

WORLD'S NO.1 TRUE  
CRIME QUARTERLY

www.truecrimelibrary.com

# MURDER

## MOST FOUL

ALL  
TRUE  
CASES

No.124

### "BOA CONSTRICTOR KILLED MY HUSBAND"

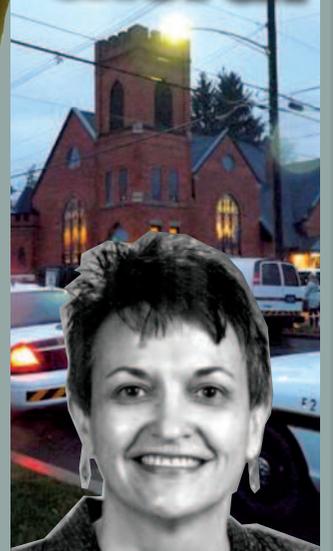
199-Year  
Sentence For  
Chicago's  
"BLONDE  
TIGRESS"



Wife Lies After  
Snake Farm Murder...



### Shot Dead In Church

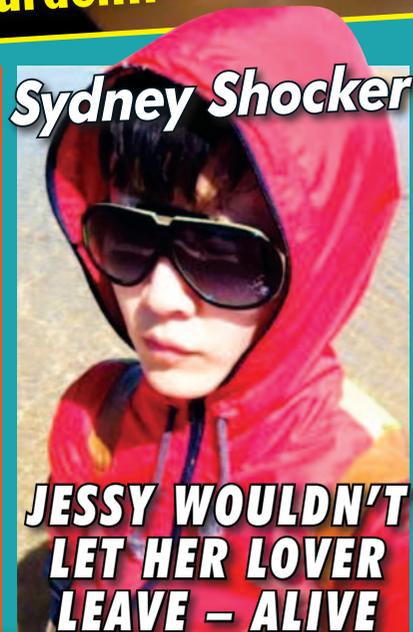


### "LET'S MOIDER MOTHER"



Schoolgirls carry out  
their killing fantasy

Sydney Shocker



JESSY WOULDN'T  
LET HER LOVER  
LEAVE - ALIVE

- Wife Who  
Unearthed  
Child Porn

DIGITAL  
truecrimelibrary  
EDITION

FELIXSTOWE BARGE MURDER: MYSTERY DEATH IN THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN

# MURDER

## No. 124

**MOST FOUL**



- 2 "Boa Constrictor Killed My Husband"
- 7 Opinion  
*More of your views*
- 8 Farm Worker's Deadly Revenge
- 11 Shot Dead In Church – Ex-Wife Who Unearthed Child Porn
- 14 "Let's Moider Mother"
- 20 Mystery Death In The Captain's Cabin
- 24 Did Barbara Murder One Husband...Or Two?
- 30 199-year Sentence For Chicago's "Blonde Tigress"

- 38 Strange Case of The 78-Year-Old Prostitute
- 42 "Mommy Was Crying...Mommy Was In The Rug"
- 45 An Old Man On The Gallows
- 50 She Hired A Hit-Man
- 54 Jessie Wouldn't Let Her Lover Leave – Alive
- 58 Unsolved: Who Killed "Carefree" Sandy?
- 63 "It Was Sex. I Haven't Had It For A Year"

Teenagers Pauline Parker, 16, and Juliet Hulme, 15, meant the world to each other – but their close friendship, in which they engaged in sexual experiments, was a worry to both sets of parents. The girls, from Christchurch, New Zealand, immersed themselves in literature, dreamed of becoming authors and began to consider themselves above the law. They indulged in shoplifting and wondered whether prostitution or blackmail was the route to financial reward. Pauline's mother wanted to split them up – so she had to die. Turn to page 14 and "Let's Moider Mother" for the full story. School baseball coach Russ Stager



was worried. He feared that his wife Barbara was out to kill him. In fact, so suspicious was he that he recorded a tape voicing those concerns. Days later, the 40-year-old dad from North Carolina was dead – mortally wounded when he was "accidentally" shot by his wife while in bed. Russ's recording didn't come to light till a year after his death. But when it did, investigators were very keen to speak to Barbara. Turn to page 24 and *Did Barbara Murder One Husband...Or Two?* Finally, don't miss a curious case from Leytonstone, east London. Wife-killer Charles Frembd was guilty. But should his age and frailty have saved him? See page 45 and *An Old Man On The Gallows*. Enjoy the read!

In some cases, fictitious names and places have been used. Where this has been done, a note of this fact appears in conjunction with the story. Cover and contents of *Murder Most Foul Quarterly* are produced by Magazine Design & Publishing Ltd. Printed and bound by Warners Midlands plc, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH, for the Proprietors and Publishers. Copyright and the rights of translation and reproduction of the contents of *Murder Most Foul Quarterly* are strictly reserved. Editorial and General Offices, P.O. Box 735, London SE26 5NQ. Single copies £4.75 post free in UK, available from Forum Press, P.O. Box 735, London SE26 5NQ or email: enquiries@truecrimelibrary.com. Advertising sales, subscription and back-number enquiries Tel: +44 (0) 20 8778 0514. Trade sales by Marketforce (UK) Ltd, 3rd Floor, 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP. Tel: +44 (0)330 390 6555. © Magazine Design & Publishing Ltd.

This Report By  
**Mark Davis**

**T**HE WOMAN making the 911 call was frantic. She tearfully explained that her husband, who ran a reptile supply business in New Florence, Missouri, had been crushed by one of his boa constrictors. And she desperately asked the emergency services to send help ASAP. But when police arrived to check the call out, they discovered that if a snake had been involved, it must have been unique.

Because it would have been the only snake in history to know how to use a gun.

As they discovered when they saw the used cartridges spread around the body of Ben Renick, the 29-year-old reptile business owner in question, he hadn't been crushed to death.

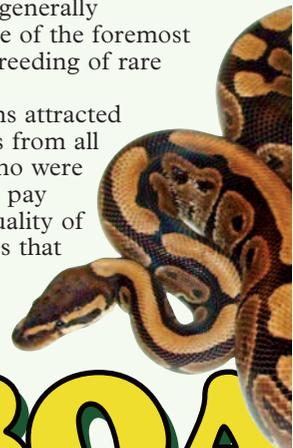
He'd been shot. Eight times, in total. So who was the real snake – the boa constrictor or the human kind?

Ben Renick was the scion of a family famous with fans of reptiles throughout America.

He'd built up a business and knowledge of reptiles that had made him a household name – he had offered his expertise in documentaries, made safety videos for potential customers and was generally considered to be one of the foremost authorities on the breeding of rare reptiles of all kinds.

His online auctions attracted high-quality bidders from all over the country, who were more than happy to pay top dollar for the quality of animals and supplies that were being offered.

Ben would often explain in his safety videos that



# "BOA KILLER"

there was really nothing to fear from the snakes and other creatures that he sold, so long as you treated them carefully, respectfully and followed all the rules and advice that he was more than happy to give.

One of the problems that Ben had, however, was that as carefully as he bred his reptiles for sale, his own family had a dark past.

Ben's father was Frank Renick. Frank ran a business called Spectrum Pet Care, a pet shop and supplies

It's a well-known fact that snakes are cold-blooded. But they're not the only ones – humans can be, too, and the person who murdered Ben Renick was as cold as they come...



Ben and Lynlee Renick pose for a photograph. First responders were concerned that the reptiles which Ben was famous for may have played a part in his demise. The cartridge-strewn crime scene soon made it clear what kind of snake they were hunting...

# "A CONSTRUCTOR KILLED MY HUSBAND"

business that had earned him, his wife, Ben and his brother, Sam, a comfortable, well-off lifestyle.

But it all turned sour and ended in tragedy.

Frank was accused of multiple counts of fraud after persuading investors to buy \$7 million of shares in Spectrum Pet Care.

Police accused him of ripping his investors off, and spending "a substantial amount of that money" on his own, personal expenses.

He could easily have been sent to prison for decades, but in 2012 he was found dead with a shotgun wound in his chest that police filed under "apparent suicide."

Five years later, Ben would die of gunshot wounds, too. But who pulled the trigger that killed *him*?

**T**he big difference between father and son was that in Ben's death, there was nothing apparent that may have led to it – he was successful,

apparently happily married and, other than business rivals, had no known enemies.

And despite a natural inclination to suspect Ben's wife, Lynlee Renick – after all, the vast majority of murders are carried out by a member of the victim's family, most often the spouse – there was no evidence whatever other than the five spent cartridges found near the body.

There was no gun to be found, either, smoking or otherwise.

So as time dragged on, the case gradually grew colder and colder.

But then the police got a break from an unusual angle.

After Ben was killed, Lynlee had

Detective Schaffer's first move was to track down the employee at Lynlee's salon.

Ashley Shaw flatly denied having had anything to do with Ben's

It didn't help his cause. All three – Lynlee Renick, Ashley Shaw and Michael Humphrey – were arrested on charges of conspiracy to murder. But only two would face trial.

Detective Schaffer told Ashley Shaw they had more than enough evidence to charge her, but allowed her to cut a deal whereby she testified against Lynlee in exchange for not being sent to trial.

Humphrey would also cut a deal with the prosecution, but first he would face his own trial, in October 2021.

He was charged with first-degree murder, and Missouri state law required that the minimum penalty was life without the possibility of parole.

After he was convicted by a jury in Audrain County, he cut his own deal where the charge would be reduced to second-degree murder in exchange for providing the state with crucial testimony against Lynlee when she went on trial.

So he would get a life sentence, but with the chance of parole after 20 to 25 years.

His part of the deal was that he'd tell police where to find the gun that was used to kill Ben Renick.



**Above, investigators quickly worked out that Ben was worth far more dead than alive to Lynlee**

started a relationship with 32-year-old Brandon Blackwell, and she became pregnant with Blackwell's child.

Despite the arrival of the youngster, things were not going well for the family. The couple had split up, and, as so often in cases like these, things quickly got messy.

In May 2019, Blackwell was ordered by the courts to pay Lynlee nearly \$800 a month in child support.

Unhappy with the court's decision, he was then arrested for stalking and threatening Lynlee, and for breaking a protection order that had been made against him.

He was found guilty of five counts of violating the order of protection and two counts of first-degree stalking.

So while he sulked in his prison cell, Blackwell hatched a plan to get his revenge on his ex.

He asked to speak to Nathaniel Schaffer, the lead detective from the Missouri State Police, who was still investigating the murder of Ben Renick.

He told Schaffer that Lynlee had confessed to him that she and an employee from her nail, spa and beauty salon had conspired together to kill Ben.

Schaffer was cautiously intrigued.

Delighted to finally have a lead that he could get his teeth into, but aware that it came from a vengeful ex-partner languishing in prison on charges of stalking the woman he'd just accused of murder.

Was there really anything in it?

death. But when she was told the consequences of going to trial and being given a long prison sentence, she started wavering, and sure enough, began to talk.

**A**ccording to Ashley, she and Lynlee had first tried to kill Ben by slipping tranquillisers into his drink, but that didn't work.

A week or so later, they used the computer at the spa to do an internet search for a hit-man who would do the job.

Not surprisingly, they came up blank.

Next, Lynlee got in touch with an old boyfriend of hers, Michael Humphrey.

Using Facebook to track him down, they discovered he'd moved to Jefferson County, but was still in Missouri.

Humphrey still held a candle for Lynlee, so it was pretty easy to persuade him to help the pair out.

Lynlee got him on board by lying about her relationship with Ben. She said that she'd been abused both physically and emotionally, and that she was scared of Ben.

She told Humphrey that she needed something to protect herself with when she confronted him about getting a divorce. So he gave her a gun.

While he admitted being there on the day that Ben had been shot, he insisted that not only had he not been holding the gun, he hadn't even been looking when Lynlee had fired.



**Above, Lynlee in police custody**

When the gun was retrieved and tested by a ballistics expert, it was found to be of the same calibre as the shell casings that had been found near Ben's body.

Having proved that he was telling the truth so far, the police were confident that when Lynlee went on trial, Humphrey would give devastating testimony against her.

**A**shley Shaw was the first to take the witness-stand. She told the court that she'd provided the Percocet opioids that Lynlee had used in her

attempt to poison Ben a few weeks before the shooting.

She said that she'd also helped Lynlee to track down Humphrey, and put her in contact with him.

She claimed that she didn't know that Lynlee had reached the point where she was genuinely thinking of killing Ben, or that Humphrey had provided her with a gun.

However, she said that she did believe Lynlee when she told her that Ben was prone to violent outbursts against her, that he'd raped her and she was in fear of her life.

But while Ashley Shaw said she didn't know what Lynlee had been planning, she admitted that she'd taken her back to the spa so that she could

Ben and Lynlee had been having conversations about all the money he'd been giving her to prop up the salon, which was failing as badly as their marriage

clean herself up after the shooting.

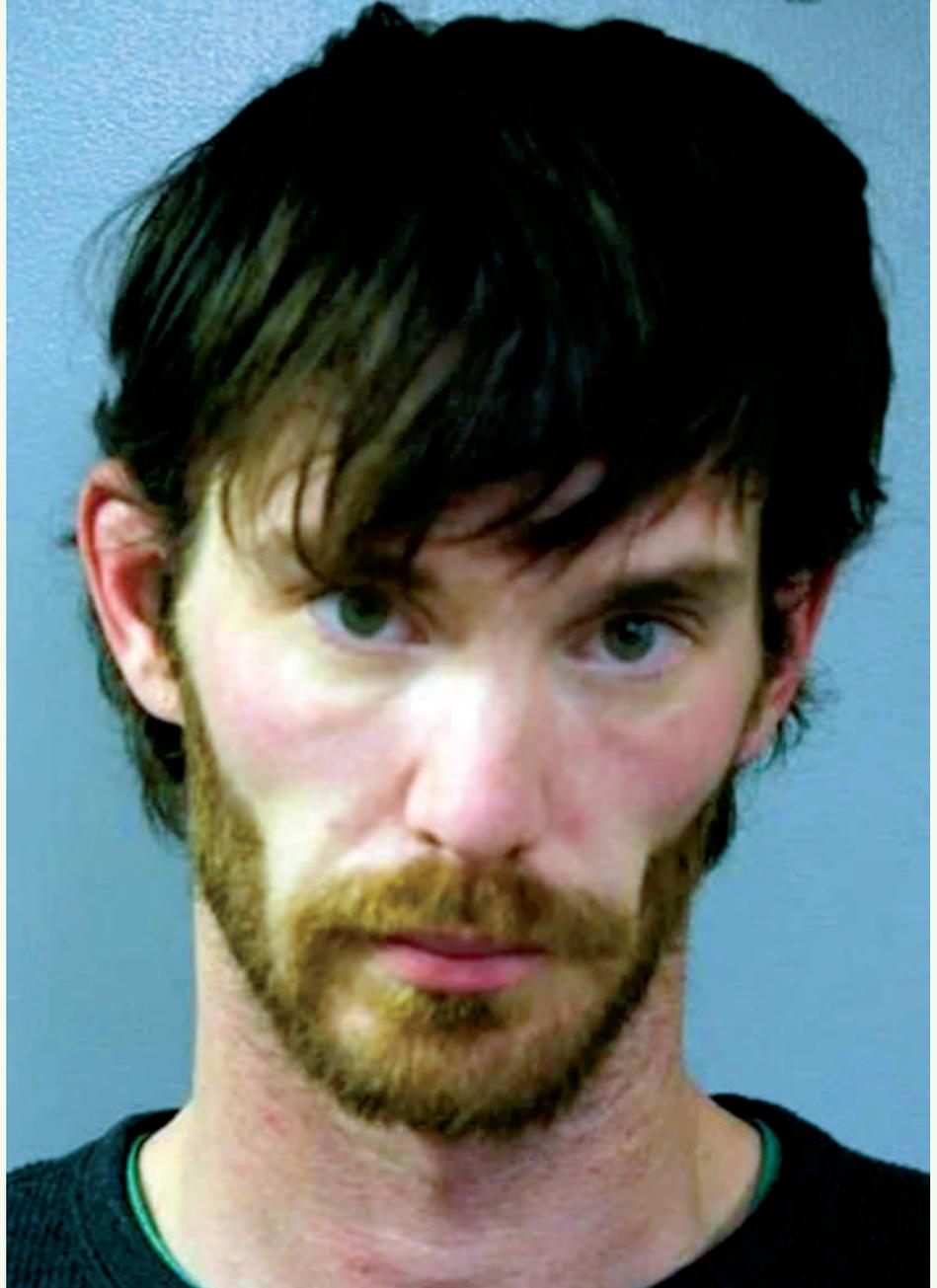
She claimed that she didn't know why she'd helped out, and admitted that she wished she'd gone straight to the police, well before Ben had actually been killed.

Then Michael Humphrey fulfilled his part of the bargain to testify against Lynlee.

He swore that she pulled the trigger because although she'd said that she wanted a divorce, the opposite was really true.

Apparently, she'd thought a divorce would mean she would miss out on his hefty life insurance policy and any chance of inheriting or benefiting from his business, and that his stronger financial position would mean he'd get custody of their children.

A ballistics expert from the Missouri State Police Crime Laboratory explained how he was able to match



**Lynlee drew an old boyfriend of hers, Michael Humphrey (above), into her murder conspiracy. Below, Lynlee cries during the sentencing phase of her trial on December 9th, 2021, at the Boone County Courthouse**

the bullets that had been used with the gun that Humphrey had provided Lynlee with.

In the manufacturing process, machines imprint a random imperfection into every gun barrel, so that it becomes unique.

That imperfection then becomes imprinted onto the cartridges when the trigger is pulled, so that they can then be unquestionably matched to a gun when tested in the lab.

So these bullets had definitely been fired from the gun that Michael Humphrey had led the police to, no question.

Simple as that.

Then Detective Schaffer took the stand.

He testified that after he'd been informed

that Lynlee had been behind the murder all along, he'd had her phone examined.

He and his team had gone through messages from the months leading up to Ben's death.

These had shown that Ben and Lynlee had been having conversations about all the money he'd been giving her to prop up the salon, which was failing as badly as their marriage.

According to the messages, the spa was leaking money so badly that Ben had told her they were "bleeding out" financially.

So in the detective's view, she had yet another financial motive for killing him.

The final witness for the state was Ben Renick's financial adviser.

She testified that she'd been introduced to the couple in February 2017 by a mutual friend, and was asked to go over the accounts to see if she could work out where the money had been going.

She said that the Renicks were the



beneficiaries of a trust fund, and there was a \$1 million life insurance policy, both in Ben's name.

Lynlee was the sole beneficiary of the life insurance policy. But the "murder rule" prevents anyone who is found guilty of killing someone from inheriting their property or money.

So while Lynlee claimed to have good reason to divorce Ben, she had an even clearer financial motive for killing him instead.

**W**hich brought on the defence case. The first witness was Britney Bishop, who had been Lynlee's friend since high school. Lynlee went to live with her after Ben was murdered.

Britney said that she could not imagine Lynlee ever killing anyone,

**"Forget – and excuse the pun – her crocodile tears in court. Lynlee Renick planned and executed her husband ruthlessly and cold-bloodedly to get her hands on his estate to bail herself out"**

especially as she was afraid of guns.

Under cross-examination, though, she admitted that Lynlee had told her she was worried that she would lose custody of her and Ben's two children if she filed for divorce.

Unusually in a murder trial, Lynlee took to the stand to testify in her own defence.

She told the court that she had asked Humphrey to come out to her place, because she did indeed need emotional support, since she planned to tell Ben that she wanted to leave him.

"I walked right up behind Michael," she said, "and then he turned around and I saw a gun in his hands. I screamed something like 'No, don't!' and I screamed and ran outside to the car."

She said that immediately after that, she heard gunshots. Humphrey ran back to where she was standing by the vehicle and yelled at her that they needed to leave, as he hustled her into the car.

Then they drove away together.

"I don't remember thinking about anything," she said tearfully. "I recall at one point I sat up, and I just remember

**Now incarcerated, Lynlee has begun the inexorable process of filing appeals and lawsuits**

the trees and rolling the window down and lighting a cigarette. I was frozen. I couldn't understand the reality of what just happened. I didn't think Ben was dead, I thought they were just warning shots that I heard."

State prosecutor Kevin Zoeller was curtly dismissive of Lynlee's account of what happened.

In cross-examination, he asked her how she could feel safe driving off with a man that she knew had just killed her husband.

Lynlee acknowledged that she'd asked him, rather than her best friend Britney, to accompany her home to ask for a divorce.

She also said that she hadn't asked her father to go with her, because he wouldn't morally agree with the idea of a divorce.

And she also admitted that she'd regained enough presence of mind to go back to the spa and ask Ashley Shaw to help her clean herself up, and remove any evidence that she'd been involved in a murder.

"We have one million reasons why you wanted our husband dead," said Zoeller, "one for each dollar of his life insurance."

"You were the mastermind of the murder," he continued, "if a somewhat bungling one. You have lied every day since the day you killed your husband. You even suggested to police that Ben's brother might have been involved in his murder. You have run out of straws to clutch on to."

Lynlee's lawyer, Timothy Hesemann, claimed that Humphrey had actually fired the gun, and that Ashley Shaw told police what they wanted to hear, rather than the truth, because they'd threatened her with arrest and being



thrown in jail.

He reminded the jury of the sweetheart deals that Detective Schaffer and Shaw had made to testify against Lynlee.

Hesemann continued, saying that Lynlee hadn't called 911 right away, which set off a chain of poor decision-making.

That started with saying her husband had been killed by a huge snake, which then meant she had to change her story several times after being arrested.

"I lied a lot and I understand how this looks," she admitted to the court, "but I never wanted Ben dead."

**I**n early December 2021, after nearly 12 hours of deliberation, the jury returned their verdict.

Guilty.

But it wasn't the guilty verdict the prosecution had wanted.

They found Lynlee guilty not of first-degree murder, but second-degree.

When it came to sentencing, the defence brought in Lynlee's father, stepmother and sister.

Lynlee had been staying at her father's house, with an ankle monitor. She had deeply regretted everything that had happened, said her father.

Her stepmother said that none of Lynlee's children – neither the ones she had with Ben, nor the one she had with Blackwell – would be able to live full lives if their mother was jailed.

And her sister, Rachel Peek, added to the melodrama by asking the court through tears to be merciful towards Lynlee for the sake of her children.

Kevin Zoeller, the prosecutor, replied that the reason the children wouldn't have their mother in their lives was because of what she'd done.

"When crime happens," he said, "you punch water and there are ripples. Those ripples are the victims, and the victims include her children."

The jury could choose to be merciful, he said, but they shouldn't be just because the culprit's family were asking them to.

The jury weren't merciful.

Lynlee Renick was sentenced to 13 years in prison, plus another three years on the charge of armed criminal action.

"Snakes might be cold-blooded creatures," said Kevin Zoeller afterwards, "but they're not as cold-hearted as Lynlee Renick.

Does she really know what kind of cold heart lies within her?

**"Forget – and excuse the pun – her crocodile tears in court. Lynlee Renick planned and executed her husband ruthlessly and cold-bloodedly to get her hands on his estate to bail herself out. The only snake in the grass in this case is her."**

## Death Of Deadly Durst

I read with great interest John Sanders's article about the life and crimes of property tycoon Robert Durst (*"Jinxed: He Killed Susan But Did He Kill Kathie Too?"* – MMF 123). How sad for the family of Kathie McCormack Durst that Robert Durst's death in January 2022 has robbed them of any chance of long-overdue justice. My heart goes out to them. For decades they must have suspected that the despicable Durst was responsible for murdering Kathie. Now, with Durst's death, his darkest secrets have gone to the grave with him.

Your article ends by suggesting that many people believe Durst was a serial killer. There's no doubt about it in my mind. His confession in TV documentary *The Jinx* said it all.

**Peter Easton, Gosport**

## Con-Man Who Escaped Prison

Has MMF ever featured the story of American con-man Steven Jay Russell who was able to con his way out of American prisons quite a few times through simply impersonating many different people? Such deception especially in escaping from prison should provide a most interesting story for MMF readers to enjoy.

**Iris Dutton, Telford**

*No, we haven't. Although Russell would indeed make an interesting story, he's not for us simply because he's not a murderer!*

## As Tough As Any Man

The Ma Barker brood (MMF123) reminds us that tough gangsters are not always men. Miami's attractive Two-gun Marie Baker (aka Rose Durante), the Pretty Pants Bandit, raided a string of stores in 1933 with the phrase "Take off Your Pants!" As her legend grew, this changed to "Stick 'em up and take 'em down!" The store clerks were thus unable to give chase. Vanity was her downfall. She stopped to check her make-up in a mirror, a pants-free hostage escaped, Marie was caught with her trousers down. She served three years.



**Financial wizard:  
Enedina Felix**

Semi-mythical Irish-born Hell-Cat Maggie (1820-45) was a member of the New York Dead Rabbits. She filed her teeth to points, attached brass claws to her nails and hung out at McGurk's Suicide Hall, Hell's Gate or the Tub of Blood. "When Hell-Cat Maggie screeched her battle cry and rushed



**5 Manor Road, Bournemouth. The house, formerly known as "Villa Madeira," is the one-time home of murder victim Francis Rattenbury (inset). See letter below**

biting and clawing the midst of a mass of opposing gangsters, even the most stout-hearted blanched and fled," wrote Herbert Asbury. A fine Irish whiskey is named in her honour.

Bang up to date, Enedina "La Madrina" Arellano Felix, 60, has led the Tijuana Cartel for the last two decades since her father and brothers were bumped or arrested. Always the financial wizard, she has shifted the focus from violence to business – much like Lucky Luciano and the Syndicate (great name for a band) achieved in the States a century before. Like my mother always said, "You take care with them girls in the village – remember some girls are good at being bad."

**Andrew Stephenson, Newhaven**

## Mystery Death

Has MMF featured the still unsolved death, presumed murder, of Wigston, Leicestershire, resident Mark Cookson, who was found dead at his home in 2015? It does beggar belief at times that unsolved deaths where foul play is suspected can remain unsolved even with the advancements made in forensic science.

**Robert J. McInachan, Leicester**

*No, we've never featured the case. Would other readers like to know more about it?*

## A Crime Buff On Tour

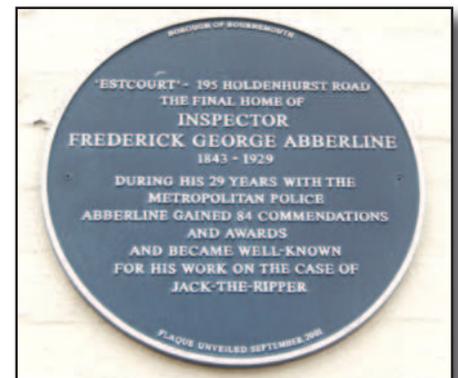
For the new year celebrations we went to Bournemouth. En route we stopped at Winchester and went to the crown court to view Court Number Three where Rose West went on trial for murder. They allowed me to view the court, but no photographs were permitted.

From there we went to Bournemouth

and 195, Holdenhurst Road, the final home of Inspector Frederick Abberline, who did investigative work on the Jack The Ripper case. There is a plaque marking Abberline's home. Finally we went to 5, Manor Road, Bournemouth, the scene of the town's most famous murder, The Rattenbury Murder of 1935. The murder was turned into a film called *Cause*



**Above, Inspector Frederick Abberline. Below, the plaque at his Bournemouth home**



*Célèbre* featuring Helen Mirren. I bought the film after visiting the place.  
**Ray Spiller, via email**

## Murder Of A Landlady

I too would like to read about the murder of pub landlady Annie Walker, because I myself was born in Leicestershire. I think the murder was known as the Coronation Street murder. Hope you will oblige.

**Colleen Stevens, Cork City**

*We're already working on it! See next issue.*

# FARM WORKER'S

**I**N THE summer of 1940 two young men, Harry Allen and Steve Wade, applied and trained to become hangmen. They learned their table of drops and successfully completed their course of instruction, but before becoming assistant executioners they had one more test to pass. To satisfy the authorities that they could cope coolly with their duties on the scaffold, they had to watch an actual hanging.

By **Matthew Spicer**

For Harry Allen, a letter from Bedford Prison dated November 20th, 1940, confirmed the date of execution of William Henry Cooper on the 26th of that month. Allen and Wade were both to be second assistants at the hanging. The letter from the prison governor, with all its official stiffness (but perhaps not with its rather wonky syntax), was standard procedure:

*Dear Sir,*

*With reference to my letter of the 15th inst. and your provisional acceptance to undertake the duties of Second Assistant executioner in the execution of the above named convict at this prison, I have to inform you that the High Sheriff has fixed Tuesday next the 26th inst. at 9 a.m. as the date and time fixed for the carrying out of the sentence. I therefore have to request that you will report to this prison on the 25th inst not later than 4 p.m. Prepared to carry out your duties the following morning.*

*A return railway warrant to Bedford is enclosed, which please return if your services are not required. The date is final as far as the high sheriff is concerned, but is, of course, subject to possible interference by the Secretary of State. Should the arrangements be altered you will be notified immediately so far as you may be concerned.*

And so a hangman's journey was to begin – but first, a man had to die...

**O**N NOVEMBER 25th, 1940, the two would-be hangmen set out for Bedford Prison to witness the execution due to be performed there early the next day.

The investigation which had led to this had begun at 8.30 a.m. on Friday, July 5th, 1940, when 69-year-old John

**Cambridgeshire farmer John Harrison was a kindly bachelor without an enemy in the world. Or so it seemed. When he was found fatally beaten in a poultry hut, robbery seemed to be the motive. But was there anyone who had a particular grudge against him?**

Harrison was found sitting severely injured in a poultry hut on his farm in Thorney, Cambridgeshire. He had been beaten about the head and face with a bottle, and was taken to hospital in Peterborough where he died a fortnight later, unaware that he had been attacked and having failed to recover full consciousness.

He was a bachelor living with an unmarried sister in Thorney at Causeway Farm, one of several smallholdings he owned, for like other farmers in the neighbourhood he had bought land when the Duke of Bedford's estate was broken up shortly before the First World War. The assault had taken place in Seven Acre Field, on Mr. Harrison's

Middle Farm, and robbery was believed to be the motive because on Fridays he would normally have between £50 and £60 on him to pay his employees. This particular Friday had been an exception, however, because on the Thursday evening he had handed his men's week's wages to his foreman, and he had only three 10-shilling notes on him when he was attacked.

These were now missing, but not for long. William Cooper, a 24-year-old farmworker, had been seen with a bicycle near the crime scene, and the stolen notes were found on him when he was arrested at 10.30 a.m. Admitting the assault, he was remanded in custody, charged first with robbery with violence, and then with murder when Mr. Harrison died.

The victim, a close relative told

**Thorney Farmer Assaulted**  
**Mr. J. J. Harrison in Hospital**  
**in Grave Condition.**  
**Man Charged with Robbery.**  
**T**HE MANY FRIENDS of Mr. John Joseph Harrison, farmer, of the Causeway, Thorney, heard with concern that he was the victim of a dastardly attack by a man armed with a bottle, which it is alleged took place in a field on one of his farms early on Friday morning. He was conveyed to Peterborough Memorial Hospital in a serious condition. Mr. Harrison, who is 69 and a bachelor, resided with his sister, Miss Harrison, who is staying with her niece, Miss Uttley, of 12 Thorney Road, Peterborough.



**The crime scene in Seven Acre Field, Thorney, Cambridgeshire**

# DEADLY REVENGE



Above, the poultry hut in which victim John Harrison was discovered. Below, trainee hangman Harry Allen who would witness the killer's execution

reporters, was "so kindly and inoffensive that he could not have had an enemy in the world." But the police learned that Cooper had a grudge against him. After working for the farmer for about a year as a second horsekeeper, he had been dismissed for ploughing a field poorly and disobeying his foreman's orders.

Mr. Harrison had agreed to give him a reference, however, offering him casual employment, but Cooper had been heard muttering, "I'll have my own back."

When arrested at his mother's home in Eastleigh Road, Peterborough, he denied being on Mr. Harrison's land that morning, and claimed that blood on his clothes was red paint. But while being taken to Whittlesey police station by car, he told the two officers escorting him: "I will tell the truth, you have got me taped. I hit him with the bottle and all over. The bottle, I believe, is a Tizer."

He had left home at 6.40 that morning, his mother told detectives. "I packed his drink in a glass bottle," she said, adding that he owed her £6 for lodgings and had split up with his wife.

A broken, bloodstained Tizer bottle had been found at the crime scene, and fragments of glass from it were recovered from the turn-ups of Cooper's trousers.

"I do not know what to say," he said when he was subsequently charged with



murder. "I did not think it would turn out like this."

**P**leading "Not guilty" when his trial before Mr. Justice Singleton began at Cambridgeshire Assizes on October 17th, he was said by Mr. John Flowers, KC, prosecuting, to have made a full confession. He had made statements admitting lying in wait for Mr. Harrison, hitting him six times, and then pulling some boxes down over him to make the scene look like an accident.

Arthur Jinks, the foreman at Middle Farm, testified that Cooper was "in a

rage" after being given notice. "He spoke to the Master and he said, 'You talk to Jinks,' so he came to me and asked me what he had got the sack for. I told him it was for not obeying orders and to go back to his work, and he said he would report me to his union."

Cross-examined, the foreman said that Cooper "was ploughing potatoes in on the Friday. I asked him to do something and we had a few words. He was given notice the next day and he was very upset. He asked the Master why he got the sack. I don't know if he asked him several times. I know he asked the Master for a character [reference], and he gave him one."

The court then heard that as a matter of routine Mr. Harrison went to the poultry hut early every morning.

"On July 5th I was working next to Seven Acre Field," Lawrence Rycroft, a labourer, testified. "I saw Mr. Harrison go to the hut about 8.30 a.m. and go in it. I heard a noise like boxes falling down. A little while afterwards I saw a man who I did not know come out. He had a dinner bag on his back. He ran down the field and got on his bike and went towards Eye on Bukehorn Road. I went in the hut a little while after and found Mr. Harrison sitting down, his head all battered about."

Dr. Robert Walker told the jury that when Mr. Harrison was admitted to hospital, "he was unconscious, restless and rambling, suffering from shock. His face and head were bruised and swollen, his nose fractured and pushed over to the right side.

"There was a deep lacerated wound below his right eye and on the left side of his face and through both lips, and on the top left side and back of his head and neck, and his shoulders were much bruised. His cheekbone was exposed under his right eye, and the bone of his skull could be felt under two or three of his wounds. An X-ray showed what we thought was a fracture of the skull."

Dr. David Fulton, who had conducted Mr. Harrison's autopsy, confirmed that the skull was fractured. "In my opinion," the doctor concluded, "the cause of death was bronco-pneumonia which I attribute to the fact that he was confined to bed in an unconscious condition. It was consequential to the head injuries."

Seeking an acquittal or a manslaughter verdict, Cooper's counsel, Mr. F.T. Alpe, said his client's defence was that he called at the poultry hut to ask Mr. Harrison the reason for his dismissal. Mr. Harrison would not tell him, and lunged at him with a hammer. So in self-defence, Cooper hit out with a bottle containing tea made by his mother.

There was no evidence, Mr. Alpe

added, that Cooper was armed with any weapon or had any intention of committing murder.

The jury, however, took a different view. After only 15 minutes' deliberation, they found William Cooper guilty as charged and he was sentenced to death.

In the following month his appeal was dismissed, the Lord Chief Justice,



A Tizer bottle from the era of the murder

Viscount Caldecote, noting that Cooper had made no mention of a hammer in any of his pre-trial statements. It was not until he went into the witness-box at his trial that he claimed that Mr. Harrison had picked up a hammer.

On duly arriving at Bedford Prison to see the killer executed, Harry Allen and Steve Wade were given the basic information that Cooper was five feet, five-and-a-half inches tall, and weighed 136 pounds. The hangmen Thomas Pierrepont and his nephew Albert, having consulted their table, had decided on a drop of eight feet, one inch.

At his trial Cooper had shown no emotion on hearing the verdict, and on the eve of his execution he played dominoes and cards with one of his guards until 10 o'clock. The next morning, however, he fainted as his hands were being pinioned behind his back.

Harry Allen and Steve Wade both maintained their composure as Cooper was then carried to the scaffold, where he was executed still in the same oblivious state. Neither Allen nor Wade batted an eyelid, and a Home Office official watching them noted that they would do.

"Very good and a clean job carried out at Bedford by Mr. Thomas W. Pierrepont," 29-year-old Allen wrote in his diary. "The culprit had to be carried to the scaffold



Above, the scene of the murderous attack. Fragments of a broken bloodstained glass bottle were discovered here. Below, the record of attendance at the execution reveals the participants

Bedford Prison on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 1894

Records respecting the Executioner and his Assistants (if any).

	Name and Address, in full, of the Executioner.	Name and Address, in full, of the 1st Assistant to the Executioner (if any).	Name and Address, in full, of the 2nd Assistant to the Executioner (if any).
Executioner	Thomas William Pierrepont, 2 Turner's Avenue, Lidget Green, Bradford, Yorks.	Albert Pierrepont, 2 East St., Newton Heath, Manchester, 10.	(1) Stephen Wade, 16, St. Vincent Av., Doncaster, Yorks.
Assistant			(2) Harry Bernard Allen, 34 Waterloo St., Hurst, Ashton - u - Lyne, Levens.

owing to faintness and loss of courage, but not until the same morning."

Allen assisted at his first hanging three months later, subsequently participating in 81 executions, 29 of them as "number one," until

capital punishment for murder was abolished in November 1965. Coincidentally, Steve Wade also carried out 29 executions as the chief hangman, also assisting at another 39.

# Shot Dead In Church – Ex-Wife Who Unearthed Child Porn

*She was a community stalwart whose life had been devoted to music and the church. So when popular Darlene Sitler was brutally gunned down by her ex-husband in front of the congregation, the community was left horror-struck*

**O**N A chilly Sunday morning in December 2012, the congregation began to gather at the First Presbyterian Church in the little Pennsylvania town of Coudersport, about 140 miles from Pittsburgh.

Regular churchgoers in the close-knit farming community greeted each other warmly, unaware that the service they were about to attend would be remembered with horror for years to come.

Inside the church – a gaunt, redbrick edifice built by the early Presbyterian fathers in the 1830s – pastor Evon Lloyd welcomed everyone and opened with a prayer.

Modern and progressive in style, she'd introduced new kinds of worship to the church such as meditation, painting, drumming and dance.

To try and combat local homophobic bullying, she'd even organised a screening of the gay rights film *Love Free or Die*.

Fifty-three-year-old choir director and organist Darlene Sitler was delighted with Evon's lively approach, and was soon leading the congregation in a medley of new and traditional hymns.

As a music teacher, band leader, and orchestral conductor, Darlene



**Above, police outside the First Presbyterian Church after the organist, music teacher Darlene Sitler (inset), was shot dead**

was one of Coudersport's most loved personalities, and had been Sunday school teacher to many of the parents now sitting in the pews.

The church's acoustics were

Case report  
by **Francesca Morrison**

sonorous, and from her seat at the organ on the east side of the altar, she didn't hear a door open behind the choir or see a man walk in wearing a beige jacket with the hood pulled up.

A few people had noticed him pacing up and down outside the church before the service began, but thought little of it.

As Evon opened her Bible to read from Corinthians, the shrouded figure strode forward, pulled out a gun, levelled it at Darlene, and fired four shots. She fell into the organ pit, blood spurting from multiple wounds, and for a few moments no one in the stunned congregation moved.

In the shocked silence that followed, the shooter walked back the way he'd come in, waving the gun and muttering.

Evon threw down the Bible and

shouted: “Gregory, stop!” then rushed over to Darlene, who was still breathing, but close to death. Other people put a cushion under her head, and covered her with a blanket.

Leslie Rolfe knew Gregory Eldred well. He’d been a member of the church until Darlene had divorced him two years earlier.

Rolfe followed Eldred out of the building to the car park, and saw him lay his gun on the roof of his truck.

**“I’ve got to see her.  
I’ve got to finish it.  
I’ve got to see if she’s  
dead. Get out of my  
way or I’ll have to  
shoot you too”**

“Put your gun on the ground, Gregory,” he called. “The police will be here any minute. You can’t get away. Don’t make things any worse.”

For five minutes Eldred stood bowed over the vehicle while Rolfe reasoned with him, then he suddenly picked up the weapon again and headed back towards the choir door.

Rolfe begged him to put the gun down and flung himself across the door, trying to bar Eldred’s way.

“I’ve got to see her,” Eldred said wildly. “I’ve got to finish it. I’ve got to see if she’s dead. Get out of my way or I’ll have to shoot you, too.”



**A handcuffed Gregory Eldred, his ankles shackled, arrives for a court hearing**

Knocking Rolfe to the ground, he barged through the door and fired more shots at Darlene’s body before other church members overpowered him.

One bullet was recovered from a

cushion on the altar, another pierced a pillow beneath her head, and a third lodged in the back of a pew.

Trooper Michael Delp arrived from the barracks outside town eight minutes after receiving the 911 emergency call. Coudersport is in a remote rural area without full-time police cover, and the next patrol wasn’t due until four o’clock that afternoon.

Darlene was pronounced dead at the scene by the county coroner and Eldred was taken into custody. While being interviewed at the Coudersport barracks, he called his sister and told her he’d shot Darlene in the church where their children had been baptised.

He was charged with first-degree murder, third-degree murder, simple assault, recklessly endangering another person, and terror threats.

Shortly after the murder, police transported the entire congregation to headquarters in a school bus for questioning. At the time, the dazed

## CRIME CAMERA



**Scene-of-crime officers search for evidence on Twickenham Green, London, on August 20th, 2004, where Frenchwoman Amélie Delagrangé (inset), 22, was slain the night before. Serial killer Levi Bellfield was convicted of her murder in February 2008. ALAMY**



**Church steps lead to the tragedy**

churchgoers were hardly aware that they were making history. Only rarely is a murder witnessed by so many people in such a confined space.

The church and wider community were overwhelmed by a crime involving two such well-known citizens. Eldred was an elementary school music teacher and played the clarinet in a local



**Above, music teacher Eldred who played the clarinet in a local orchestra. Left, victim Darlene. She had been terrified that Eldred would think she had anything to do with the FBI raid on his home**



**Eldred's police mug-shot**

orchestra. Darlene was simply “darlin’ Darlene.”

“She was the ultimate professional and the kids loved her,” said police chief Scott Graham. “She taught my kids. She taught everybody’s kids at one time or another. She just did so many things for our schools and community. For her to die like this is incomprehensible.”

A month later, the church re-opened with a service of re-consecration. In a symbolic act of purification, Evon burned the vestment in which she’d wrapped Darlene’s body at the time of the killing.

Facing the death penalty, Eldred accepted a deal in which he would plead guilty to first-degree murder in exchange for life without parole.

A crowd of 60 people came to his sentencing in July 2013, including most

of the churchgoers who’d witnessed the murder. Speaking softly and sobbing, a haggard-looking Eldred seemed overcome with remorse and tender feelings for the woman he’d killed in cold blood.

“I ended the life of the one person who meant more to me than anyone else,” he

**“I ended the life of the one person who meant more to me than anyone else. I am truly sorry. I wasn’t thinking rationally about how these actions would affect our family, friends, the church, staff and students”**

told the court. “I am truly sorry. I wasn’t thinking rationally about how these actions would affect our family, friends, the church, staff and students.”

Evon Lloyd struggled to maintain her composure as she addressed Eldred, saying: “Darlene never said an unkind word about you, even after your divorce.



**Musical theme on the headstone of victim Darlene Sitler**

You can’t undo what you did, but you will bear the consequences. If you can come to terms with what you did, please let us know and we will pray for you. Otherwise, be gone.”

Locals wondered for months why Eldred had murdered his wife. Those who knew them believed the couple had remained on reasonable terms since the divorce, and Darlene clearly had a happy and sociable life, devoted to the church and music.

Then it emerged that the FBI had raided Eldred’s home – where he lived alone with his three cats – two days before he killed Darlene. They’d taken away several guns, pornography, and his computer hard drive as part of an ongoing investigation into a child pornography ring.

According to friends, Darlene was distraught when she heard about the raid, and said she was “terrified” Eldred would think she had something to do with it.

Until then, she’d never mentioned Eldred’s problem to friends, and they later speculated that he might have sworn her to secrecy when he didn’t contest their divorce.

Police believed Eldred would probably have killed himself if members of the congregation hadn’t overpowered him. He’d made no attempt to conceal his crime, and chose a very public and meaningful setting for it – one that seemed to express his shame and spiritual fear.

If he’d wanted simply to stop Darlene revealing anything she knew about his child pornography/abuse, he could have killed her in a way that was hard to detect.

Instead, he silenced her in the church to which he’d once belonged in front of people who’d once called him “brother.” Were they his real judge and jury?

# "LET'S MOID" SCHOOLGIRLS CARRY OUT

*Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme meant the whole world to one another. It was an obsession. One mother tried to separate them – so she had to die...By Brian Marriner*

**I**T WOULD be easy to dismiss the story of Juliet Hulme and Pauline Parker as simply a case of two murderous schoolgirls, but there is more to it than that. It represents a peculiarly modern twist to murder: that of two people teaming up to take another's life.

For this condition to exist in killing couples, they have to have a shared fantasy, or a shared ideology. In the cases of Leopold and Loeb, and Brady and Hindley, that ideology was supplied by the writings of De Sade and Nietzsche – the philosophy of the "ubermensch" who is above the law. Nietzsche wrote that "*Mankind exists for the creation of great individuals.*" In both cases, both sets of killers believed that they were those great individuals. Leopold and Loeb conceived the idea of committing the "perfect murder" to

demonstrate their superiority. Brady and Hindley wrote of other people being just "maggots, insects, cabbages, not deserving to live."

All these factors are to be found in the case of Pauline and Juliet, but they did not take their ideology from some dead philosopher. They created their own.

Pauline Parker, 16, and Juliet Hulme, 15, lived in Christchurch, New Zealand. They were great friends. Indeed, so close was their liaison, so intimate, that both sets of parents were worried about the relationship; Pauline's mother in particular was anxious to split them up.

Mrs. Honora Mary Parker was not in fact married to Pauline's father, although the girl did not know it, or that she was illegitimate. The mother, whose name was Rieper, had lived with

Mr. Parker for 25 years and had three children by him, Pauline being the second.

Pauline and Juliet buried themselves in a world of literature, writing novels and determining to be authors of note. They had first met in 1953, and a bond developed which was to lead to murder. They assumed fantastic roles. Juliet was "Deborah, mistress of Emperor Charles II of Borovnia." Pauline was "Lancelot Trelawney," a Cornish soldier-of-fortune who married "Deborah," becoming Emperor in the process.

The two girls went to bed together, engaging in sexual experiments – "Imagining how the saints made love." Pauline had sex with a boy so that she could report the experience to Juliet. They drifted into shoplifting and speculated about the possible financial rewards from prostitution or blackmail. "I am apart from the law," Juliet Hulme said, unconsciously echoing Nietzsche. "We do believe we are geniuses."

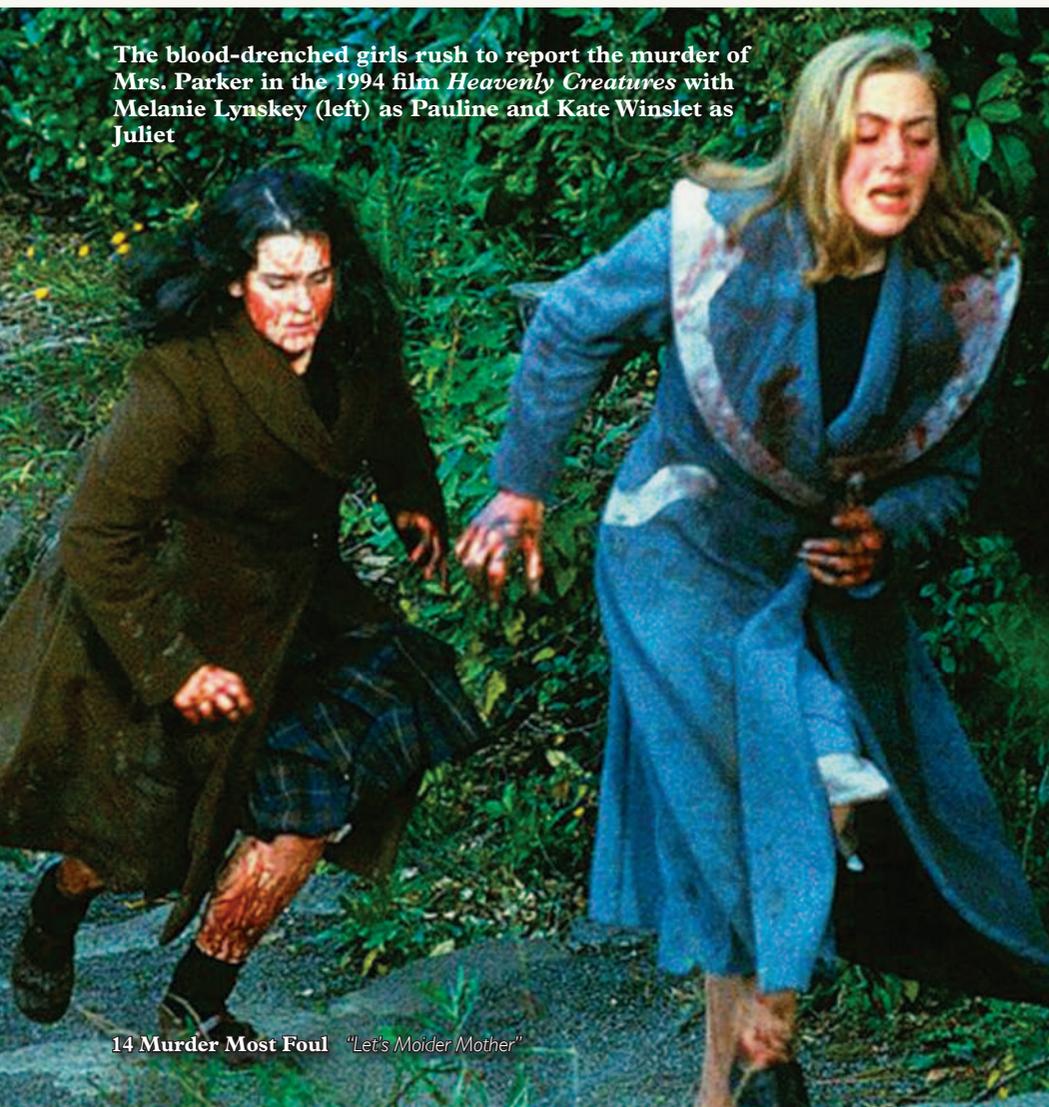
Meanwhile, the parents of both girls, anxious about the morbid aspect of the relationship, continued to try to end it. Mrs. Parker was the most vociferous in her determination to part the couple. She stood in the way so she had to die. The planning was long and detailed...

**O**n June 22nd, 1954, the girls were walking with Mrs. Parker in Victoria Park. At 3.30 p.m. they ran to a tea kiosk, shouting, "Please help us! Mummy has been hurt!" A few minutes later Mrs. Parker was found lying in a pool of blood on a secluded path near a bridge. She had head injuries, and she was dead.

Questioned by detectives, the girls gave unsatisfactory answers, trying to suggest that Mrs. Parker had had an accident when it was apparent that she had been battered with some blunt object. That evening Pauline was arrested, and the following day Juliet was in custody too. Both were charged with the murder of Mrs. Parker.

Their trial began in August at Christchurch, before Mr. Justice Adams. Both girls pleaded not guilty. Opening the case for the prosecution, Mr. A.W. Brown said to the jury, "I feel bound to tell you that the evidence will make it terribly clear that the two young accused conspired together to kill the

The blood-drenched girls rush to report the murder of Mrs. Parker in the 1994 film *Heavenly Creatures* with Melanie Lynskey (left) as Pauline and Kate Winslet as Juliet



# "MURDER MOTHER" AT THEIR KILLING FANTASY



Pauline Parker, 16 (left), and Juliet Hulme, 15. Their desperation to avoid being separated led to murder...

mother of one of them, and horribly carried their plan into effect. It was a callously planned and premeditated murder, committed by two highly intelligent and perfectly sane but precocious and dirty-minded girls.

"The circumstances of the crime are unusual, indeed unique. It is rare that two girls of the ages of the accused should stand trial on the charge of murdering the mother of one of them. The evidence will be that the two accused came to the conclusion, after much thought, that the mother of the accused Parker was an obstacle in their path, that she thwarted their desires, and that she should be done away with. They planned to murder her, and they put their plan into effect by battering her over the head with a brick encased in a stocking.

"Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme met at school and became friendly, and this friendship developed into an intense devotion. Their main object in life was to be together, sharing each other's thoughts, secrets and plans, and if any person dared to part them, then that

person should be forcibly removed. Mrs. Parker became perturbed at the unhealthy relationship and tried to break it up. This was resented by the accused, and the resentment gradually grew into hate and eventually resulted in this ghastly crime.

"Early in 1954, Dr. Hulme resigned his position as Rector of Canterbury University College, and decided to go to South Africa, taking his daughter Juliet with him. It was discovered that the two girls were planning to go to America to have their novels published, and that they had tried to acquire funds to pay their fares. Both girls were determined not to be parted... Both girls knew that Mrs. Parker would be the one to object most strenuously to their going away together. They decided the best way to end Mrs. Parker's objections was to kill her in such a manner that it would appear to have been an accident.

"Early in June, when the date of Dr. Hulme's departure had been fixed for July 3rd, the girls coldly and calculatingly formed a plan to kill Mrs. Parker. They pretended to be resigned

to being parted, and they persuaded her to take them for a farewell outing. They planned to entice her to a secluded spot and strike her on the head. They would then rush for help, announcing that she had died as a result of a fall.

"On the day of the outing, Juliet Hulme took with her part of a brick from her home. After the accident they both told the same story."

Then Mr. Brown revealed that the police discovery of Pauline Parker's diary had exposed both the plot and the nature of the girls' relationship.

He said, "In it she reveals that she and Juliet Hulme have engaged in shop-lifting, toyed with blackmail, and talked about and played with matters of sex. There is clear evidence that as long ago as February she was anxious that her mother should die, and that during the few weeks before June 22nd she was planning to kill her mother in the way she was killed."

Extracts from the diary were then read out in court:

**February 13th:** "Why could not Mother die? Dozens of people,

thousands of people are dying every day. So why not Mother, and Father too?"

**April 28th:** "Anger against Mother boiled up inside me. It is she who is one of the main obstacles in my path. Suddenly a means of ridding myself of the obstacle occurred to me."

**April 29th:** "I did not tell Deborah of my plans for removing Mother... The last fate I wish to meet is one in a borstal. I am trying to think of some way. I want it to appear either a natural or an accidental death."

**June 6th:** "We are both mad. We are both stark, staring, raving mad. There is definitely no doubt about it and we are thrilled by the thought."

**June 12th:** "Eventually we enacted how each saint would make love in bed. We felt exhausted, but very satisfied."

**June 19th:** "We practically finished our books [the novels the two girls were writing together] today, and our main 'ike' for the day was to moider Mother. The notion is not a new one, but this time it is a definite plan which we intend to carry out. We have worked it out carefully and are both thrilled by the idea. Naturally we feel a little nervous, but the pleasure of anticipation is great."

**June 20th:** "We discussed our plans for moidering Mother and made them a little clearer. Peculiarly enough, I have no qualms of conscience (or is it peculiar we are so mad?)."

**June 21st:** "We decided to use a brick in a stocking rather than a sandbag. We discussed the moider fully. I feel keyed up as if I was planning a surprise party. So next time I write in the diary, Mother will be dead. How



On June 22nd, 1954, the girls led Pauline's mother to this remote area of Victoria Park, Christchurch, and beat her to death (on the spot marked X) with a half-brick concealed in a stocking

odd, yet how pleasing."

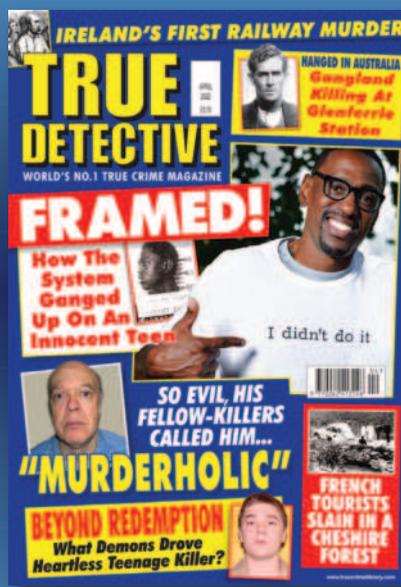
**June 22nd:** "I am writing a little of this up in the morning before the death. I felt very excited and the 'night before Christmassy' last night. I did not have pleasant dreams, though."

Mr. Brown concluded: "You will hear that Juliet Hulme carried a small pink stone to Victoria Park. The theory of the Crown is that she would place it on the path and that Mrs. Parker would be asked to bend down and examine it. While she was doing so, Pauline Parker, armed with the brick in a stocking, and standing behind her mother, would strike her a heavy blow at the back of the neck and kill her. The two girls would arrange the body in such a position as to give the impression of an accident. Their plan miscarried. Perhaps Mrs. Parker did not bend far enough and so received repeated blows, causing the terrible injuries she received."

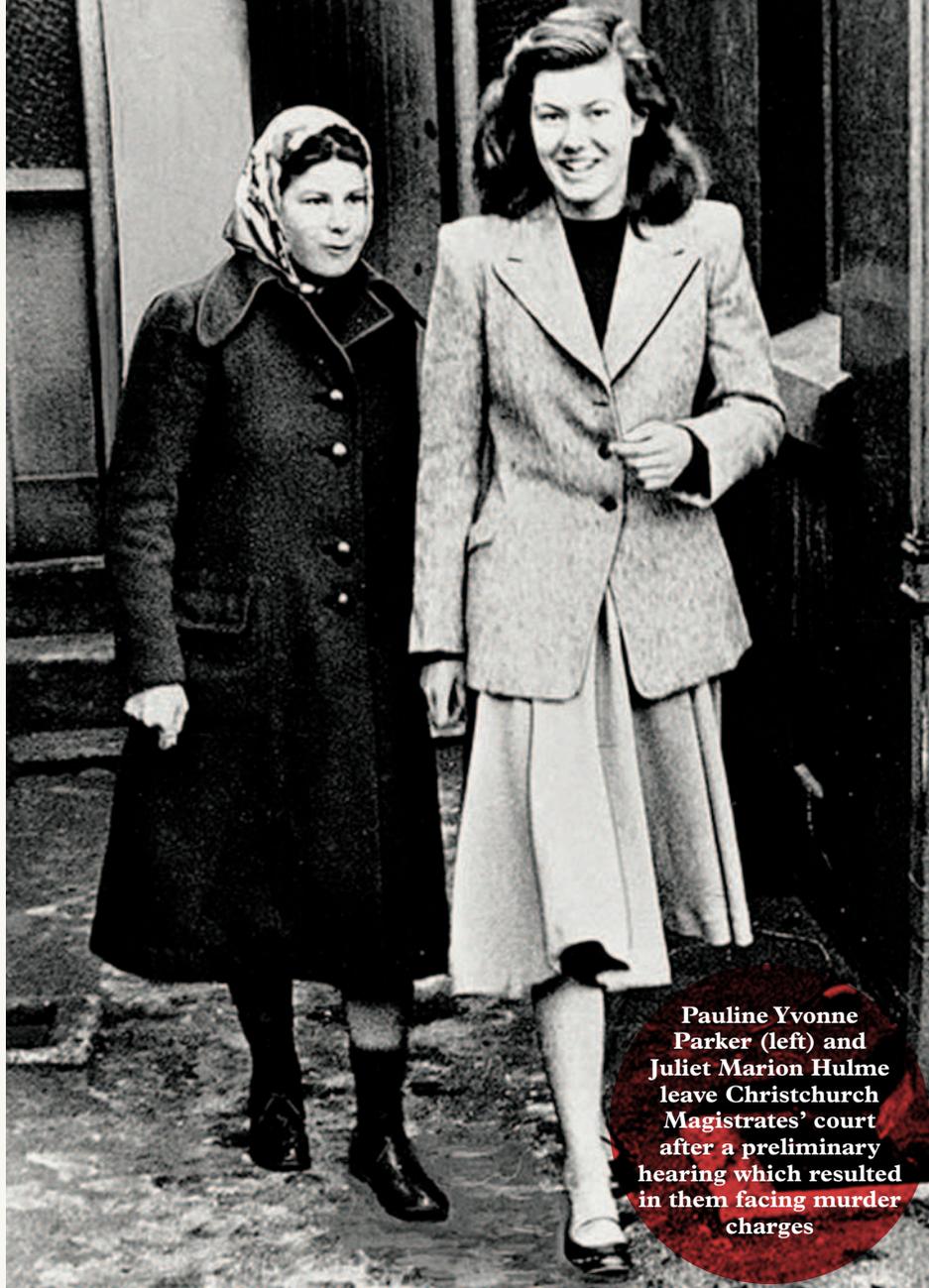
Medical evidence confirmed that 45 blows had been inflicted on the victim, 24 of them to the head and face. A brick and stocking were found, bearing hairs and blood from the dead woman. Both girls were hysterical when they reported the death at the tea kiosk, and they had blood on their faces and clothing. They told the woman at the kiosk that Mrs. Parker had slipped and bumped her head on a brick as she fell, and that her head "kept bumping and banging." A doctor who examined Mrs. Parker at the scene said he could not explain the woman's injuries as having been caused by a fall, and it was he who informed the police.

A pathologist noted that a crushing force had been applied while Mrs. Parker's head was motionless on the ground. Bruises to her throat indicated that she had been held by her neck. Lacerations to her finger suggested

## WITHOUT DOUBT...THE BEST IN TRUE CRIME READING



Every month read classic British cases, modern crime stories, features, facts and opinions on crime...visit our website [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com), order from your newsagent or see the offer on page 62



**Pauline Yvonne Parker (left) and Juliet Marion Hulme leave Christchurch Magistrates' court after a preliminary hearing which resulted in them facing murder charges**

that she had put up a hand to defend herself.

After the police and medical experts had testified, Pauline's father went into the witness-box to tell of having lived with the dead woman for 25 years as her husband. He said he became worried when Pauline cut herself off from her parents' affection, and became moody and easily upset. He and Honora became so concerned about Pauline's relationship with Juliet Hulme that they approached Dr. Hulme at Easter about breaking up the friendship. Dr. Hulme assured them that he was taking his daughter abroad.

Mrs. Hulme told the court that Juliet had been born in England in 1938, and in the London blitz had suffered from bomb-shock and nightmares. She described her daughter as an excitable child, full of fantasy. She told how the girls wrote to one another in the names of the characters of the stories they were writing together.

The early correspondence was full of such fantasy, but later the letters became full of murder, suicide and sudden death. Later still,

violence and bloodshed featured to a disproportionate degree. The girls appeared to be vying with each other to see who could produce the most horror.

Mrs. Hulme said that she and her husband had been concerned about their daughter's emotional development, but they were advised that it would be unwise to have her psychoanalysed at such a young age. When Mr. Brown asked, "Did you have any reason to suspect that your daughter was insane?" Mrs. Hulme answered "No."

Senior Detective Brown then gave evidence. Describing his first interview with Pauline after her mother's death, he said she persisted in her story that her mother had slipped and kept banging her head on a stone. He told her, "We believe the girl Hulme was not present when the fatality occurred."

She looked surprised. The detective then said, "You are suspected of murdering your mother." She made no reply. "I told her that she need not say anything, but she could make a statement if she wished," Brown continued. "She responded, 'No. Ask me questions.'"

The interview then proceeded as

follows:

"Who assaulted your mother?"

"I did."

"Why?"

"If you don't mind, I won't answer that question."

"When did you make up your mind to kill your mother?"

"A few days ago."

"Did you tell anyone you were going to do it?"

"No. My friend did not know anything about it. She was out of sight at the time. She had gone on ahead."

"What did your mother say when you struck her?"

"I would rather not answer that."

"How often did you hit her?"

"I don't know, but a great many times, I imagine."

"What did you use?"

"A half-brick inside the foot of a stocking. I took them with me for the purpose. I had the brick in my shoulder bag. I wish to state that Juliet did not know of my intentions, and she did not see me strike my mother. I took the chance to strike my mother when Juliet was away. I still do not wish to say why I killed my mother."

"Did you tell Juliet that you had killed your mother?"

"She knew nothing about it. As far as I know she believed what I told her, although she may have guessed what had happened. But I doubt it, as we were both so shaken that it probably did not occur to her."

"Why did Juliet tell the same story as you to the lady in the tea kiosk?"

"I think she simply copied what I said. She might have suspected what I had done, and she would not have wished to believe it, nor to have got me into trouble. As soon as I started to strike my mother I regretted it, but I could not stop."

Detective Brown continued, "I told the girl Hulme we had reason to believe her first written statement was not correct, and that she was present when the assault took place. I then said, 'You are suspected of having taken part in the death of Mrs. Parker.' I told her that the girl Parker had said we were to ask Deborah, and what she said would be right. She said she would rather not say anything then."

At the police station a piece of paper which Pauline tried to burn was rescued. On it was written, "I am taking the blame for everything."

Detective Sergeant Tate told the court that Juliet at first denied being with Pauline when the assault took place. But the next day she said she and Pauline had decided to go to Victoria Park with Mrs. Parker to have it out with her about Pauline accompanying Juliet to South Africa.

"She knew that it was proposed that we should take a brick in a stocking to the park with us," Juliet said. "I had part of a brick, which I wrapped in a newspaper. I know the brick was put in a stocking at Pauline's house. I did not

put it there.”

She described the walk in Victoria Park, and the pink stone. “There was a pink stone on the path. I dropped it there myself. On the way back I was walking in front. I was expecting Mrs. Parker to be attacked. I heard noises behind me. It was a loud conversation and anger. I saw Mrs. Parker in a sort of squatting position. They were quarrelling. I went back. I saw Pauline hit Mrs. Parker with the brick in the stocking. I took the stocking and hit her too. I was terrified. I thought that one

***“There was a pink stone on the path. I dropped it there myself. On the way back I was walking in front. I was expecting Mrs. Parker to be attacked”***

of them had to die. I wanted to help Pauline. It was terrible. Mrs. Parker moved convulsively. We both held her. She was still when we left her. The brick had come out of the stocking with the force of the blow.”

Later in her statement Juliet claimed that she had not been sure what was to happen in the park. “I thought we may have been able to frighten Mrs. Parker with the brick, and she would have given her consent for Pauline and I to stay together. After the first blow was struck I knew it would be necessary for us to kill her.”

**F**or the defence, Mr. T.A. Gresson told the jury, “The actual killing cannot be refuted, and the sole but very important issue in the case concerns the mental capacity – the sanity or otherwise – of these girls when they committed their ill-conceived and disastrous assaults.”

He said he would call medical experts to testify that Pauline and Juliet were insane at the time of the killing, and were still suffering from a mental illness known as paranoia of the exalted type associated with *folie à deux*, meaning communicated insanity. “The Crown has seen fit to refer to the accused as ordinary, dirty-minded little girls. Our evidence will show that they are nothing of the kind. The Crown’s description is unfortunate and medically incorrect. They are mentally sick girls, more to be pitied than blamed.”

Dr. Reginald Medicott said that he had examined both girls and had read their writings. Both had an early history of physical ill-health, but the significant factor was the closeness of their relationship.

“Their association, I consider, proved tragic for them. There is evidence that their friendship became a homosexual one. There is no proof that there was a physical relationship, although there

is a lot of suggestive evidence from the diary that this occurred. There is evidence that they had baths together, spent nights in bed together, and had frequent talks on sexual matters.”

Dr. Medicott told of interviewing both girls in prison, where they constantly abused him. “Parker told me I was an irritating fool and displeasing to look at. Hulme pulled me over the coals for not talking sufficiently clearly. After I had physically examined Parker she shouted out, ‘I hope you break your flaming neck.’” He said he had found in both girls “a gross reversal of moral sense. They admired those things which are evil, and condemned those things the community considers good. They had weird ideas about their own paradise, god and religion.”

He read to the court a poem composed by the girls. It read, in part:



**The girls with the stone used as a distraction for murder – as portrayed in the 1994 film *Heavenly Creatures* by Kate Winslet (left) and Melanie Lynskey**

“There are living among you two dutiful daughters,

The most glorious beings in creation,  
You cannot know or try to guess,  
The outstanding genius of this pair...”

In Pauline’s diary were entries working out how much prostitutes earned, and wondering how much she and Juliet could earn that way. Pauline also talked of the fun they would have from this profession. There were references to shop-lifting, blackmail, and stealing money from her father’s safe. She wrote, “We are so brilliantly clever.”

“The whole thing rises to a fantastic crescendo,” the doctor went on. “In my opinion they were insane when they attacked Mrs. Parker...”

Under cross-examination, he admitted that the girls had known they were doing wrong, but said they considered themselves outside the law. About homosexual relations between the girls he was asked, “Your reading of the diaries showed that these young people

played about with each other sexually?”

“It is very suggestive, but there is no clear evidence of it.”

“But she, Parker, did have intercourse with one boy over and over again?”

“No, once only.”

“But she attempted to have it more than once?”

“It would appear so.”

“According to the diary, the boy was in bed with her until three a.m.?”

“Yes.”

“And the following night he was in bed with her again and was caught by Mrs. Parker?”

“That is so.”

“There are other references to their attempting intercourse?”

“That is so.”

“So she had a good knowledge of the other sex, didn’t she?”

“She had.”

Dr. Francis Bennett then gave evidence. He had been consulted about the girls’ friendship before the resulting tragedy. Referring to the moral responsibility of the paranoiac, he said that the murder was proof of the diagnosis.

“There came the threat of separation. Anything that threatens the paranoiac makes him dangerous. They thought that by removing Pauline’s mother the way would be clear. The idea was stupid, but they have steadily maintained it was justified. Neither will admit contrition or regret. Pauline told me she would feel justified today in killing her mother if she was a threat to their being together. Juliet Hulme was more outspoken. She not only considers the murder justified, but also that other murders must be justified if there was a threat to the association of the two girls.”

He agreed that the girls had known what they were doing when they killed

Mrs. Parker. Did they not also know it was wrong in the eyes of society at large, he was asked?

“They probably did, but I doubt very much if they gave any consideration to what society thought,” he replied.

For the prosecution, Dr. Stallworthy said he had seen the girls and considered them to be medically sane. In interviews Pauline had told him, “We knew we were doing wrong. We knew we would be punished if we were caught, and we did our best not to be caught.”

Juliet had told him, “I knew it was wrong to murder and I knew at the time I was murdering somebody. You’d have to be an absolute moron not to know murder is against the law.”

Dr. Stallworthy went on, “The accused have some justification for conceit. Hulme displayed a shrewdness in appreciating difficult questions, and shrewdness in answering them more like that of an older, more sophisticated person. Parker is well above average in intelligence and is a talented writer. These two girls were very fond of each other. The most important thing in the world to them was to be together. There have been other great loves in the world where one person would stick at nothing to be with the other.”

Two other prosecution doctors agreed that both girls were sane, although they considered that they had been motivated by a compelling force they could not withstand.

On the sixth day of the trial counsel made their closing speeches. The prosecutor said of the girls, “They are not incurably insane. They are incurably bad.”

Defence counsel pleaded, “They are problem children who at the time of committing the act were ill and not criminally responsible for their actions.”

It was left to the judge to explain the law on insanity to the jury. He told them, “The gravamen of this case is the defence of insanity. If you find it established – and the burden of proof rests on the defence – then it is your duty to return a verdict of not guilty. Your proper choice lies between guilty and not guilty on the grounds of insanity.”

The jury took two and a quarter hours to convict both girls. As they were under 18, the death penalty could not be imposed. Instead the judge sentenced them to be detained during Her Majesty’s pleasure. But their shared fantasy-life was to cost them only five years in prison, although it had cost Pauline’s mother her life.

**T**he girls were released in 1959 and almost certainly have never seen each other again. The spell of their relationship, it seems, had been broken. Pauline Parker, who had delivered the deathblow to her mother, now disappeared, successfully covering her tracks. Juliet Hulme left New Zealand and 20 years later, under the pen-name



**Pauline Parker (above) and Juliet Hulme both took new names and moved to new countries after their release from prison in 1959**



of Anne Perry, she turned her hand to writing about what she knew: murder.

In the United States, she became the author of best-selling detective fiction. But this was no cynical exploitation of past experience. Her novels are noted for their humanity and compassion. Nobody knew how well-qualified she was to write them.

In the mid-1990s journalists started digging when that 40-year-old murder was recalled in New Zealand and it became known that a film – *Heavenly Creatures*, directed by New Zealander Peter Jackson – was to be based on it.

Pauline had vanished, but a reporter in Wellington established that her partner Juliet was none other than the thriller writer Anne Perry, now living in Scotland.

So it was that residents of a Scottish fishing village awoke to find that the tall spinster who had settled among them, who was often to be seen exercising her dogs or tending her garden, had an early history beyond their wildest imaginings.

For Anne Perry, the publicity was decidedly unwelcome. She had made no secret of her past to those who needed to know – to officialdom and to the church to which she has long belonged. But nationwide newspaper coverage and her identification with Juliet in *Heavenly Creatures*...that was a different matter.

The new life she had built so successfully now seemed in jeopardy. How would her friends react? Would she find herself ostracised by people who wouldn’t, couldn’t, understand? And as the author of books with a pronounced ethical bias, would she be branded a hypocrite?

In fact the unsought publicity now enabled her to tell her own side of the story, an opportunity denied her 40 years before as a 15-year-old being tried for murder.

She said that the scenario presented in court was somewhat different from the actual situation. Both she and Pauline were semi-invalids – it was for her health that her parents had sent her to New Zealand, where they later joined her, and Pauline seems to have suffered from something akin to bulimia nervosa.

Anne’s parents separated, and she was about to leave New Zealand. Pauline was desperate to accompany her, and all that stood in the way was the opposition from Pauline’s mother. If the two of them were separated, Anne was convinced, Pauline would die. So it was one or the other...

Contributing to her belief that her friend’s life was at stake, Anne said, were the drugs she was taking at the time for her chest complaint – drugs now no longer in use, as they have been found to distort reasoning. As it was, she felt she had no choice but to assist Pauline in despatching her mother. She had to take a life to save a life.

Forbidden to speak in court, she had to listen to the prosecution misinterpreting Pauline’s diary, investing it – she claimed – with lurid sexual significance Pauline had never intended.

When last heard of, Anne Perry had left Scotland and moved to Hollywood in order to help promote films based on her novels.

**Pauline Parker, meanwhile, was given a new identity after her release from prison and eventually settled in Kent, England. Though she has never spoken to the press, in 1996 she released a statement through her sister, expressing her remorse for having killed her mother.**

# MYSTERY DEATH IN T



The barge *East Anglia* berthed in Felixstowe harbour

After seven pints with his lunch at the Pier Hotel, and a bag full of beer for the afternoon, it was no wonder that “Ginger” couldn’t remember anything

**W**ALTER “GINGER” Smith could certainly hold a skinful. By his own admission he had been on a continuous bender for five weeks. On the last day of his life as a free man he sank seven pints at lunch time, and was then seen leaving the pub with a bag full of beer.

He was back again a few hours later, standing drinks in the bar and knocking back a few more pints himself. So when a detective tapped him on the shoulder and told him he was under arrest for murder, 34-year-old Ginger Smith shook his fuddled head and said with what must have seemed like at least a gleam of truth: “Don’t know what you’re talking about, guv.”

The man he was accused of murdering, he was told, was his best pal, Albert “Bill” Baker, 28. Like Smith, Baker had a seemingly endless capacity for strong beer and had been seen reeling along the harbour-side at Felixstowe, in Suffolk, only an hour before he was killed.

Such was the effect of their carousing

that if Ginger Smith hadn’t any idea he had murdered Albert Baker it was equally certain that Albert Baker had no idea he was about to die.

The two men were bargees on the *East Anglia*, plying between London and Felixstowe, although both lived at Strood, in Kent. The *East Anglia* was owned by Baker, who with Smith as his mate made up her entire crew.

They had arrived at the port of Felixstowe on a Thursday morning with a cargo of barley destined, appropriately enough, for a local brewery.

All next day a team of dockers unloaded the barge, leaving Skipper Baker and his mate to while away the hours in the bar of the nearby Pier Hotel. Some time after that, they returned to the barge, and later still Ginger Smith was seen ashore again in the waterfront pubs, no longer in the company of his skipper.

Next day, Saturday, unloading continued from 7 a.m. By nine o’clock the job was finished. It was now necessary to move the *East Anglia* to an



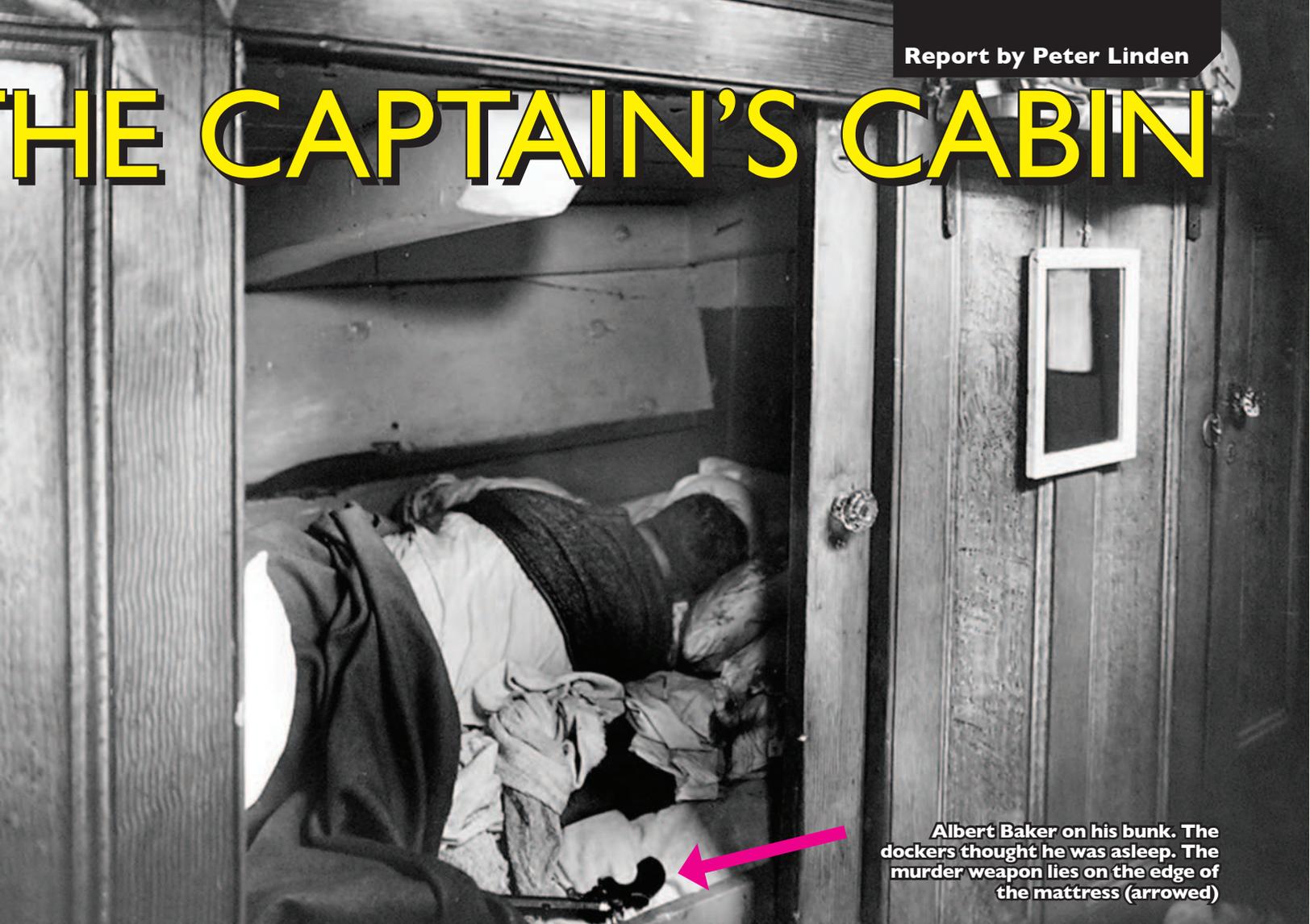
Skipper Albert “Bill” Baker

outer berth. Docker Charles Morgan went below to tell the skipper.

In the cabin Morgan saw the skipper on his bunk – asleep, as he assumed. The dockers obligingly decided to move the barge themselves, so that they could get on with unloading another barge.

At 11 o’clock they took a break. By now the *East Anglia* needed “squaring up” again, and again Morgan went below to tell the skipper. When he

# THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN



Albert Baker on his bunk. The dockers thought he was asleep. The murder weapon lies on the edge of the mattress (arrowed)

went back on deck to report that Baker was still sound asleep, and couldn't be roused, a couple of dockers, suspecting something was amiss, went to investigate.

As they pulled back the blanket covering Baker, a pistol and some cartridges clattered to the floor.

One of the dockers struck a match. In its flickering light they could see Baker lying on his right side with his face turned to the cabin wall. There was blood on the pillow. The skipper was dead.

In fact he had been shot three times, once through the head and twice through the heart. The post-mortem was to show that the head wound would have made him immediately unconscious, and either of the two heart wounds would have killed him. The man Suffolk Police immediately wanted to interview was, of course, the mate, Ginger Smith – a bargee whose reputation had gone so far before him that the search for him was at first confined to the waterfront pubs. That same evening Smith was arrested in an Ipswich bar.

Slowly, painstakingly, the hours that followed the end of the *East Anglia's* voyage to Felixstowe were pieced together. She had sailed from London and, since she wasn't to be unloaded at Felixstowe until 24 hours after her



Bill Baker, left, with Ginger Smith – friends together before the killing

arrival, the skipper and mate had a lot of time in which to quench thirsts exacerbated by the salty sea air.

As for companionship, neither could have wished for better. They were, at least until the moment they docked, the best of friends. They had grown up in Kent together, lived on barges all their working lives, and no one had ever heard a cross word between them.

On Friday, October 29th, 1938, the day after their arrival and the day unloading started, they went to the Pier Hotel and drank 14 pints between them for lunch. When they went back to the barge with their bag full of beer, passing dockers noticed they were talking loudly, but there was no violence.

Early that evening Ginger Smith was back at the Pier Hotel. Someone noticed he had a bottle of beer in one hand, which wasn't unusual. Someone



else noticed that he was wearing Baker's clothes, which seemed most unusual. He was also seen to have plenty of money.

Enough, in fact, to buy drinks all round, have a few himself, and then hop on a bus to Ipswich.

Unluckily for Ginger, one of the passengers on the bus was Charles Morgan – the same docker who the next day was to try to rouse Skipper Baker from his deathly sleep. Morgan knew Ginger, although of course he didn't at that time know of the fate of Ginger's boss, and started a conversation with him.

"Have you covered your barge, Ginger?" Morgan asked. "Could be a wet and windy night, and we've still got some cargo to shift in the morning."

Ginger replied: "My colonel-in-chief wouldn't give me a hand to cover up, so what's good for him is good enough for me – I'm clearing off to Ipswich.

I left him playing with a gun in the cabin."

Morgan cocked an eyebrow. This didn't sound like Ginger Smith. Had there been a quarrel between the two close buddies, he wondered?

Ginger's path along the Suffolk coastline that night was a familiar one. He went to the Plough Inn at Ipswich and had a drink with a friend. Customers noticed he had plenty of money and that he treated three other men to drinks.

Later Smith went to the British Lion pub, where he told people he was looking for a missing colleague, and from there to the Crown. At closing time he moved on to the Sailor's Rest for a meal. There, by now considerably the worse for drink, he became abusive, and complained about the food. Two policemen were called, but they were satisfied he was in a fit condition to continue with his conquest of the night.



**Ginger Smith. Today perhaps he would be recognised as a man with a low capacity for logical reasoning, addiction problems and an extenuating family history. The options provided to the jury of the era saw them side wholly with the victim**

Somehow or other he made his way to Ipswich docks and boarded a barge named the *Arrow*. The mate, named Trott, knew Ginger, recognised he was drunk again, and didn't take much notice of his alcoholic ramblings. But he did remember that Ginger said:

"There's a gun aboard the *East Anglia*, and either Bill Baker will shoot me with it or I'll shoot him first."

Trott found a bunk for Ginger, and

"We had a tussle with one another. He had a gun and I was trying to get it away, and it went off. I know I shot him because he was found shot. I was as drunk as a cricket"

the mate of the *East Anglia* fell into a drunken sleep. He woke early, thanked Trott for his hospitality, counted his money in Trott's presence, and then disappeared into the dawn. A few hours later the Felixstowe dockers discovered Skipper Baker's body.

That same Saturday morning two detectives questioned Ginger in the British Lion. After telling them he knew nothing about it, Ginger added: "You say he was shot dead. No wonder. He gave me the sack yesterday. I've been on the booze for about five weeks."

At the police station Ginger made a statement admitting he had killed his pal. But next day he insisted he'd got it all wrong. He'd been drinking all day and didn't know what he was

# TRUE DETECTIVE

WORLD'S NO.1 TRUE CRIME MAGAZINE

## JUNE ISSUE

In shops from May 5th

• Make sure of your copy by ordering direct from [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com) or call 020 8778 0514 • For subscription savings see page 62

**BRITISH WIFE-KILLER NAILED AFTER YEARS ON THE RUN**



**HANGED IN WALES - FOR THE Sex-Murder Of A 76-Year-Old**



**WHY LUCRETIA AND HER LOVER WERE HANGED - AND DECAPITATED**



**Will We Soon Know The Truth About Muriel's Murder?**

**BODIES IN THE BASEMENT, IN THE SHED, THE GARAGE...**



"I never thought I'd get away," said his final victim

**Canning Town Killer With Two Women In The Freezer**



**IRISH WIFE'S DESPERATE PLEA:**



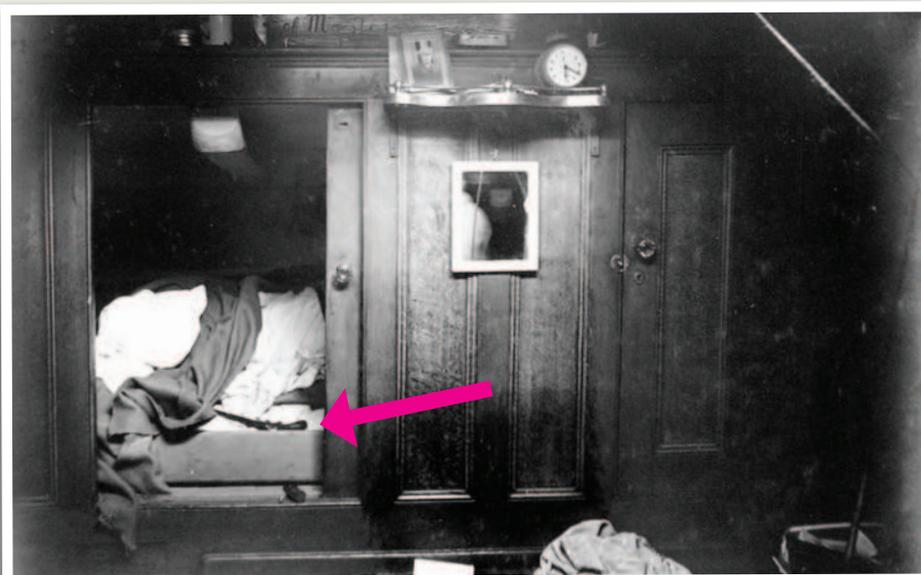
**"I Did Not Poison My Husband"**



**MUSIC TEACHER WAS A SEX BEAST**



Another view of the *East Anglia* and, below left, the skipper's body at the morgue



Another police photograph of Albert Baker's cabin (murder weapon arrowed), his body still in the bunk. The first bullet shot (below) entered his right temple



talking about, he said, and now he wanted to withdraw his confession. Ginger's new story still seemed to suggest that if he now knew what he was talking about, it still didn't make much sense. "We both got drunk on Friday," he said. "We didn't know what we were doing. We were singing in the pub. We had a lot of words and

a squabble with one another...

"When we got back on the *East Anglia* we had a row. I don't know how it started. I know one thing he said was, 'I'll put Sweeney Todd on you.'

"We had a tussle with one another. He had a gun and I was trying to get it away, and it went off. I know I shot him because he was found shot. I was as drunk as a cricket.

"We both turned in his bunk first. His gun was on the locker. When he was half drunk he always started messing about with it, and I thought perhaps he's going to shoot me or something.

"The suit I had on is the skipper's. I was going to buy it off him, as he had another one coming. The blood on my wrapper (rain-proof overcoat) must

have come off him.

"When I got away from the barge I didn't think I had hurt him. That's all I can tell you."

Much of this statement fell apart when Ginger was put on trial at Suffolk Assizes on January 20th, 1939. There it was testified that Skipper Baker's injuries couldn't have been self-inflicted. A firearms expert also testified that Baker's pistol, the murder weapon, fired only one bullet – it then required six to 10 seconds to remove a used cartridge, reload and fire. Despite his alcoholic state, Ginger must have performed this operation twice.

The evidence piled up against Ginger. Baker's wallet was empty, but it was known that when he docked at Felixstowe he had £10 in it. And the blood on Ginger's "wrapper" was

almost certainly Baker's.

Ginger's courtroom answer to this was that he was suffering from *mania a potu*, which is simply alcoholic insanity. A motiveless homicidal attack is often a feature of this condition, the court was told.

Ginger Smith was mentally sub-normal – he claimed in court he had no recollection whatsoever of being interviewed by the police. His father was an alcoholic, his mother an epileptic and an aunt had been certified insane.

Eight years earlier Ginger had confessed to Kent Police that he had stabbed a man in the back and thrown him in a river. The story was a complete fabrication.

"This case is simple enough," the judge told the jury. "Smith killed Baker, but it is for you to say whether the facts suggest murder, manslaughter, or guilty but insane."

**The jury opted for the first choice, and at eight o'clock on March 8th, 1939, Walter "Ginger" Smith was hanged at Norwich Prison.**

# ***DID BARBARA MURDER ONE HUSBAND... OR TWO?***

*Initially, investigators thought that Larry Stager's shooting was a tragic accident – but something didn't add up. It was quite a coincidence that his wife had lost her first husband in very similar circumstances...*

**A**S HE listened to the tape-recording, the young student could hardly believe his ears. He'd found the tape in the locker room at Durham High School, North Carolina, had taken it home unaware of

By John Griggs

what was on it, and had forgotten about it for more than a year.

When he finally got around to playing it, he instantly recognised the voice of his school's 40-year-old baseball coach Russ Stager, who had been found mortally wounded in his bedroom on February 1st, 1988. Stager had made the tape on January 29th, expressing disturbing suspicions about his 39-year-old wife Barbara.

Shocked by what he heard, the student gave the tape to his mother. She handed it to the police, and it practically floored Lieutenant Rick Buchanan of Durham County Sheriff's Department



**Barbara Stager is led from Lee County Courthouse following her 1989 conviction for murder**

when he listened to it on April 18th, 1989.

The affair had begun just after 6.00 a.m. on February 1st, 1988, with a call to Durham police reporting a shooting on Fox Drive.

"My father had a gun, and it went off," a boy's voice told the dispatcher.

At the Stagers' home on Fox Drive, the boy directed police officers to a back bedroom. There, Barbara Stager put on the light and pointed to her husband on the bed.

Apparently shot in the head, Russ Stager was still breathing; a small .25-calibre, semi-automatic Beretta lay near the centre of the bed.

A deputy took charge of the gun as the emergency team prepared Stager for transportation to hospital. Barbara Stager kept repeating that she was afraid of guns.

About six hours later, at Duke University Medical Center, where Barbara worked as a secretary, Russ Stager died. At the hospital, she was heard to say, "Forgive me – I didn't mean to do it."

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Buchanan became involved in the case. He looked over the deputies' reports and saw that they thought the shooting was accidental. Later, he visited Barbara Stager, who was in

Barbara Stager breaks down in court after the jury reaches a guilty verdict. She was sentenced to death but her sentence was later changed to life imprisonment



surprisingly good spirits.

The very next day, Russ Stager's first wife came to see Buchanan at his office. Stager was proficient with firearms, she said, and he would never have slept with a gun cocked and loaded under his pillow.

Then she told the lieutenant that Barbara's first husband, Larry Ford, had died under very similar circumstances in Randolph County, North Carolina, 10 years earlier.

After Ford's death, Barbara had returned to her native Durham County where she met Russ Stager.

His first wife said that before his death he'd told her, "This sounds crazy, but

if anything should ever happen to me, please check it out."

"Now I'm beginning to have doubts about the death of Barbara's first husband," she told Buchanan.

Following this visit, he asked Barbara

**According to Barbara's description of the "accident," the bullet would have passed upwards through Russ's brain. But the autopsy showed that the bullet had travelled downwards**

Stager if she would demonstrate for him, before a videotape camera, how her husband was shot. To his surprise, she agreed to do it, re-enacting the incident on February 5th, 1988, in the bedroom she'd shared with her husband. After seeing the re-enactment, Buchanan realised that, according to Barbara's description of the "accident," the bullet would have passed upwards through Russ's brain.

But the autopsy showed that the bullet had travelled downwards.

Buchanan was now sure that the shooting was no accident and his next aim was to find out why it had happened.

He began to talk to Randolph County officials about the death of Barbara's first husband. Then on April 15th, he talked to Barbara again.

She told him about the death of her first husband, Larry Ford, a 30-year-old salesman shot dead on March 22nd, 1978. She said that he suffered a groin injury at his karate class the night before the shooting. On the night of his death, he was still uncomfortable, tossing and turning.

Barbara volunteered to go downstairs to the settee so he could sleep in peace. She said that a sudden noise upstairs woke her and she ran up to find her husband shot.

Investigators found a .25-calibre automatic pistol beside the bed. Barbara told them she had bought it the day before at a local gunshop for self-protection.

Ford's shooting was classified as an accident. But later, tests for gunshot residue on his hands came back

**Investigators found a .25-calibre automatic pistol beside the bed. Barbara told them she had bought it the day before at a local gunshop for self-protection**

negative, meaning that he could not have fired the gun that killed him. The case was reclassified as a homicide, but no charges were ever filed.

Barbara got almost \$120,000 in insurance payments from Larry Ford's death. From Russ Stager's death, she was eligible to receive nearly \$156,000 from five life insurance policies.

As Lieutenant Buchanan dug into the case, he uncovered a trail of dud cheques and lavish spending on Barbara's part, actions that had left her and her husband in financial trouble.

Then, on April 18th, Buchanan was handed the dramatic tape and that same day he went before a grand jury and got an indictment against Barbara Stager for first-degree murder. After getting out of jail on a \$250,000 bond, she was too broke to hire her own attorneys.

When her trial began on May 1st, 1989, her court-appointed lawyers argued that the pre-trial publicity would make it hard to seat an impartial jury in Durham County. They won a change of venue to the small Lee County town of Sanford, just under an hour's drive from Durham.

Durham County District Attorney Ron Stephens and his assistant, Eric Evenson, indicated that they would seek the death penalty for Barbara Stager, a former Baptist Sunday School teacher and the mother of two boys.

Before testimony began, Defence Attorneys William Cotter and Eddie Falcone fought to exclude any references to Larry Ford's 1978 death.



**Above, the staged re-enactment of Russ's death is played out by Barbara and recorded by police. Below, Russ Stager. He was a respected baseball coach at Durham High School**



Assistant District Attorney Evenson, obviously wanting to get the connection allowed, prepared a chart listing 33 similarities between the two deaths.

Both men were shot in bed during



**A tearful Barbara Stager in the courtroom**

sleeping hours by handguns that Barbara Stager said she had purchased for protection. In both cases, she was the last person to see each victim alive and she was the person who discovered each body.

Both victims had been military reservists and consequently both had firearms training.

Furthermore, both left their estates and life insurance to Barbara Stager.

Defence Attorney Cotter argued that allowing the Ford evidence wasn't relevant or fair to his client, who had never been charged in that case.

But Superior Court Judge J. B. Allen Jr. made North Carolina legal history when he allowed the Ford evidence to be heard, ruling that the jury could determine whether the similarities in the deaths of Ford and Stager showed "proof of intent, but more important, absence of accident."

Cotter acknowledged that his client shot her husband, but maintained it was accidental.

The next big legal battle was over the tape-recording which had been given to Lieutenant Buchanan. The defence tried to have it suppressed, arguing that it was a fake. Judge Allen allowed it to be presented, however (*see opposite right*).

**T**he next issue that became a bone of contention was an unpublished book that Barbara had written.

The defence fought to suppress the admission of this novel that Barbara had tried in vain to sell to a New York publisher in 1982.

In that book, entitled *Untimely Death*, the female narrator tells of the accidental shooting death of her first husband and the legal harassment that follows.

A woman relative of Russ Stager's testified that Barbara had said she was "really excited about going up and down the East Coast signing autographs" and that she was going to make a lot of money.

*The tape recording was played for the jury, and Russ Stager was heard voicing his suspicions about his wife.*

“The last few nights, during sleep, Barbara has woke me up to give me some kind of medication, but I have not taken it,” he said. “Last night she woke me up and gave me what she said were two aspirins, but this was about four-thirty in the morning.

“She stood there to see if I took it, but I didn’t. I placed it under the bed. She came back to make sure I had taken it, saying she wanted something to drink from what I was drinking.

“This morning – she is normally up and gone by seven – she was still in bed. She said that she was going to work at eight. Before I got up, she was looking around for what I supposedly took last night. Now this was the night of January twenty-eighth, a Thursday night.

“So she hung around looking to see if I had taken the stuff this morning. I got it out of there, although she was looking very close to see if I was trying to retrieve it.

“Well, I took the two capsules to Eckerd’s Pharmacy, and they said it was sleeping pills. Now, if I was already asleep at four-thirty in the morning, why would somebody wake me up to give me two sleeping pills?

“Also, once a few years ago, I had to get a post office box number because a lot of the mail coming to the house – bills and stuff – seemed to be disappearing when she got home first. Now, I’ve got the only key to the post office box.

“For the last couple of weeks, every time I’ve turned around, she’s taken the key off the key-ring and supposedly gone to check the mail herself. Now for a couple of months, I haven’t even got the bill from the Visa card people. She says she’s called them and they said there’s just been a misunderstanding.

“I don’t understand myself why a company wouldn’t send the bill if they had been sending it every month for a year and not missing. Why all of a sudden they would miss?

“Here is my question: Why is it every time I turn around she’s taking the key and running to check the post office box unless there’s something to hide, ’cause that’s the reason I got the post office box to start with. I wanted to make sure I got all the mail and nothing got misplaced or destroyed.

“Years ago her grandmother died. On the day of the funeral, she supposedly had to go somewhere to do something. I took one of the

“She didn’t give any details of the book,” the relative told the court. “She just said it was about Larry’s death.”

In the jury’s absence, Lieutenant

## MURDER HUSBAND’S STORY WAS ALL ON TAPE



**Dangerous: Barbara Stager**

cars to wash it and when I came back I saw our other car sitting in the car park at the county stadium all by itself. So I went across to the armoury and sat in that car park waiting to see who turned up.

“She arrived with some guy. I couldn’t see well, but I did see that they were in the car making love. When I went over there in my car, he fled and she tried to put it all on me saying that I wasn’t giving her enough affection.

“Now that’s pretty strange, to be doing it on the day that they’re putting your grandmother in the



ground.

“When we lived on Falkirk Drive, numerous times policemen came over supposedly to serve some kind of warrant on her for some bill she didn’t pay. Now that’s pretty tough, considering that you’re hiding that from your husband.

“She also took money from a local radio station when she worked there and didn’t do with it what she was supposed to do with it. It was a payment, but she never did the work, so I had to reimburse them for that.

“Also, at one of the banks here in town that we tried to get a loan

from – they knew of her and because of that wouldn’t grant the loan. They wouldn’t give me a reason why, but they would not give us a loan...

“I still, to this day, don’t know the reason, but her parents were sitting right in there with me, and they wouldn’t give me an answer, either. Also at two other banks she had flip-flopped some money that she supposedly had in the bank.

“But what she was actually doing was writing a cheque from one bank – taking the money out of the other bank to cover that and vice-versa, which obviously did not work. Jiggling this money back and forth was done for some car repayments which really weren’t being made, and I had to come up with the money to pay the car off because the bank was ready to raise all kinds of Cain.

“Back to Wednesday night, January the twenty-seventh. Barbara had given me something that was supposedly for sinuses and some aspirin and at about five that morning I woke up and I was feeling terrible.

“I was hurting real bad around my eyes, under my eyes, my temple and I really wonder if what she gave me was some sinus medicine and aspirin.

“I also had a really bad case of cotton mouth. Even after all this, when she woke up and saw I was in pain, she actually tried to give me some more stuff, which I wouldn’t take.”

*On the tape, Stager also said he wondered about the death of his wife’s first husband, James Larry Ford...*

“The first husband, I don’t really know what happened. According to his parents, there was some foul play involved. He is supposed to have accidentally shot himself in their bedroom with a pistol. She was there when it happened and my question is, did her husband, Larry Ford, accidentally shoot himself?

“I really hope that I’m just being paranoid about all the stuff that’s going on, but I wonder. This is Russ Stager and this is January twenty-ninth, 1988, ten minutes to two.”

*That was the end of the tape, an indictment that threatened to put the former Sunday School teacher on Death Row.*

Buchanan read portions of the novel to the court. These excerpts were almost identical to the depiction of Ford’s death given by Barbara to deputies in 1978.

But before Judge Allen could rule on whether the book would be admitted as evidence, District Attorney Stephens inexplicably

dropped his fight to get it allowed.

Over the course of the week-long trial, Assistant District Attorney Evenson presented more than 100 exhibits and called on 83 witnesses from eight states, reconstructing the lives and deaths of Barbara Stager's two husbands for the nine-man, three-woman jury.

"Barbara Stager tried to solve her money problems, and she tried to solve those money problems with the death of Russ Stager," Stephens told the jury in his closing arguments. "She got \$156,000 in cash alone, just from the life insurance benefits."

Cotter, the co-defence counsel, urged the jury not to convict her just because of the similarities in the deaths of her two husbands.

"People have taken sides on this case," he said. "This is the kind of case where you take sides. If you have a reasonable doubt, it is your



**Barbara Stager: she remains locked up at Raleigh women's jail**

obligation to find her not guilty."

He reminded the jury that Barbara had never been charged with her first husband's death. "It is just not fair for you to convict Barbara Stager because of anything concerning Larry Ford," he declared.

The case went to the jury the following day, May 17th. Less than 50 minutes later, the panel came back with a guilty verdict. Barbara, who stood with her family behind her, cried her eyes out.

Judge Allen revoked her bond and placed her in the custody of bailiffs. After spending the night in the Lee County jail, she came back to court to fight for her life. The jury would now hear arguments for and against the death penalty before setting punishment.

"It is a horrible, horrible thing she has done, but it is not a death penalty case," Cotter argued. "There is some good in Barbara Stager, there's some decency and there's some bad in Barbara Stager."

The prosecutors portrayed her as a woman who cold-bloodedly killed her husband of nine years, Evenson quoting

**"She was there when it happened and my question is: did her husband accidentally shoot himself?"**

from the Old Testament: "Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses."

Co-defence counsel Falcone invoked the New Testament: "Jesus on the Cross said, 'Forgive them, for they know not what they do.'"

In closing, Defence Attorney Cotter cautioned the jury: "You're going to wake up one day and you're going to hear, 'Barbara Stager was killed this morning.'"

The jury was out for more than four hours. They came back on May 19th, 1989, with their recommendation – death.

Barbara Stager, dressed in a turtleneck jumper and skirt, bowed her head and cried. She had become one of only two women on North Carolina's Death Row.

In August 1993, however, her death penalty was overturned and she was resentenced to life in prison, with the possibility of parole in 20 years. But when her hearing for that came round in 2009, parole was denied.

"I believe Barbara is a serial killer," said Russ Stager's first wife.

"She got away with the first one. She thought she could do it the second time, and she didn't make it," commented Rick Buchanan, by now a captain.

**The one-time Sunday school teacher had a way of gaining trust that made her especially dangerous, he added. "She's the pillar of the community during the day, but behind closed doors at night, she's another woman. She's evil."**

## LOUIE AND THE KILLINGS THAT SENT HER TO THE GALLOWS



MASTER DETECTIVE'S

JUNE

# CRIME

CINEMA MURDER IN WARTIME DOVER

Private Horror Show At The Plaza



CASEBOOK



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

US EXECUTIONS: THE "ROCK 'N' ROLL YEARS"



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



**HOW RUTH BECAME THE LAST TO HANG**

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

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



**Suffolk's "Body In A Suitcase"**



**The Mystery Deepens...**

**LAST MAN HANGED AT DERRY**

**But Did An Innocent Man Go To The Gallows?**

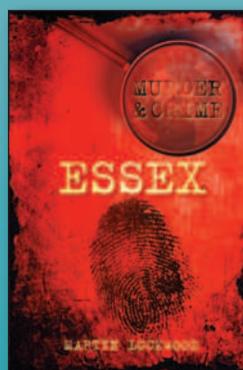
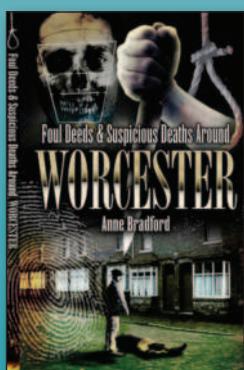
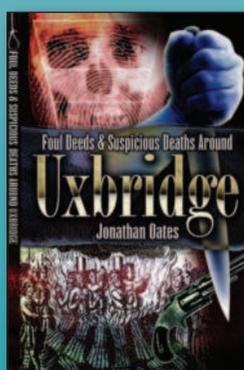
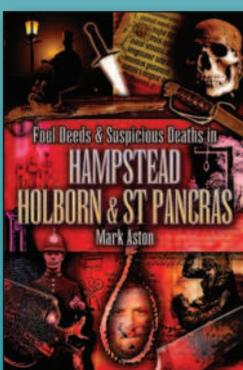
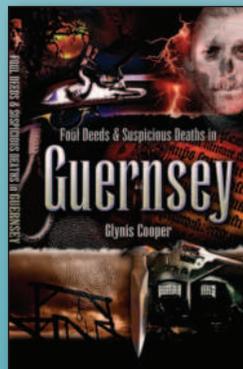
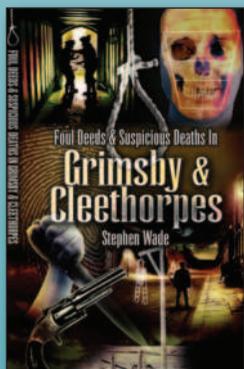
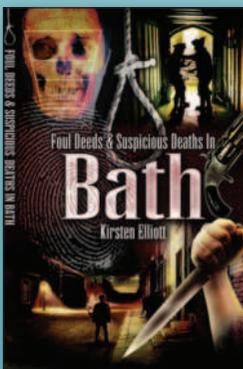
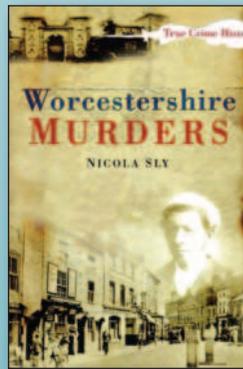
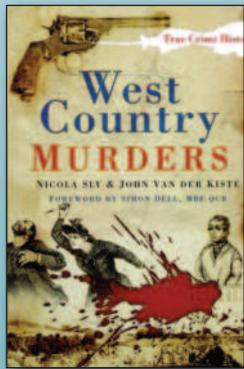
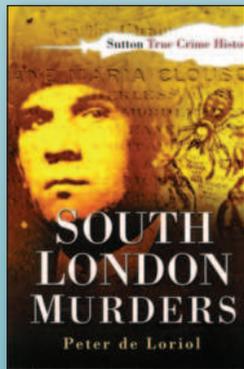
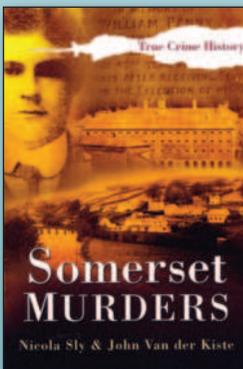
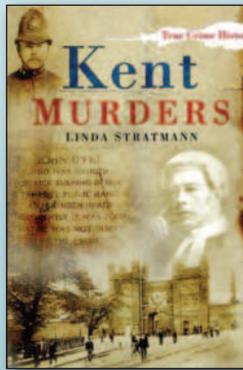
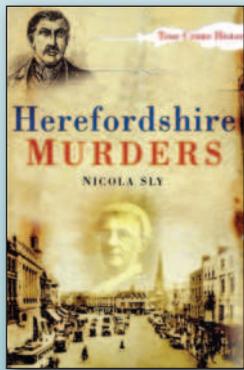
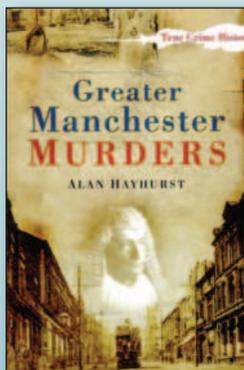
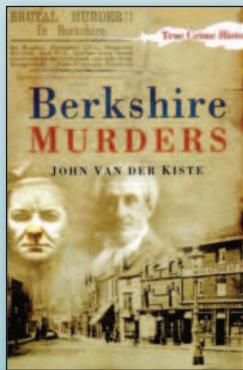


In shops from May 19th • Make sure of your copy by ordering direct from [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com) or 020 8778 0514 • For subscription savings see page 62

# truecrimelibrary BOOKSTORE **FOCUS ON LOCAL CRIME BOOKS**

If you're interested in true crime, you'll be fascinated to learn about crimes that have taken place "down your way" – and that's the focus of this special edition of True Crime Library Bookstore. We've brought together almost 100 local-interest crime titles from some of the leading publishers in Britain and Ireland – so you're sure to find one that's local to YOU.

Here is just a small selection – you can find the full range at [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com) or call +44(0) 20 8778 0514 and ask for a full list of our titles. *All titles are paperback unless otherwise stated.*



## Use this form to order your choice of true crime books

### YOUR ORDER

#### True Crime History:

- Berkshire Murders..... £14.99
- Greater Manchester Murders... £14.99
- Herefordshire Murders..... £14.99
- Kent Murders..... £14.99
- Somerset Murders..... £12.99
- South London Murders..... £12.99
- West Country Murders..... £14.99
- Worcestershire Murders..... £14.99

#### Foul Deeds & Suspicious Deaths:

- Bath..... £12.99
- Coventry..... £10.99
- Grimsby & Cleethorpes..... £12.99
- Guernsey..... £10.99
- Hampstead, Holborn, etc..... £10.99
- Uxbridge..... £12.99
- Worcester..... £10.99

#### Murder & Crime:

- Essex..... £9.99

Prices include UK postage and packing. For rates outside the UK, please order by phone or via our website: [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com)

Total order value £\_\_\_\_\_

### YOUR DETAILS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### YOUR PAYMENT

Cheque or postal order enclosed, made payable to Forum Press (UK only)

To pay via credit/debit card, call 020 8778 0514

You can also order through our website: [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com)

Return your form and payment to: True Crime Library Bookstore, PO Box 735, London SE26 5NQ, UK

Remember, you can always view and order our complete stock of books and magazines at

[www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com)

MMF74

**S**TROLLING ALONG the crowded pavement, the chic young woman paused to study her reflection in a shop window and touched up her lipstick.

“Say, baby,” drawled a bystander, “where’ve you been all my life?”

“Scram, you louse,” she snarled, “or I’ll knock your ears off.”

The man moved away, further humiliated by a newsvendor’s laughter.

A few minutes later the girl paused again outside a men’s outfitter’s shop on West Division Street, in Chicago’s upmarket district of Austin. Two men in a mud-spattered green car drew up at the kerb three stores away. They remained in the car, lit cigarettes and watched the young woman.

Entering the shop, she was met by Gustave Hoeh, the white-haired, 71-year-old proprietor.

“Good afternoon,” he said.

“What’s good about it?” she snapped, taking a revolver from her handbag.

“This is a heist, pop. Stay where you are, or I’ll mow you down!”

Outside, the two men left their car and joined her. “All set?” said one of them. “Nice work, duchess.”

Hoeh watched angrily as the taller of the two men punched the “No Sale” key of the cash register and scooped up its contents.

“See what he has in his pockets,” said the woman, hovering near the door and keeping lookout. The tall man shoved his pistol in his waistband, vaulted the counter and thrust his hand into one of the shopkeeper’s pockets.

“A fat roll,” he announced, holding up a wad of dollar bills. “Thanks, sucker.”

Gustave Hoeh’s smouldering rage exploded. Springing forward, he grabbed the man by the neck and both toppled to the floor.

“Blast him!” the woman screamed. “Give him the works!”

With her finger coiled round her gun’s trigger, she circled the struggling pair. But as they rolled back and forth, knocking over piles of hatboxes and banging against display cases, first one was on top, then the other. She couldn’t shoot without risking hitting her accomplice.

“Hold him still,” she shouted, “and I’ll shoot him!”

The second man joined the fray, throwing his powerful arms round



Captain Willard Malone

Hoeh. A shot rang out, fired by the other hoodlum the old man was throttling. It missed its target and struck the gunman’s accomplice.

“I’m hit!” the man cried, scrambling to his feet. Blood streamed from his hands, leaving a crimson trail across the pavement as he ran out to the car.

The shop’s screen door slammed behind him. Then Hoeh and the other man burst through it, followed by the woman, her face distorted in fury. Passers-by screamed and scattered, an elderly woman dropping her bag of groceries. A blind man paused uncertainly, and then tapped his way forward with his white cane as the gangsters’ moll leapt on Hoeh, tearing at his silvery hair and raking bloody furrows in his face with her fingernails.



# 199-Year Sentence

# “BLONDE TIGRESS”



***“Hold him still and I’ll shoot him,” she screamed. Then, with the helpless old man pleading for his life, they gunned him down like a dog***

The “Blonde Tigress” during her 1933 trial: Mrs. Eleanor Jarman, a mother of two, with her signature blonde hair dyed dark while on the run

Then she raised her pearl-handled revolver and struck him with its butt.

“Take that!” she shouted, hammering his head. “And that, and that!”

Hoeh, dazed by the blows, relaxed his grip on the robber, rose to his knees and slumped back on the pavement.

The freed hoodlum stepped back and drew his automatic.

“For God’s sake, don’t shoot!” Hoeh pleaded.

“Oh, yeah?” the man snarled. His pistol barked twice, two bullets ploughing into the defenceless shopkeeper.

As Hoeh started to crawl away, bleeding heavily, the woman ran to him and kicked him three times in the face. Then she and her accomplice joined the other man in the car and it roared away, crossing Austin Boulevard to disappear in the tree-shaded suburb of Oak Park.

The blind man had stopped on hearing the shots. Now he resumed his walk, tapping his way across a pool of Gustave Hoeh’s blood and leaving crimson footprints behind him.

**O**n the trio’s departure, witnesses poured out of the shops where they had taken cover. A passing truck was flagged down, and Hoeh was lifted into it and taken to Chicago’s West Suburban Hospital.

Austin’s police station had been deluged with calls while the struggle was still in progress.

“Take it easy,” Captain Willard Malone told the crowd that swarmed round him at the scene, each witness jostling to tell their story. “There’s one thing we need right away – does anyone know the car’s licence number?”

There was no answer.

“Well, what did they look like?” asked Detective Patrick Touhy. “What kind of car were they in?”

A man pushed forward, one half of his face freshly shaved, the other covered with lather. A barber, razor in hand, hovered behind him. “I got a good view of the girl,” the man said. “I was in the first chair in the shop across the street when the fireworks started.”

“I saw it, too,” said the barber. “I was shaving him.”

“Good,” said Detective Albert Glass. “Describe them.”

“The lady was a platinum blonde, about twenty-five, I’d say, around five

# For Chicago's **“TIGRESS”**

Case  
recalled by  
**Harrison  
Carter**

feet three inches, eight stone..."

"Save your breath," Glass interrupted, pocketing his notebook. "She's on a hundred wanted messages already. She's the Blonde Tigress."

For six months newspapers had been chronicling her exploits – 70-odd robberies, netting her and her two male accomplices thousands of dollars. From the victims' stories, she was the trio's dominant figure, always the first in action, setting the stage for her companions. A reporter had dubbed her the "Blonde Tigress," causing her stock to rise so that each hold-up made headlines. And now, on the afternoon of August 4th, 1933, the gang had shed blood for the first time.

Gustave Hoeh's shop resembled a battlefield. Ties and shirts had been brushed from the counters and trampled, chairs had been overturned and heavy display cases had been shoved out of position. As Captain Malone surveyed the scene, Detective James Fleming phoned from the hospital. "Hoeh's just died," he reported. "I had no chance to get a statement from him."

The bullets had struck the shopkeeper in the right breast and below the heart. "His body's a mass of bruises, his eyes are blackened and his teeth are loosened," Fleming added. Several witnesses said they had seen blood dripping from the hands of the first robber to take to his heels, and a flattened bullet was found embedded in a wall in the shop.

"But Dad didn't have a gun," said Hoeh's son Norman, who lived over the shop with his mother and brother Earl. "So how was the fellow wounded?"

"Probably accidentally in the tussle," said Malone. "Any money missing?"

"The cash register has been cleaned out – ten or twelve dollars," Earl reported. "And Dad had fifty dollars in his pocket to pay for some stuff coming cash-on-delivery."

"Then the rats got that too," Malone



Dorothy McFee was one of numerous witnesses of the fatal fracas who gave evidence in court



Above, the widow and sons (Earl and Norman) of murdered shop-owner Gustave Hoeh

told him. "Your father didn't have a penny on him when he reached the hospital."

The news vendor described how the girl had dealt with the man who asked where she had been all his life. "She was sore as a boil," he said. "I don't think she liked the guy's style."

"That wasn't why she was angry," Detective Touhy commented. "She got mad because he interrupted her at work. She was casing the place to see if it was ripe for robbery. I suppose some customers were inside, so she moved down the street to Hoeh's."

It was learned that just 20 minutes before the murder the trio had robbed a shoe shop three miles away on West North Avenue. "The woman entered first and asked to look at some shoes," said the victim, James Swoik. "She told me, 'I'm going to California on vacation, and I'll need lots of them.' She looked eighteen-carat to me – talked like a lady and wore expensive clothes.

"She tried on shoes for half an hour and selected a dozen pairs she wanted. The bill was seventy-two dollars. She walked to the door, waved a handkerchief, and came back to the counter. 'I'll pay you with this,' she said, and poked a revolver in my face. Then a couple of fellows came in. They had guns too. They got fifty dollars from the register, took my watch and walked out with the shoes."

Detective Touhy finished typing the shopkeeper's statement and pushed it across the desk for his signature. "That babe will need a fleet of trucks if she ever moves," he commented. "What a wardrobe she must have! Twelve pair of shoes today. Last week she got six. Yesterday she took seven evening gowns, making about thirty she's swiped in all. She's heisted enough silk stockings and scanties to keep a burlesque chorus happy for a year. Hats, handbags, gloves – you name it, she's stolen it."

"No aprons, though," said another detective.

"Housework isn't her line," Touhy replied. "But she'll wear an apron when we catch her and she ends

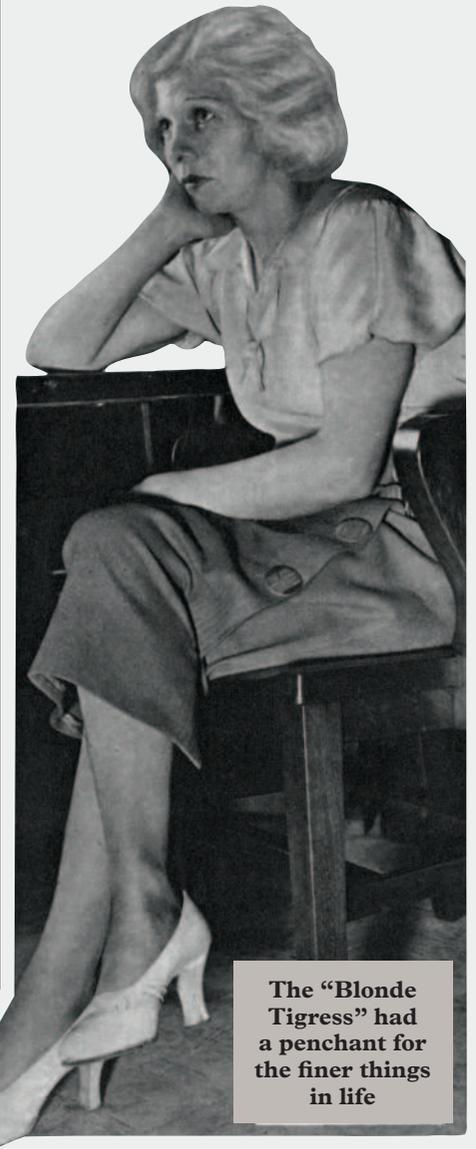
up in Dwight Reformatory. They don't allow inmates stylish gowns there. And maybe she'll wear a shroud if she fries in the electric chair."

All the victims robbed by the Blonde Tigress during the previous two weeks were summoned to the police station, in the hope that further questioning might produce a lead.

"She's a fiend," said Mrs. Sophie Hoffman, the middle-aged, bespectacled owner of a dress shop on Milwaukee Avenue. "She hit me over the head with a blackjack."

Mrs. G.H. Gould, who ran a Sheridan Road boarding-house, had been trussed up and robbed of 18 dollars. She recalled: "The girl pushed a lighted cigarette against my bare arm and said, 'You have money hidden. I'll kill you if you don't tell me where.' I fainted from pain and fear, and when I came round I was alone."

Mrs. Samuel Cohen, proprietor of a small department store on South Halsted Street, suffered a different kind of torture. "They tied my hands and feet," she said, "and took my diamond engagement ring and ninety-five dollars. Then they helped themselves to a lot of the stock. Before they left, the girl came into the back room where I was



The "Blonde Tigress" had a penchant for the finer things in life

stretched out and asked, 'Are you comfortable?'

"I couldn't answer. I was gagged. She laughed and tossed a pile of autumn coats over my face. It was hot – the temperature was about ninety. I almost smothered before a customer released me."

"What kind of clothes did she take?" asked Detective Glass.

"Mostly women's, but some children's too."

"Children's? Tell me more about that."

"Well, four suits in two different sizes were missing when I checked, as well as shirts, caps and ties. They'll fit boys of eight to ten."

"Then she may be a mother."

"Oh, yes. I heard her say, 'Now I'll get something for my kids.' And later she said to one of the men, 'Just the kind of cap my oldest boy LeRoy wants.'"

"Now we're getting somewhere," said Detective Glass.

Meanwhile Touhy was questioning people in the buildings opposite Hoeh's shop. One of them was Dorothy McFee, a dentist's laboratory technician.

"I had a grandstand view. I saw everything," she told the detective. "I was at the window. That blonde seemed to take a positive delight in kicking the old man as he lay helpless."

"Did you get the car number?"

"Do you want it?" The witness picked up a notepad. "I thought everyone

would have it – dozens of people were nearer the car than I was. But here it is: 790-748."

Checking the licensing records, Touhy learned that the number had been issued to Emil Minneci of 3346 West Monroe Street.

"First, radio the number to all cars," Malone ordered. "Then find out if the plates have been reported stolen."

Then the captain turned to resume questioning Mrs. George Seigl, the owner of a Sheridan Road dress shop. A

week earlier she had been robbed of two diamond rings and ninety-five dollars.

"They escaped in a car parked in the alley," she said. "I heard it start, but didn't see it as they had locked me in a closet."

The trio had been in her shop for quite a while, the girl using more care in selecting a gown to steal than most people show in buying one.

"Hey, Touhy!" a voice called outside the captain's office. "You're wanted on the phone."



**Eleanor Jarman (above and below) confronted with the arsenal found in her flat at 6323 Drexel Avenue in Chicago by Capt. Willard Malone of the Austin police**



The detective excused himself and hurried to the desk sergeant's cubicle. The caller was a clerk in the automobile division at headquarters. He told Touhy that the number 790-748 had not been reported stolen.

The detective returned to the captain's room. "Here's something, captain," he said. "The blonde's licence-plate number isn't hot."

"That's odd," said Malone. "They've pulled a lot of jobs and ought to be smart enough to use a car with phoney plates. It takes only a minute to steal a pair."

"Maybe they did," Touhy suggested, "and the owner hasn't missed them yet."

"That's possible, but the way they work indicates they could be using their own car. In the previous robberies they bound their victims and locked them in closets and back rooms, giving them no chance to see the getaway car. They'd have done the same in the Hoeh job if he'd submitted quietly like the rest. They probably counted on leaving him helpless, and strolling out to their car without anyone raising the alarm."

The captain rose and strapped on his revolver. "Call the rest of your squad," he said. "We're going to visit Emil Minneci. And he'd better have a good alibi."

**A**s the investigators drove towards Minneci's home, their radio



**Eleanor was arraigned in August 1933 with her alleged accomplices in the holdup, Leo Minneci (centre) and George Dale (right), before Chief Justice Prystalski. The trial of the three for murder was set for August 28th, 1933**

crackled with the message that the wanted car had been recovered. Malone ordered his driver to stop and phoned headquarters from a cigar store. He learned that the car had been found abandoned on West Monroe Street. "A man left it there," a detective explained. "Neighbours saw him walk east and turn south on Kostner Avenue. We've searched for him, but the trail was hours old."

Changing course, the investigators went to examine the green car which had now been impounded. A technician had just finished going over it. It had been wiped clean of fingerprints, he reported.

"Anything in it?" asked Glass.

"Some blood on the front seat. Apart from that, not even a cigarette butt."

Malone and the squad resumed their drive to 3346 West Monroe Street. There, in a dark hallway, a grimy card beside a bell button read: "E. Minneci, 2nd floor."

"Touhy and I will crash in this way. You fellows take the rear," said Malone.

After pressing the bell, the captain and the detective bounded up the stairs, arriving on the second-floor landing, revolvers drawn, as a door opened and a man peered out.

"Emil Minneci?" said Touhy.

The man's face fell as he saw the guns.

"Don't move!" Touhy warned, "We're police officers."

"I'm Minneci, but what've I done?"

He admitted owning the green car, but said he had loaned it to his brother Leo that morning. He himself had been at work at the time of the murder, he said, and a quick phone call confirmed this.

Leo Minneci, a 28-year-old punch-drunk ex-boxer, lived on the floor below, and he was not at home when the detectives burst into his flat. His wife, her two small children clinging to her skirt, said he had gone out early that morning to look for work.

"He's a good man. I'm sure there's some mistake," she said when Malone told her they were seeking her husband in connection with a murder.

But her description of Minneci convinced the investigators that he was the bandit wounded in the melee that morning. Detectives Donald Oakley and Edward Dooley, armed with shotguns, were assigned to remain in the flat to await his return.

"The Blonde Tigress and the killer may be with him," the captain warned. "And they're dynamite. If they step out of line, don't spare the lead."

Doctors and hospitals had already been asked to call the police if a man sought treatment for hand wounds, and chemists had been alerted to look out for the Blonde Tigress and her companion who might buy first-aid dressings for their accomplice.

Sixteen hours passed without further developments. Then at noon the next day the telephone rang in

Leo Minneci's flat. His wife moved to answer it, but Dooley motioned her aside and lifted the receiver. "Hello," he said.

There was a moment's silence. Then a tired voice said, "You're a cop, aren't you?"

"Yes, and you're Minneci. Take my advice, Leo, and surrender. You can't escape us."

"But you'll plug me on sight."

"No we won't," Dooley promised.

"I gotta do somethin'," Minneci continued. "I'm shot. I need treatment. I'm afraid to go to a sawbones. Blood poisonin'..." There was another pause. Then he said, "I'm comin' home. Givin' up. Wait for me."

He walked into his flat 45 minutes later, his hands crudely bandaged with strips torn from a pillowcase. Although his wounds were superficial, they were festering, posing a danger of gangrene.

"Get me to a doctor, please," were his first words.

"Before we do anything," Dooley told him, "you must talk. Where is the blonde and her pal?"

"I left them in a flat at 4300 Madison. They'll have lammed by now. I don't know where."

**T**he Tigress, he revealed, was Mrs. Eleanor Jarman, a mother of two; the killer was her lover George Kennedy, who posed as her husband.

Under guard, Minneci was taken to hospital, as squads led by Captain



**Detective Patrick Touhy with witnesses Mrs. Anna Fillard, Ms. Sophie Hoffman and Mrs. Sophia Hoffman identifying the three accused: George Dale, Eleanor Jarman and Leo Minneci**

Malone raided the trio's hideout. As Minneci predicted, the pair had fled.

"Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy and their two children moved last night," said the landlady. "They went away in a yellow cab."

"Did they have much luggage?" asked Malone.

"Luggage! That woman had so many dresses and other clothes, it was a crying shame. The extravagance! And her poor husband was such a nice, patient man."

The investigators conferred outside on the pavement. Malone ordered detectives to check the neighbourhood's taxi stands to find the cabbie who had driven the couple. "I'm going to the hospital," he said. "I may be able to sweat more out of Minneci."

The wounded hoodlum was eager to talk. "I ain't no heist guy, never was, never want to be," he insisted. "Here's what happened yesterday. They asked me to go for a ride with them. Sure, why not? We came to that spot. George said he needed a shirt, and we went in."

"Then he pulled a gun and told the geezer to cough up the dough. I was surprised! I didn't want George to plug the poor guy, and I grabbed for the rod. It went off. That's how I got shot – saving the storekeeper."

"I was scared and ran to the car. George and the old gent rolled out, fighting like mad. I saw Eleanor slug him, and George feed him lead. They piled into my crate, and I drove away. I was kind of dazed – like someone gave me a ten-count punch.

"I went with them to their flat. Eleanor bandaged my hands. Then I left, ditched the car on Monroe Street and hid in a shack all night. They told me they were goin' to take it on high – go far away. They didn't say where."

"Are Jarman and Kennedy their correct names?"

Minneci shrugged. "Your guess is as good as mine. I think they're aliases."

Rejoining the detectives, Malone learned that the hunt for the fugitives' cab driver had proved fruitless. "A lot of them wouldn't help if they could," an investigator complained. "They don't like to get mixed up with the law."

"Try this angle," the captain ordered. "Minneci mentioned that the Tigress and Kennedy did a lot of drinking along Madison Street. Check the taverns."

This too proved fruitless until Glass called at a side-street saloon several blocks from the couple's former lair. "A platinum blonde?" said the bar tender. "That must be the Bizzy Izzy lady."

"Bizzy Izzy? What do you mean?"

"Like to try one?"

"Oh, I see. A drink?"

"Yeah, a screwy mixture – pineapple juice, lemon, sherry, rye and seltzer. She's the first customer who ever asked for it. Her name's Eleanor. A nice enough girl. And her boyfriend George – I don't know his last name – is okay too."

The bartender knew little more about the couple, except that George had once cashed an Illinois Emergency

Relief cheque with him. "For a guy on relief, though, he seemed to have plenty of folding money."

**F**urther investigation established that a George Kennedy had been on the rolls of the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission for several months, but had left his job in May. He had been employed on a project in Berwyn, a Chicago suburb.

Searching the Commission's records, Glass and Touhy compiled a list of the men who had worked with Kennedy, and began calling on those they could locate. One of them was Roscoe Burke, an engineer who had directed a labour gang.

"I haven't seen Kennedy for several months," he said. "I was quite friendly with him and met his sweetheart, Eleanor Jarman."

The detectives told him that she was the Blonde Tigress, and Kennedy was Gustave Hoeh's killer. "I'd be more than glad to help you," Burke said, "but I don't know how I can."

"Just keep on talking about them," said Glass. "Give us the names of their acquaintances, places they mentioned. We might get a lead that way."

"One evening last March," Burke recalled, "Eleanor came to me with a strange request. She asked me to drive her to Madison and St. Louis, where she had an appointment with an ex-sweetheart. She told me not to

mention it to Kennedy. Of course, I obliged. I didn't meet the fellow, but I saw her talking to him for a long time in a doorway. Then she came back to the car and I took her home. Before we parted she told me again not to tell Kennedy."

The man Eleanor had met, Burke recalled, was thin, frail and sickly-looking. Setting out to find him, the detectives questioned the janitor of a building at the junction of Madison and St. Louis Streets.

"That must be Tim Bellows," he said. "He used to live here, but moved. Let's see..." He consulted a notebook. "His mail is being forwarded to 32 South Kedzie."

Bellows's name was on a door at the Kedzie Avenue address, but no one answered the detectives' repeated knocks. A neighbour said Bellows had gone out four hours ago. "He was with a woman and two children," she added.

"A platinum blonde?"

"No, a redhead."

Otherwise the neighbour's description of Bellows's companion fitted the Blonde Tigress perfectly. The detectives concluded that she had dyed her hair to disguise herself.

Using a skeleton key, they entered Bellows's apartment. His clothes had not been removed, so it seemed he would be returning.

"Stick there," Captain Malone ordered.

Taking turns sleeping and slipping out to eat, the detectives spent the next two days at the flat. Then at 4 p.m. on the third day they heard a key grate in



Contemplating 199 years in prison, Eleanor Jarman (left) stands in the county jail on August 31st, 1933. Above, she wept after hearing the verdict – but after serving six years her life would take yet another turn...



the lock and hid in an alcove. A wisp of a man entered and shut the door behind him.

"Bellows!" Glass called out.

The man tottered and almost lost his balance. "Someone say something?" he asked shakily.

The detectives stepped into view, guns in hand and displaying their badges. "Where's Mrs. Jarman?" Touhy demanded.

"I don't know."

"Don't lie."

Bellows said that Eleanor Jarman had called on him two days ago. She told

him she was in trouble and asked him to take her children – LeRoy, 11, and LaVerne, nine – to relatives in Sioux City, Iowa.

"That's where I've been," he continued. "Eleanor told me she and Kennedy were going to get a flat at Sixty-third and Drexel."

"Do you know Kennedy?"

"Yes," Bellows replied sadly. "Last December Eleanor left me to go and live with him. She loved him more than she did me."

He was horrified to learn that Kennedy was wanted for murder, and

Eleanor was his accomplice. "That fellow's been a bad influence," he said in Eleanor's defence.

"Do you think she lied about moving to Sixty-third and Drexel?" Touhy asked Captain Malone. "After all, she's red-hot."

"Women do funny things," said the captain. "We'll give the neighbourhood a whirl, and hope."

The street corner in question was one of the busiest in Chicago's Woodlawn district of boarding-houses and small hotels. The investigators began by asking local bartenders, "Have you a red-headed woman customer who drinks Bizzy Izzies?"

The answer was "No" in so many saloons that the detectives lost count. But finally they found a bartender who said "Yes." Furthermore, he knew where the woman lived, for earlier that day her "husband" had ordered a case of beer to be delivered to their home.

Half an hour later Lieutenant George Lynch and Detective Elmwood Egan, carrying submachine-guns, took up positions behind an apartment building at 6323 Drexel Boulevard. Then Captain Malone led Detectives Touhy, Glass, Edward Becker and Thomas Mulvey up the front stairs. On the second floor they stopped at a door and Malone peered through the keyhole. Straightening up, he smiled and whispered, "Crash it!"

Mulvey and Becker's shoulders struck the door simultaneously. It flew open and the officers rushed in, shotguns ready for action.

The Blonde Tigress and Kennedy were sitting on a couch reading newspapers. Handcuffs were clicked on their wrists before they knew what was happening.

At Austin police headquarters they were identified by 62 robbery victims, and witnesses of Gustave Hoeh's murder. Ballistics tests established that the fatal bullet had been fired by one of seven guns found in the couple's flat.

Kennedy claimed that he had entered Hoeh's shop to make a purchase and had been unarmed. "Hoeh got sore when I threw back at him a shirt I didn't like," he said. "He pulled a gun. Minneci and I struggled so he wouldn't shoot. It went off and Leo was wounded. Then it went off a couple more times, and the old man was hit."

Eleanor Jarman's story was identical. The pair had obviously rehearsed it. She also denied striking, kicking and scratching the victim. "I wouldn't do that," she said. "He was such a nice old man. We ran because we didn't want to get my children involved in the mess."

Minneci, confronting the couple, stuck to his story that Kennedy was armed and had shot the shopkeeper in the course of the robbery.

"You're a black-hearted liar," Kennedy snarled. "Do you want us all to fry?"

Eleanor Jarman, 29, had met Kennedy in 1932 while she was



operating a beer flat – an unlicensed drinking den – in Chicago. "I was alone," she said. "My husband had left me, and George and I teamed up."

Kennedy, also 29, admitted that his real name was George Dale and that he had lived for the past four years on the proceeds of robberies.

**P**leading not guilty to murder, the trio went on trial on August 28th, 1933, the Tigress and Dale repeating their claims that Hoeh had drawn the gun and had been killed when they tried to disarm him in self-defence. Minneci meanwhile repeated his story that Dale had been staging a hold-up, and that he himself had not known his companion's intentions beforehand.

Seeking the death penalty for all three, Assistant State's Attorney Wilbert F. Crowley urged the jury: "Don't let a few crocodile tears from this woman sway you. She is a despicable murderess who set the old man up like a tenpin so her pals could shoot him. They gave it to Hoeh. You give it to them!"

After hearing the evidence of 20 witnesses, the jury retired for four hours. They returned to recommend the death sentence for Dale. Eleanor Jarman and Leo Minneci were each sentenced to 199 years' imprisonment.

On Friday, April 20th, 1934, George Dale was strapped in the electric chair in the basement of Cook County jail, and 2,500 volts drove the life from his muscular body. After his death, a love letter to Eleanor was found in his cell.

It read:

*Dear Eleanor, I just thought that I would write you a few lines for the last time. Don't think I have forgotten you. I wrote several letters before and I know that perhaps you didn't receive them and thought maybe I didn't think or care any more. Anyway, I hope you have become a Christian and I wish only to thank you for all the happy moments we have spent together. Give all my best regards and tell the children hello for me when you write home. I will pray for you. Everything is fine for me. Love to you and the boys.  
George.*

Weeping when it was delivered to her in prison, she broke down and confessed: "Yes, I slugged and kicked the old man, but I hardly knew what I was doing after I saw him fight with George."

Six years later, on August 8th, 1940, she escaped from Dwight women's reformatory with another prisoner, a bank robber's moll serving time for larceny. While their guard's back was turned, they ran from a cottage where they had been scrubbing floors, scaled a 14-foot fence topped with spikes, and disappeared in a cornfield.

The reformatory's superintendent revealed that Eleanor had received a letter, telling her that her 16-year-old daughter LaVerne had run away from the home of her Sioux City relatives. This was believed to have prompted her escape.

State police and 250 prison guards scoured the countryside in vain, and it was learned that the two fugitives had hitch-hiked the 100 miles to Chicago.

The other woman was soon arrested but not Eleanor, and 12 years later on January 31st, 1952, having found no trace of the fugitive, Illinois authorities appealed to the FBI and Eleanor Jarman was placed on their "Ten Most Wanted" list.

Wanted she may have been, but found she never was. After the jailbreak, having satisfied herself that her children were safe, she went to ground, occasionally contacting family members through classified ads. In 1975 she arranged a meeting with her brother and her son LeRoy, who was by now middle-aged. LeRoy was all for Eleanor giving herself up and finally facing the music, but she refused, saying she believed the authorities would no longer be looking for her.

**That was the only confirmed sighting of the former Blonde Tigress, but contact with her family via classified ads is said to have continued into the 1990s, when she herself would have been in her mid-90s. In 1993 a petition was organised for her to be pardoned by the state, but it was refused. So Eleanor Jarman must be presumed to have died at some point after that, though almost certainly not under her real name.**

# Strange Case Of The 78-Year-Old Prostitute

## SHOCKER FROM THE NORTH-EAST

**B**Y DAY Mrs. Julia Beesley was a respectable old lady. But on Friday and Saturday nights things were different. Then, despite her 78 years, she pulled on her black stockings and cruised the bars of Stockton-on-Tees and Billingham as a prostitute.

She would be home late, she told her labourer son Robert once again on the night of Saturday, July 29th, 1950. But she wasn't merely late that night. She didn't come home at all, and the next morning he went to the police.

They were aware of his mother's weekend occupation, but turned a blind eye to it. As she had never been known to solicit on the streets, she had never been arrested. The law did not

### Case Report By **Matthew Spicer**

criminalise prostitutes who picked up men in pubs, and Mrs. Beesley didn't score that often anyway. To the other girls she was a bit of a joke. None of them could remember her ever picking up anyone who wasn't very, very drunk.

When her son reported her missing, the police wondered if he knew what his mother got up to. They made no comment and began to make inquiries. They soon learned that she had been in the bar of Billingham's Victoria Hotel the previous night. The head barman knew her too. He sometimes had to stop her accosting men at the bar. She was there again shortly before closing-time on the Saturday night, he told detectives. And she was drunk.

Just three hours after she was reported missing, officers were called to Billingham Docks, where the body of a woman had been found by a passer-by. It lay in long grass beside a cycle track near the quayside, and the police recognised the woman as Julia Beesley.

There were no obvious signs of



**Above, the body of Julia Beesley lying in the long grass beside the cycle track near the quayside. Below, Billingham Docks**



violence, and inquiries at the Victoria Hotel established that while there she had been seen talking to a sailor who had a South African accent. He too was drunk, and a taxi driver told detectives he had taken the pair to the SS *Absalon* at the docks.

When police went to the ship they were told that the captain intended to sail at 6 p.m. It was 5.30 when Detective Constable James Dawson was approached by 31-year-old third engineer Patrick Turnage, who asked if he was a policeman. Told that he was, Turnage said: "I may be able to help you about that woman last night. I had a woman here at the ship last night, but she left and I looked for her for a long time but couldn't find her. I have her handbag here. It has about seventeen shillings in it. She threw it on the deck from the quay."

The ship engineer then told the detective that this was his first time in Billingham. His ship had docked on the Friday morning, and he'd tossed a coin to decide where he would spend the Friday and Saturday nights. The outcome was that he'd spent the Friday night in Middlesbrough, where he'd found two prostitutes, the first about 17, the second about 30. He hadn't seen any girls at the Victoria in Billingham the following night, but he had later met the old woman who he'd taken to his ship.

He said an argument developed after they got out of the taxi, and Detective Dawson suspected that Mrs. Beesley had panicked, thinking her son would be wondering where she was. She had never spent the night with a client.

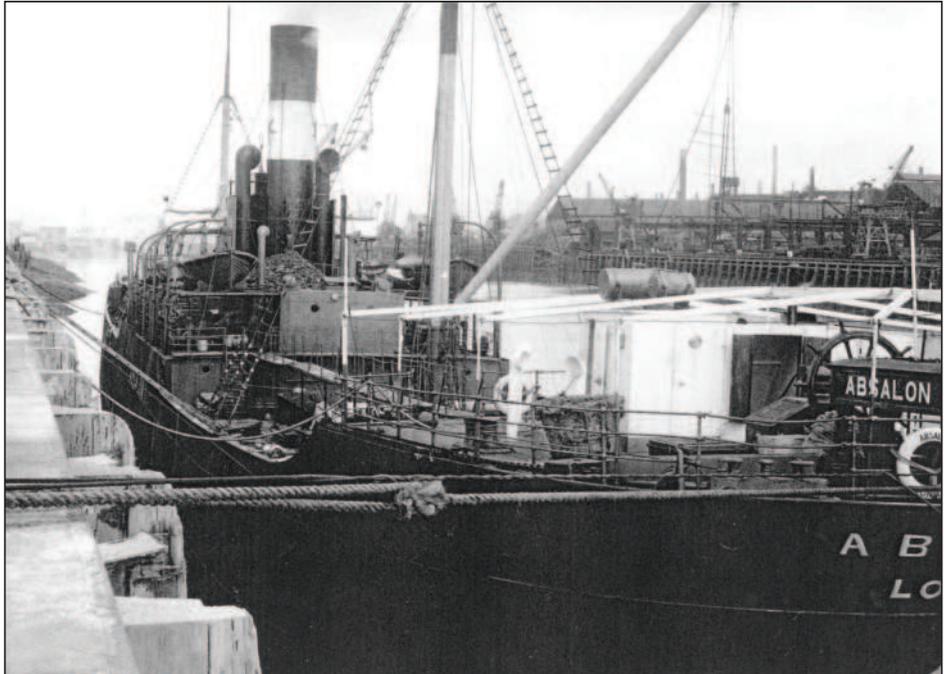
Dawson asked to see Turnage's cabin, and the engineer took him there and gave him Mrs. Beesley's plastic handbag. The officer had enough evidence to arrest him on suspicion, and he took Turnage to the police station, his ship sailing without him.

Shortly after Turnage's arrival at the station, the Home Office pathologist Dr. David Price told Detective Chief Inspector John Rowell that he had found faint bruises on Mrs. Beesley's neck, and he suspected she had been strangled, her age and poor health also contributing to her death.

The pathologist thought that the absence of severe bruises on her neck might be explained if her killer had twisted her clothing round her throat, but the force needed to do this would be significant. If there had been an argument, her attacker might have grabbed the clothes at her neck without meaning to strangle her.

It was 6.45 p.m. when Rowell began questioning Turnage, who said he had been born in India. His parents were English, he had spent most of his life in South Africa, and his home was in Durban.

He said that he and the old woman had parted on



**The SS Absalon moored at the docks. The prime suspect was the ship's third engineer**



**Left, Julia Beesley. Right, her corpse in the mortuary. Faint bruises on her neck led the pathologist to believe she had been strangled**

the quay when she refused to board his ship because she was disorientated in the dark. He had tried to find her later, thinking she might be in some danger on the quayside, but he saw no more of her.

The interview was brief, and at 8.55 Turnage asked to speak to the chief inspector again. He insisted he knew nothing of Mrs. Beesley's death, and said he had taken her to his ship for company. She had suggested having sex, for a price, and when he laughed at her she began swearing at him.

Asked to make a written statement, he said that at 8 o'clock the previous night he was in the Victoria Hotel in Billingham where he had two or three pints and then took a bus into Stockton, where he had another four pints at the Blue Post and tried to chat-up the woman pianist. He was making his way back to his ship when he saw Mrs. Beesley and asked her where he could catch a bus. He said she told him that the buses stopped running well before midnight and she pestered him to show her over his ship.

He said Mrs. Beesley became agitated when she tried to board his ship and the gangway began to sway. She stepped back and stood on the quay and, when another crew member tried to help her aboard, she became angry and threw her handbag at him, and it landed on the deck. At this point, Turnage said, he needed to go to the toilet, and on his return she had gone.

**SEAMAN ACCUSED OF TEES MURDER**

**PATRICK G. TURNAGE**, a 31-year-old engineer on board the s.s. *Absalon*, now lying in the Tees, was remanded in custody until Wednesday at Stockton today, when he appeared on a charge of murdering Mrs. Julia Beesley (78), a widow, of 18, Northbourne-road, Stockton. Mrs. Beesley's body was found yesterday on the approach road to Billingham Reach wharf.

Det.-Insp. J. Rowell, of

Then he changed his story again. He now said he caught up with Mrs. Beesley along the cycle track near a locomotive shed. He saw she was holding something, and realised it was her knickers. She told him she had taken them off to have sex with him for £1.

He said it was at this point that she laughed at her, telling her she was old enough to be his mother. She responded by grasping his penis through his trousers and trying to undo his fly-buttons. When he said "no," she pulled down hard on his tie and he pushed her away. As he walked back to his ship she followed him, cursing him.

Turnage said he gave her another push and she fell into a ditch. "I went to pick her up and discovered that she was limp. I looked for some water as I thought she'd just fainted. I went back to the watchman's hut but there was nobody there. I tried to lift her again but she was still limp.

"I didn't know what to do. I was so worried and frightened, I couldn't think straight. I went back to the ship and was too frightened to say anything to anybody about what had happened."

**T**his account, however, conflicted with what other witnesses had told the police. A man who had gone to the Victoria Hotel at 8 p.m. to attend a wedding party told detectives that Turnage had asked him if it was right that he could pick up a woman at the hotel. The man said he told Turnage he was in the wrong pub. From this it was apparent that Turnage was looking for sex, and not just company.

The cab driver said he had picked up Turnage and Mrs. Beesley at a taxi rank in Stockton. He said the old woman stank of drink and became agitated as Turnage tried to get her into the car. When they arrived at the docks she seemed to want to return in the taxi to the town centre. She asked where the cab was going and he told her, "Back to Stockton."

She said, "What about me?" so he asked Turnage if he should return later to pick her up, and Turnage told him to come back at 2 a.m. The old woman said that was too late, telling him to return at 1.30. The driver said he was about to leave when Turnage told him, "Forget it. She's staying all night."

Part of Turnage's story was confirmed by his ship's watchman Charles Bellamy, who told the police that shortly after midnight he saw Turnage on the gangway. A woman stood on the quay, shouting that she wasn't going to risk being drowned.

Bellamy said he reminded Turnage that women were not allowed on board, and Turnage said, "You know me, watchman."

When Turnage was told of the pathologist's findings he stuck to his story, repeating that he had merely pushed Mrs. Beesley into a ditch. But the pathologist's evidence convinced Stockton magistrates that there was



**The cabin on board the SS *Absalon* where a sailor kept the victim's handbag**

a case to answer, and Turnage was committed for trial.

However, it was assumed that he would plead guilty to manslaughter. Given the evidence against him, this plea would probably have been accepted by the court and Turnage would have gone to prison for only a few years. But then a most unusual turn of events occurred. Just days after the committal proceedings Detective Chief Inspector Rowell received a message that Turnage wanted to speak to him.

Interviewed again, this time in Durham Prison, Patrick Turnage told

***"I went to pick her up and discovered that she was limp. I looked for some water as I thought she'd just fainted"***

the chief inspector he intended to plead guilty to murder. He said he knew he had killed Mrs. Beesley, and he had thought his ship would have sailed before her body was found. He went on to say that he had wanted to kill a woman for some time, and he had decided to do it that Saturday night.

Why did he want to kill a woman? He said he had caught VD from a girl and wanted revenge.

When he started to strangle Mrs. Beesley, Turnage continued, she went limp. He then placed her in a sitting position and squeezed her throat until she was dead. This took two or three minutes, and he then put her body in a ditch and tried to cover it with grass.

His confession of premeditation made the charge one of capital murder when Patrick Turnage appeared at Durham

Assizes on Thursday, October 26th, 1950. On hearing him plead guilty, Mr. Justice Hallett told the prosecuting and defence counsel: "When such a plea is tendered by a prisoner in answer to such a charge, it is the clear duty of the court, before accepting the plea, to assure itself that it represents the advised and settled determination of the prisoner."

At the judge's direction Detective Chief Inspector Rowell was then called to give evidence. He testified that Turnage had told him: "I want to plead guilty to the charge. My mind is made up and I want to speak the truth. I knew what I was doing, and knew that she was dead when I left her. I did not expect her to be found, and I was sailing the next day."

The chief inspector said that Turnage had later been seen by both his solicitor and counsel, and had again insisted on pleading guilty. Before sentencing him to death, Mr. Justice Hallett told Turnage: "Having regard to the evidence I have heard, it is quite clear that the plea which you have tendered to the court has been tendered by you after careful consideration and with the benefit of advice by your solicitor and counsel. Accordingly it remains only for me to pass the sentence prescribed by law."

The proceedings lasted only 10 minutes, the execution was set for November 14th, and in his memoirs the assistant hangman Syd Dernley recalled that Turnage seemed to welcome his date with the gallows.

Dernley recorded that a warder told him that the condemned man was as "cheerful as could be. He's quite happy – this one wants to go."

"Has he gone crackers?"

"No. The lads in the condemned cell with him say he's perfectly OK. Just wants to get it over with. Some of the coppers say he needn't have been hanged at all. Some of our lads were talking to a couple of detectives on the case. They were amazed when he decided to plead guilty to murder. They thought he could have escaped the gallows if he'd pleaded manslaughter."

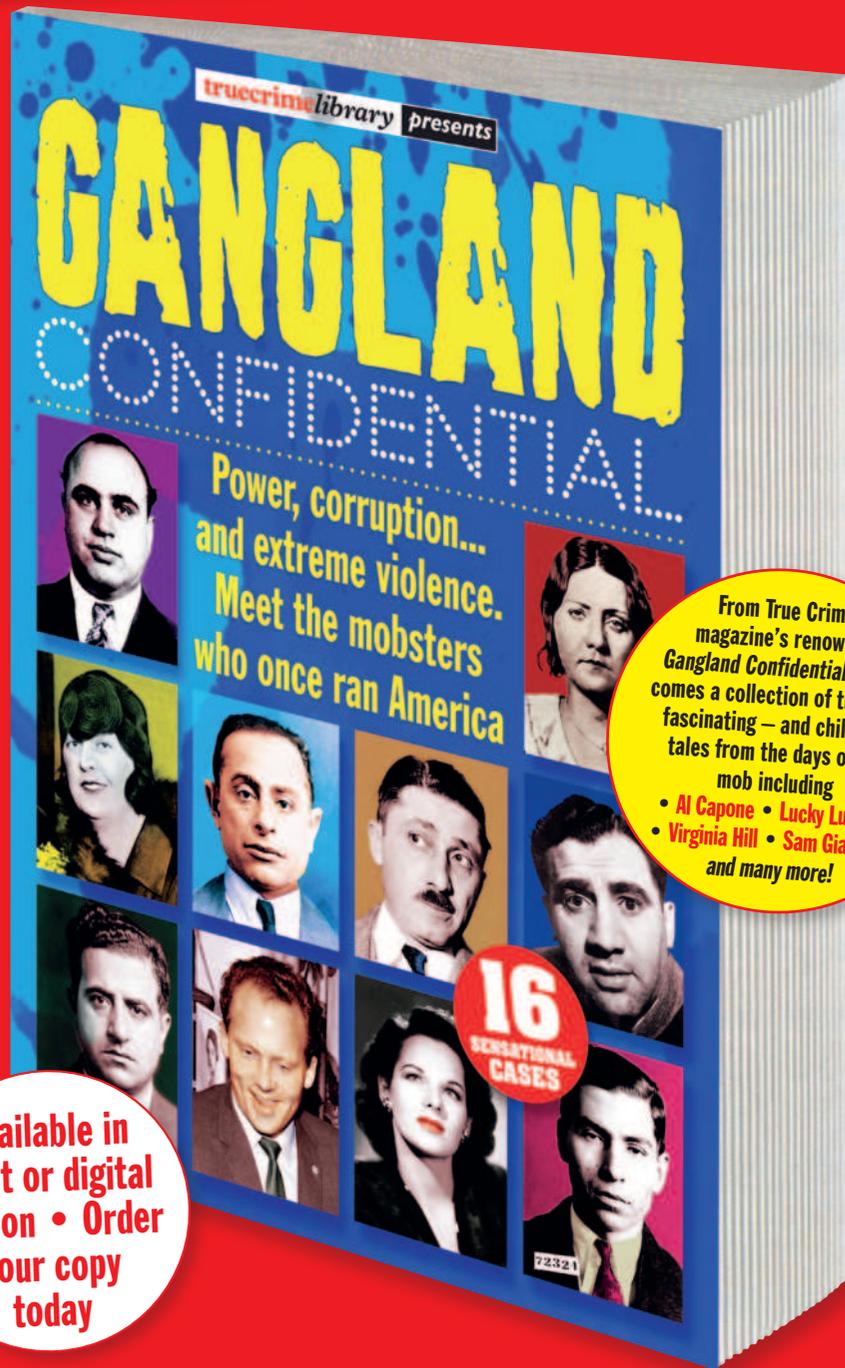
"Then why didn't he?" asked Dernley.

"He told the police he'd prefer the drop to fifteen years in stir."

Dernley wrote that Patrick Turnage "went as cheerfully to the grave as they said he would. When they swung the condemned cell door open for us, the seaman turned to watch us enter. For just a moment there was a flicker of fear, and then his face changed and I swear he smiled at us! His manner and self-control were one of the most remarkable things I ever saw on an execution morning.

***"I never came across a killer who came closer to getting clear away. I certainly never met another man who chose to hang, rather than try to save his neck and serve a prison sentence."***

# MEET THE MOBSTERS WHO RULED AMERICA



From True Crime magazine's renowned *Gangland Confidential* series comes a collection of the most fascinating – and chilling – tales from the days of the mob including

- Al Capone • Lucky Luciano
- Virginia Hill • Sam Giancana and many more!

Available in print or digital edition • Order your copy today

## How to order *Gangland Confidential* or any of our other collections seen here:

- Print editions: order direct from [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com)
  - Or call 020 8778 0514 • Or send £9.99 (post-free in UK)\* to True Crime Library, PO Box 735, London SE26 5NQ, UK
- \* Please make cheques payable to Forum Press

• Digital editions: go to [www.pocketmags.com/true-detective-magazine](http://www.pocketmags.com/true-detective-magazine)  
Digital editions are also available through the True Detective magazine apps (iOS and Android)

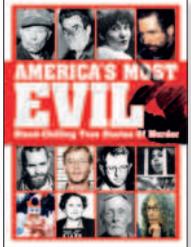
**PLUS:** Don't miss these bumper collections, still available!

### AMERICA'S MOST EVIL Volume I:

Prepare to be shocked at the evil men – and women – do. A bumper collection with full case histories of 17 American sadists, psychopaths, cannibals and serial killers, including Gein

- Heidnik • Manson • Dahmer • Kemper etc.

• Digital only



### AMERICA'S MOST EVIL Volume II:

Sadists, cannibals, psychopaths and serial killers – you'll find 24 of the very worst in this bumper collection, including Rifkin • Rader • Unruh • Speck • Ridgway • Lucas & Toole and more.

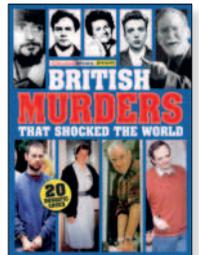
• Digital only



### BRITISH MURDERS THAT SHOCKED THE WORLD

What makes a murder echo round the world? Find out in this collection of 20 intriguing case reports featuring notorious figures including Brady and Hindley • Allitt • Sutcliffe • Shipman • Neilson • Sams etc.

• Digital only



### WHAT MAKES WOMEN KILL?

33 revealing case histories to help you get inside the minds of killer women including Aileen Wuornos • Joanna Dennehy • Dena Thompson • Karla Homolka • Katherine Knight and many more!

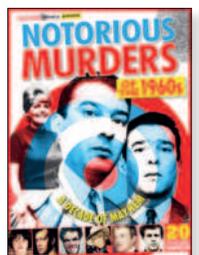
• Digital only

### NOTORIOUS MURDERS OF THE 1960S

A decade of celebrities, scandals and brutal killings

- Celebrity slayings
- Sex killings
- Unsolved murders
- Gangland killings
- A legendary serial killer. All this and the last hangings too...

• Digital only



**As Patty Looked For Her Daughter She Heard Her Grandson Say...**

# **“MOMMY WAS CRYING... MOMMY WAS IN THE RUG”**

*The USA was horrified when a heavily pregnant woman was murdered by the father of her unborn child*

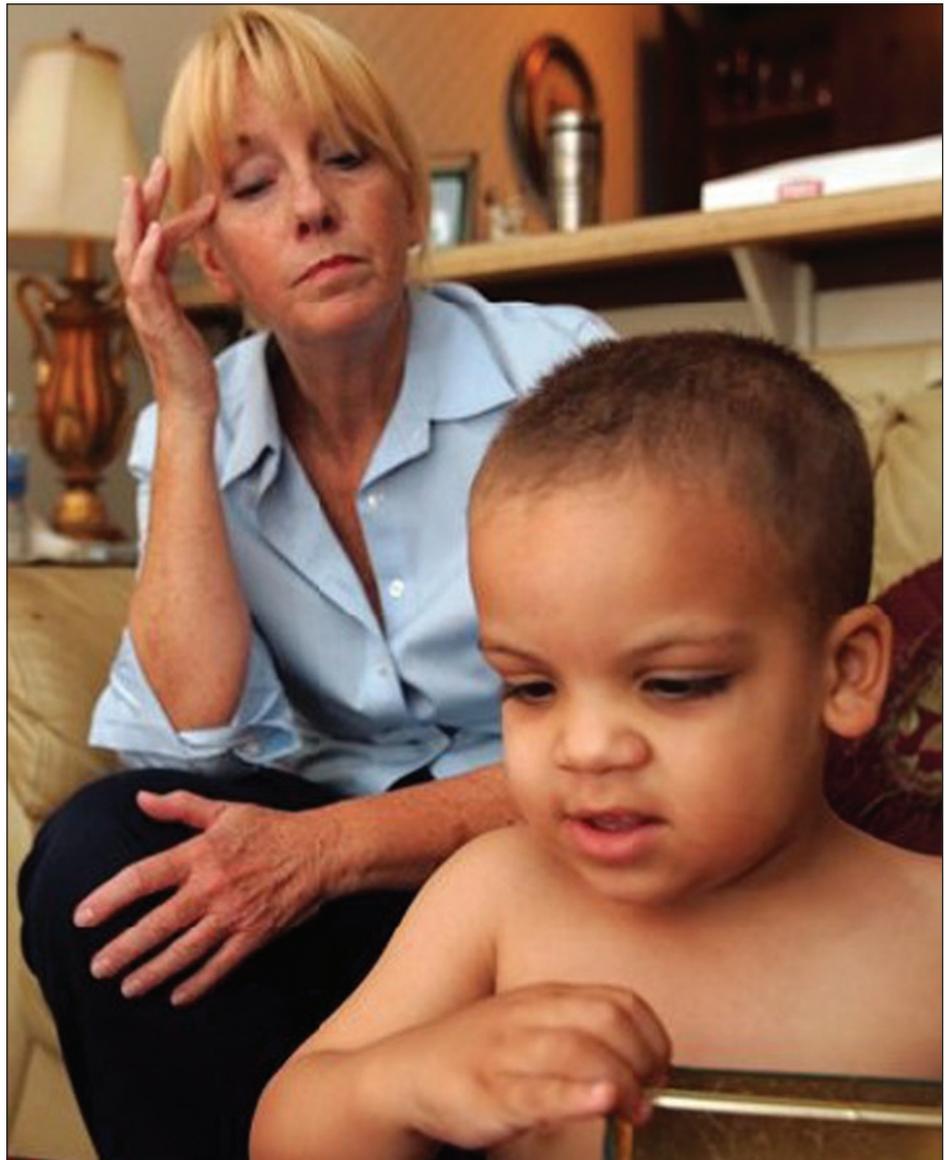
**P**ATTY PORTER was feeling scared as she drove through the streets of Lake Township, Ohio. “I’ve never had a speeding ticket but I was probably driving 65 miles per hour,” she later said. When she arrived at her daughter Jessie Davis’s house her heart was pounding in her chest. She rang the bell. No reply.

The sick feeling in Patty’s stomach intensified as she went round the back of the house and found that the door was unlocked. As she stepped inside she called out, “Jessie, are you there?” Then she heard the soft patter of her two-year-old grandson’s feet as he toddled down the stairs. She could smell his dirty nappy. It was unusual for Blake to be running around like this, she thought. Jessie was such a good mother, she would never have let her son stay in a smelly nappy for long.

Patty called her 26-year-old daughter’s name again, wondering if Jessie had slipped in the shower or was sick in bed. There was still no reply. Patty had a reason to feel concerned. Jessie was nine months pregnant and due to give birth to a daughter, who she had already named Chloe, in three weeks’ time.

Patty had waited for Jessie to drop Blake off at her house that morning, as she babysat on the days her daughter worked. But Jessie hadn’t turned up, or answered her mobile phone when Patty phoned to see where she was.

Patty picked up her grandson, who was tugging her sleeve and babbling, “Mommy broke the table and mommy was crying.” Patty walked into Jessie’s bedroom, now worried sick. The



**Patty Porter with grandson Blake. She knew that something terrible had happened to pregnant daughter Jessie**

mattress had been moved and Jessie’s special burgundy blanket that she took everywhere with her was missing, as was her mobile phone. Then Patty saw

that nearly a whole bottle of bleach had been poured onto the carpet.

“I just stood there screaming at the top of my lungs,” she said later. “And

the neighbours came running.”

Blake was still trying to explain something to Patty. “Mommy was crying, mommy was in the rug,” he said.

Patty knew that something terrible had happened. She sensed evil in the room, but she wanted to believe that her beautiful, caring daughter was okay, that her unborn granddaughter would still come into the world healthy.

She immediately contacted the police and reported Jessie missing. It was Friday, June 15th, 2007 – a day that Patty would never forget.

The police quickly contacted 30-year-old Bobby Cutts, Jessie’s boyfriend and the father of Blake and their unborn child. He told them that he, too, was worried. Jessie was meant to have dropped their son off at his house the day before, and hadn’t shown up. When he tried to phone her, she hadn’t answered. Bobby Cutts was a police officer in Canton, Ohio.

His relationship with Jessie was complicated. He was still married, but seeking a divorce. His wife knew about Jessie and the new arrival. The police questioned Mrs. Cutts but came away from the interview convinced that she was not involved in Jessie’s disappearance. She had long ago accepted that her marriage was over.

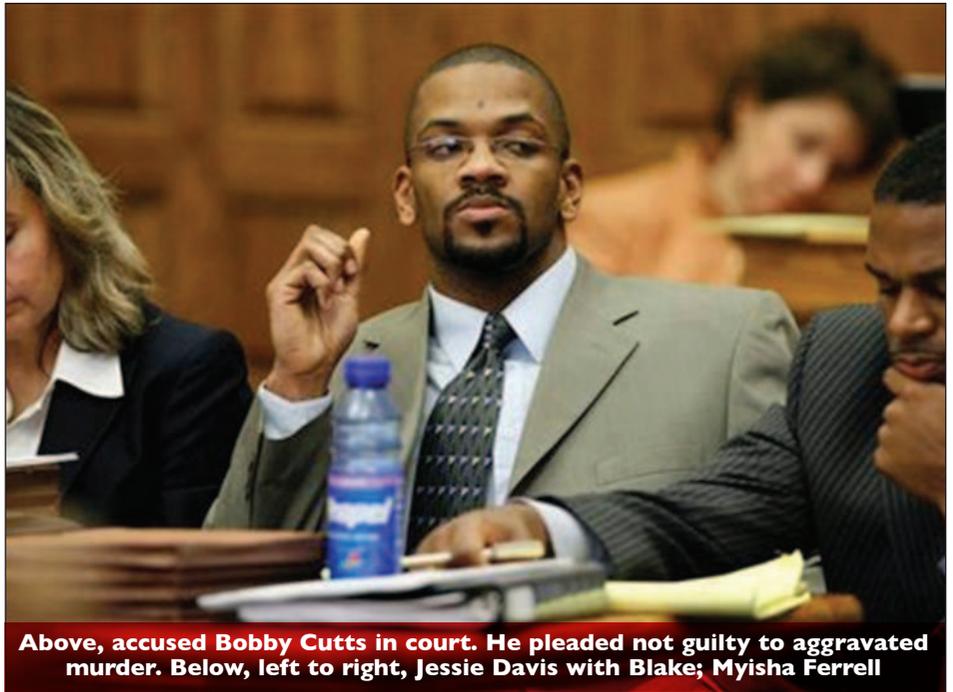
As the search for Jessie continued, police interviewed friends of both Cutts and Jessie in an attempt to piece together Jessie’s last known movements.

Myisha Ferrell, 30, an old school friend of Bobby Cutts, told police she had seen him on Friday, June 15th, and he had been really worried about Jessie, telling Myisha that she hadn’t answered her phone or answered the door when he called round to see Blake.

The police search for Jessie continued with the help of her family, neighbours and members of the church she attended, but to no avail. On Monday, June 18th, the police returned to Bobby Cutts’s house and spent two hours there, searching for clues.

Finally, on Saturday, June 23rd, Bobby Cutts led the police to the Summit County park and showed them where Jessie lay in a shallow grave – her baby inside her. Both were dead.

The police kept details from the media of how Jessie’s body had been discovered, and this important fact was not made public until the trial began in August 2007.



**Above, accused Bobby Cutts in court. He pleaded not guilty to aggravated murder. Below, left to right, Jessie Davis with Blake; Myisha Ferrell**

Cutts pleaded not guilty to aggravated murder, aggravated burglary, gross abuse of a corpse and endangering a child. He sobbed on the witness-stand as he admitted killing Jessie and their unborn child. He had gone round to the house to collect Blake and when Jessie was slow to get Blake’s things together he lost his

temper. He tried to get out of the house but Jessie grabbed him to stop him leaving, and he accidentally elbowed her in the throat, he told the court. The next thing he knew, she had collapsed on the floor at his feet. He tried to resuscitate her with bleach but she didn’t come round.

Blake was crying and he didn’t want the boy to see his mother dead, so he wrapped her body in the burgundy blanket and put her in the back of his truck. He drove straight to Myisha Ferrell’s house. It was about 6 a.m. She got into the truck and he told her, “Something is wrong. Something bad.” “What is it, Bobby?” she asked. “Jessie,” he said. “She’s in the back.”



temper. He tried to get out of the house but Jessie grabbed him to stop him leaving, and he accidentally elbowed her in the throat, he told the court. The next thing he knew, she had collapsed on the floor at his feet. He tried to resuscitate her with bleach but she didn’t come round.

**Finally Bobby Cutts led the police to Summit County park and showed them where Jessie lay in a shallow grave – her baby inside her. Both were dead**

The pair drove around town hatching a plan. They decided to dump Jessie’s body in the park. Bobby told Myisha what to say to the police if they questioned her. She could give him an alibi and nobody would ever find out what he had done. Myisha agreed.

Myisha Ferrell had been arrested at the same time as Cutts and was tried in November 2007 for obstructing justice and complicity in the gross abuse of a corpse. She pleaded guilty and was sentenced to two years in prison as part of a plea-bargain if she testified against Cutts during his trial. In her testimony she admitted making a serious error of judgement in helping him dispose of Jessie’s body but she had believed him when he told her that it had been an accident.

As the trial progressed local

newspapers delved into Bobby Cutts's past. His colleagues claimed that he was a nice man, fun to be with. He did voluntary work for a local citizens' advice bureau and his co-workers were shocked that he had been charged with Jessie's murder. They knew him as a family man, someone who could always calm a difficult situation with a few quiet words.

But they had never met Jessie, and weren't aware that she was expecting her second child with Bobby Cutts – he had kept that part of his life quiet.

One of his former girlfriends, who had a daughter with Cutts, had a completely different story to tell. He was violent, abusive and controlling, she claimed. He had terrorised her for 11 years and she had taken out restraining orders against him in 1998, 2005 and 2007.

This led to further speculation in the press about how Bobby Cutts had managed to become a police officer. In 1998 he had been found guilty of

**“For nine days he kept the location of Jessie’s body a secret and went about his life, every day knowing that Jessie and Chloe were laying there rotting away, destroying the evidence”**

breaking and entering his ex-girlfriend's flat and was placed on three years' probation. He was hired by the Canton police force in 2000.

Then in February 2003 he was fired from the police department after his handgun was found at his cousin's house during a drugs raid. Cutts claimed that the weapon had been stolen and he was eventually reinstated.

The prosecution at Bobby Cutts's trial were at pains to point out that his actions were those of a ruthless man. He had killed Jessie, they claimed, because he had mounting debt and didn't want to pay her any more child support. He was not the family man he made himself out to be – he had put pictures of himself on internet dating websites wearing nothing but a towel. He had also told a friend that he wanted to kill Jessie one month before he actually committed the crime.

“For nine days he kept the location of Jessie's body a secret and went about his life, every day knowing that Jessie and Chloe were laying there rotting away, destroying the evidence,” the prosecutor said. And he had left his two-and-a-half-year-old son alone in the house.

The jury took over 21 hours to find Bobby Cutts guilty of murdering Jessie Davis and their unborn child. Although his crimes could have led to the death penalty he was given a life sentence with



**Bobby Cutts seen during the period of the police search after Jessie's disappearance in Lake Township, Ohio**



**Left, Bobby Cutts' police mug-shot. He portrayed himself as a doting family man but a former girlfriend described him as violent, abusive and controlling. Right, Jessie with son Blake in happier times**



no eligibility for parole for 54 years. Before he was sentenced he had begged the jury to spare his life and apologised to Patty and her family.

“It was a nightmare that will continue to haunt me for the rest of my days,” he said. “To imagine that I was responsible for the death of Jessie, the mother of my son and my unborn daughter, is beyond any words that I can express. Words cannot bring them back, nor can they erase the pain I've caused, but I want to apologise.”

Patty Porter later told reporters that she had forgiven Cutts. “I don't want to hate anybody,” she said. “I feel like if God can't forgive Bobby Cutts, then he can't forgive any of us.”

She began to look after Blake and the community clubbed together to raise money for Jessie's son. A total of \$20,000 was donated towards Blake's college education and Patty was given a new home by Countrywide Home Loans.

“I would have been very content in our two-bedroom apartment,” a tearful Patty told reporters. “I am so grateful. Thank you so much.”

**The media attention that her daughter's brutal murder had attracted had benefited her grandson Blake, she added, but no money could compensate for the loss of Jessie and the granddaughter she would now never know.**

# AN OLD MAN ON THE GALLOWES

## But Was He Fit To Be Killed?

*There's no doubt that Charles Frembd killed his wife in August, 1914 – he admitted as much. But even though a doctor stated that Frembd was already suffering from dementia, and was a frail 71, he was hanged. Did his being German have anything to do with the government's lack of sympathy?*



**Chelmsford Prison, Essex, where German wife-killer Charles Frembd was executed. Background image: a World War One trench**

**F**RIDAY, AUGUST 18th, 1914: Dorothy Woolmore was puzzled. The 19-year-old servant to Charles and Louisa Frembd, living with them in the flat above their grocery shop in Leytonstone, couldn't work out why everything was so quiet.

She went up to the room to wake them, which wasn't how things usually went.

Case report  
by **James Newbury**

Her employers' bitter, vicious rows were often what woke her.

But this morning? Silence.

Nervously, she opened their door. Popping her head round, she instantly recoiled in horror.

Louisa was lying in a pool of blood, her throat savagely cut open. Charles was lying fully clothed in a similar position, with his throat cut, too – but remarkably, he was still alive.

Even for the notorious pair, this was astonishingly violent, gory and terrifying.

What on earth had been going on?

**A**t the start of the 20th century there were roughly 60,000

German expatriates living in England. About half of them were in London, and mostly, everyone got along fine.

But then, on Tuesday, August 14th, 1914, all the bluster and posturing of two empires came bursting forth into real, lethal action, and Great Britain officially declared war on Germany.

From then on, war in England had a very different time.

Often seen as infiltrators, many changed their names – from Schmidt to Smith, for example – to try to camouflage their heritage. Many were interned as possible foreign agents, while many who had been born here actually considered themselves English – even so, they kept their backgrounds quiet out of fear.

One of those immigrants was Charles Frembd. Born in Germany in 1843, he came to England as a 16-year-old, to work in the furniture trade.

Initially apprenticed to an uncle in London, when he qualified at the age of 24 he moved to Norfolk – to Great Yarmouth, where he found both work and love.

In 1882, married with five children, he decided to do what many others

from all over the world, including his homeland, were doing.

He left to make his fortune in America.

For 30 years, he and his family prospered until his wife died in 1912.

Broken-hearted, and desperate to evade constantly running into the memories of his lost love in the US, he took his small fortune and returned to Great Yarmouth.

Once there, he couldn't help noticing how much his widowed cousin Louisa had grown – he'd last seen her as a baby, but now she was a full-grown woman of 52.

She had been married, too, and her husband had died after just four years of marriage. She'd not married again, but during the years since Charles had left for the States she had built up a successful bakery business in London. Then she'd sold it, and moved back to Norfolk.

Charles and Louisa had a whirlwind romance, and married just a few months later in 1913. Together, they bought a grocer's in Leytonstone, east London, living in the flat above the store.

For a few weeks, the couple were perfectly happy.

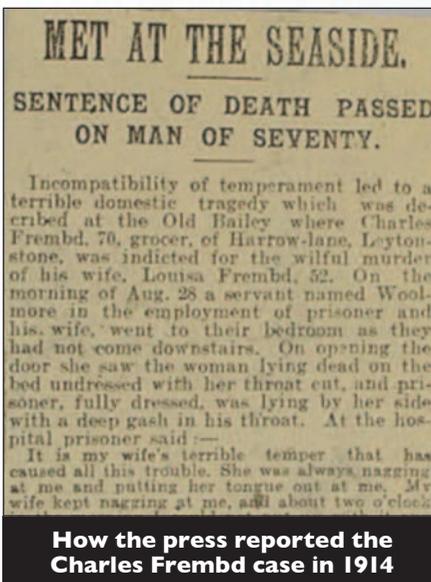
But the flame that had sparked when they'd seen each other for the first time in decades was to engulf them in anger soon after.

Charles couldn't believe how rude Louisa was to him. Louisa couldn't believe how interfering Charles could be.

Charles was convinced that Louisa had simply married him so that she could spend his money while he was alive, while waiting to inherit whatever was left after he died.

He claimed that Louisa would physically assault him, punching him in the back once and even hitting him with the handle of a carving knife.

Louisa, on the other hand, often wanted nothing to do with the miserable old busybody. He was getting in the way of her running the grocer's – she had already proved she could be



successful; now she wanted to be left alone to do it again.

Charles would throw bread and rolls at his wife, while she would lacerate

him with her acidic tongue. The pair would frequently come to blows, with each capable of giving the other a good wallop.

Louisa would often threaten to torch the shop, and spit in his face, throwing whatever came to hand at her husband.

Charles often claimed he was just trying to help. Having been successful back in America, he wanted to help make sure that everything went well in London, too.

Gradually, though, as Louisa began to spend Charles's money, he started worrying.

In his life across the Atlantic, he'd almost always been comfortably off, but now he was constantly concerned about how long his savings would last – and if they didn't, what would become of him now, at his age?

That was a question that would be settled in the most dramatic way the following summer.

**W**hile the Frembds liked to give the impression that all was well during the shop opening hours, everyone in the neighbourhood knew that as soon as it closed, the two fought like cat and dog.

Nevertheless, when their servant Dorothy went upstairs to see why neither had awoken so far on the morning of August 28th, she was both shocked and horrified at what she discovered.

Normally, they were the ones to wake her, having risen at first light to get the shop ready for the day's trading.

This morning, though, the shop would be the last thing on anyone's mind.

Unable to believe her eyes, young Dorothy fled to a nearby nursing home, and fetched nurse Edith Blount, who confirmed her worst fears.

A doctor was called, and he said that Louisa's throat had been cut right across the carotid artery – so severely and with such force that she'd have died almost instantly.

But Charles was still alive – barely, and clinging to life by a thread, but definitely alive. His throat had been cut, just as Louisa's had, but not fatally.

He was rushed to hospital, where doctors performed life-saving procedures that meant Charles was soon able to answer questions from the police.

"It is my wife's terrible temper that has caused all this trouble," he said. "She was always nagging at me and putting her tongue out at me. My wife kept nagging at me and at about two o'clock in the morning, I could not put up with it any more."

Back at the blood-soaked flat, the police did a search to see if there was any sign of what had brought this on.

In the bedroom, there was a blood-stained razor that had clearly inflicted the terrible injuries, and a note, claiming that Louisa's first husband had actually taken his own life by drowning

# 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**

**YARMOUTH HOLIDAY HORROR**

**The Terrible Snatching Of Leoni**



**MURDER UNDER COVER OF WAR**

**WW2 SOLDIERS WHO WENT TO THE GALLOWES**

**TWO WIVES, TWO MISTRESSES... ONE MURDER**

**SAGA OF THE SOMERSET RAKE**

**The Secret Head Of LA's "Underworld Government"**



**Middlesbrough's Only Police Murder**



**In shops from May 26th • Make sure of your copy by ordering direct from [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com) or call 020 8778 0514 • For subscription savings see page 62**

himself in Regent's Park because he could no longer live with her.

The note went on to say that Charles could take Louisa's jabs no longer, either – she'd belittled his family and his beloved first wife, as well as casting doubts on the "respectability" of his daughters.

But as for what had sparked such an orgy of violence and blood-letting, no one really knew.

Of course, the neighbours had plenty to say on the subject, but after speaking to enough of them the police were firmly of the view that all they'd heard was nothing more than tittle-tattle.

For instance, one claimed that Charles had said he was going back to America, but Louisa had said he couldn't go anywhere without her now – and if he wanted to sell anything, he'd need her signature.

So for worse or worse still, he was stuck with her and he'd better do what he was told. Or else.

But whatever Louisa had or hadn't threatened, it had all rebounded in the most dramatic way possible.

**C**harles Frembd appeared at the Old Bailey on Thursday, October 15th, before Justice Sidney Rowlatt in a hearing that lasted less than a day. First to speak was Dorothy Woolmore.

Dorothy began by confirming that the couple had always been kind to her, but horrible to each other almost constantly.

She explained that the night before the murder, Louisa's lips were bruised, probably by a loaf that Charles had thrown at her. Dorothy had gone to bed at around 11 p.m., Louisa had followed at around 11.15 p.m., while Charles had retired at around 11.45 p.m.

The following morning, Dorothy had come down at about 8.25 a.m. to notice the shop empty, which was unusual, as it was normally Louisa who woke Dorothy.

So she went back upstairs to wake the Frembds, which was where she discovered the grisly scene.

In describing Louisa as "undressed" she may have simply meant that Louisa wasn't fully clothed, and in her nightdress. But Charles was most definitely fully dressed.

Next, a doctor was called, who noted that Louisa's throat had probably been cut from behind, on the right side, and "great force must have been used."

In addition to the bruising on her lips, Louisa's eyes had also been bruised the previous day, he said, adding that although Frembd had tried to cut his own throat too, he'd only done it a maximum of 30 minutes before being found.

So he'd lain there most of the night, next to his wife's dead body, knowing that he'd killed her in such a violent manner, before finally trying to do the same to himself.

Dr. Sidney Dyer, the Medical Officer at Brixton Prison, where Frembd was



**Justice Sidney Rowlatt**

being held on remand, said that he'd conducted many interviews with him.

He believed that while Frembd wasn't insane, he was, in the words of the day, in "senile decay" – the early stages of what we know today as dementia.

Nonetheless, Dr. Dyer was sure that when Frembd had told him he knew he was murdering his wife, he knew exactly what he'd done and what he was saying.

Frembd gave evidence in his trial himself. During the day before the murder, he and Louisa had argued over the way that the bread was stacked in the shop.

He admitted that he'd "pushed her

**Although Frembd had tried to cut his own throat, he'd only done it a maximum of 30 minutes before being found**

down" after she'd broken three loaves.

During the day, the shop was very busy, so for the sake of the customers they'd tried to appear to be getting along, but in the evening everything had boiled over once again.

Downstairs in the living-room, he claimed, Louisa had hit him with a chair, injuring his nose, but the police doctor could find no evidence of such an injury.

He also admitted that the razor had been the murder weapon. It was left by the bed, as Louise had used it for shaving her corns.

However, while he admitted that he'd murdered his wife some time between 1.30 and 2 a.m., he had no memory of actually doing it.

When questioned, Frembd said he'd no idea why he hadn't dressed in his

night clothes that night, and remained fully dressed, which the police said showed his pre-meditation – that he'd intended to kill his wife, then flee immediately.

But, realising that would be pointless, he'd decided to stay and, eventually, kill himself.

The jury retired for just a few minutes, and inevitably found Charles Frembd guilty of murder.

But he was 71 years old. They gave a strong recommendation for mercy – because in this day and age, England would never hang a man of 71, surely?

**T**wo days later, Frembd's solicitor, Charles Sharman, wrote to the Home Office saying that his client should be sent to an asylum.

As Dr. Dyer had put it, "the mental decay was more developed than he should suspect to find in a man of his age and thought that his power of resistance was lessened."

Sharman also insisted that his own enquiries amongst the Frembds' neighbours suggested that he had



**Home Secretary Reginald McKenna**

been badly abused by his wife. In fact, she was so unpleasant that her first husband had, indeed, committed suicide rather than continue to live with her.

Frembd wrote his own letter to the Home Secretary, concluding that "I received great provocation. I pray that I may be reprieved, if you please."

He also pointed out that he was a US citizen, having been naturalised in 1893, and had led a "good Christian life."

None of it cut any ice.

In fact, the Home Office didn't even think it needed to make any of its own investigations into the prisoner's mental state.

In their opinion, Frembd had killed

his wife while she was in her nightdress, and quite probably even asleep at the time, proving it was a cold-blooded act.

So there was no chance of mercy from them in that regard.

On the other hand, Home Office officials were concerned about the condemned man's physical state.

There then followed a truly gruesome debate on what might happen to Frembd at his hanging, carried out with almost callous disregard for his (or anyone else's) feelings.

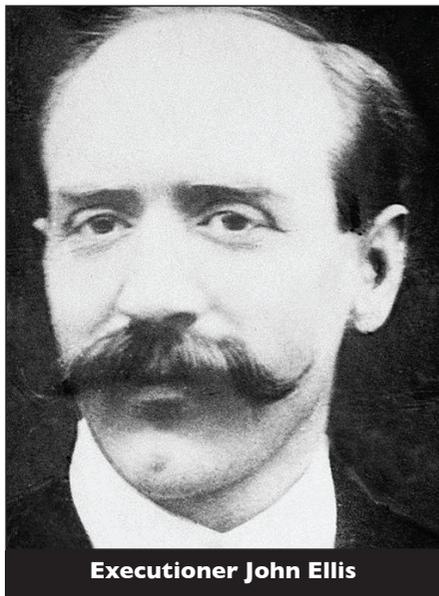
He may not have succeeded in killing himself, one side of the argument ran, but he'd done a very good job of cutting his throat – some were concerned that if he was to hang, then his head might come clean off.

But instead of postponing the execution as a result, they merely wanted to make sure that didn't happen.

On October 23rd, an official wrote to the governor of Chelmsford Prison, where Frembd was being held in the condemned cell, to make sure that the execution could proceed "without any untoward incident."

So the Medical Officer examined Frembd and reported that the wound had healed well.

But while he also felt that it would re-open "by the process of hanging," the rest of his neck hadn't actually been damaged, and no large arteries had been cut, so it was unlikely that his

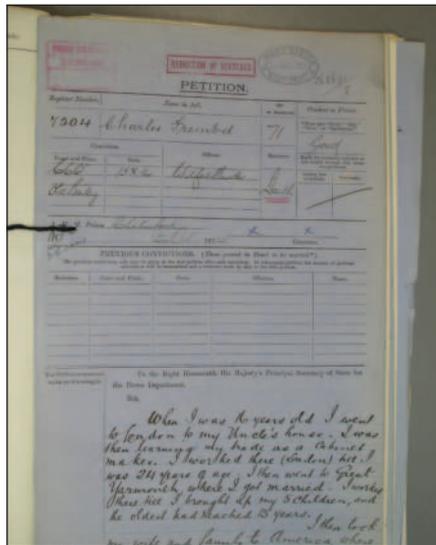


Executioner John Ellis

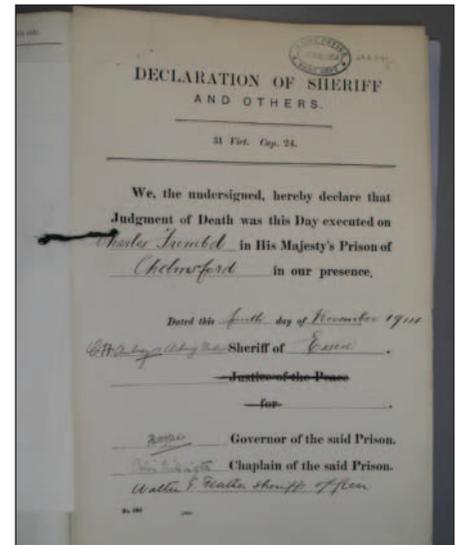
head would actually come off.

The report sent to the Home Secretary at the time, Reginald McKenna, was brutally brief and succinct. Just two pages long, it ended with the following words.

"The jury recommended mercy to him on the grounds of his age. The judge offers no comment. I can find no recent case of a man over 70 having been executed, but there have been many cases of men over 50 being hung for wife-murder. Prisoner's age may perhaps afford grounds for reprieve, but I scarcely think that it is sufficient.



Left to right, the reduction of sentence petition written by condemned Charles Frembd and the execution notice



The murder was deliberate...on the whole, I think that the law should take its course."

And that was that, as far as the authorities were concerned.

Execution was set for 8 a.m. on the morning of Wednesday, November 4th, 1914, at Chelmsford Prison.

It was carried out by John Ellis, who had been shocked at just how frail Frembd had appeared the day before.

He looked even worse on the fateful morning. His throat was heavily bandaged and Ellis later admitted to having been extremely nervous – the Medical Officer might have thought the old man's head wouldn't come off, but Ellis wasn't so sure.

In the end, Ellis settled for a drop of 6ft 6in, but even that didn't go smoothly.

Frembd made it to the gallows unaided, but on the trap-door he started to sag and then appeared to faint just as Ellis pulled the lever.

Instead of dropping straight down, he crumpled and fell at an angle, hitting his head on the side of the platform.

Crucially, though, it didn't seem to hinder the execution. Although it bruised his face, Charles Frembd nevertheless died instantly.

**T**o our modern age, this may seem a shockingly callous, even brutal, way to treat such an old man, no matter what he'd done.

But the times were different then, for a very important reason: The Great War.

By the time the Home Office began looking into Frembd's case, the first battle of Ypres had begun.

It lasted for a month, during which 8,000 British and almost 80,000 French troops died.

So whilst anti-German sentiment had not yet reached its height (or depths, depending on your point of view), these figures are still shocking today – imagine how appalling they must have seemed to a country, a

world, that had never seen the like in any war previously, never mind any single battle.

It was inevitable that prejudice would start rising in the body politic, and it did.

But is it fair to believe that any of this may have played a part in the decision not to reprieve a German prisoner? It certainly wouldn't be the first time a British official displayed callous contempt for a prisoner of another nationality.

On the other hand, there is also considerable evidence to show that British bureaucrats were more than

**“The jury recommended mercy to him on the grounds of his age. The judge offers no comment. I can find no recent case of a man over 70 having been executed, but there have been many cases of men over 50 being hung for wife-murder”**

capable of being brutally callous, no matter who was before them.

Regardless, the war caused considerable changes to the prison system in England, as well as society generally. A number of prisons were either closed or put to different use. Chelmsford Prison, ironically, was used for holding German prisoners of war thought likely to try and escape.

After Armistice Day, it eventually returned to being a normal prison, but by then it had been decided that executions would thereafter take place in Pentonville.

**So Charles Frembd turned out not just to have been the oldest person executed at Chelmsford, he was also the last.**

# DON'T MISS OUT ON YOUR REGULAR COPY OF

# MURDER MOST FOUL

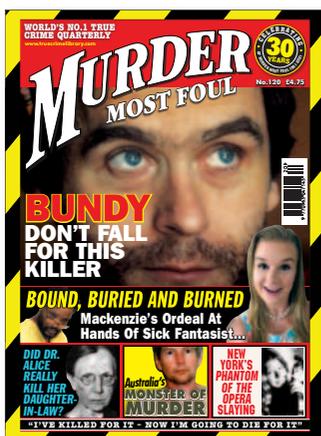
To make sure you don't miss your regular copy of *Murder Most Foul*, *True Detective*, *Master Detective* or *True Crime* (and *True Crime Library's* Specials and bookazines) you are welcome to order direct from our website [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com) or by phone on **020 8778 0514...**

- You can order a **single issue** or a full year's **subscription** from us. Single issues are sent **post-free in the UK**, direct to your door.
- With a subscription you not only benefit from delivery **direct to your door** (post-free in UK) – you also **save 25%** off the shop price of a year's issues.
- There's another way to stay up-to-date with *Murder Most Foul* and *True Crime Library's* other magazines, including the Specials – **try our digital editions**. You can read them on any connected computer or mobile device. As with the print edition, you can opt for a single issue or make big savings with an ongoing subscription. **Click the "NEW! Digital edition" link** below the magazine covers on our home page ([www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com)) to get started.

To make sure you don't miss out, go to [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com) to select your magazines – or call today on **020 8778 0514**.

## MISSED THESE RECENT ISSUES?

Don't worry – you can still get them by ordering direct from the "Back Issues" page at [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com) or by calling **020 8778 0514**. What's more, they're **post-free in the UK!**



Murder Most Foul 120



Murder Most Foul 121



Murder Most Foul 122



Murder Most Foul 123

- Prefer digital back issues? Go to [www.pocketmags.com](http://www.pocketmags.com) and search "Murder Most Foul". Digital editions are also available through iOS and Android apps – see page 57

**J**UDY BENKOWSKI was not a happy woman. She had been married to her husband Clarence for too long and she wanted out. At their neat suburban home in South Yale Avenue, Addison, Illinois, every day was a living hell for her.

For almost 20 years, Judy had put up with the insults and appalling stress of her married life. She had forgotten what it was like to live, to feel human...to have fun.

She was a slightly built woman of 45, just over 5ft tall, and more than 20 years younger than her husband. Clarence who had grown old disgracefully. When they married, he had been in his late 40s, good-looking and in reasonable shape. As the years passed by. Clarence ate and drank more and worked less.

As far as he was concerned his wife was there to please him. Many was the day that Clarence would lie in bed with a bell beside him, and ring it whenever he wanted something.

They may have been husband and wife in law, but they were total strangers in every other sense of the word. He had recently retired, and now spent all day at home. There had been a time when Judy loved him, or thought she did, but she could barely suppress her feelings of hatred towards him now.

Clarence's attitude towards sex was much the same as his outlook on life. Men ruled the household, women were there just to honour and obey. He wasn't interested in his wife's feelings, he just wanted three meals a day, beers in the fridge and sex on demand. Judy dreaded the nights, the time when she would have to climb into bed with him. Would he force himself upon her tonight? The only good thing was that it was usually over in seconds, but there was so much pain involved – he was an overweight man and she was a small, slender woman.

Then to make matters worse, if it can be imagined, Clarence had decided that he wanted to spice up his sex life, so he went out and bought a waterbed. And Clarence, being Clarence, bought the cheapest one he could find. As he lay on top of Judy that night she became nauseous to the point of vomiting as she squelched beneath his blubbery form. She knew then that she couldn't carry on much longer like this.

But what could she do? She had asked Clarence for a divorce before, but he was a strict Catholic, and had always refused. Besides, he knew he was on to a good thing; he would never find anyone else who would put up with him. Judy was at her wits' end, knowing she would never be free while Clarence was around.

**O**ne of the few people Judy had contact with was her neighbour



**Judy Benkowski. She swapped one type of life sentence for another**

Debbie Santana. They had formed an unlikely friendship, and Debbie was the one person to whom Judy felt she could pour her heart out.

Debbie was a striking blonde woman of 32, with a fun-loving attitude towards life. She had suffered during her own marriage but had managed to get a divorce. She was enjoying everything that Judy had long given up. Debbie told Judy there was no way she should accept living with Clarence, the couch potato, for the rest of her life. Despite Debbie being 13 years younger than herself. Judy became increasingly influenced by her more outrageous neighbour. The more they talked about Debbie's adventures, the more Judy realised how desperate her own life was.

Recently Debbie had been dating a

handsome young man named Eddie Brown. He had not long been out of jail and he was looking for ways to earn some money. Judy was immediately attracted to Eddie. He was everything her husband was not: lithe, muscular, romantic and a great lover – or so Debbie told her. One night, just before Halloween in October, 1988, the three of them were sitting in Debbie's lounge, talking.

"Judy," said Debbie, "Eddie and I can solve your little problem for you, and it will only cost you \$5,000." Judy didn't even ask what they meant. She knew immediately.

"Yeah, we can make it look like a burglary gone wrong. It'll be easy," Eddie chipped in.

Debbie could sense that Judy was

# ED A HIT-MAN

## No Parole For Judy Till She's 97!



The body of a despised husband, bagged and laid-out on his waterbed. Judy hated those nights squelching beneath his blubbery form

wavering. "What about all those times we imagined what it would be like if Clarence was dead? Well, now it can become real. Judy, you are going to be free of that bastard once and for all."

Judy held her head in her hands. This was the one answer to all her problems. Certainly it seemed drastic, but then what more did that animal of a husband deserve? He had treated her like dirt for too long. "The slob must die," she thought to herself, and suddenly there was no turning back. She had stepped over the line.

During the next few weeks the three of them met regularly, always round at Debbie's house. Once or twice Judy let herself in and heard the couple upstairs in Debbie's bedroom making love. It only compounded Judy's own misery

and isolation. The more she saw Debbie and Eddie together the more determined she was to get her husband out of her life. She wanted what her neighbour was getting, and she wanted it soon.

Eddie had reassured her, "Don't worry, Judy - I'll kill him, but the time has to be right and we have to have a plan."

**D**ecember 4th was a cold winter's morning. The first real bite of another fearsome Chicago winter was beginning to take effect. The topic of most people's conversation was either the weather or the approaching Christmas holidays, but neither was on Judy's mind. Today was the day she was going to be set free, at long last, from the man who had ruined her life.

There were very few people around that morning, once the commuter rush hour had finished. Meanwhile in the kitchen Clarence was giving his usual breakfast performance - slumped in a chair, with a grubby dressing gown over his pyjamas, barking orders at Judy.

As Clarence yelled at her, Judy prepared his special breakfast. She knew he would never come into the kitchen and do anything himself, so she was not going to be detected as she poured the contents of several sachets of sleeping pills into his coffee. "Keep shouting, Clarence," she whispered to herself. "Soon you won't have another chance."

As she took in his breakfast, Clarence as usual completely ignored her, and shoved food into his fat face while reading the sports pages of the *Chicago*

*Sun-Times.* Judy sat opposite him; it was as if time was standing still. He didn't pick up his coffee for five minutes. He just kept eating and belching. She couldn't say anything: they never spoke and she didn't want to arouse his suspicions.

If Clarence had bothered to glance up he would have seen a look in his wife's eyes that he had probably never seen before. It was a look of anticipation, a look of grim satisfaction.

Down went the knife and fork, one final belch, and Clarence picked up his coffee and slurped it back. Judy sighed quietly to herself. It was one of the most satisfying moments of her life.

The sleeping pills began to take effect. Clarence lumbered back up to the bedroom before collapsing in a heap on the wretched waterbed.

Eddie had given precise instructions on how many pills she should feed him. Just enough to knock him into a deep slumber rather than complete unconsciousness. That way no one would be able to tell that he had been drugged.

Judy phoned Debbie. "He's asleep," she whispered. "You'd better come over and tell Eddie to get over here too."

The two women sat downstairs counting the minutes. Soon they heard the back door opening and Eddie walked in. In an eerie silence, Judy handed Eddie her husband's Luger pistol and pointed him towards the bedroom. The two women stayed downstairs, sitting on the sofa. Eddie had said that as part of the plan he would use a pillow to muffle the sound of the gun, but seconds later the women still heard the pops of the three bullets being fired into Judy's husband. At last it was over.

But there was still work to be done. Judy and her two friends had to make it look like a burglary gone wrong. The three of them began to tear the

*Downstairs Eddie was smashing the place to bits to make it look like a genuine burglary. Some of his blatant destruction was proving more stressful to Judy than the murder of her husband. "Smash the place up, Eddie, but don't break the china," she screamed out*

house apart. Up in the bedroom Judy glanced for a second at her husband's blood-spattered, bloated body. She had wondered for weeks how she would feel when it happened. In fact she didn't really feel anything, certainly not guilt or remorse.

The two women were now in the bedroom pulling clothes out of drawers and spreading them over the bed where Clarence's obese body lay. At least the ghastly waterbed was still intact, she thought to herself. It would have created such a mess if it had leaked everywhere.

Downstairs Eddie was smashing the place to bits to make it look like a genuine burglary. Some of his blatant destruction was proving more stressful to Judy than the murder of her husband. "Smash the place up, Eddie, but don't break the china," she screamed out.

"It's meant to look like a burglary," Eddie yelled back.

"I've been collecting that china for years. Don't wreck it."

Eddie shrugged and carried on destroying the house. She was paying

him for the job, after all. Just before Eddie left, Judy gave him \$1,000 as his first instalment and also allowed him to take two rings from a jewellery drawer. Seconds later, he was gone.

Judy and Debbie hugged each other in relief. Before they could leave the house they had to make sure the coast was clear. It was mid-morning. Husbands were at work, mothers were shopping and it was freezing cold. Not a person in sight.

The two girls went to an Italian restaurant to celebrate. Debbie proposed a toast: "To us. Long may we live without husbands."

It wasn't just a new life of freedom that Judy was looking forward to. She believed Clarence's life insurance was worth at least \$100,000 – and then there was the house with its mortgage paid up. Judy Benkowski was going to be a very merry widow indeed...

**"H**e's been murdered, help me, help me!" Judy's voice screeched down the line to the 911 operator. "I've just come back from the shops. He's dead upstairs. Please get someone round." Judy was in hysterics, or so it sounded.

Detective Sergeant Tom Gorniak was dispatched to the scene. By the time he had arrived, an ambulance and two uniformed police were at the house.

Gorniak had the two women taken from the house and began a detailed inspection. He sensed almost immediately that things didn't seem right. This was the best time to look around because nothing had been touched since the time of the murder. He soon became puzzled by several aspects of the crime.

The victim's body lay slumped in bed as if he had been taking a nap. How could he have slept through the noise of an intruder who then leant over him and fired three bullets into his head from close range? Gorniak knew that usually a burglar makes a run for it when he is disturbed. Few of them carry guns either. But this victim had been asleep when he was shot; he never saw who his killer was.

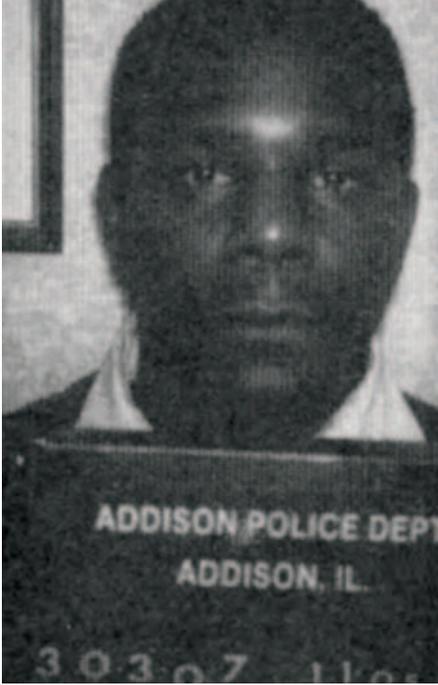
As he looked around the bedroom Gorniak noticed that the clothes thrown from the drawer were over the victim's body. That meant that the killer had ransacked the room after the shooting. It didn't make sense. Surely the intruder would have got out of there as fast as possible after the shooting?

He didn't want to draw too many conclusions but to his experienced eye this looked like a contract killing. When ballistics informed him that the murder weapon was the victim's own gun, Gorniak was even more certain. There had been no sign of a struggle, so how did the killer know where the victim kept his gun?

"Did your husband have any enemies, Mrs. Benkowski?" Tom Gorniak was trying to be as gentle as possible. After all, this was the apparently grieving

**Judy and Clarence smiling happily on their wedding day**





**“It’s meant to look like a burglary,” Eddie Brown (above) yelled at Judy**

widow he was talking to and she appeared to be in a really bad way. “No,” replied Judy, “He didn’t have any enemies, not that I am aware of, anyway.”

So far Gorniak was playing it by the book. but he had a hunch that Judy was holding something back and decided to press a little harder. “Can you tell me where you were when your husband was killed?”

“Yes. I was out shopping with my neighbour, Debbie Santana. Lots of people must have seen us.”

Gorniak hadn’t asked Judy for an alibi, but she had immediately gone on the offensive. He persuaded her to stay at the police station for a little longer that evening, explaining that he knew how awful she must be feeling but it would be a great help to the police if she stayed there. Judy agreed. She didn’t want to appear to be hindering the police inquiries in any way.

The homicide squad were convinced that there was a lot more to learn about the case, and Judy would be the one to tell them. But Judy was getting edgy. She knew she had to tell them something. Should she insist on a lawyer being present? No, she thought, that would only make them think she was hiding something. So she decided to tell them a half-truth. Enough to give them something else to work on, and enough so she could go home.

Gorniak had told her that they had talked to Debbie and that she had backed up Judy’s story, but he found it strange that they went to shops they had never been to before, and to so many of them, and to a restaurant, although Judy admitted that they never normally went out to lunch. It was almost as if they wanted to be seen by as many people as possible, but not necessarily people they knew well.

Gorniak realised that some women liked to shop, but they hadn’t bought anything. Besides, today had been the coldest day so far this winter. People

only went out if they had to.

In the interview room Judy made a decision. “I did see someone outside the house this morning,” she recalled anxiously to Gorniak and his partner, Detective Mike Tierney. The two cops looked at each other. Why hadn’t she mentioned this before? It didn’t seem as if it was shock. After all, she had remembered every shop she had been to that morning.

Judy then said that on returning from their trip she and Debbie had seen a rather short, stocky, black man running down the street. “He seemed to be sprinting away from the house. I didn’t think about it any more because as soon as I got inside I saw the house was smashed up and I called Clarence. When he didn’t answer I knew something had happened to him.”

**T**he next step was to haul in Debbie Santana for questioning. As the detectives waited for her to arrive at the station, Gorniak sensed that Judy was growing more uneasy. “Listen, Judy,” he said, “if you have anything to tell me, you should tell me now. Debbie will be here in a minute. I’m afraid if your stories don’t match perfectly then both of you are in big trouble.” Gorniak was bluffing. At that time he had no proof at all that Debbie was involved in Clarence’s death, although he was becoming more and more certain that Judy was.

Judy waited for a moment. She had



a lot on her mind and she knew that the officers were watching her every move and listening to her every word. “If it’s any help to you, officer,” Judy said, “I think I know who the black guy was running away from my house. His name is Eddie Brown and I’ve seen him around Debbie’s. I think he’s her boyfriend.”

With that Judy had blown the case wide open. Gorniak and Tierney knew they were going to get a full confession.

When Debbie arrived she had no idea what Judy had told the police. She didn’t

even know that Judy was at the station. As soon as she realised that she was a suspect she refused to answer any more questions – but by then it was too late. Hours later Eddie Brown was picked up. He still had one of the rings that Judy had given him in his pocket.

On September 4th, 1989, Judy Benkowski broke down in court when she was sentenced to 100 years in prison for hiring hit-man Eddie Brown to murder her husband. Brown received a life sentence without parole while Debbie Santana, who claimed that she’d been set up by her neighbour and boyfriend, got 20 years.

Du Page county prosecutor Michael Fleming had argued in court that Judy should receive the death penalty but the judge, Brian Telander, ruled that there were mitigating factors that “precluded the imposition of the death penalty.” These factors included the fact that Judy had no criminal record, suffered from numerous health problems, and had several character witnesses who had testified on her behalf. Fleming described the sentence as “fair and appropriate.”



**Debbie Santana (left) was the “helpful” neighbour who claimed that Judy (above) and her boyfriend Eddie set her up**

Judy Benkowski will not be eligible for parole until 2041, when she is 97 years old.

Detective Gorniak said after the trial: “She claimed she wanted a divorce but her husband didn’t. The fact is she never even talked to a lawyer about it. This woman was desperate. I agree she has no criminal mind, but she must pay for the consequences of her actions.

**“She could have put a stop to this crazy plan at any time. She didn’t and now Clarence is dead and she won’t get a penny of his money. She’s swapped one kind of life sentence for another. The difference is she has no choice over this one.”**

## SYDNEY SHOCKER

# JESSY WOULDN'T LET HER LOVER LEAVE – ALIVE

*They say that hell hath no fury like a woman scorned – and when Lianne Zhou scorned Jessy Wang, her lover of two years, Jessy brought down the wrath of hell...*

**J**UST A few miles from the main Kingsford Smith Airport, Zetland is an up-and-coming suburb of Sydney. Mostly industrial, it's not the smartest part of town, but with apartment blocks of flats costing well in excess of A\$1 million, it's far from being the roughest, either.

So it's definitely not the sort of place where, if you're out for a quiet walk of an evening, you'd expect to find the shattered body of a young woman lying in a pool of blood, barely conscious and

### Case Report By **Donald Carne**

desperately fighting for life.

Especially when the young woman is one of your neighbours.

Naturally, the man who discovered Shuyu "Lianne" Zhou called the emergency services, but as he was doing so, another young woman calmly walked up and started stabbing Lianne.

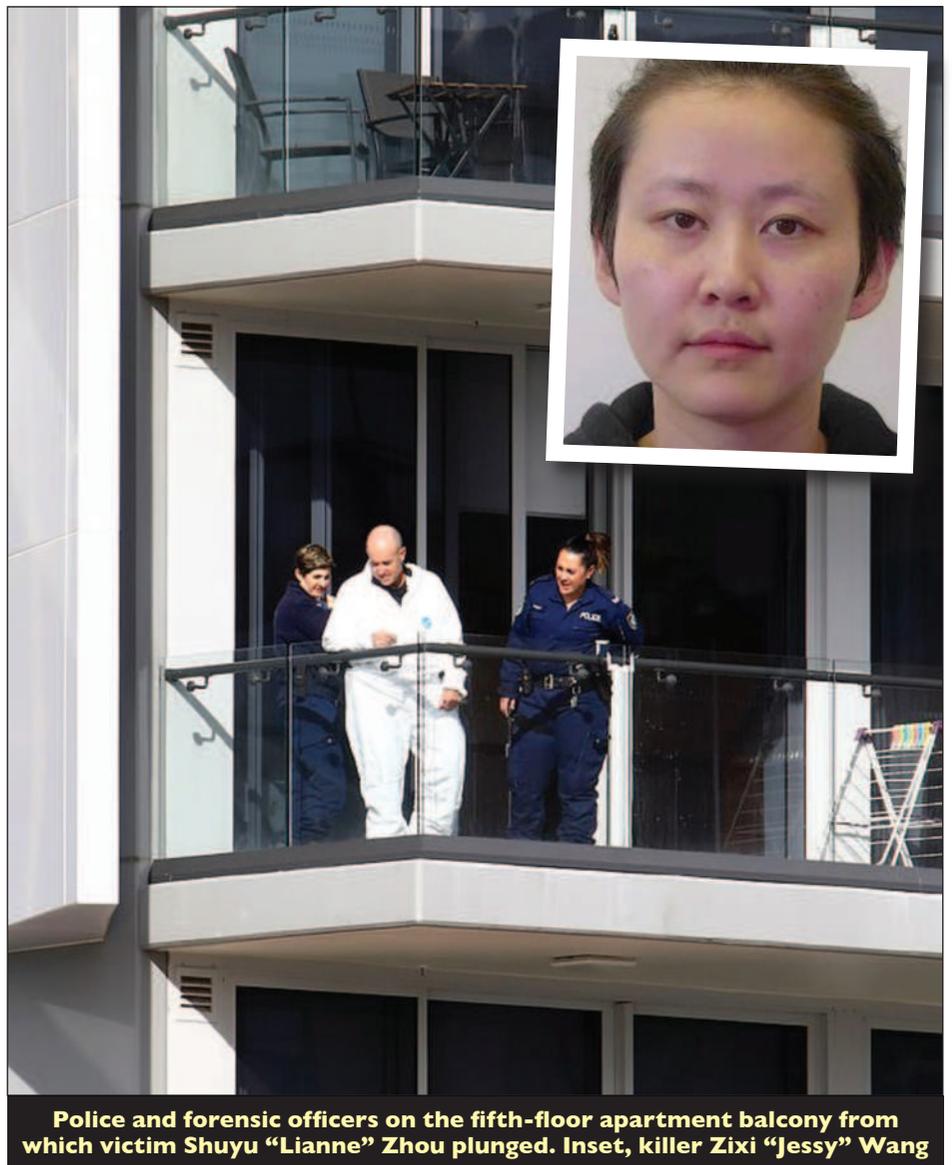
Again and again and again and again, the knife was driven into the already mangled body.

As the neighbour stood back, utterly appalled and horrified beyond measure, Zixi "Jessy" Wang plunged the knife into her former lover almost 60 times.

And then, when she felt she was finally done, she turned round and strolled back into the apartments as if nothing had happened.

**L**ianne Zhou had thought she had moved on.

After two years of being Jessy Wang's partner, she'd left both her ex-lover and the A\$1.7 million apartment, and moved in with someone else.



**Police and forensic officers on the fifth-floor apartment balcony from which victim Shuyu "Lianne" Zhou plunged. Inset, killer Zixi "Jessy" Wang**

Inevitably, some of her stuff was still back at the old place, and she wanted it back.

So one evening in June 2019 Lianne went back to get it.

When Lianne had ended their relationship, it's fair to say that Jessie was upset. In fact, she was having none of it.

Especially as the one that Lianne had left her for was a friend.

"It was exacerbated when the deceased commenced a relationship with a mutual friend," said Jessie's barrister, Anthony Bellanto, QC.

Jessy, basically, fell apart.

She sank into a "major depressive episode" and quit her job. Drinking didn't help.

Then, when Lianne came back to collect her stuff, Jessie started the final fight, raking everything over the coals, and letting her temper boil over.

She was incensed that Lianne would dare to leave her, and was determined that if she couldn't have Lianne, then no one else would, either.

Neighbours later described the disturbance on the fifth floor of the prestigious apartment block as being more like a war than a row.

Shouting, swearing, screaming, things being broken, smashed, and thrown about.

The battle royal moved from one room to the other, charging and crashing throughout the apartment.

And then suddenly, there was one final scream followed by silence.

But while the noise may have stopped, Jessie hadn't.

That scream came from Lianne, as she plunged over the balcony of the apartment, fell fully five floors and hit the fence below at full tilt, before bouncing off to the ground below.

The fall should have killed her outright, but Lianne wasn't dead. Yet.

She lay on the ground with a broken spine, dislocated hip, lacerated internal organs and serious head wounds.

As she lay there, traumatised and desperately clinging to what remained of her life, she tried to move.

Meanwhile, having watched her former lover plunge from the heights, Jessie got into the lift, rode down to ground level, marched round the corner to the crumpled mess of Lianne and tried to tidy up her clothes.

No attempt to save her or see how she was – just a pathetic attempt to make Lianne seem less dishevelled.

Then Jessie turned around and stomped back into the apartment block, got back in the lift, and went back into the apartment.

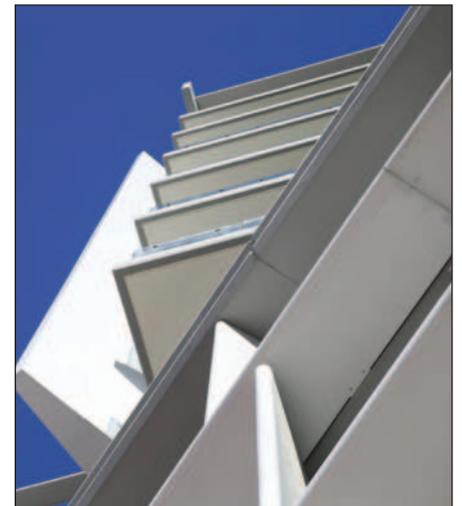
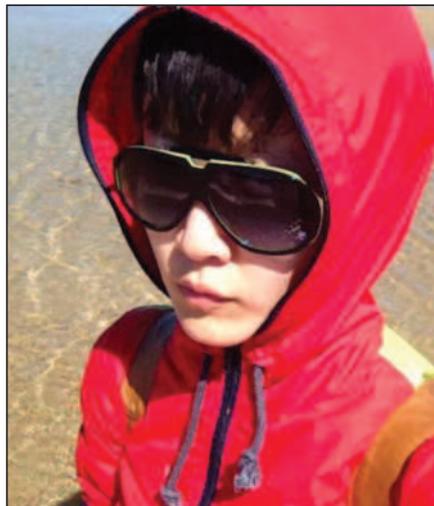
On the way, she checked her hair – just because Lianne was a mess now, didn't meant Jessie had to be, too.

Meanwhile, a neighbour had come across the broken, crumpled body of Lianne and called the emergency services.

While he was on the phone to them, who should return but Jessie, determined to finish what the fall hadn't.



**A CCTV image of the heartless killer entering the lift of the apartment building in Zetland, Sydney**



**Above, left to right, Zixy "Jessy" Wang and the view from the ground up to the apartment building where the killer had once lived with her victim**

She took the knife that she'd brought from the apartment and stabbed and slashed at Lianne 58 times in total.

After what must have seemed an eternity, but was actually only about two minutes, Jessie turned on her heels and left.

**T**he police promptly started a massive hunt for Jessie, who hadn't waited for the emergency services to get there.

She'd promptly driven off in Lianne's white Mercedes and vanished into the Sydney evening.

The following afternoon, June 18th, a dog-walker named James found her, clinging to a fence at the scenic cantilevered Sea Cliff Bridge north of Wollongong.

"She looked very agitated, as if she was going to do something," said James. "She was on the second rail, leaning over. I was nearly going to go and grab

her but she came down again."

It's a sign of modern thinking that instead of calling the police direct, James first called a local radio station. They had more of a sense of civic duty, and relayed his call to the police.

They told him not to approach Jessie, but to stick around until they got there.

"I pretended to pat my dog to take the attention away from the area," he said. "When she moved to the north, I followed 100m behind and when she walked past me, I kept a safe distance."

Scarcely able to stay calm, James kept a discreet eye on Jessie, to make sure he was able to tell the police where she was when they arrived.

Not much later, the police turned up and were able to spot the Mercedes quite easily. They took Jessie into custody and kept the situation as calm as possible.

"I wanted to jump off the bridge to end my life," Jessie told them.

In May 2020, due to all the covid restrictions, Jessy made her plea of not guilty by video link before Justice Elizabeth Fullerton at the New South Wales Supreme Court.

The court was told that she'd graduated in philosophy at Macquarie University and loved to sing.

However, there was nothing harmonious about the way her relationship with Lianne had ended.

Neighbours told of how shocked they were at the ferocious argument playing out in the exclusive building.

"My friend came over and she heard screams in the hall," said one. "She literally said, 'It sounds like someone's dying in there.'"

Redfern Police Superintendent Brad Hodder told of the horrific scene that was waiting for officers when they arrived at the apartment block.

"Any of these falls from buildings are a tragic sight," he said.

Jessy was found guilty of murder and in September 2021 was brought

***"How could the feelings of anger, bitterness and rejection not dissipate to at least let her have some modicum of sympathy as she saw Ms. Zhou helpless and writhing in agony?"***

before Justice Robert Beech-Jones for a sentence hearing.

She was faced by Lianne's distraught mother.

"I just want an answer from the murderer," she asked plaintively, in her victim impact statement. "How could you be so merciless? What on earth are you, a human being or a devil?"

Jessy stood and shamefacedly said nothing in reply.

But later, in a letter to the court, she apologised to "all the people who have suffered and are still suffering from my crime."

She also admitted that she'd been wracked by feelings of shame, guilt, disgust and remorse for her actions.

**T**he court wasn't convinced by her contrition, however. Crown Prosecutor Christopher Taylor made a point of demonstrating how the CCTV from the building showed that, on her way back up to the apartment to get the knife that she stabbed Lianne with, Jessy had made sure to check her reflection in the mirror.

"A small fact of the circumstances," Taylor said, "but indicative that she was in control."

Jessy was jailed for 25 years with a minimum term of 19 years before parole. She showed no emotion as the sentence was read out.

"This was a particularly heinous crime," Judge Beechwood-Jones said. "I



**The Sea Cliff Bridge, north of Wollongong, where Jessy was arrested**

am satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the offender was the aggressor in the confrontation. The agreed facts record that Ms. Zhou wanted to leave, and the offender would not let her go."

He was baffled at how Jessy could have stayed so cool, calm and cold as she went back to get the knife before stabbing Lianne so brutally and so often.

"How could the feelings of anger, bitterness and rejection that welled up in the offender from the breakdown of her relationship with Ms. Zhou not dissipate to at least let her have some modicum of sympathy as she saw Ms. Zhou helpless and writhing in agony after that fall onto the sidewalk?"

Lianne's mother told how the family had moved from Beijing to Sydney in 2009. Lianne had only moved out of the family home a month before she died.

"Lianne was kind, healthy, beautiful and very happy to help people," she said.

The final punishment for Jessy was that, as a Chinese national, she would be deported at the end of her sentence.

Or will she?



**Lianne's heartbroken mother leaves court**

**I**n November 2021, Zixi "Jessy" Wang launched an appeal against her sentence.

She tendered a fresh psychological report to the court arguing that she had been the victim of a miscarriage of justice.

According to the new report from prominent forensic psychologist Dr. Richard Furst, there was a causal connection between the depression Jessy suffered after Lianne left her and her brutal crime.

He initially tendered two reports during Jessy's sentencing hearing, in November 2021.

Jessy's lawyers argued that Dr. Furst had not articulated his opinions accurately at that hearing, that there was a link between her traumatic childhood and her depression that had led her to behave so brutally.

However, one of the three appeal judges, Justice Robert Hulme, pointed out that Jessy's barrister hadn't mentioned any of this in the original hearing.

"If we were to proceed as you would have us, it seems to me it would be incumbent on any solicitor who was asked to look at the appeal prospects for anyone who has had an expert report tendered in the sentence proceedings, in which the judge has not been completely accepting of the contents," Justice Hulme said.

"They can go back to the expert and say, 'Look, this is what the judge said, what have you got to say about that?'" he added. "That concern should not determine how we proceed. But it feeds into my intuition that there is something wrong about this."

So was Jessy the victim of a miscarriage of justice or is she the devil incarnate?

At the time of going to press, Justice Hulme and his colleagues have yet to hand down their judgment.

**Whatever they think, there's no doubting what Lianne Zhou's family believes.**

# MURDER MOST FOUL goes digital!

## At last! Digital editions of our magazines!



By popular demand...  
Now you can read digital editions of **MURDER MOST FOUL** and **ALL True Crime Library's** magazines on any device, anywhere!

You already know about the astonishing stories and remarkable pictures you can find in our crime magazines. And now you can read them on any internet-connected PC, laptop, tablet or smartphone, wherever and whenever you like.

That means wherever you are in the world, you can get our latest issues as soon as they're released - no waiting for snail mail!

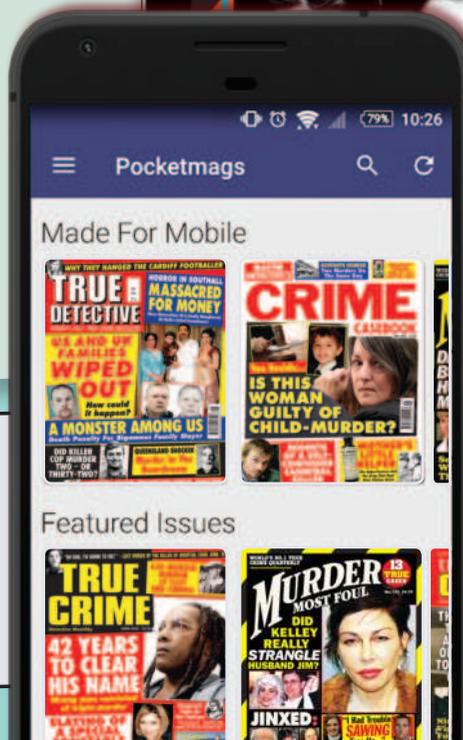
You can choose from the latest issues, subscription offers and back issues. And that applies to all our magazines: *True Detective*, *Master Detective*, *True Crime* and *Murder Most Foul*.

To get started right now, go to **Pocketmags.com** and search for *Murder Most Foul* (or one of our other magazines).

OR Download the Pocketmags app from the **iTunes** or **Google Play** app store.

OR Find our magazine apps in **iTunes** or **Google Play**:

- True Detective* magazine
- Master Detective* magazine
- True Crime* magazine
- Murder Most Foul* magazine



AVAILABLE NOW!



**BUY ONLINE...**  
**READ ONLINE**  
for as little as  
**£3.99 an issue**

# UNSOLVED:

## SCOTTISH MYSTERY

# WHO KILLED “CAREFREE” SANDY?

**T**HE MYSTERIOUS death of loner Sandy Drummond in the East Neuk of Fife has become one of the most intriguing murder cases in Scotland.

It was Monday, June 24th, 1991, in the sleepy hamlet of Boarhills, near St. Andrews, when the body of 33-year-old paper mill labourer Sandy Drummond was found on a farm track. An elderly local man, out for an evening stroll, found the body lying only 200 yards

### Case Report By Martin Lomax

from No. 2 Falside Cottages, the home that Sandy shared with his brother.

Sandy was a quiet, intelligent man and enjoyed gardening, nature, wild flowers, birds and ham radio. He kept his own company and seemed to have no enemies.

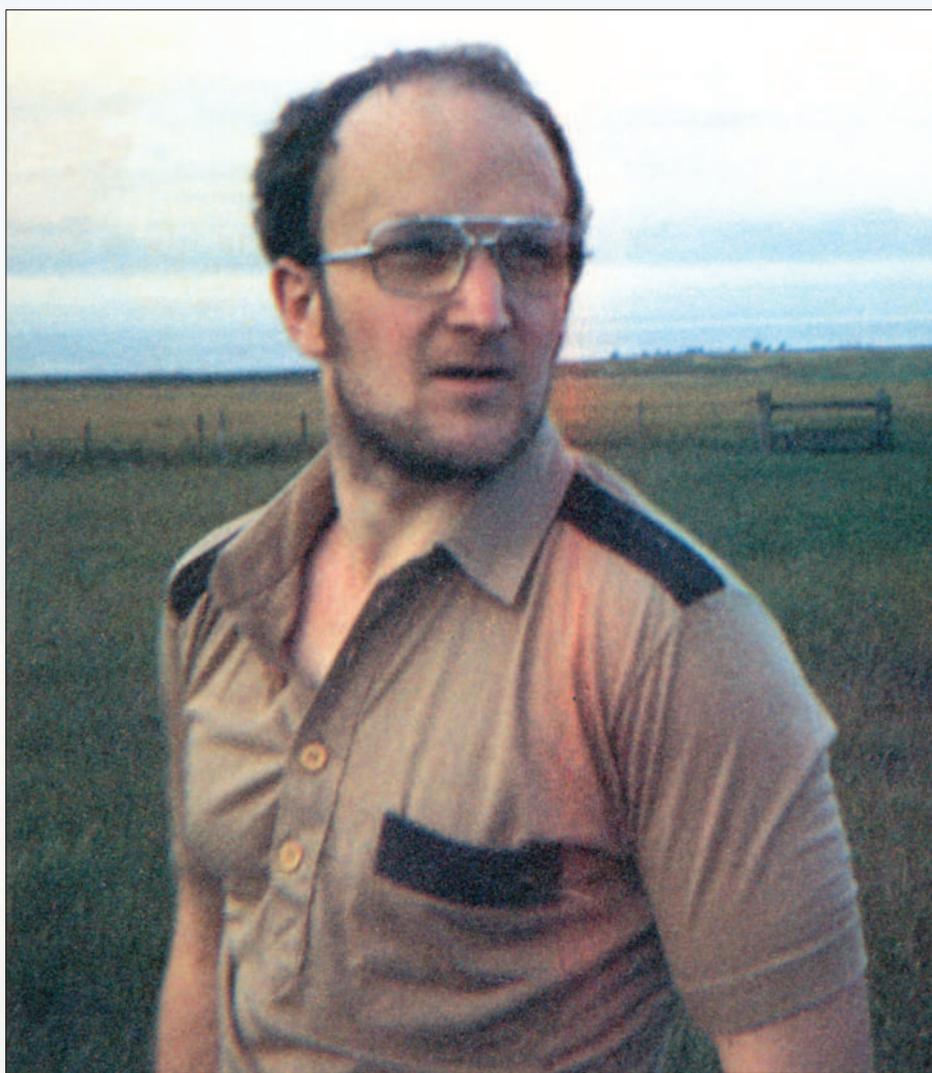
At first a senior police officer from Fife Constabulary thought they were dealing with a natural death.

But a local man, who was the second person to see the body lying on the track, suspected there was something amiss.

He says: “I spoke to the first police person that arrived and he agreed with me that things didn’t look very natural. We did agree that the body didn’t look like it had just fallen there. It was lying in a fairly peculiar position for someone that had maybe just collapsed.

“Basically the best way I can describe it is as if someone had been standing at attention, the body absolutely straight and hands down by their side, except he was lying horizontal on the ground but his head was turned to one side.”

There was in fact much more to Sandy’s death than met the eye. Professor of Forensic Medicine Anthony Busuttill was asked to review the findings of the post-mortem for a fatal accident inquiry the following year. In 2004, he told *Unsolved: Getting Away With Murder*, Grampian



**Tragic loner Sandy Drummond. Could the secrets in his life help reveal why he was murdered?**

Television’s programme about the case, that although there was nothing to see on the body that indicated a murder, further examination revealed Sandy had been asphyxiated.

“There was no evidence of a ligature mark, there were no external findings in terms of oval or rounded bruises of the neck which suggested hands, fingers

have been pressed tightly against his neck. But there was extensive damage to the muscles inside the neck which suggests some form of a choke hold or stranglehold using perhaps a forearm, an arm, as the method of obstructing the blood vessels and airways in the neck.”

Was it a ju-jitsu stranglehold? And, if so, who had the martial arts expertise to

administer it?

Sandy's family found the situation confusing, and his brother was aware that vital time had been lost before the police started to investigate the death.

"The house we lived in, the forensics had to go in and take fingerprints and everything which had been delayed by three, five, six days, something like that. From an investigation point of view that probably didn't help. They then had to go back to the site where Sandy was found to do forensics again. And there again time had passed - I don't think it had rained, but people had been using the track so there were confusing issues of evidence and things like that."

Once the death was being treated as murder the police started trying to figure out what kind of person Sandy was.

They found that although Sandy was exceptionally quiet he was a reliable employee at the Guardbridge paper mill where he worked. The human

**"There was extensive damage to the muscles inside the neck which suggests some form of a choke hold or stranglehold using perhaps a forearm, an arm, as the method of obstructing the blood vessels and airways in the neck"**

resources officer at Curtis Fine Papers recalls: "As an employee he was very conscientious, very dependable, caused no problems at all, came to work on time, regularly, but kept himself very much to himself and didn't socialise with any other employees."

It was a sad fact that when Sandy died a lot of people at the mill did not know who he was.

The human resources manager said: "A lot of people were asking, 'Who was Sandy Drummond?' It was awful. An employee had been murdered but the majority of people I think wouldn't have known him if he had walked past them."

His brother said that Sandy was the last person on earth he would have expected to be murdered. "You think maybe his heart's gone or too much exercise, things like that. He had trouble with his back and had been in a lot of pain with that, and he'd had a couple of operations, you just don't know. Anything could have happened. "Natural causes is



An orange-red Marina like the one that had been seen several times outside Sandy's cottage



Sandy's isolated home (arrowed) in Boarhills, near St. Andrews. His body was found 200 yards from the property

probably the first thing you think about, especially when the police at the scene didn't seem to think anything was amiss at the time. It wasn't until a few days later that doubts started to creep in."

The investigation soon showed there was a lot more going on in Sandy's life than anyone could have suspected. It turned out that on the Friday before his death he had handed in his notice at the paper mill. In his resignation letter he said that it would not be to either his or the mill's advantage for him to come back to work. This baffled his employers who could not understand what he meant and knew of no reason for him to leave.

The mystery deepened when it was discovered that in the last few days of his life he had withdrawn around £760 from a number of banks and building societies in St. Andrews. In fact the last sighting of him was on a security camera in the Dunfermline Building Society on the morning of his death.

Another intriguing twist in the story was that on the day of his murder a motorist saw Sandy walk across the road from his cottage carrying what seemed to be a full hold-all and push it through a fence into the field. The bag was never recovered and this strange event is still unexplained.

Sandy's mother was determined to find out what had happened to

her son, and she and her solicitor Richard McFarlane campaigned tirelessly for a fatal accident inquiry to be held.

However the inquiry held in Cupar in September, 1992, didn't produce what Sandy's mother really wanted - an explanation of what happened to Sandy. Sadly Mrs. Drummond died in

## Mystery car gives new lead in Fife murder hunt

DETECTIVES HUNTING the killer of Boarhills labourer Sandy Drummond have a new lead which they hope will help bring to an end the 17-month-long murder inquiry.

Mystery has surrounded the death of Mr Drummond (33) whose body was found on a quiet country track just yards from his home on June 24 last year.

He had been strangled.

The man leading the murder investigation, Detective Inspector Douglas Potter yesterday revealed important new evidence which gave to light after a

significant development in the investigation as up until now police had no cause to think that Mr Drummond had any regular visitors.

The car, he said, was seen quite regularly at Mr Drummond's cottage.

On the day he died it was seen twice, once at 1.43 pm and then again at 7.10 pm.

Yesterday at Cupar Police Station a poster campaign was launched in a bid to trace the car.

The poster features a four-door Morris Marina saloon and in the rear windscreen a diamond shaped "Baby

## New appeal in Fife murder hunt

FIFE POLICE have revealed the first clue that there might have been a regular visitor to the house in the days before he was found murdered.

The sighting of a diamond shaped "Baby" sign on the rear window of a four-door Morris Marina saloon, which was seen on the day of the murder.

The sighting, reported yesterday, "has given us a new lead which we are now pursuing."

"What we have to do now is to identify the car and see if we can trace it to the person who owned it," said Mr Potter.

Mr Potter said that the car was seen on the day of the murder, and that it was seen again on the day after the murder.

It is at this point that the car was seen again, parked

at Sandy's home at 1.43 pm, and just a few minutes later it was seen again in the street in front of the house.

"The car was seen on the day of the murder, and that it was seen again on the day after the murder."

It is at this point that the car was seen again, parked

at Sandy's home at 1.43 pm, and just a few minutes later it was seen again in the street in front of the house.

"The car was seen on the day of the murder, and that it was seen again on the day after the murder."

It is at this point that the car was seen again, parked

at Sandy's home at 1.43 pm, and just a few minutes later it was seen again in the street in front of the house.

"The car was seen on the day of the murder, and that it was seen again on the day after the murder."

It is at this point that the car was seen again, parked

at Sandy's home at 1.43 pm, and just a few minutes later it was seen again in the street in front of the house.

"The car was seen on the day of the murder, and that it was seen again on the day after the murder."

It is at this point that the car was seen again, parked



1996 without discovering the truth.

Richard McFarlane says: "One of the principle instructions she wanted me to pursue was the length of time it took for her to be told about the true circumstances of the death of her son. It was 117 days, or something like that, before the matter was brought home to her in an official context. That upset her. That did not assist her grieving while she was trying to find the answer to why her son died at the age of 33."

Comments by Sandy's mother at the fatal accident inquiry prompted speculation that Sandy might have been gay or was being tormented by people at the paper mill. She said he had become introspective about a year before the murder, and she had tried to find out what was wrong. He said he was having problems with two people at work but he could not tell her because it was "too filthy." After Sandy's death it was found that he had highlighted passages in the Bible about persecution, but the idea that he was gay or that he was being bullied at work was investigated and discounted by the police.

Officers could not find anything in Sandy's background to provide a motive and even the money Sandy took out of his accounts just before he died was found neatly stacked in his home.

Seventeen months after the murder the investigation received a boost. Police had heard about some teenagers who were seen jumping over a bridge near to where the body had been found, and running across the fields. It turned out they were chasing some stray geese. But when police questioned them, their mother realised that the police did not know anything about an orange-red Marina she had seen parked outside Sandy's cottage. The teenagers' mother had spotted the car there a number of times as she went past on the bus to St. Andrews.

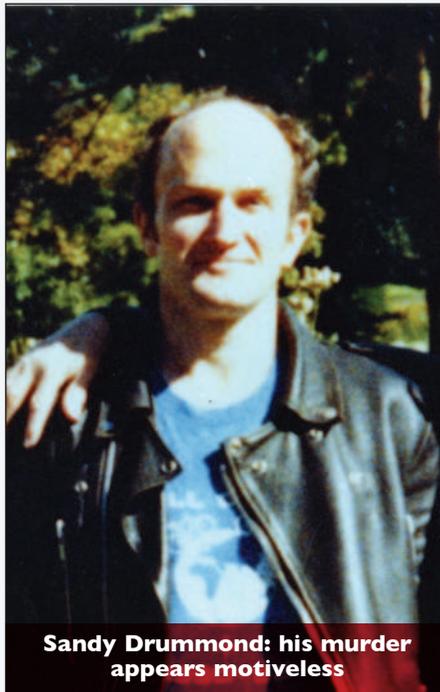
Her information created another twist in the story. The car became a key aspect of the case and was featured on posters appealing for information.

It unveiled yet another aspect of Sandy's quiet but puzzling life. His brother, who he lived with, knew nothing about it.

Inspector Ross Bennet of Fife Constabulary explains: "For reasons best known to Sandy, he was not telling his brother the fact the car was there on a regular basis, and there were obviously visitors there."

With all its twists and turns the Sandy Drummond murder investigation has been a frustrating one for the police but there is still hope that science or someone with something on their conscience will be the key to unlocking the mystery.

Inspector Ross Bennet says: "We do have items which are retained as what we term productions for subsequent forensic examination. Forensics such as DNA have come on leaps and bounds in the last thirteen years and who knows where they'll reach in the next

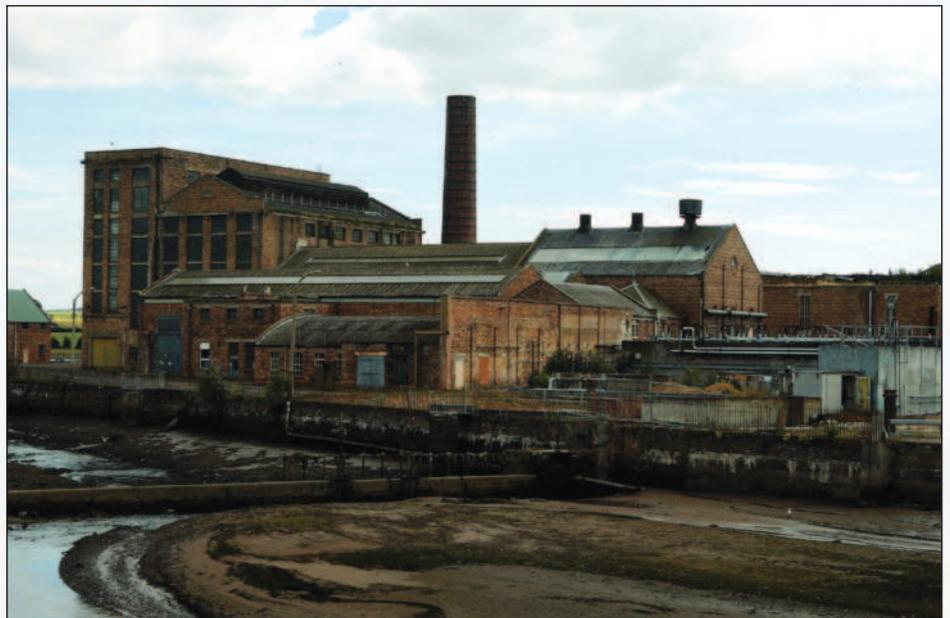


**Sandy Drummond: his murder appears motiveless**

shocked the little community of Boarhills. And those in charge of the inquiry who have worked tirelessly to bring the investigation to a close.

Superintendent Dougie Potter of Fife Constabulary explains: "It's been very frustrating because on the face of it, it should be solvable. This is not an area where things like this happen – it's perhaps one of the least likely places that somebody would be found murdered on a farm track in what is a very respectable area. Perhaps the answer is not very far away. I'm at the stage in my police career where I'll be thinking about retiring in a few years time and it's always been my personal ambition before I retire that the case would be resolved. But it's not just about me. There are other people who have worked on this case with me, good officers who at any time in the future will be able to pick up on any piece of information and take the case to a conclusion."

Sandy's brother says: "Even after



**The site of the former Guardbridge paper mill where Sandy had been employed as a labourer**

decade – so that may give us avenues in the future. Also someone out there, who watched the Grampian Television programme knows the truth. Hopefully, as time moves on, people have a change in their personal circumstances, a change in their loyalties and will no longer wish to keep this secret and will want to contact the police. We'd be very interested in hearing from anyone who has a story to tell us as to Sandy's death."

The murder mystified journalists too. News reporter Jim Rougvie of *The Courier* says: "There are very few clues, very few indications as to why it may have happened. The response from the public was scanty. The man himself appeared to have no enemies whatsoever. It's completely motiveless as far as we can tell so we're left with simply a void."

The murder of Sandy Drummond

all this time I don't really have a sense of closure on it. There's still too many unanswered questions."

In 2016, 25 years after the murder, an investigative journalist claimed that police had identified Sandy's killer.

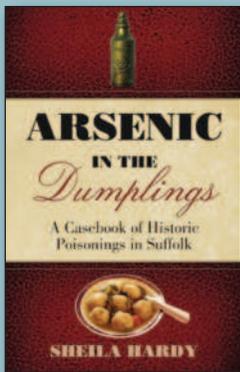
Michael Mulford said that detectives had identified their "prime suspect" during a cold case review of the murder. However, the suspect was also dead, according to Mr. Mulford.

In response to Mr. Mulford's comments, Police Scotland and the Crown Office reportedly refused to confirm whether a prime suspect had been identified, although they said the case was under ongoing review.

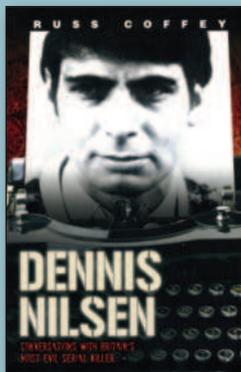
**It is now 31 years since Sandy Drummond's murder. Questions remain unanswered and no one has been charged in relation to the crime. For his family and friends the long wait for justice continues.**

True Crime Library doesn't just publish some of the world's best true crime books. We also specialise in tracking down, evaluating and making available some of the better – but sometimes hard-to-find – non-fiction crime books from other publishers around the world. Here's our latest selection of recommended reading.

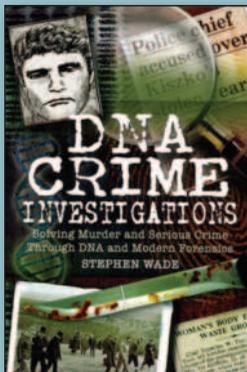
All titles are paperback unless otherwise stated. And remember, you can also view and order an even bigger range of non-fiction crime books at [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com)



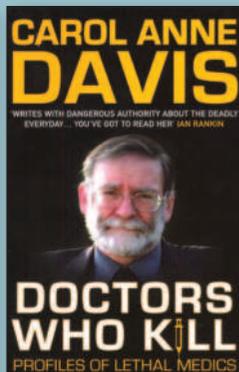
**ARSENIC IN THE DUMPLINGS** • £9.99 • No chemist in Suffolk would have been suspicious when a small amount of arsenic was purchased. That is until a sudden death took place. Of all forms of murder, poisoning is one that is premeditated. Yet it is also the least certain way to ensure the death of the desired victim...



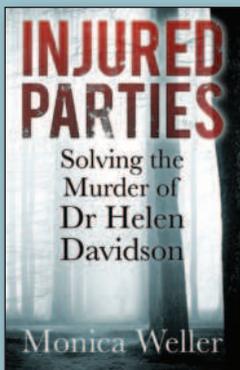
**DENNIS NILSEN** • £7.99 • In February 1983, civil servant Dennis Nilsen was arrested after body parts were found to be blocking drains at the house where he lived. He confessed he had strangled 15 young men. This is a shocking glimpse into the mind of a unlikely serial killer.



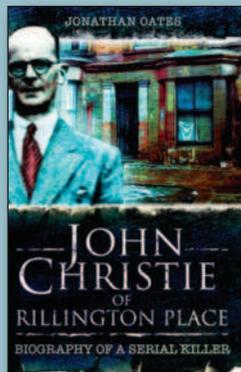
**DNA CRIME INVESTIGATIONS** • £19.99 • The famous cases included here include those of Rachel Nickell, Keith Lyon, Lesley Malseed, the World's End Killings, plus many others, including the "Cardiff Three" and Sean Hodgson's false imprisonment, one of the longest ever miscarriages of justice.



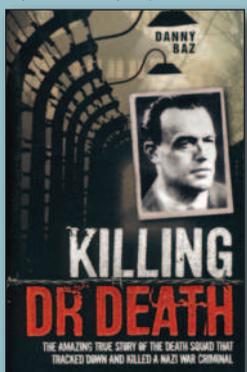
**DOCTORS WHO KILL** • £7.99 • What drove Harold Shipman to murder over 200 of his elderly patients? Why did Beverly Allitt kill the babies in her care? This book examines the formative influences and careers of British, American and European doctors, nurses, dentists and paramedics.



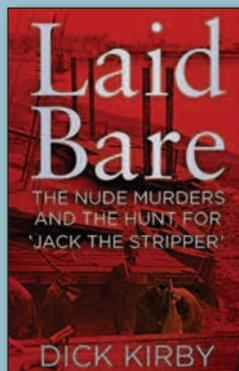
**INJURED PARTIES** • £9.99 • On November 9th, 1966, popular GP Dr. Helen Davidson was battered to death in dense woodland a few miles from her Buckinghamshire home. Her eyes had been pushed into her skull. Fifty years later, author Monica Weller set about solving the murder and uncovered the identity of the murderer – revealed here for the first time...



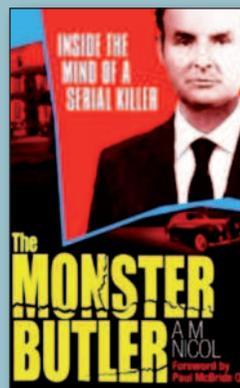
**JOHN CHRISTIE OF RILLINGTON PLACE** • £19.99 • One of the most controversial serial murder cases in British criminal history began 60 years ago with the discovery of bodies at 10 Rillington Place in Notting Hill, London... John Christie still provokes much speculation. More than a catalogue of his crimes, this book takes a biographical look at Christie's early life and events that shaped and developed his murderous ways...



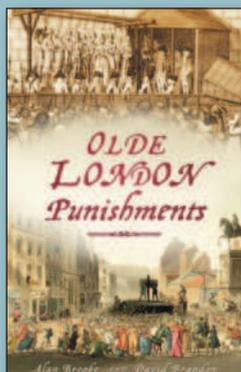
**KILLING DR. DEATH** • £7.99 • Nazi War Criminal Dr. Arieh Heim performed sadistic medical experiments on prisoners at the Mauthausen Concentration Camp. In this astonishingly vivid and controversial book, retired Israeli Defence Force colonel Danny Baz tells his tale of the tireless man hunt that took him around the globe to apprehend and execute the wicked fugitive known as "Dr Death..."



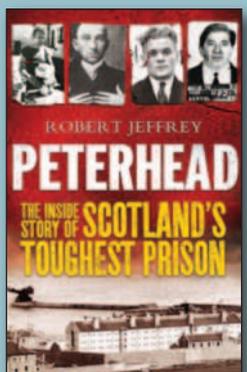
**LAI D BARE** • £16.99 • The killer had a detailed knowledge of London's deserted places, where he dumped bodies...How did he gain the confidence of the girls who entered his car? How did he know of the police plan to check every vehicle in the killing area? The case of the nude murders and "Jack The Stripper" remains a mystery – but there are answers...



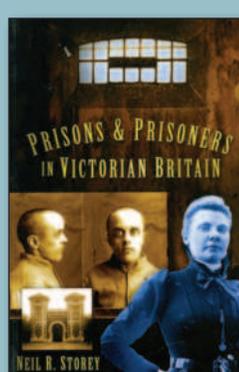
**MONSTER BUTLER** • £9.99 • Archibald Hall was an enigmatic criminal. He became more widely known as Roy Fontaine – the "Monster Butler." But how did this Glaswegian petty thief fleece the wealthy aristocracy in London and beyond before becoming a most notorious serial killer? And, along the way, how did his story acquire such glitz and glamour?



**OLDE LONDON PUNISHMENTS** • £12.99 • All manner of grim punishments London's long and bloody history. Taking in the stocks and pillories in public spaces across the city, and the shocking punishments used inside the churches, workhouses and schools, this is a heart-breaking survey of the capital's penal history.



**PETERHEAD: THE INSIDE STORY OF SCOTLAND'S TOUGHEST PRISON** • £9.99 • Peterhead Prison – "The Hate Factory" – has housed some of the most notorious criminals in Scottish penal history and became a brutal, cold and windswept home for wrongdoers from all parts of Scotland.



**PRISONS & PRISONERS IN VICTORIAN BRITAIN** • £14.99 • An illustrated insight into the Victorian prison system – on both sides of the bars. Covering crime and social history this book analyses a typical day inside a Victorian prison; the punishments convicts faced and an overview of the ultimate penalty – execution.

Use this form  
to order your  
choice of true  
crime books

## YOUR ORDER

- Arsenic in the Dumplings..... £9.99
- Dennis Nilsen..... £7.99
- DNA Crime Investigations..... £19.99
- Doctors Who Kill..... £7.99
- Injured Parties..... £9.99
- John Christie Of Rillington Place .... £19.99
- Killing Dr. Death..... £7.99
- Laid Bare..... £16.99
- Monster Butler..... £9.99
- Olde London Punishments..... £12.99
- Peterhead..... £9.99
- Prisons And Prisoners In Victorian Britain..... £14.99

Prices include UK postage and packing. For rates outside the UK, please order by phone or via our website: [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com)

Total order value £\_\_\_\_\_

## YOUR DETAILS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## YOUR PAYMENT

Cheque or postal order enclosed, made payable to Forum Press (UK only)

To pay via credit/debit card, call 020 8778 0514

You can also order through our website: [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com)

Return your form and payment to:  
True Crime Library Bookstore, PO Box 735, London SE26 5NQ, UK

Remember, you can always view and order our complete stock of books and magazines at [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com)

Get your copy of **MURDER MOST FOUL** delivered direct to your home – at 25% off the shop price!

**SAVE 25%**

**FOUR ISSUES, PACKED WITH GREAT STORIES, FOR JUST £13.50**



**3 EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE:**

- Visit [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com)
- Call 020 8778 0514
- Post Complete the order form below



- The world's No. 1 true crime quarterly
- Save 25% on the shop price
- Never miss an issue
- Get your copy first
- Delivered direct to your door
- Post-free in UK
- The perfect gift for yourself or a friend!

You can also subscribe to True Detective, Master Detective and True Crime at £31.50 for 12 issues

**SEND TO:**  
 Forum Press, PO Box 735, London SE26 5NQ  
 Yes! I would like to subscribe to MURDER MOST FOUL for one year (4 issues)  Tick here if it's a gift subscription  
 UK £13.50  Outside UK (surface mail) £23/US\$31  
 Europe (airmail) €26  Rest of World (airmail) US\$40

**YOUR DETAILS:**  
 Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms. Forename \_\_\_\_\_  
 Surname \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**GIFT SUBSCRIBER DETAILS:**  
 Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms. Forename \_\_\_\_\_  
 Surname \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT:**  
 By credit/debit card:  
 Please debit my  Visa  Mastercard  Maestro number:  
                  
 Expiry date     Security code      
 By cheque mode payable to Forum Press (UK only)

MMF 124



*Diana Kemp made a fatal mistake when she decided to hitch-hike to Mudeford. She fell prey to a heartless killer who told the police:*

# “IT WAS SEX. I HAVEN’T HAD IT FOR A YEAR”

IT SEEMED just about everywhere she went 20-year-old Diana Kemp thumbed a lift, however short the distance. She was an habitual hitch-hiker, as she cheerfully admitted.

But she was not in a good mood on the evening of Thursday, October 16th, 1969. She worked as a secretary for a Bournemouth estate agent, lived with her parents in Elizabeth Avenue, Christchurch, and she was miffed



**Diana Kemp. Her strangled body was found in a ditch by a man out for a walk with his family near Corfe Castle, six weeks after she vanished**

because her boyfriend had not phoned her the previous night.

She wanted some small change so she could call him from a phone box, so her father gave her sixpence and she went out. She was back within minutes, and at 8.15 she went out again, calling “Cheerio!” to her parents.

An hour or so later a young man knocked on the Kemps’ door. He had

**The picturesque Dorset village of Corfe Castle**



found Diana’s shoulder-bag in the village of Mudeford, near Christchurch. It was lying in the middle of the road to Bournemouth, and finding her name and address in it, he had come to return it.

The bag contained three £5 notes and various personal items, and Diana’s

**Case report  
by Matthew Spicer**

mother asked the man for his name and address so that her daughter could thank him. But he said there was no need for that, and drove off.

Diana’s boyfriend lived in Mudeford, and her parents assumed she had gone to see him and lost her bag on the way. But when Mrs. Kemp phoned the boyfriend at 9.45, he told her he hadn’t seen her daughter, and he hadn’t been

expecting her.

She had phoned him, wanting to see him, but he had told her he was having an early night and had arranged to meet her the following evening, he said.

Diana’s parents wondered if she had another boyfriend and had gone to see him, so they waited until midnight before they phoned the local hospitals and then the police, who listed her missing.

Officers questioned her boyfriend, who satisfied them that he had nothing to do with her disappearance. At 7.30 the following night he went to meet her outside Christchurch Town Hall, as arranged, but he waited for her in vain.

Like the Kemps, he told the police about Diana’s habit of hitch-hiking, saying he had warned her of the risks. Sometimes she would disappear for hours, her parents said, but until now she had always come back.

“She suffers from glandular fever and I wonder if she has lost her memory and does not know what she is doing,” her mother told a reporter.

“Then again, I wonder if a car drew up while she was walking along the pavement. A door might have opened and someone asked her the way, and another man might have been in the car and grabbed her. In the struggle her bag could have fallen onto the road. All these things go through your mind.”

Diana’s disappearance was reported in the local paper, and a 13-year-old boy told the police he had picked up her shoulder-bag in Mudeford at 8.35 p.m. This was only 20 minutes after she left Elizabeth Avenue, and the spot where the boy found the bag was too far from her home for her to have walked there in that time. So it seemed that, true to form, she had hitched a lift.

The boy said he had thrown the bag into the middle of the road, where it had been struck by a bus.

Two young men then came forward to tell the police they had spotted the bag while driving in their mini van. They had stopped, thinking it was a dead cat. One of them had found Diana’s address in the bag, and it was he who had returned it.

Six weeks passed with no further developments. Then on Sunday, November 30th, a man went out for a walk with his family near Corfe Castle, 24 miles from Christchurch.

As they walked along a footpath he saw two bare feet and legs protruding from a bracken-covered ditch near the Swanage–Studland road at Ulwell. He flagged-down a passing motorist, and they drove to Swanage police station, reported finding a body, and returned to the scene with a constable.

The officer radioed for assistance, and he was soon joined by an inspector and then by Dr. Albert Hunt, a pathologist summoned from Dorchester.

Dental records confirmed that the decomposing body was that of Diana Kemp. She had been wearing a short blue dress, white plastic raincoat, brown leather shoes and black tights when she disappeared. Her dress and petticoat had been pushed up around her chest, her panties and tights were missing, and her bra had been unfastened and pulled up her back.

Conducting an autopsy at Poole Hospital, Dr. Hunt found that Diana had been strangled, and he estimated that she had been dead for more than a month. Her corpse was too decomposed for the doctor to be able to establish if she had been raped, but the absence of her tights and panties indicated a sexual motive.

Apart from a small bruise on Diana’s neck, the pathologist found nothing to suggest a violent struggle, and the police wondered if she had been killed accidentally while having consensual sex and her body then dumped by her killer in panic.



**Above, the spot next to the Swanage to Studland road where Diana Kemp’s body was discovered near the village of Ulwell. Below, investigators with the pathologist Dr. Hunt (wearing the white coat) survey the scene at night-time**



The Chief Constable of Dorset and Bournemouth, Mr. Arthur Hambleton, decided to break with precedent and not call in Scotland Yard. Instead he entrusted the investigation to Detective Chief Superintendent William Mayo, the acting head of the force’s CID.

Diana’s boyfriend and the two men who found her shoulder-bag were again questioned, and were again eliminated

**Her corpse was too decomposed for the doctor to be able to establish whether she had been raped, but the absence of her tights and panties indicated a sexual motive**

from the inquiry. The investigators suspected that Diana had thumbed a lift to Mudeford from near her home, and that whoever picked her up had suggested sex, been rebuffed, and killed her. They consequently decided to question all men living within 20 miles of Christchurch and Swanage who had criminal records.

The Kemps were told of the discovery

of their daughter’s body on what would have been her 21st birthday. They now told the police something they had forgotten to mention: Diana’s watch was missing. It was only a cheap, Pontiac women’s wrist-twatch, but sexual attacks are often accompanied by theft and a search for the watch was launched throughout Dorset and Hampshire, officers visiting jewellers and second-hand shops throughout the area.

At the same time Hampshire detectives interviewed a housewife in Mudeford who told them she had heard three short, loud screams near the spot where Diana’s shoulder-bag was found about two miles from her home.

The housewife had gone to her front door to see what was happening, and had seen a black car which she thought was an old Ford Consul. She added that she had also seen it on the two previous nights, when there had been three men in it, calling out to girls.

By now 200 officers had been assigned to the inquiry. Thirty of them were seeking the missing watch, and when Constable John Welch went to a second-hand shop in Parkstone, Poole, he saw a Pontiac watch in the window. It was taken to the Kemps, who believed it was Diana’s. They said

it had been repaired in Parkstone. The watch was then taken to Parkstone, where the watch-repairer recognised it and showed the police his initials on the back.

The shopkeeper told the police that on November 26th – four days before Diana’s body was found – a young man had called and asked the price of a tape-recorder in the shop window.

“It’s thirty-five pounds,” he was told.

“That’s pretty good,” the man said.

“I’ve got a mate who’s got one and he says it cost sixty pounds new.”

Discussing it further, the man said he’d have a word with his wife about it and would probably come back and buy it with instalments paid over two or three weeks.

The shopkeeper said that would be all right, and the man then said, “Oh, while I’m here, you might like to buy this.” Taking the Pontiac watch from his pocket, he added: “It’s my wife’s but she’s got another now.”

The shopkeeper offered him a pound for it, which the man accepted. He was between 25 and 30, the shopkeeper told the police, and was about five-foot-six, with thick, dark, unkempt hair, and sharp features. He had no noticeable accent and looked like a labourer or lorry driver.

Two thousand identikit pictures based on this description were distributed throughout Hampshire and Dorset, and Mayo wondered if the man who had sold the tape-recorder to the shopkeeper might be the friend mentioned by the man who had sold the watch.

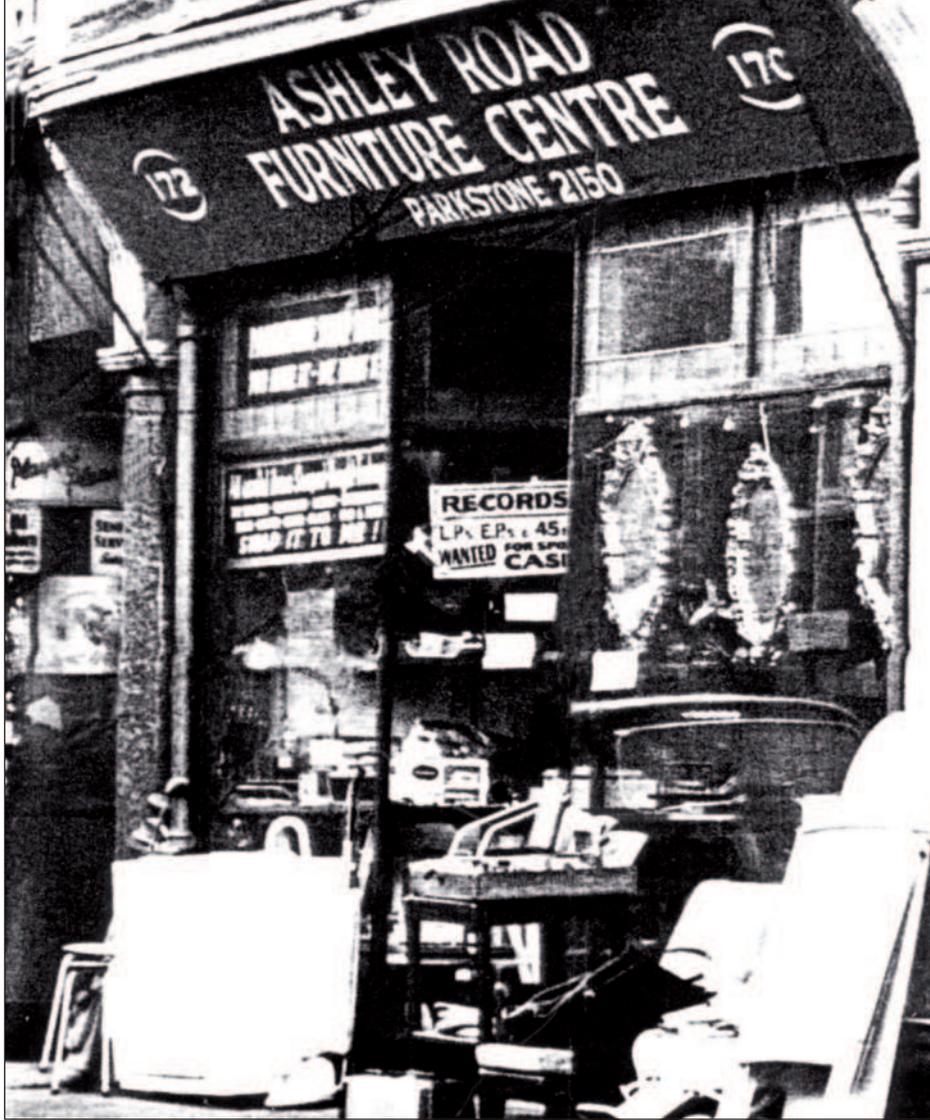
The shopkeeper had noted the name and address of the tape recorder’s vendor, but when officers went to see him it transpired that he had gone to Cornwall on holiday and nobody knew where he was.

A week later, however, he contacted the police. He had heard they wished to see him, he said, and he confirmed he had sold the tape-recorder to the Parkstone shopkeeper.

Did he have a friend who was interested in tape-recorders? Yes, he said, that would be Ian Troup who worked with him in Christchurch as a cinema projectionist.

Troup was 29 and had a black car – not a Ford Consul but a Standard Ensign, which looked similar. On October 16th – the day Diana vanished – he had been lodging at the home of his fellow-cinema projectionist. A week later, however, he had been asked to leave because his colleague’s mother had a nervous illness.

Where was Troup now? The young man said he didn’t know, because Troup no longer worked at the cinema. He added that Troup bore no resemblance to the identikit picture, but the police thought the lead worth pursuing and they learned that Troup was married but had not lived with his wife for three years. Other staff at the cinema described him as a loner who



**Below, Diana Kemp and two identikit pictures of the man who sold her watch. Above, the second-hand shop in Parkstone, Poole, where the watch was recovered**

was always broke.

One of them, a 15-year-old girl, said she’d gone out with Troup, spending the evening with him in Swanage and at Corfe Castle. To her surprise, he had made no attempt to kiss her, and had dropped her off at her home by 10 o’clock. Shown the identikit picture, she said he looked nothing like it, except for his mouth.

Within 16 hours of hearing of Troup the investigators traced him to a Bournemouth lodging-house which he had just vacated, leaving the landlady a forwarding address in south-east London. Her husband said Troup had arrived in a black car, which he had since sold to another lodger.

Superintendent Mayo asked the Criminal Records Office in London to run a check on Ian Troup, but this drew a blank. And a man who took a 15-year-old girl out and didn’t even kiss her seemed unlikely to be the abductor and murderer of Diana Kemp.

On December 9th, however, the



police were told that the cinema projectionist’s mother who’d had Troup as a lodger was now sufficiently recovered from her nervous trouble to be interviewed. She said that in Troup’s suitcase she had seen a wrist-watch which he’d said was his ex-wife’s.

Then the man who had bought Troup’s black Standard Ensign came forward. Under the front passenger seat detectives found two buttons which matched others on Diana Kemp’s raincoat, from which two were missing.

Strands of long dark hair like Diana's were also found in the car, and Mayo contacted the Criminal Records Office again. This time he asked for alternative spellings of the suspect's name to be checked, and when Troup was tried this produced results.

Ian Troup had been convicted of indecent exposure in Leicester in 1968, and again in Lambeth in 1969. Three years earlier he had also been convicted of theft and burglary in Leicester.

The forwarding address he had given his last landlady turned out to be correct, and he was found and arrested there on a warrant for indecent exposure in Greenwich the previous August.

Taken to Peckam police station, he was questioned there by officers from Bournemouth, who rearrested him on suspicion of murder and took him back to Dorset.

As Superintendent Mayo prepared to interview Troup at 9.30 that evening, he expected him to say he had found

Diana's watch while walking near Swanage. But to his surprise it was all over in a sentence.

"It was sex," Troup told him. "I haven't had it for a year."

He said he was driving along Elizabeth Avenue when Diana Kemp flagged him down near her home, saying she wanted a lift to Mudeford. He was turned-on by her short skirt, and he drove her to Mudeford where he suggested they go for a longer drive and where he tried to kiss her.

She slapped his face, so he grabbed her throat, she lost consciousness, and he drove her to Boscombe, where he raped her. Then, realising she was dead, he headed for Swanage to dump her body. He took her watch before he left her, and he said she must have lost her shoulder-bag when she tried to leave his car in Mudeford when he attempted to kiss her. On his way back to Bournemouth, he added, he threw her shoes and tights out of his car window.

"It all happened because of my wife not properly letting me have sex," he concluded. Although they were separated, he explained, he still saw his wife, but she had not had sex with him for a year.

At his two-day trial at Winchester Assizes in March 1970, the Crown rejected Troup's plea of guilty to manslaughter. It was a clear case of murder and nothing less, said the prosecutor Mr. Raymond Stock QC.

For the defence, Sir Joseph Malony QC said that Troup had only wanted to render Diana unconscious for a couple of hours so that he could have sex with her. He had dumped her body through fear of being caught.

"I am now deeply sorry and ashamed of myself," Troup told the jury. "I asked her twice for sex while we were stopped. She slapped my face the second time. I had not laid a hand on her up to that point.

"She did not explain her action. I moved a little bit closer and asked her

**"My arm was on her shoulder. It slowly built up. I felt within myself I wanted to have sexual relations with her. I felt within myself I would put her unconscious. Then I would be able to have the sexual relations that I wanted"**

again. I put my left hand behind her. With her presence in the car in her mini-skirt, my sexual impulse started to build up. After a little while I put my arm around her and at that point there was nothing to stop her leaving the car.

"My arm was on her shoulder. It slowly built up. I felt within myself I wanted to have sexual relations with her. I felt within myself I would put her unconscious. Then I would be able to have the sexual relations that I wanted."

He admitted that Diana had fought vigorously to stop him raping her, and had managed to open the car door. He said that during the struggle they both fell back over the front seats and into the rear of the car, and it was on the back seat that Diana died. But he thought she was only unconscious, he claimed, as he drove her to Boscombe and raped her. Then he sat in the car for 90 minutes, smoking cigarettes as he waited in vain for her to come round.

On Friday, March 13th, 1970, it took the jury only 10 minutes to decide that Ian Troup was guilty of murder, and he was jailed for life.

In May 1983, having served just over 13 years, he was being prepared for release when he failed to return to Bristol Prison after spending the day in a hostel. He was not recaptured until June 1986, and was finally released in 1989.

**VICTIMS OF THE TEEN PARTY FROM HELL**

**MELISSA AND THE RAPE-MURDER OF LITTLE SANDRA**

**MELBOURNE MAYHEM**

**WHY WAS SHANNON CHOPPED UP AND LEFT IN THE FREEZER?**

**LIFE AND TIMES OF A SERIAL KILLER**

**When Jessie Became A Hammer-Killer**

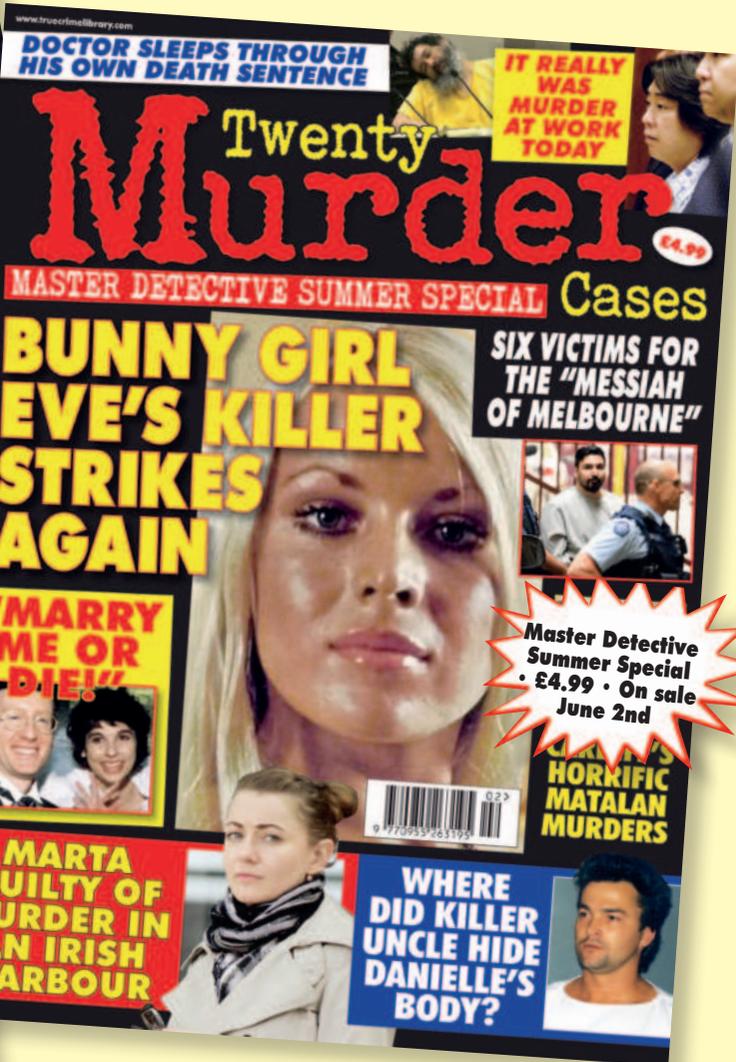
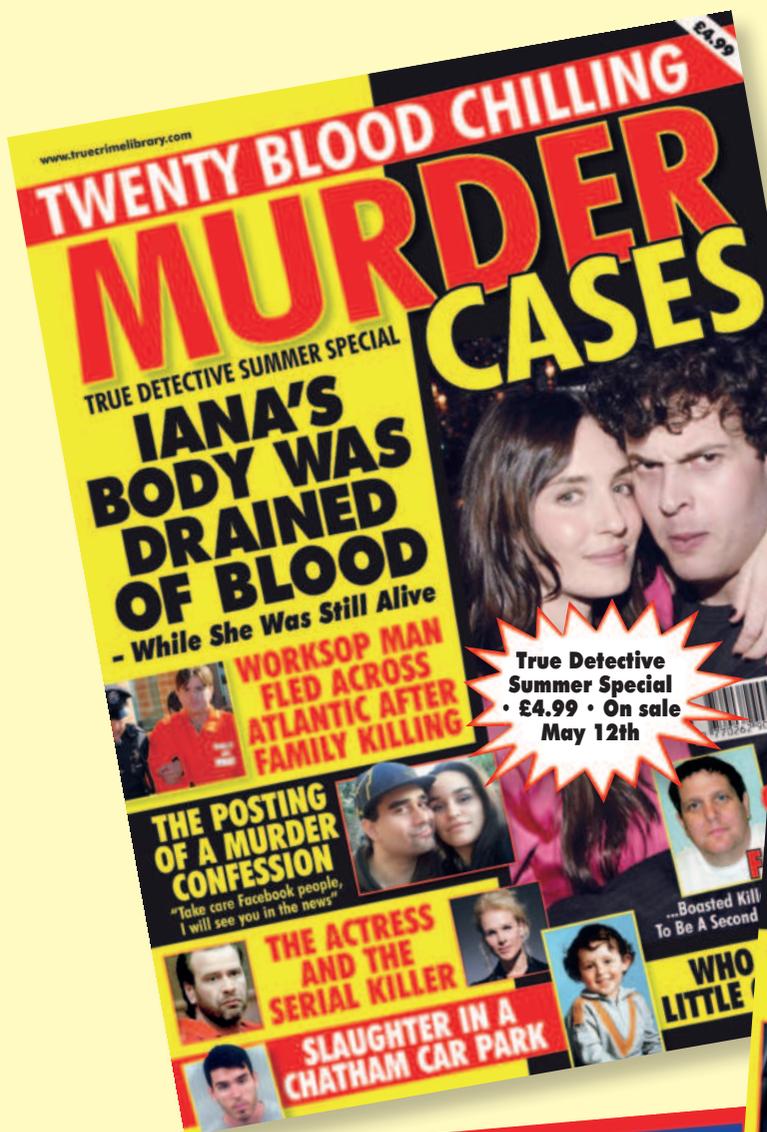
**"I'm Beginning To Need My Own Private Cemetery"**

**MURDER #125 MOST FOUL**

**WORLD'S NO.1 TRUE CRIME QUARTERLY**

In shops from July 28th, 2022 • Make sure of your copy by ordering direct from [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com) or 020 8778 0514 • For subscription savings see page 62

# Don't miss this year's **SUMMER SPECIALS!**



## **FIVE WAYS TO ORDER YOUR 84-PAGE SPECIALS**

- Order your Specials online at [www.truecrimelibrary.com](http://www.truecrimelibrary.com)
- Also available at W.H. Smith and all good newsagents, who will gladly save your copies for you – this is a free service
- Price £4.99 each – or get ALL THREE Specials sent direct to you, post-free in the UK, for £12.00, and SAVE £2.97! (Outside UK, via airmail: £17 or €20 or US\$26 or Aus\$33).
- Call 020 8778 0514 to order by credit/debit card
- Send a cheque made out to Forum Press or a postal order for £4.99 each OR £12.00 for all three Specials and send to Forum Press, PO Box 735, London SE26 5NQ
- Your set of three Summer Specials will be sent out to you by June 8th



No. 123



No. 122



No. 121



No. 120



No. 119



No. 118

Don't miss out on these reasonably priced back issues!

They're ideal if you can't wait for the next issue – or if you have gaps in your collection.

But hurry. Some issues have already sold out and others are in short supply!

Each of the issues shown here costs just £4.90 post-free in the UK.

Europe incl. Ireland: €9.00 incl. postage.

Rest of World US\$10.00 incl. postage.

To order send a cheque or postal order, payable to Forum Press, to **MMF Back Issues, PO Box 735, London SE26 5NQ, UK.**

● You can also order and pay by card on **020 8778 0514.**

● And you can always view and order our complete range of back issues at **www.truecrimelibrary.com**

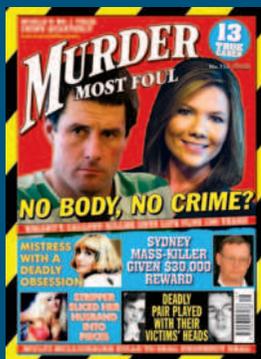
truecrimelibrary

# BACK ISSUE FOCUS

**Missed an issue of MURDER MOST FOUL? Snap up these bargain back issues NOW for just £4.90 each, POST-FREE in the UK!**



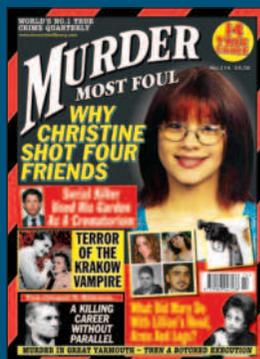
No. 117



No. 116



No. 115



No. 114



No. 113



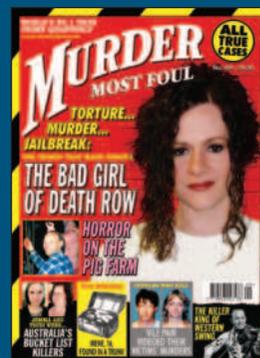
No. 112



No. 111



No. 110



No. 109



No. 108