellie's murder, the physician had noted an improvement in his condition.

The jury heard that he had attempted suicide while awaiting trial, but Strangeways Prison's medical officer said he had found Cartledge to be sane, although of low intelligence.

Found guilty as charged and sentenced to death, Cartledge was executed by Thomas Pierrepont on April 4th, 1929.

71

"NELLIE IS NO MORE"

It was "out of the frying pan and into the fire" for 24-year-old Sarah Ellen "Nellie" Johnson when, fed up with her six-year marriage, she left her husband for **Francis Land**. The new man in her life, she soon realised, was a violent bully.

A 40-year-old boiler fireman living in Rochdale, Land was also a heavy drinker. The pair were soon doing little but quarrel, and after another row and another beating Nellie packed her bags and went to stay with a girlfriend, Emily Whitehead.

Four days later, on December 6th, 1930, Land spotted them in Rochdale's Flying Horse Hotel and asked Nellie to



"We'd better have a constable on the job," said Francis Land (above)

return to him. "I'm not coming back," she snapped. "We're finished. You've hit me once too often."

"I'll bloody murder you," Land threatened.

When Nellie and Emily saw him again on the evening of December 12th he again asked Nellie to rejoin him, and said that a coat had been delivered at his home for her.

"I'll come with you now to collect it," Nellie told him.

"Don't forget to bring her back safely," Emily cautioned Land.

But Nellie did not return home, and when Emily went to look for her she saw Land alone in the town centre. "Where's Nellie?" she asked.

"Nellie is no more. There is no Nellie," Land replied. "Nellie is dead. I have done her in."

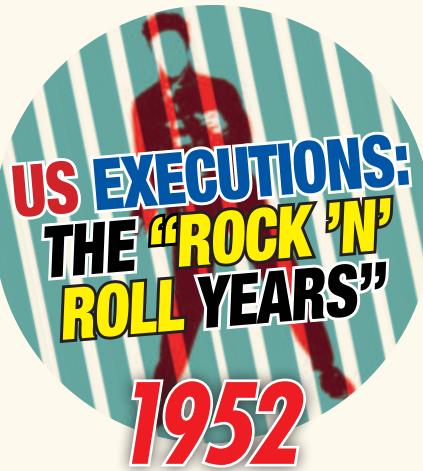
Emily called two men over and asked them to detain him while she fetched a policeman, but there was no need. Land himself said, "We'd better have a constable on the job," and when a police inspector was seen walking down Toad Lane he was called over. At Land's invitation the inspector accompanied him, Emily and the two men to Land's home in Waterhouse Place. And there Nellie lay dead in the front room, her throat gashed.

Arrested and charged with murder, Land pleaded not guilty at his trial, denying that he had ever said he'd done Nellie in. He claimed that as he approached his home with her she had told him, "It's no use you coming up, Frank. I'll go and get the coat and meet you in the Grapes." But she didn't show up at the Grapes Hotel, he said, and on returning home and finding her body he panicked and ran back to the town centre.

The jury didn't believe him, and took only 15 minutes to decide that he was guilty.

"I still maintain that I am innocent," Land said after he was sentenced to death. A petition for a reprieve failed to save him, and he was hanged on April 16th, 1931.

NEXT MONTH: A dwarf, a deadly doctor and two one-eyed killers go to the gallows



Bonnie's Date Frenzied Axe-



Bonnie Lou Merrill was just 16 years old when she was murdered

ROLAND DEAN SUNDAHL had a hangover. He moved his thick, swollen tongue inside his dry mouth and he reckoned that a beer – just one beer, cold, wet, creamy and smooth – would make him feel better. He'd lose his thirst and he'd kill that awful taste.

The heat wasn't helping. It was a sultry day in August 1950, and as the 20-year-old brooded in the little town of Columbus, Nebraska, he slid his hand into his pocket and felt to see how many notes he had. There were four – all singles, probably, but still four.

That was quite good for Rollie Sundahl these days. He sighed with self-pity. Healthy, husky and handsome, the boy from Norfolk, Nebraska, ought to have had the world by the tail.

Instead, he bitterly realised that the world had him by the tail – and was swinging him around the way a gang of cruel children would whirl a frightened cat. He was finished, for all practical purposes. What's left for a man with maintenance to pay to a wife and two kids?

He felt a slight pang of guilt as he remembered that it was a long time since he'd sent any money home for the support of his two children. The pang passed in a second. They wouldn't go hungry. Somebody would take care of them. Anyway, he'd worry about that when it caught up to him.

He bought the drink and brooded over it. Then he had a sandwich and moved on. Somewhere along the line he ran into two old buddies. He had a lot of friends in Columbus, although it was 47 miles from his home town. They all went to a nearby pool for a swim and then sat around and chatted for a while and he began to feel better.

In fact, he decided, slicking back his wet, blond hair, he not only was out of the dumps, but he was beginning to feel like having fun – like going out with a girl, for instance. He sounded out his friends on the subject.

One of them, Lou Garner, went right along with the idea.

"I'm in favour," he said. "I could do with some company."

The other one shook his head. "Count me out. I've got other plans for tonight." Garner and Sundahl decided to spend

the night on the town. Sundahl was happy. He privately thought that it would be a lot easier to get dates for two than it would be for three.

But, after much prowling and a number of frosty stares, he found that getting two just girls wasn't that easy.

"This really is a dead loss," Rollie said with disgust. "All this cruising around and we still haven't got our dates for tonight. What's the matter with the kids in this town, anyway? Don't they like a little fun?"

"I can't understand it," Garner said. "Don't usually have this much trouble."

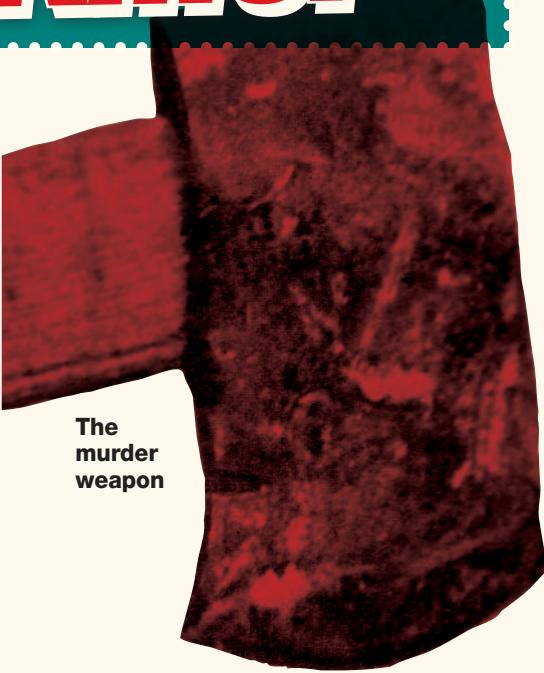
He thought for a moment. "Tell you what. Let's go on over to the drive-in joint and try some of the waitresses they've got there."

"What can we lose?" Rollie pressed his foot against the starter of his old Ford.

At the drive-in, they got out and walked inside. Rollie's luck was spectacularly bad. There were girls, all right – but they weren't interested. Two of them said they had dates. A third said she didn't have a date and, furthermore, she didn't want one with Sundahl. Her pert face and smooth figure made the words dig deep.

1952

With A Killer



The
murder
weapon

He was still sulking five minutes later when Garner returned to the car.

Garner said, "How did you do?"

"They've all got dates," Rollie said bitterly. "All except that blonde, and I wouldn't take her if she came wrapped in silver dollars." He paused. "You?"

Garner shrugged. "I've got a date with Bonnie, the dark-haired girl who works behind the soft drinks counter. She's not a bad-looking number, but quiet. Anyway, she knocks off work at 1.30 a.m. and I told her I'd be back for her then."

It gave them time to scout around for a girl for Rollie. But his luck stayed bad.

It was Saturday night and every dateable girl in town was busy. But by 1.30, Sundahl had another idea.

He said, "Hey, Lou, how would it be if I string along with you and Bonnie tonight?"

"It's okay by me. And Bonnie won't mind. She'll have two men with her instead of one. It'll make her feel more popular."

That's the way it started. That's how Bonnie Lou Merrill had two male escorts when she left the drive-in that night.

Mrs. Merrill was polite but firm as she faced Ed Nickolite, Columbus chief of police. Nickolite, gray-eyed, quiet and competent, sighed and reached for a sheet of paper. As chief, he expected all kinds of trouble. But as chief of Columbus police, he got an extra dose because Columbus was

Case Report By A. MAHER

a minor metropolis of that section of Nebraska. It was a stopover for people travelling between Cheyenne, Wyoming and Omaha, and was crowded with more transient salesmen than its size warranted.

Mrs. Merrill explained that her daughter, Bonnie Lou, had left her home in Silver Creek, 17 miles from Columbus, in search of a summer job before returning for her senior year of high school. She had found work in a Columbus drive-in and had written home about how pleasant her work as a waitress was. Mrs. Merrill, afraid the girl might decide not to return to school after the summer, had travelled to Columbus to talk to her.

"I went to her boarding-house," Mrs. Merrill said. "But nobody there has seen her in a week. And she hasn't reported for work during that time, either. I'm worried. I'm certain that something's happened to my Bonnie."

"Now, Mrs. Merrill," Nickolite interjected, in an effort to soothe her, "suppose she's just met a nice young fellow and eloped?"

"I know Bonnie," replied the mother. "I know what she would do and what she wouldn't do. If she had anything of that sort in mind she'd bring the boy home and let us meet him. Besides," she added, "she's just a baby. She's only 16."

Nickolite tried another idea: "Perhaps she's at home right now. Maybe she figured on paying you a surprise visit."

Mrs. Merrill shook her head. "It wouldn't take a week to travel 17 miles."

Nickolite stood up. "Let's go over and talk to the landlady," he suggested. "It may be that she knows something she hasn't mentioned."

A trip to the boarding-house disclosed that the landlady knew nothing more. In fact, she had attached little significance to Bonnie's absence. Ed Nickolite asked her why.

"I thought Bonnie had gone home," she said. "I thought she'd be back any day. That's why I left her things exactly as they were, although I did the sweeping and dusting, of course."

Nickolite asked: "Her things? All her clothes are here? Nothing's missing?"

The landlady shook her head. "I don't think so. We could go up and look."

The room was clean and tidy. The bed was neatly made, with fresh linen. Nickolite wanted to know: "When did you put those sheets on?"

"Saturday, like I always do, I came up here after she went to work and straightened up and left clean linen."

Nickolite thought a minute. "That's Saturday, August 26th, and this is September 2nd. She hasn't been back in all that time?"

"Not that I know of," said the landlady. "Last time I saw her was last Saturday,

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

On Sunday November 2nd, 1952, Derek Bentley (right), 19, and Christopher Craig, 16, attempted to burgle a warehouse in Croydon, London. In the process a police officer was killed by Craig – a minor. A jury found Bentley guilty, and he was promptly executed. So began a 45-year-long campaign for a posthumous pardon (granted in 1993), and for the quashing of his murder conviction (1998).



WORLD EVENTS

On February 6th, during a visit to Kenya, the Duchess of Edinburgh, upon the death of her father, King George VI, becomes Queen Elizabeth II. The United Kingdom becomes the third nuclear weapons state after a successful test detonation in Australia...

Work begins on the new United Nations building in New York City, designed by Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer, and the first successful sex reassignment surgery is performed in Copenhagen, with George Jorgensen Jr. becoming Christine Jorgensen.

ENTERTAINMENT

Sooty, Harry Corbett's bear glove puppet, first appears on BBC television; the *New Musical Express* – with a record sales chart – goes on sale for the first time and Agatha Christie's play *The Mousetrap* opens in London...In the US Sun Records issues its first release in Memphis, Tennessee; Composer John Cage's 4'33" premieres in Woodstock, New York, and the first issue of *Mad* magazine is published.



Sooty
and
Harry
Corbett

There are Best Film and Best Director Academy Awards for Cecil B. DeMille's *The Greatest Show on Earth*, while Gary Cooper wins Best Actor for *High Noon*. The Best Original Screenplay award goes to T. E. B. Clarke for the Ealing Studios classic *The Lavender Hill Mob*...

In literature *The Killer Inside Me* by Jim Thompson, Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and Kurt Vonnegut's first novel *Player Piano* are notable arrivals, while Mary Norton's Carnegie Medal-winning *The Borrowers* and Charlotte's Web by E. B. White are published.

ROCK 'N' ROLL

Lawdy Miss Clawsy by Lloyd Price. With Fats Domino on piano, New Orleans-style rock'n'roll crosses over to US teenagers – like Elvis Presley, who recorded his own version four years later...



MURDER MONTH

June

Cannibalism horror in Paris...

It was approaching midnight on June 13th, 1981, when a couple strolled along the Bois de Boulogne as a blue Peugeot taxi pulled up and a short man got out lugging two suitcases. He had begun to drag the cases towards a lake when he spotted the couple and sprinted away.

Puzzled, the couple went to see what the man was doing and were shocked to see a bloodied hand sticking out of one of the cases. They opened it and found the torso of a woman. The head, legs and arms were in the other case.

The cases were taken to a morgue where examination showed the body parts belonged to a woman who had been killed by a shotgun blast. The tip of her nose had been sliced off along with parts of her thighs and buttocks.

Four days later, after tracing the taxi-driver, armed police broke into an apartment at 10 Rue Erlanger, Paris. It had been rented to a 4ft 9in Japanese student called Issei Sagawa,



Issei Sagawa

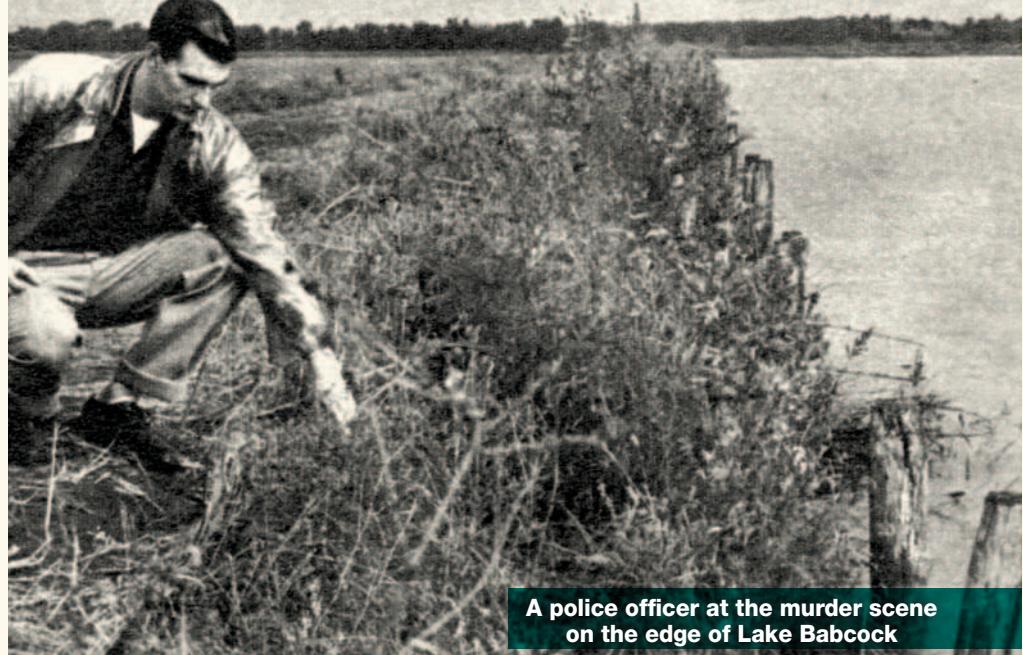
32, who was studying at the Sorbonne. He had left Tokyo for Paris on April 26th, 1975 – his 26th birthday. Prior to that, he had broken into the apartment of a naked woman intending to knock her unconscious and then eat her buttocks but he woke her and was charged with attempted rape.

His desire to eat a woman had become an obsession. When the police came, he quickly confessed to the murder and directed them to his fridge where they found a breast, a lip and two buttocks. He told the police that he suffered from mental illness and had been snacking on the human flesh.

At the police station, he admitted murdering the woman and chopping her up in his apartment before stuffing her into a suitcase and trying to dump her in a lake off the Bois de Boulogne. He identified his victim as Renée Harteveldt, a 25-year-old fellow-student from Holland.

Miss Harteveldt had been in his flat when he shot her, killing her instantly. He placed a towel under her head, undressed her and had sex with the corpse. He then cut out her vagina and anus and tried to eat them but was put off by the smell so he put them in a frying pan, but although he consumed the vagina the smell of the anus was still too much for his palate.

In 1983, a judge decided that Sagawa was not mentally competent to stand trial. In 1985, he was sent to Tokyo where he spent some time in hospital before being freed on August 12th, 1986. He has been free ever since.



A police officer at the murder scene on the edge of Lake Babcock

and I know her bed hasn't been slept in since."

A quick look into Bonnie's wardrobe revealed that all her clothes were there. Apparently nothing was missing.

Mrs. Merrill, who had stood by, listening, said quietly: "Even her make-up is here – powder, cold cream. No girl would leave that stuff behind, no matter where she was going. Bonnie is missing. Something has happened to her."

Before they left, Nickolite asked the landlady a few questions about Bonnie's friends, but the information he got was of no value. Yes, Bonnie had often gone out on dates. All girls did. No, there had been nobody special. Bonnie, as far as the landlady knew, had not been serious about any of the boys. She had said nothing about any particular boy to the landlady, with whom she had been friendly, and the landlady had heard no rumours.

"It doesn't look good," Nickolite confided in a worried tone to Mrs. Merrill. "But don't worry, we'll find her for you."

Mrs. Merrill said nothing, but tears ran down her face.

At the drive-in, the police had little more success in getting information about Bonnie. The owner, a tired, harassed man, was busy and had his own ideas on the matter.

"No, she isn't here," he snapped. "She hasn't been here since she quit on Saturday night-Sunday morning, at 1.30. She didn't even show up to collect her pay the next day."

"All these girls are alike. They're here one day, and they smile at you and tell you they like the place and you treat them fine and they're getting lots of tips. Then some guy comes along in a Cadillac, smiles at them and bang – they're gone. Or they get another job somewhere. Either you never see the girl again or she doesn't show up for two weeks. They don't have much sense of responsibility."

Nickolite waited for him to calm down. "You mean Bonnie Merrill left here at 1.30 a.m. on Sunday, August 27th, and

hasn't showed up since? Not even for her pay?"

The proprietor admitted that it was odd. Always before, when a girl had left without notice, she had returned to collect the money due to her. But it hadn't occurred to him to worry about this girl.

"But I must say I didn't expect it of Bonnie," he said. "She was such a sweet kid. I know most of the guys that pulled in here tried to date her. But Bonnie was choosy. She wouldn't go out with just anybody. It had to be a local boy, someone she knew."

"Do you know whether she had a date that last night she worked here?" Nickolite asked.

The proprietor shook his head. "I never know what's going on out front. I'm usually too busy in the back, attending to the food."

But one of the other waitresses knew. Joan Bailey, 19, answered Nickolite's questions without hesitation.

Yes, Bonnie had a date that night, Joan said. It was with Lou Garner. Garner and another boy had driven up earlier, and that was when it was arranged for Lou to pick up Bonnie after work. "They wanted to make it a foursome and the other man tried to date me. But I didn't go for it. I just didn't like his looks."

Nickolite was curious. "What do you mean, you didn't like his looks?"

Joan frowned. "I don't know how to explain it," she said. "It wasn't that he was ugly or anything like that. He was blond and good-looking, as a matter of fact. But there was something mean about him – he acted sullen, as if he was sore at the world and nobody had better get in his way." She paused. "I may be all wrong about him, but that's the feeling he gave me."

"And did he get a girl for himself?"

"I don't know," Joan said. "Lou and he came back here alone to pick up Bonnie later. He was driving, and I saw Bonnie slide in and sit between them. Maybe they'd arranged to meet another girl someplace else."

Finding Lou Garner was easy. He lived in the centre of town with his family and

he was at home when Nickolite arrived. He casually greeted the officer, whom he knew, and apparently did not realize that there was any significance to the call until Nickolite told him he was investigating Bonnie Merrill's disappearance.

"When was this?" Garner asked.

"Since the night you had a date with her," responded Nickolite.

Garner stared at him. "You mean she hasn't been around in all that time, hasn't been back to work?"

"Hasn't been back to work, hasn't been home, hasn't been anywhere that we can discover," Nickolite said. "I thought you might know something about it. You were the last one to see her."

"No, I wasn't," said Garner bluntly.

"Rollie Sundahl was. I left them around 2.30 that morning. I had a headache and I was tired, so I told him to drop me off and I went on home."

"Where were they headed, when you left them?" Nickolite asked.

Garner shrugged. "I don't know. I took it for granted that he was going to take Bonnie home. They didn't say anything about going anywhere."

That was Garner's story. He maintained that he had left Bonnie with Sundahl. Asked where Sundahl could be found, he suggested Norfolk. He said Sundahl had told him he was going there.

"When did he tell you this?"

"Later, that same Sunday," said Garner.

"How did he look?"

Garner stared at him. "No different than ever, except messed up. He'd slept in the car and his clothes were creased and dirty. He had dried yellow mud on his trousers and he needed a shave. Otherwise, he looked all right."

So Sundahl had stayed around town the following day. That certainly seemed to indicate innocence, Nickolite thought. Then he caught himself up sharply. Innocence of what? So far there was no proof that there had been a crime committed. He had nothing to go on – nothing except an inner conviction that Bonnie Merrill's disappearance had not been voluntary.

The mystery of the girl's whereabouts had to be solved. And his best lead thus far – granting that Lou Garner was telling the truth – was Rollie Sundahl. Nickolite spent some time finding out more about Sundahl.

One thing he discovered was that Garner had not lied about having seen Sundahl on Sunday, because other people had also seen him.

Further questioning in the diner revealed that early that day Sundahl had come into the place. The man who served him said Sundahl hadn't eaten anything; he just had a couple of cups of coffee, but he had spent plenty of time getting them down.

"Did you notice anything unusual? Did he seem strange or different in any way?" asked Nickolite.

The man shook his head. "No, he was just like always. A little dirtier, maybe. He had dried yellow mud on his trousers,



Police Chief Ed Nickolite with the suspect who was charged with murder

which he said he got when he fell into a puddle."

Nickolite decided his best bet was to question Sundahl directly.

He returned to his office and put in phone calls to county attorney A.W. Kummer and Sergeant Willard Teachman of the safety patrol at Norfolk district headquarters and explained why he wanted to get hold of Roland Sundahl.

Teachman had an interesting note to add: "I want him, too," he said. "We've got a warrant for him on a non-maintenance charge. He should be making payments to his family. He hasn't been in Norfolk recently, but if he's in town now I'll pick him up and let you know immediately."

It was less than half an hour later that Teachman's call came through. He had Sundahl in custody, but had said nothing to him about Bonnie Lou Merrill.

"I'll be up there within an hour," Nickolite said.

He and his right-hand man, patrolman Kenny Simpson, left for Norfolk.

On the way, Nickolite outlined the story to him.

Simpson listened closely. "You think the girl was murdered and her body buried somewhere?"

Nickolite nodded. "That's the way it stacks up to me. If Garner is telling the truth, Sundahl is the guy. We'll know a lot more after we talk to him."

"I'll take a good look at the inside of his car," Simpson added. "There may be some revealing stains on the upholstery."

At Teachman's office they met Rollie Sundahl. Faced with Nickolite and Simpson, and told why they had come up from Columbus to see him, he appeared interested but certainly not troubled.

"I just drove up from there a couple of days ago," he offered. "Brought through a truckload of watermelons from Oklahoma to Columbus."

"And stuck around long enough to have a date with Bonnie Merrill, didn't you?" Nickolite said, smoothly.

"Bonnie Merrill? Never heard of her. Who's she?"

"The little waitress you and Lou Garner took out," Nickolite prompted.

"Oh, her. I forgot her name," Sundahl said. "I didn't have a date with her, Lou did. I just strung along for the ride."

"Lou says he left you with her," Nickolite stated, flatly.

Sundahl shrugged. "He got out of the car and said he was going home, if that's what you mean. But I don't know whether he met Bonnie later or not. What I do know is that a few minutes later she asked to be let out of the car. I dropped her a couple of blocks from the square. It looked to me like a pre-arranged deal between them."

"He says he went home," Nickolite snapped.

Sundahl seemed puzzled. "Why all the fuss? What's this all about, anyway?"

Nickolite tapped a cigarette on the back of his hand. "Bonnie Merrill's missing. We think she's dead." He paused. "We think she was murdered the night you and Lou dated her."

Angry blood rose to Sundahl's temples. "That's crazy! We never touched her. Like I told you, she asked me to let her out of the car and I did. That's all I know about it."

Nickolite pointed his cigarette out the window. "Is that the car, that Ford coupé?"

Sundahl said it was. Nickolite fumbled with his lighter, stalling as he lit a cigarette. His mind weighed the facts that he had learned. The car could be the key to the entire mystery of Bonnie's disappearance. Sundahl hadn't immediately tried to cast suspicion on Garner, as Lou had done on him. Yet Sundahl owned the car, and a car came in handy for transporting a body without being seen.

Nickolite stepped out of the room into an adjoining office, where Teachman was waiting. "I've got a hunch, Bill," Ed Nickolite said. "Could you get your experts over here to do a fast fingerprint job on a car?"

"Sure," Teachman said. "I'll call them right away."

"Fine," Nickolite said. "In the meanwhile, Simpson and I will give the

car a quick going over."

A search of Sundahl's coupé failed to reveal any suspicious stains on the upholstery. Simpson opened the boot and the two officers picked through the assortment of tools and junk. Nickolite grabbed a small steel shovel and stared hard at it. Clinging to the shovel were bits of dried mud.

"That's funny," Nickolite said. "This is yellow mud. The guy in the diner told me Sundahl had yellow mud on his trousers when he went in there early Sunday morning. Sundahl told him he'd fallen in a puddle – but did the shovel fall in, too?"

Simpson's eyes gleamed. "There's only one place around Columbus with yellow mud. Lake Babcock."

"Yeah, Lake Babcock," Nickolite repeated, thinking of the square mile of deep, muddy water only three miles outside of Columbus. "A nice isolated spot to be alone with a girl for a little petting – or a little murder," he finished.

The whole thing was beginning to take shape in his mind. Suppose Sundahl had driven Bonnie out to the lake? Suppose there had been an argument, or a fight, and Bonnie was killed? What better place to hide a body than Lake Babcock? And to dig a grave with the shovel found in the car?

But it seemed too pat, too obvious, and Nickolite was always sceptical of the obvious. Besides, he couldn't accuse Sundahl of murder on the basis of a muddy shovel. He had to locate the body, and finding it in Lake Babcock would not be easy, unless the killer led them to it.

He outlined his theory to Simpson.

"You figure he made a pass at the girl and she resisted?" Simpson asked.

"I figure she not only resisted, she put up a terrific battle. And somewhere along the line he killed her, either in a wild fury or accidentally. At this stage of the game, with no corpse to check, it could have been either way."

The two men decided to go back and question Sundahl again.

Nickolite got right down to brass tacks this time. "Rollie," he said, "we've just been looking over your car, and what we found there tells the whole story – what happened and how it happened and how you got rid of the body. You may as well come clean and give us all the details."

Sundahl said coldly: "I don't know what you're talking about. You haven't got a thing on me except that non-maintenance charge."

"You let Bonnie out, after Lou Garner had left the car?" Nickolite asked.

"Yes, I told you that," Sundahl replied.

"And you didn't let Lou borrow the car later? Didn't let him borrow a blanket or anything?"

"I let Lou out, and I slept in the car all night," Sundahl snapped. "He didn't ask me for a blanket."

"Or a shovel?" Nickolite said slowly. "A small steel shovel?"

Rollie Sundahl stared at the chief, not answering.



Roland Sundahl poses for his prison mug-shot

"She must have put up a real fight," Nickolite said aloud. "There are no bloodstains in the car, but Bonnie's fingerprints are all over the front seat – the left side, right side, the middle. There's mud on your shovel and there was mud on your trousers when you stopped in the diner for coffee. It was yellow mud from Lake Babcock."

Nickolite shifted his tactics. "You're the kind of a man who wouldn't deliberately kill a girl. It must have been accidental."

"It was accidental," Sundahl blurted, and then he stopped, his shoulders slumping. He went on, wearily. "I drove her out there and put my arm around her – and something snapped."

Nickolite kept his voice even and calm. "We may as well get it over with now and go out to the lake and see where you left the body."

Within a few minutes, they had started on their grim journey, Simpson, Nickolite and Sundahl in one car, followed by another car carrying more officers.

Sundahl was unable to point out the exact spot, but he showed them the general vicinity. Ten minutes later, Simpson found the corpse.

Bonnie Lou's clothes were torn to the point where she was nearly nude. Her face and head had been hacked almost beyond recognition. There was a long deep cut in her right arm, and her neck had been broken.

Nickolite asked thinly: "What did you cut her up with, a knife?"

"A hatchet. I had it in the car," Sundahl said.

Nickolite stared at him. "Some accident! What really happened?"

Maybe it was Nickolite's tone, or the shock effect of the gruesomely mutilated body. Right there on the edge of the lake, Sundahl suddenly broke down and told the story of Bonnie Merrill's death...

After Garner got out of the car, Bonnie, too, asked to be taken home. She was tired, she said, and wanted to get to bed. Sundahl argued against it, until

she gave in and agreed to take a drive out to the lake, where there would be a cool breeze. They were out at the west end of Lake Babcock, he told the officers, when he stopped the car and put his arm around her. Bonnie sat quietly until he started groping her then she protested and asked to be taken home.

But Sundahl, fuelled by the alcohol he had drunk, refused to take "no" for an answer. Bonnie tried to push him away and when that came to nothing, she began to strike him.

He grabbed her by the throat, and in response her arms flailed at him, her nails digging into his wrists.

He heard sounds of tearing and a crack, as though a bone had broken. In the struggle, the door was somehow opened and Bonnie fell out of the car. Her head hit against a rock. Sundahl stumbled out after her.

Now it was no longer the crazed desire that drove him; it was sheer hatred. He tore open the door of his coupé and reached across to the back seat, where he had left the hatchet.

He brought the hatchet down on her head, once, twice, countless times. He was no longer slashing Bonnie Merrill. He was slashing away at life, at the world, at all his frustrations and all his insane, frenzied hatreds.

He chopped away at the girl's body blindly and wildly, knowing only that he must satisfy the brutal, insatiable craving within him to kill.

Minutes later – or hours, he didn't know which – he realised that Bonnie Lou was dead. She had ceased to cry out, she had ceased to fight back. So she must be dead.

It was all over and he felt better. He was calm and at peace, as though he had spewed forth all that was ugly and twisted within him, all the blackness and viciousness and venom.

He took the army shovel from his car and began to dig a grave...

On September 5th, 1950, Roland Sundahl stood before Judge C.I. Sonte and heard the county attorney read the charge of murder. All Sundahl said as he lifted his head was: "It was not premeditated."

This apparently had little effect upon the jury, for they found him guilty.

Sundahl was sentenced to die in the electric chair at the Nebraska State Penitentiary on October 26th. Four times his sentence was commuted, and amid all that, he slashed his wrists in an unsuccessful attempt to take his own life.

But finally, on April 29th, 1952, he was escorted to the jail's dimly lighted basement and electrocuted.

Roland Sundahl may have been at peace with the world at last, but it was the brutal, senseless killing of an innocent girl that brought him that relief.

Next month: 1953 – the Alabama nurse whose medicine was arsenic...

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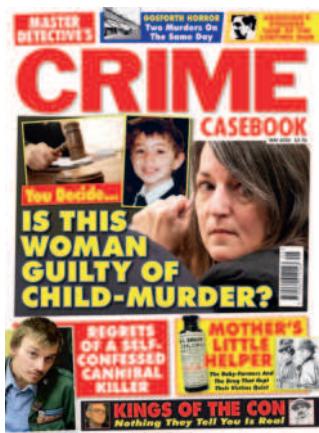
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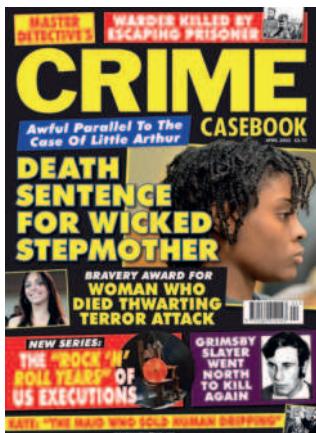
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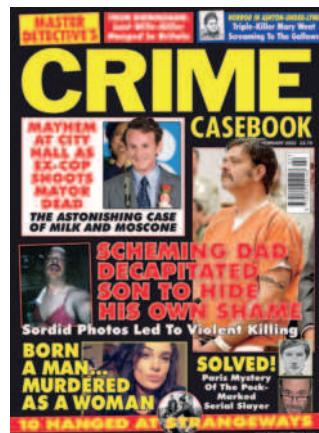
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CINEMA MURDER II

Private Horror Show At The Plaza

HELL'S CORNER" wartime Dover was called, with good reason. Between July 1940 and September 1944, some 1,000 buildings in the Kent port were destroyed by German bombs, but the town's Plaza cinema steadfastly remained open.

The film *Arise My Love* was the main attraction on July 3rd, 1941, and the 9.30 p.m. end of its last performance was the cue for Sidney Williams, the cinema's nightwatchman and fire watcher, to begin his shift. By 10.30 he usually had the place to himself, but

the new manager, 50-year-old George Roberts, had taken to sleeping in his office in preference to commuting to his Gillingham home in the blitz.

Most nights the two men would exchange a few pleasantries, but sometimes they saw nothing of each other, and so it was on July 3rd. When Mr. Williams left the building on completing his shift at 8 a.m. the next day, the cinema's team of women cleaners arrived. As one of them dusted the females' staff-room, she noticed that a framed photo and a vase had

been moved from the window sill. She thought nothing of this, nor of a dark stain on the tiled floor which someone else had apparently tried to clean.

Another cleaner used disinfectant on a stain on the carpet outside the manager's office. Knowing that Mr. Roberts slept there, she wondered if he'd been sick. Inside the office, she saw that his mattress had been rolled up, but on top of it were his pyjamas and dressing-gown which he usually put away. Another cleaner then saw some keys on George Roberts's desk and this too seemed odd.

At 10.30 a.m. his secretary arrived at the Plaza. There was no sign of him, and on seeing his office and the keys she immediately sensed something was wrong. Using the keys, she unlocked the cinema's safe. The £3 float was missing, along with one of the cash bags – and there was still no sign of Mr. Roberts.

The secretary telephoned the nearby

Covered with an overcoat, George Roberts lay dead in one of the rooms, the top of his head sliced open. He also had five more head wounds, all apparently inflicted with a heavily bloodstained axe found nearby



Part of the manager's office, showing the desk on which the keys were left

Granada cinema, where manager Sidney Sale was Mr. Roberts's immediate boss. He sent round an assistant manager, who joined the secretary in counting the money in the safe. Instead of the £40 that should have been there, they found just eight. Mr. Sale was informed, and was at the Plaza within minutes. He was shocked by the robbery because he had thought Mr. Roberts totally dependable, but it now seemed that the manager had done a runner.

Police were called, and the secretary told them she had last seen George Roberts at 10.30 the previous night, when she left the cinema to go home and he returned from the Friends Social Club opposite where he usually had a quick drink after the last performance.

The officers' attention was directed to the stain on the carpet, and the similar one in the women's rest-room. Told of the framed photo and vase having been taken off the window sill, Detective

N WARTIME DOVER



Recalled by
Matthew
Spicer

The body of George Roberts after the murderer dragged it to the basement area. Below, showing at The Plaza: *Arise My Love*, starring Claudette Colbert and Ray Milland



Inspector Percy Datlen went to the window and looked down at the disused basement area below.

A stain was apparent in the passage leading to the cinema's basement, so the inspector, the detective constable accompanying him, and Mr. Sale went down with torches to search the basement's rooms.

It was Mr. Sale who discovered that George Roberts hadn't done a runner. Covered with an overcoat, he lay dead in one of the rooms, the top of his head sliced open. He also had five more head wounds, all apparently inflicted with a heavily bloodstained axe found nearby.

Scotland Yard's assistance was requested, and Detective Chief Inspector William Rawlings was soon at the scene with a detective sergeant, and all the evidence indicated the murder-robbery was an inside job, the perpetrator familiar with the Plaza's layout and its manager's routine.

The only fingerprints found were those of the staff, who were all interviewed, the nightwatchman being questioned particularly closely as he was the only employee without an alibi. He said he had neither seen nor heard anything and, as his duties included keeping a fire-watching eye on the roof of the premises, his statement seemed entirely credible.

On rereading the statements made by



A contemporary picture of the victim,
George Roberts

the rest of the staff, Rawlings felt one account needed more investigation. It had been given by 18-year-old Leslie Hammond, one of the cinema's four projectionists. He was asked to go to Dover's police station for a second interview.

He had told the investigators that after the Plaza's last show on July 3rd he had stood talking nearby to his brother until 9.55 p.m. At 11 p.m. he had been due to begin fire-watching at the Midland Bank, so with some 65 minutes to fill he had gone for a stroll around the town centre, walking a number of streets before



Above, a caricature of Granada manager Sidney Sale who found the body

reaching the bank at the appointed time.

When officers walked the route he described, however, they found this occupied only 44 minutes. They also learned that Hammond hadn't actually arrived at the bank until 11.30.

He was asked what he had done in the 51 minutes he hadn't accounted for. After a long silence, he blurted out: "I can't think. When they talk about Mr. Roberts I get a funny feeling here [he indicated his head]. I feel I went back to the Plaza, but I can't think."

Told to take his time in trying to remember, he sat pondering for a while before he made a fresh statement in which he described how he'd had his own private horror show. "What I told you in my statement before about what I done when I left my brother at about 9.50 on July 3rd, 1941, is not true," he began. "I want to tell you the truth and I want you to write it down.

"About 10.25 that night I went back into the cinema. I went into the side vestibule and heard Mr. Roberts come in through the side door. I dodged into the switch-room and picked up an axe that was in there." The hatchet was identified as the cinema's own ARP (Air Raid Precautions) axe, and Hammond stated he had previously used it to chop wood

for the furnace.

"Then I went out into the vestibule and hit Mr. Roberts with the axe. He fell down and I dragged him into the office. I put him on the floor and hit him again with the axe. His head was bleeding, so I tied a tablecloth round it.

"Then I carried him into the females' staff-room and got him up on to the table. I took the picture off the window sill and put it on the shelf, and I took the vase and put it on top of the cupboard. I opened the window wide, got Mr. Roberts up to the window ledge, and he went out."

Hammond's statement went on to say that he then went down to the basement area and dragged the manager's body to where it was found. Then he returned to Mr. Roberts's office and used some towels in an effort to clean up the blood, before returning to the manager's body to cover it with his overcoat. That done, he went back to the office, saw the safe's keys and opened it, removing some money. He then locked it and put the keys on the desk.

His statement continued: "I picked up the axe and went into the females' staff-room and got on the table and threw the axe through the window into one of the rooms down the basement below the window." He had then gone to the gents' lavatory and vomited, before leaving the cinema, his statement concluded.

He was kept in custody at the police station while officers went to his Buckland Avenue home in Dover. In the outside toilet they found a parcel tied up with tape. It contained £18 in notes, and more cash was found concealed in a cistern in a public lavatory in the town.

Asked why he had robbed the Plaza, Hammond said his weekly wage was £1 12s. 6d, and when he was strip-searched a bag full of silver coins was found in his underwear. "I don't know why I done it!" he shouted as he was locked in a cell.

When his trial for murder followed at the Old Bailey in September 1941, he pleaded "not guilty." The case was expected to be an open-and-shut affair until his counsel, Mr. B.H. Waddy, said

Below, the handle of the axe in the position it was found





The modern-day site in Dover's Cannon Street of The Plaza which was opened in 1929 and closed in 1960. The entrance was through the arch, right

he would be making serious allegations against the police. He would submit that the second statement Hammond had made at Dover police station was inadmissible as evidence because it was made under duress.

Mr. Justice Cassels consequently asked the jury to withdraw while the issue was debated. In the witness-box, Hammond then claimed that the police had forced him to make his confession by twisting his arms and legs.

Rising to cross-examine, the prosecutor George McClure asked: "What was written down in the second statement was true?"

"Yes," Hammond admitted.

"And you say you were forced into saying what was true by something that was done?"

"Yes."

"So you killed Mr. Roberts?"

"Yes."

With that, the prosecutor sat down, his mission accomplished.

The judge ruled that the statement was admissible, its truth now having been voluntarily admitted. All that was left for Mr. Waddy to suggest was that his client was mentally ill.

There was no evidence of insanity, however, and after the prosecution read out Hammond's second statement the jury convicted him of murder, unaware that he had already admitted his guilt during their absence. They did not recommend mercy, and in sentencing him to death the judge told him he had committed a "wicked and cruel crime."

Hammond's appeal was rejected at the end of October, and his execution was set for November 12th, 1941, at London's Wandsworth Prison.

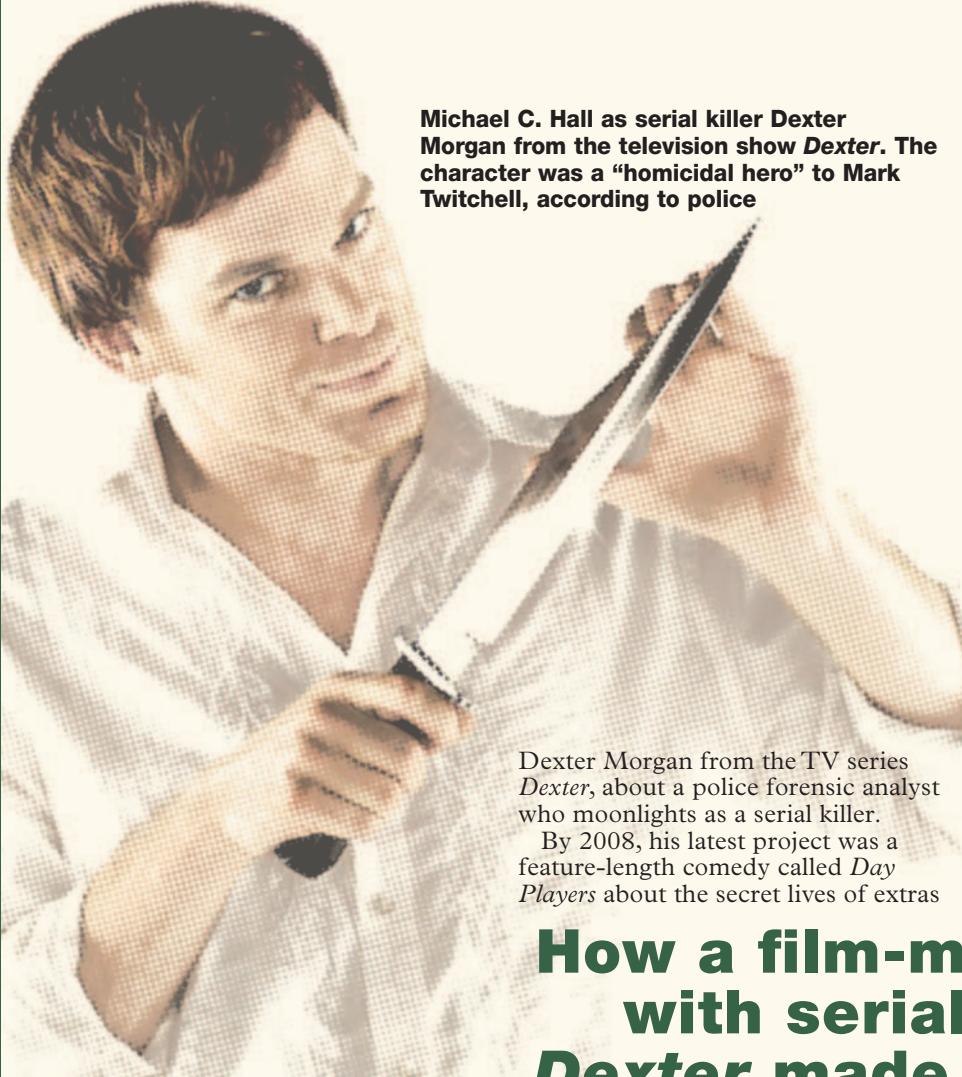
Reviewing the case, Home Office officials thought that although the crime was clearly premeditated, Hammond, a less than bright youth, was no professional criminal. He had apparently committed the crime in order to obtain money to impress a girl with whom he was infatuated.

His father, a member of the Auxiliary Fire Service, had collected more than 3,000 signatures on a petition for clemency, and the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, was shocked by the thought of sending an 18-year-old to the gallows. His revulsion was shared by the Home Office's Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Alexander Maxwell, and the two decided that in future only killers aged 19 and over at the time of their crime would be hanged, unless there were wholly exceptional circumstances.

And so, less than 48 hours before he was due to be executed, Leslie Hammond was spared the hangman's noose because of his youth. It had been decided that there would be no public announcement of this change in Home Office policy, so the deterrent effect of the death sentence would be unaffected. Hammond's release followed nine years later, in September 1950.



Leslie Hammond (left) under arrest as reported in the Daily Express



Michael C. Hall as serial killer Dexter
Morgan from the television show *Dexter*. The character was a "homicidal hero" to Mark Twitchell, according to police



Victim Johnny Altinger – lured to his death by the promise of a date

after this with A-list talent, and I won't forget those of you who offered to work for free when considering roles for that movie."

Twitchell had written the screenplay, and sounded so plausible as a wannabe director that a team of his friends turned up at the garage to help shoot

How a film-maker obsessed with serial-killer show *Dexter* made life imitate art

ASPIRING FILMMAKER Mark Twitchell rented a dank-smelling garage down a back alley in Edmonton, Canada. But there were no cars in it – only a set of hunting knives, copper pipes, handcuffs, stun gun, samurai swords, and meat cleaver.

A metal table and a sort of throne he called "the killer chair" were bolted to the floor, and patches of dark, sticky redness stained the soles of anyone who walked in there.

Thirty-one-year-old Mark loved the garage. It was his studio, and the film set for a horror movie he was making with a group of fellow-students from the local polytechnic who were all movie fanatics like him.

He'd won notoriety in 2006 with a fan-flick called *Star Wars: Secrets of the Rebellion*, which generated a major buzz online even though it was never generally released.

Talented in prop and costume design, he often created elaborate replica outfits based on characters from the George Lucas series, winning prize money for them at Star Wars premieres and conventions.

One of his other fictional heroes was

Dexter Morgan from the TV series *Dexter*, about a police forensic analyst who moonlights as a serial killer.

By 2008, his latest project was a feature-length comedy called *Day Players* about the secret lives of extras

in the film industry. But until funds for it became available, he planned to work on a short movie that would take only three days to shoot.

The plotline of *House of Cards* was simple: a cheating husband is lured to a remote location for a phoney internet date. But when he arrives, a masked man duct-tapes him to a chair, tortures him until he reveals his digital pass codes, then beheads him and dismembers the body.

Twitchell advertised for actors on Facebook, saying: "I'm casting all the roles personally, so please just contact me. The sooner we start, the better, as I'm short on time.

"There are no fees for this, but we're working on a three million dollar feature right

the eight-minute short.

None of them guessed that he'd been planning to convert the film to appalling reality as soon as it was finished. The footage, for him, was a rehearsal for real life, a way of testing out in his head how it would feel to torture and kill.

A week later, smartly dressed



Above, the garage Mark Twitchell used as a film location

HORROR IN HIS SN

businessman Gilles Tetreault arrived at the garage expecting a hot date with a seductive woman he'd met on the internet. It seemed an odd rendezvous, but he called out softly: "Hello! Is anyone there?"

Wearing a black-and-gold hockey mask, Twitchell leapt on him, raining punches on his face. Tetreault fought back hard, especially when he realised the gun Twitchell was holding to his head was fake.

They slithered and scrabbled across the floor until Tetreault found an unlocked door, and managed to wriggle free long enough to escape through it. He burst onto the pavement, welts over his eyes, and with lacerations to his neck and shoulders.

A couple who were passing told police they'd seen an injured man stumbling by, but they couldn't identify which building he'd come from. At the time, Tetreault was too embarrassed to report what had happened.

Far from discouraging him, Tetreault's escape seemed to fire a new psychotic hunger in Twitchell to fulfil his deadly fantasy, and he posted another advert on the dating website *plentyoffish.com* posing as a woman looking for a mate. This time he snared 38-year-old Johnny Altinger, a quiet man who worked for an oilfield equipment manufacturer near Edmonton.

Altinger was unmarried, and intellectually curious. He loved motorcycles, computers, New Age philosophy, and Elton John. Between night shifts, he studied clinical

Right, Mark Twitchell – film-maker and fantasist. An ice hockey mask film prop (below) became part of his killing costume

hypnotherapy, telepathy and astral travel.

He told his friends he'd met a woman online and was looking forward to his first date with her. As an oil pipeline inspector, he'd spent years working on off-shore rigs and was hoping to settle down on the mainland with a partner to share his life.

When he told the mystery woman she was a motorcycle enthusiast, she emailed him back: "*I love the throb of a Harley engine between my thighs. Let's meet up and see if we might ride off into the sunset together.*"

Dale Smith, Altinger's lifelong friend, said later that he'd felt uneasy about the date and asked Altinger to give him a call when he got there, telling him the address. The two had known each other since primary school, and spoke or emailed almost every day.

Altinger often used dating websites to meet women, and he'd sent Dale the profile of the woman he thought he was seeing that night. Brown-haired and pretty, she was posing on a beach in a bikini.

Around 6.30 p.m. Altinger called Dale and told him the woman wasn't at the garage, but he'd met

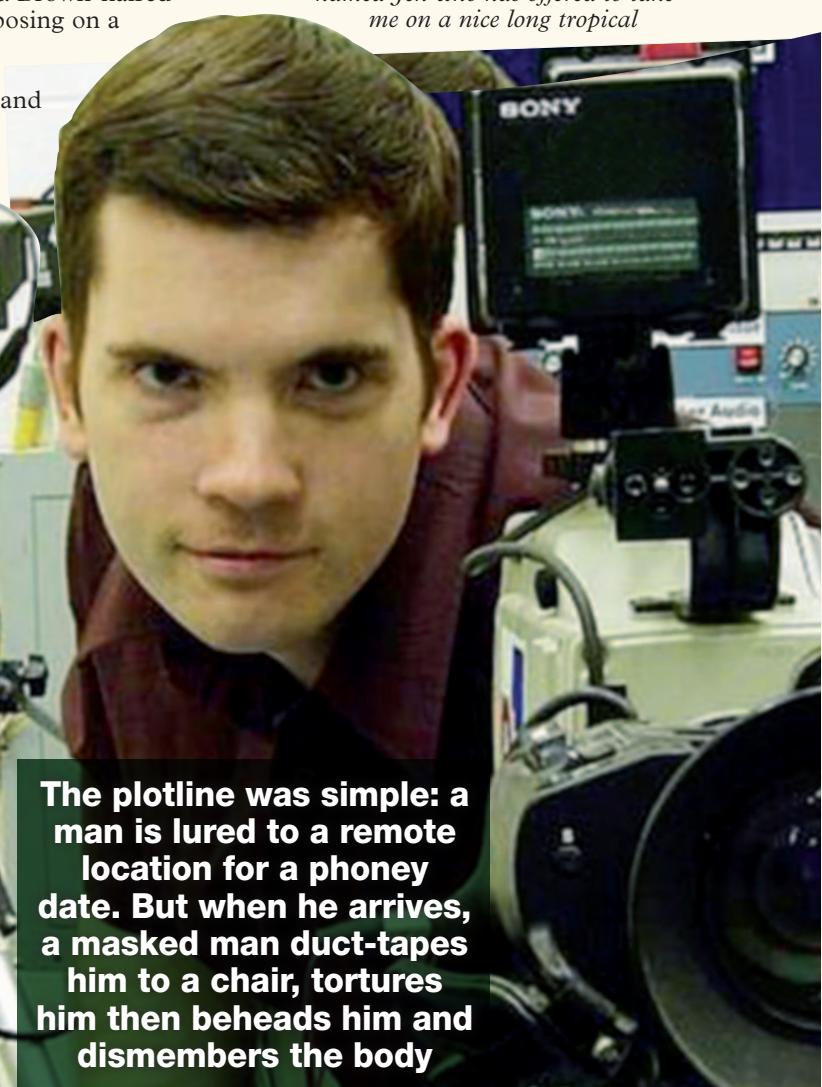
Case report by Mark Davis

a man there who said he was making a movie that involved a replica gun. Twitchell presumably told him the woman had been delayed. It seemed an odd encounter, but Dale assumed his friend was going home.

Less than an hour later, he received another call from Altinger saying he was on his way over to see the woman as she'd now arrived home.

It was the last contact he ever had with his friend and, as the weekend wore on, Dale grew increasingly worried. Altinger owned two motorcycles, and had promised to take him for a driving lesson on Sunday. But he never turned up.

On Monday morning, Dale and some other friends received an email purportedly from Altinger. It said: "*I've met an extraordinary woman named Jen who has offered to take me on a nice long tropical*



The plotline was simple: a man is lured to a remote location for a phoney date. But when he arrives, a masked man duct-tapes him to a chair, tortures him then beheads him and dismembers the body

UFF MOVIE STUDIO

vacation. I've got a one-way ticket to heaven, and I'm not coming back. We'll be staying at her winter home in Costa Rica, phone number to follow soon. See you around the holidays. Johnny."

Dale thought the email sounded odd because Altlinger hated the heat, always



Lured to the garage (above), Altlinger was attacked inside. This became clear when forensics sprayed the floor with Luminol which indicates the presence of iron found in the haemoglobin of blood and glows blue (right) under UV light. Both the thread and fabric tape on the metal pole (below and inset) found at the scene also yielded evidence

ended his emails with a joke, and rarely signed off with his name.

"Johnny wasn't the type of person to just up and take off," said Dale. "You could set your watch by him."

By the following Friday, he and other friends were so concerned that they drove to Altlinger's apartment and broke in through a window. They found his passport, luggage and shaving kit, and alerted the police.

Altlinger's boss also received a note stating he was quitting and had found "a new path." The company's accountant wrote back asking where to send his final pay cheque, but received no reply.

No one will ever know the graphic details of what actually happened at the garage that evening, but Twitchell left a chilling 42-page document on his computer called SK Confessions – the SK standing for "serial killer" – that revealed the darkness into which he was plunging. Although he later deleted it, police experts managed to retrieve it.

"This is the story of my progression into becoming a serial killer. I don't remember the exact time and place I decided to become a serial killer, but I remember the sensation that hit me

when I committed to the decision. It was a rush of pure euphoria. I felt stronger, somehow above other people. I felt like the owner of a very dark secret that no one would ever be in on."

The document describes a failed attack on a man in a garage who fought back and escaped, then a fatal, planned attack on another man who was killed, dismembered, and his remains dumped down a city sewer.

"My head rushed with adrenalin, my stomach had a half second of butterflies before my resolve strengthened and I stood there, ominous in the dark,

prepared to strike.

"The room filled with the echo of the pipe crashing into the back of his skull as I felt my predator self take over.

That one single motion was the be all and end all. I had committed now, and there was no going back."

Luckily, Dale had kept the garage address, and Edmonton Police arrested Twitchell for questioning.

"We didn't find Johnny Altlinger," said Detective Mark Anstey, "but we found a lot of other evidence that led us to conclude he'd been the victim of a bizarre and gruesome murder."

"We found the script for *The House of Cards* movie and it was almost like a written confession about how he lured a fellow from the internet, then tied him up, killed him, and cut him up. The script described chopping up body parts and getting rid of them.

"In the script, the murderer decapitates the victim in one smooth motion. The head slumps to the floor.

"The plot calls for the killer to wear an ice hockey mask and wield a stun gun. We found Twitchell's hockey mask and traced the order he'd made online for the stun gun a couple of months earlier"

Then the protagonist uses a power saw to cut up the corpse.

"The plot also calls for the killer to wear an ice hockey mask and wield a stun gun. We found Twitchell's hockey mask and traced the order he'd made online for the stun gun a couple of months earlier.



"The film ends with a twist, revealing that the killer is a writer who's doing research for his own thriller. In one line, he says: 'It's true when they say the best way to succeed is to write about what you know.'"

Even without a body, police believed they had more than enough evidence to charge Twitchell with murder.

A wall calendar from his home showed an appointment with "Mark" on the day Tetreault was attacked, and a second appointment for the date Altlinger disappeared. There were also dates ringed for meetings with two other people on consecutive weeks. It looked as if Twitchell had been planning a killing fest, and four attacks were just the start...

Altlinger's car was parked nearby and, when police asked Twitchell why it was there, he came up with an absurd story about buying it from a stranger for \$40.

A pair of bloodstained jeans were found crumpled on the bedroom floor at Twitchell's home, and a blood-smeared ice hockey mask on his





Right, victim John Altinger. His dismembered remains were found in this north Edmonton storm drain (above) in June 2010

computer desk.

Police unearthed receipts dating back to August 2008 for a meat cleaver, military knife, handcuffs and a steel barrel they believed he'd used to burn Altinger's remains.

Blades were stained with Altinger's blood, and forensic teams found patches of real blood and fake blood – made for the movie from corn syrup and food dye – on the garage floor.

A yellow sticky note on the dashboard of his car reminded him to clean "the kill room" and then go and



have rough sex with a woman he'd met online.

"I think Twitchell also wanted to emulate his homicidal hero Dexter," said Detective Anstey. "The House of Cards script actually rips off a Dexter

episode in which Dexter pretends to be a woman to snare a cheating husband."

During his last days of freedom, Twitchell

Below, a knife with traces of blood marked by forensics



Location of John Altinger's remains. In and 87 st, South of 130 ave where two are in close proximity: the only area in The cover on eastern most edge of alley light post from 130 ave, indicated by red

<http://maps.google.com/?ie=UTF8&ll=53.591613>

The annotated map (above) that Twitchell provided led the police to the drain and the body they had sought for 18 months

emailed his friends, warning them not to speak to the police. But he was finally arrested and charged with murder.

His trial began in March 2011. It was never going to be for the faint-hearted, and so many journalists descended on Edmonton from all over the world that the judge forbade live



Mark Twitchell (above) had purchased a vicious-looking hunter's kit (left) for dressing and butchering animals

blogging from the courtroom because he feared it would disrupt proceedings.

The case prompted international debate on court reporting, with some people arguing for instant verbatim coverage and others for a journalistic approach in which the reporter takes responsibility for selecting and organising relevant information instead of churning out streams of unedited content.

Amazingly, Twitchell denied murder. He admitted killing Altinger, but

claimed it was in self-defence after Altlinger attacked him for luring him to the garage on the promise of a date. He said the SK file did not stand for "serial killer" but was named after his favourite author Stephen King.

He also admitted luring two men to his garage, but insisted he didn't mean to hurt them. He said he wanted them to participate in an online publicity hoax about a short slasher movie (*The House of Cards*) and write as if it had actually happened to them.

After Altlinger's death, he said he panicked and tried to burn the body parts. When this failed, he dumped them in a sewer. They were discovered down a storm drain near his parents' house.

He later drove to Altlinger's apartment, logged onto the dead man's email and Facebook accounts, and sent reassuring messages to his friends.

Throughout his interrogation and testimony, Twitchell appeared relaxed and articulate. Many people commented on his gentle demeanour and attractive manner, and found it hard to believe this smiling, soft-eyed defendant could be a sadistic killer. His fantasy was almost contagious.



He was also a consummate actor, crying in front of a packed courtroom as he described the moment he realised Altlinger was dead. After pausing soulfully for several minutes, he said: "It all happened so fast...He came at me with the copper pipe, and I started to feel this wet sensation on the handle of the knife I was holding. I let go instinctively, and then I saw it was sticking out of him. It was the sickest feeling ever."

"It took me a long time to figure out what the hell I was going to do. I needed to buy some time. And I tried to tell myself that Altlinger was no longer a man, but a shell, so I hoisted him onto the table in the garage. I felt like a piece of scum. Like I was carrying a serious burden I'd never be able to share."

Defence Attorney Charles Davison argued that SK Confessions was a work of fiction that had "some roots in reality, but was written up and



Finally under arrest (above), Twitchell was interrogated (below left) but it was the "SK Confessions" document discovered on his laptop (below) that proved a telling factor



When offered the chance to address the victim's family, Twitchell said casually: "I'll pass on that"

embellished to make a better story. It was a tale about an imaginary man's descent into killing."

Gilles Tetreault's testimony, however, jolted jury and spectators back to reality. In emotionally gripping evidence, he described his terror when he fought off Twitchell and lunged for the garage door only to be dragged back by his feet and on his stomach, caveman-style. He said he started to cry, thinking he'd never see his loved ones again.

"But I decided I'd better fight back," he said. "I'd rather die my way than his. I didn't go to the police at first because I was ashamed and because Twitchell threatened online to kill me if I did. Then I heard about Johnny Altlinger and the coincidence seemed too great. I had to come forward."

The jury deliberated for five hours before finding Twitchell guilty of first-degree murder. He was given a mandatory life sentence, with the possibility of parole after 25 years.

When offered the chance to address the victim's family, he said casually: "I'll pass on that."

But Johnny Altlinger's mother faced him squarely across the courtroom, telling him she still calls her son's mobile, two-and-a-half-years after his death, "just to hear the sound of his voice."

"There's no doubt in my mind that Twitchell is a psychopathic killer we have taken off the city streets," said Detective Anstey. "I'm convinced he would have kept on killing. We were lucky, if that's the word, that we stopped him when we did."

He's a highly intelligent man with an aura of normality and sociability. Unlike many serial killers, there's nothing overtly eccentric or reclusive about him. He's been married and divorced twice, had a baby girl, a circle of friends, hobbies, a job.

His ex-wife gave evidence at his

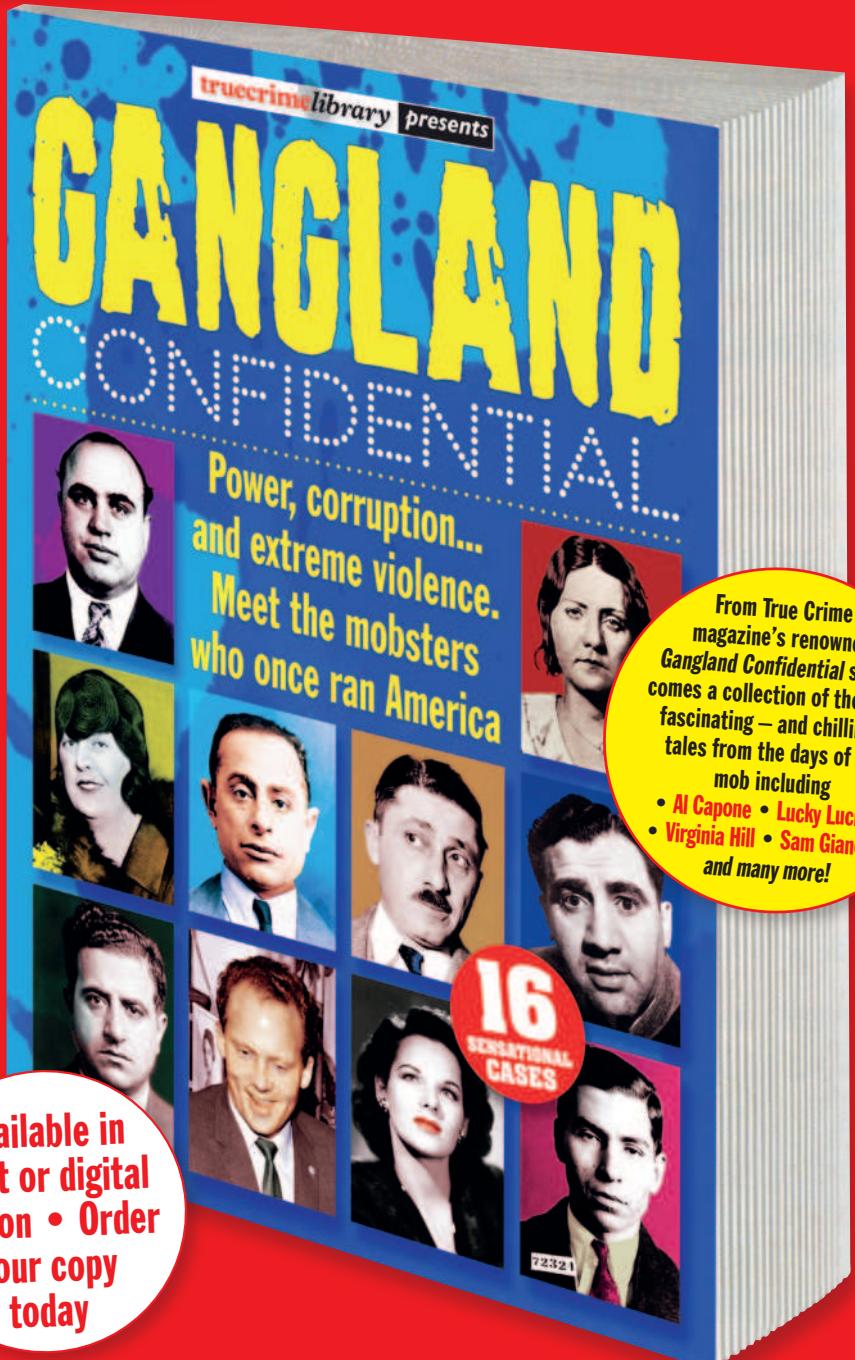
trial, and although she described their life together as "troubled," there was clearly an ordinariness about it, too. They had meals and family celebrations with their respective parents, enjoyed outings together, and Twitchell was even supposed to be seeing a psychiatrist for help with their marital problems. But he'd always lied to her, and had several girlfriends and many sexual liaisons. He once even hired an actor to convince her he wasn't cheating. The frontier between real and imagined was always uncertain.

Perhaps all this makes him the most dangerous kind of killer – one who can hide a dark vortex of psychotic drives and urges inside a personality that seems harmless and even likeable.

In March 2012, Twitchell abandoned his attempt to appeal his first-degree murder conviction.

It has been reported that he bought a flat-screen TV for his own prison cell and has watched every episode of the four *Dexter* seasons he missed while he was on trial.

MEET THE MOBSTERS WHO RULED AMERICA



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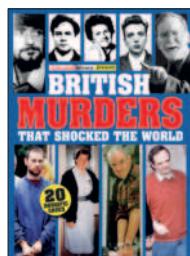
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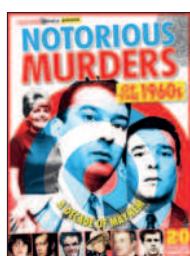
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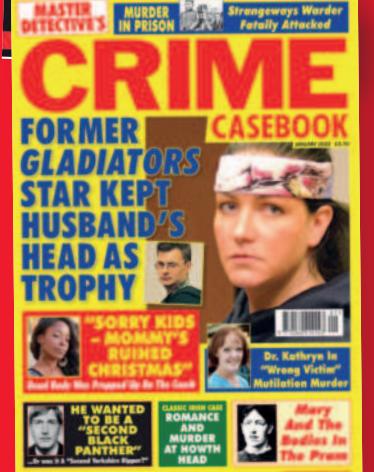
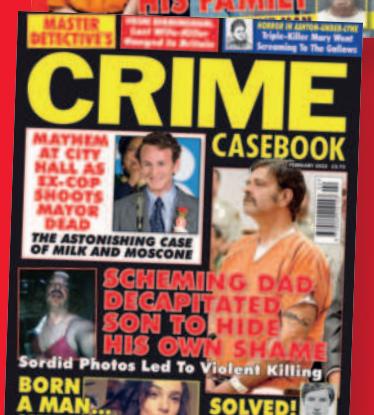
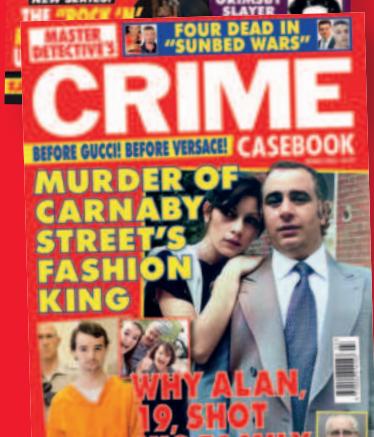
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LAST MAN HANGED IN DERRY

What possible motive did William Rooney have for murdering Lily Johnston, the defence counsel wanted to know? And why wasn't he recognised by the victim's aunt in the murder field?

CURIOSITY WAS not part of Martha Johnston's nature. She seldom gave anything a second glance, and it took a lot to disturb her. True to form, she hardly batted an eyelid at what she saw on the morning of Thursday, November 2nd, 1922.

She was walking to her work as a domestic servant in Cookstown, County Tyrone, when she heard a girl's cries. Glancing towards where the cries came

**Case report by
T.J. Leech**

from in a field at the roadside, she thought she saw the girl being kicked by a man, but she couldn't see the couple clearly.

Unruffled, she walked on. A few minutes later she met Patrick Devlin, a roadsweeper, and mentioned what she had seen. He too thought little of it. The couple were probably just a pair of tramps having a row, he assumed. Even when he later went down the road bordering the field, heard a girl moaning and saw Bill Rooney nearby, he did nothing about it. He went back to his work, and half an hour passed before he returned to the field with his workmate Bill Nelson.

To their horror, the girl who lay in the grass was dead. Her clothes were disarranged and her face was battered beyond recognition. They thought they knew who she was, believing her to be Rooney's girlfriend, but they were wrong. When the brothers of Rooney's girlfriend were brought to the scene they said the victim wasn't their sister. Several hours passed before the girl was identified as 20-year-old Lily Johnston. And the person who made the initial identification from the victim's clothes was her now-distraught Aunt Martha, who earlier that morning had witnessed the attack, unaware that the girl was her niece.

Living in Coagh Road at Newbuildings with her widowed mother, Lily was the girlfriend of a special constable. She worked at Gunning's Mill in Cookstown, and she had apparently



Left, murder victim Lily Johnston. She was the girlfriend of a special constable. Right, convicted killer William "Bill" Rooney

been attacked on her way there as she approached what was known as Kidd's railway bridge.

Thanks to what Patrick Devlin belatedly told them, the police had a suspect: William Rooney. It was estimated that he had only about 90 minutes' start on the officers seeking him, but that was long enough for him to have vanished. Extra police were called in to help the search for him, and as darkness fell he had still not been found.

Aged about 35, Rooney was well known to the Royal Ulster Constabulary. He had frequently been arrested for

drunkenness, and only the night before he had again been taken into custody. Early that morning, however, the police barracks had been left unattended, and Rooney had escaped and disappeared, leaving his cap behind on a bench.

The following afternoon he was spotted four miles away, but he again vanished. That night, shortly before 9 o'clock, the police received a message that he was at Philip Cavanagh's home in Tullagh, near Cookstown. Four officers promptly drove there and arrested him.

"He had been recognised by the occupants of the house," the *Mid-Ulster Mail* reported. "To kill time until the police arrived they brewed him tea, which he very thankfully partook of, eating ravenously. The people in the house successfully kept him from proceeding further by supplying him with still more food."

"Rooney was taken back to Cookstown barracks, which were soon besieged by a large crowd, many of whom were eager to lynch the prisoner," the *Mail* reported. "Rooney was seated at the day-room fire, and presented a haggard and worn-out appearance."

Brought before a magistrate the next

Brutal Cookstown Murder.

GIRL KICKED TO DEATH

WHILE MEN WORKED CLOSE BY.

A murder, which has rarely been equalled for callous brutality, took place on Thursday morning close to Cookstown, when a girl was kicked to death in daylight close to the county road, within reach of help.

morning, charged with murder, Rooney was remanded in custody pending further inquiries and was taken to Derry Jail.

At the inquest Martha Johnston told how she was going to work at 7.50 a.m., and while passing a field at Newbuildings heard a noise that sounded like somebody fighting. Looking through the hedge, she saw the shoulders of a man who seemed to be pushing someone. Then she heard a girl's voice say, "God, save me!" There was a scream and Mrs. Johnston heard a thud as if someone had fallen on the ground. This was followed by what sounded like somebody being kicked.

As she continued on her way, a few minutes later she saw Patrick Devlin, who was now called as the next witness.



He said that Mrs. Johnston had told him, "There's a man up there in the field on the left-hand side of the road giving a woman a most unmerciful beating."

On going to the field about 10 minutes later, Devlin continued, he heard a woman moaning and snuffling as if she were choking. Looking through the hedge, he saw a man kicking something, and he recognised him as William Rooney, whom he knew well, having attended school with him. Neither of them spoke as they stood looking at each other over the hedge, and Devlin said that when he returned to the scene with a workmate about 30 minutes later they found the girl's corpse. There was no sign of Rooney, who had been alone in the field with the girl, and Devlin said that he and his colleague then reported their discovery to the head constable.

Dr. A.M. Elliott, who had conducted a post-mortem, said that the victim's whole face, neck and the top of her chest were a mass of blood from numerous lacerations. This area of her body was also covered with severe bruises and contusions. The girl's hands and arms were also injured, and her wounds were consistent with kicks. The right side of her heart and lungs were filled with blood – upon which she had apparently choked – and her death had been caused by her injuries.

The jury returned a verdict of death from kicks inflicted by William Rooney.

The following Friday, Lily's fellow-workers carried her coffin on their shoulders to Grange Presbyterian Churchyard for interment. Blinds were drawn and shops closed along the route of the funeral procession.



Above, Cookstown, County Tyrone, at the time of the murder. Below, Lily's home in Coagh Road, Newbuildings. Left, the murder scene



When Rooney appeared at Belfast Assizes on Monday, January 8th, 1923, pleading not guilty to the charge of Lily Johnston's murder, it transpired that yet another witness had taken his time in reporting what he had seen: a railwayman, who testified that while cycling to work on the Thursday morning of the murder he had seen William Rooney, without a cap and

"There's a man up there in the field on the left-hand side of the road giving a woman a most unmerciful beating"

looking down at something in the field where the body was later found. The witness said he had heard about the murder at 11 o'clock that same morning, but he had not gone to the police until the following Monday.

His evidence was important because it corroborated that of Patrick Devlin, who told the court that he had not entered the field when he saw Rooney there. This, he admitted, was partly because he was afraid to investigate on his own.

"You are a discharged soldier?" asked Mr. J. Williamson KC, prosecuting.

"Yes."

"And have a number of wounds, and still have bullets in you?"

"Yes."

"You are still under the doctors, and could not go to the woman's assistance?"

"I could not. I was unfit for it."

"I am glad to hear that," said Lord Justice Moore. "It is an explanation."

Cross-examined by Mr. Hanna, Devlin said that he and Rooney had been the best of friends. He denied having been put out of his house at Cookstown, to be succeeded by Rooney and his sister as tenants.

Mr. Williamson said it was not for him to speculate about Rooney's motive for committing the murder. It was not part of the duty of the Crown to find a motive when a person took a human life.

For the defence, Mr. George B. Hanna MP asked the victim's mother: "Your daughter was a very attractive young woman?"

"She was," replied Mrs. Mary Johnston, who had formally identified the body of her daughter in the field four and a half hours after Lily had set out from home to go to work.

MURDER MONTH

June

Husband loses temper – with fatal consequences...

Thomas Wilford was born in Fulham, Middlesex, in 1735, the son of very poor parents. He had been born with only one arm and his parents had sent him to the workhouse. There he grew into an amiable boy and he often ran errands for locals and others in the workhouse.

Sarah Williams had also also put into a workhouse and soon gained a reputation as a girl of easy virtue. She set her sights on Wilford and persuaded him to marry her even though he was only 17. She told the churchwardens who ran the workhouse that she was engaged to be married and they gave



The Grange Presbyterian Church where the victim was buried

"Was anyone paying attention to her?"

"Yes, a young Special."

"Did you know Rooney at all?"

"No."

"He had no dealings with you or your family?"

"No."

Philip Cavanagh testified that Rooney had come to his house at 7.30 p.m. on the day after the murder. He had no cap, and the witness asked him what he had been doing, saying, "There's a rumour that you have killed a woman."

Cavanagh told the court that Rooney replied that he could not have done so because he had been in the police barracks all night.

After District Inspector Hall had given evidence of Rooney's arrest, in response to questions from the defence counsel he said he did not see anyone strike the prisoner with a revolver. No blood was shed during the arrest. "At the barracks we examined him and saw some dried blood which might have been present a day or two before."

Head Constable Hayes testified that he too had taken part in the arrest, and he had afterwards sent Rooney's clothes away for forensic examination.

Dr. Elliott told the court that he had seen Rooney stripped at the police barracks five minutes after he was taken into custody. There were bloodstains on his clothes, but the only evidence of violence on his body was scratches on his face and hands.

Amplifying his earlier account of what he had found during the autopsy, the doctor said that although Lily's clothing was disarranged there was no evidence of indecent assault.

Professor Wilson, of Queen's University, told the court that blood analysed on Rooney's clothing had been found to be human.

For the defence Mr. Hanna made a convincing argument for Rooney's innocence, dealing first with his client's lack of an alibi. He told the jury that Rooney had escaped from the police barracks at about 5 o'clock on the

morning of the murder. In those circumstances it would be very hard for him to prove where he was at 8 a.m., the approximate time of the murder. Did the jury think that as a man on the run he would be seeking the company of anybody who the defence might now call as a witness to say where he was?

He had climbed over the barracks wall, tearing his trousers on some barbed wire placed there. Was it likely that as a fugitive from the police he would go to where Lily Johnston was and murder her?

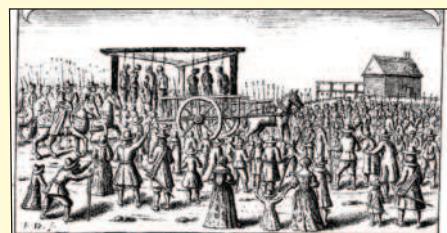
The defence counsel went on to remind the jury that Lily's mother had said there had been no relationship between her daughter and Rooney. Similarly, the girl's Aunt Martha had known Rooney for a considerable time,

If Rooney had kicked the girl to death, as alleged, said Mr. Hanna, all the water in Cookstown would not have cleaned his clothes and boots

and had said there was no reason why he should interfere with her niece.

Would Lily have left the road and entered the field with a stranger? Mr. Hanna asked, saying that if Rooney were the assailant it was remarkable that the aunt had not recognised him on seeing him in the field.

If Rooney had kicked the girl to death, as alleged, said Mr. Hanna, all the water in Cookstown would not have cleaned his clothes and boots. Yet his clothes had only a few bloodstains. Furthermore, he had made no great attempt to get away from Cookstown, otherwise he would not have visited Mr. Cavanagh the day after the murder. Mr. Cavanagh's testimony and that of other witnesses, the defence counsel concluded, showed that Rooney was not going about in the manner of a man who had committed a murder.



An execution at Tyburn

her 40 shillings to start her married life.

On the Saturday after their marriage, the new Mrs. Wilford went out with another man and did not get home until midnight. Wilford asked where she had been. In a park, she told him, but she would offer no further details. He demanded she tell him but she was not forthcoming.

An argument ensued. Wilford grabbed a knife, advanced on his wife, pushed her down and cut her throat with such force that she was almost decapitated. He dropped the knife and left the room to go out into the street.

A woman in an adjacent room had heard the commotion and came out to see what was going on. In the dark, she called out "Who's there?" Wilford replied, "It is me; I have murdered my poor wife, whom I love as dearly as my own life."

Wilford now changed his mind about leaving and waited while the woman went to find the landlord who called the local watch.

He was committed to Newgate by Mr. Justice Fielding. The next day, he appeared at the Old Bailey and pleaded guilty.

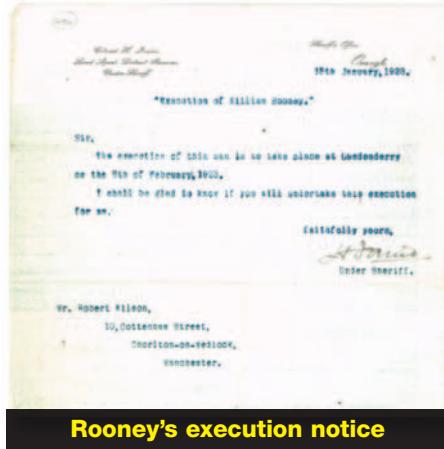
He was found guilty by a jury and the judge sentenced him to "be taken back to the place from whence you came, and there to be fed on bread and water" until he was hanged "after which your body is to be publicly dissected and anatomised."

Wilford showed great remorse up until the time of his execution, when he was hanged at Tyburn on June 22nd, 1752.

After Mr. Hanna's strong address to the jury it would seem Rooney stood a good chance of acquittal.

For the Crown, Mr. T.H. Maxwell KC said anybody who had heard the evidence could not have a shadow of doubt that Rooney was the victim's killer. The reader may think otherwise. Certainly Mr. Maxwell's address was wanting in content, but then perhaps he had little to argue about.

Summing-up, the judge said the jury must ask themselves where Rooney was at the time of the murder if he was not



Rooney's execution notice



The Man Who Killed The King Of The King's Road

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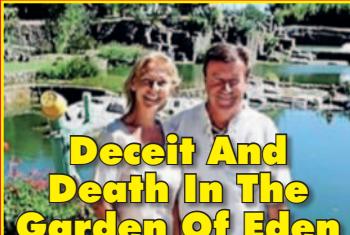
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HORROR IN CUMBERLAND
Boyfriend Shot The Wrong Sister

where the prosecution witnesses said he was. There was no evidence to show he was anywhere else, and he was not in the barracks – as he had told Mr. Cavanagh – as he was known to have escaped some time between 4 a.m. and 6 a.m.

The pleas over, how would the jury react? Had they considered the evidence in detail, logging Mr. Hanna's reasoning with that of the prosecutor and of the judge?

If they did they weren't long about it. After just 25 minutes the jury filed back into the court. In that short time they had found William Rooney guilty of murder. Asked if he had anything to say before he was sentenced, he replied: "I say I am innocent of the charge. It is perjury that has been sworn against me."

Some of the blood on his clothes was his own, he said, and it had been there since 1921. The rest was rabbit's blood, and his clothes should be sent to Scotland Yard, Dublin or anywhere else to prove it.

"I say I am innocent of the charge. It is perjury that has been sworn against me"

Sentencing him to death, Lord Justice Moore told Rooney that he had been convicted on evidence which the jury could not ignore, and their verdict was fully justified.

On the morning of Thursday, February 8th, 1923, the day of his execution at Derry Jail, the condemned man was reported to have woken at 4 o'clock after a good night's sleep. He remained in bed until 6 a.m., reading a prayer-book. He refused breakfast, and although he paled visibly when the executioner William Willis entered his cell shortly before 8 o'clock, he quickly rallied and submitted to pinioning.

Throughout his trial and his imprisonment he had displayed what was described as "an extraordinary composure."

Prior to his conviction for murder he had spent other spells in the prison for various offences, and as a handyman he had done several odd jobs in the jail. On one occasion, it was said, he had whitewashed the execution chamber!

Rooney made no confession, and he was hanged promptly at 8 a.m. without incident. In his diary Willis noted: "Thick-set man, standing five feet eight inches and weighing 156 lbs. Strong neck, thick moustache and dark hair. Walked OK to scaffold. Didn't need any support."

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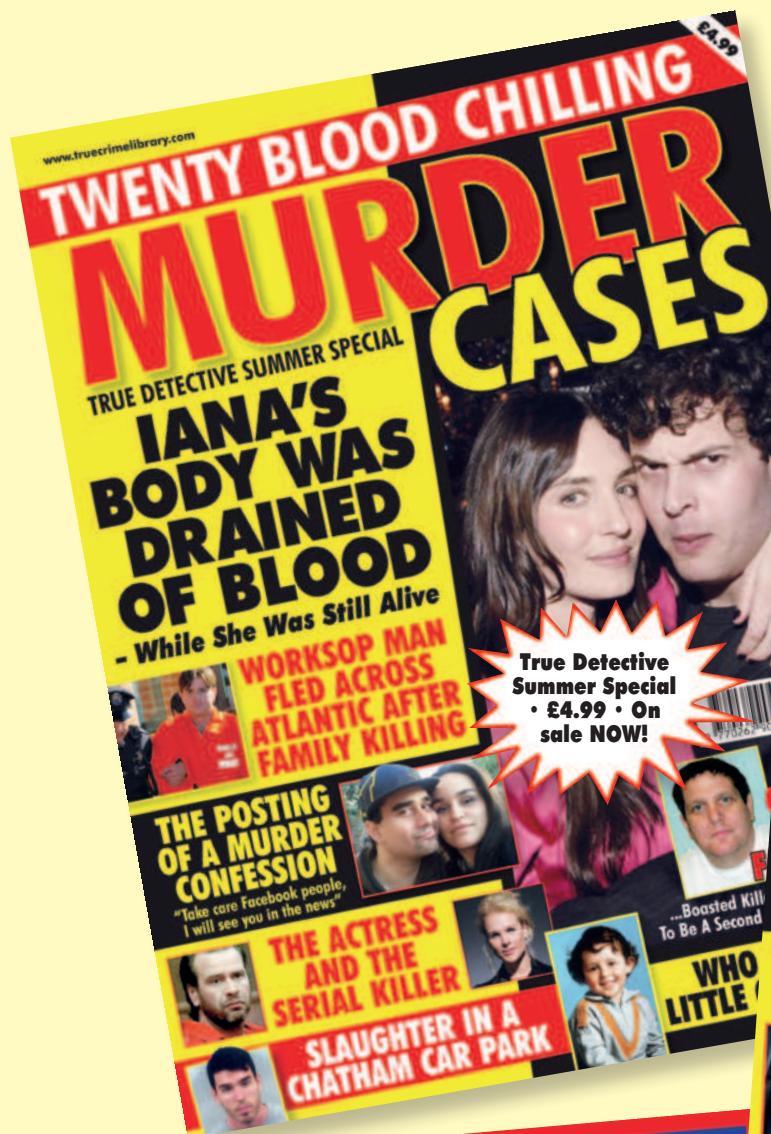
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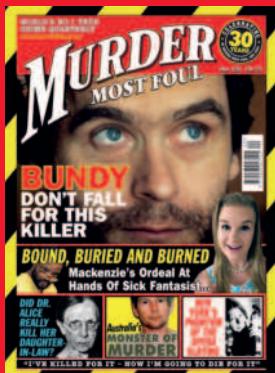
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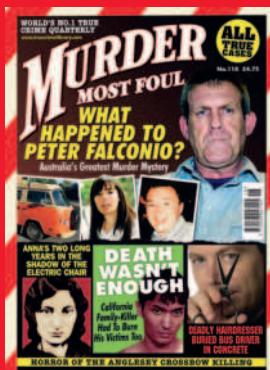


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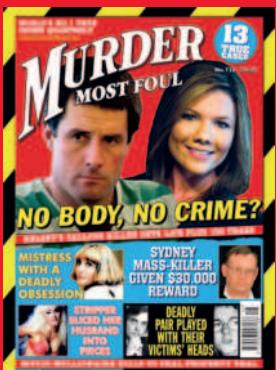
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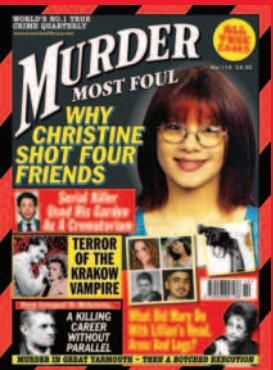
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