

**Devon
Kidnapper
Revealed As
Killer Too**



**TWENTY
THOUSAND
CAME TO
WATCH
BESSIE'S
KILLER DIE**



**Shooting
Death
of An
Adelaide
Copper**

TRUE DETECTIVE

WORLD'S NO.1 TRUE CRIME MAGAZINE

APRIL
2020



**"TELL ME
WHERE
THE REST OF MY
DAUGHTER IS"**



Cruel Killer Dismembered Ashley

**SERIAL
KILLER IN
PARADISE**

Was This The Honolulu Strangler?



DIGITAL
truecrimelibrary
EDITION

**KILLING
COUPLE
SENTENCED TO DIE**



TD'S CRIME PHOTOS



“Dying isn’t a crime,” said American pathologist Dr. Jack Kervorkian (above). “Dr. Death” challenged social taboos and US courts to champion the right of the terminally ill to choose how they died. On April 16th, 1990, he assisted the suicide a 54-year-old Michigan woman with Alzheimer’s disease and years of legal battles began. He later spent eight years in prison after being convicted of the second-degree murder of the last of about 130 patients whose lives he had helped end.

Two deaths were assisted by means of a device which delivered the euthanising drugs intravenously. Kervorkian called the device a “Thanatron” (“Death machine,” from the Greek *thanatos* meaning “death”).

At 2.49 p.m. on April 15th, 2013, near the finish line of the annual Boston Marathon, two homemade bombs detonated (right) 14 seconds and 190 metres apart, killing three people and injuring several hundred others. Brothers Dzhokhar (far left) and Tamerlan Tsarnaev (left) were responsible. Tamerlan was killed during a gun battle with police; Dzhokhar was sentenced to death in 2015.



Before he became the “Unabomber,” Harvard graduate Theodore J. Kaczynski was the youngest-ever assistant professor of mathematics at the University of California, Berkeley. He moved to an off-grid cabin in the woods (inset) near Lincoln, Montana, and in 1978, he began sending parcel bombs to targets including scientists and businessmen. Federal agents finally arrested him (above) at the cabin on April 3rd, 1996.



TD COMPETITION: WIN *BABES IN THE WOOD*

ON OCTOBER 9th, 1986, nine-year-olds Nicola Fellows and Karen Hadaway went out to play on their Brighton estate. They would never return home – their bodies discovered the next day concealed in a local park. This devastating crime rocked the country.

With unique access to the officers charged with catching the killer, former senior detective Graham Bartlett and bestselling author Peter James tell the compelling inside story of the investigation as the net tightens around local man Russell Bishop. The trial that follows is one of the most infamous in the history of Brighton policing – a shock result sees Bishop walk free.

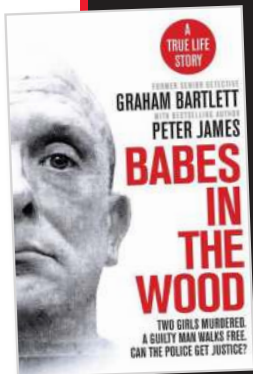
Three years later, Graham is working in Brighton CID when a seven-year-old girl is abducted and left to die. She survives...and Bishop’s name comes up as a suspect. Is history repeating itself? Can the police put him away this time, and will he ever be made to answer for his past horrendous crimes? Both gripping police procedural and an insight into the motivations of a truly evil man, *Babes in the Wood* by Graham Bartlett with Peter James is a fascinating account of what became a 32-year fight for justice...

To win a paperback copy of *Babes in the Wood* (published by Pan Macmillan; ISBN 9781529025569; £8.99) by Graham Bartlett and Peter James, just answer this question:

On October 12th of which year was the Conservative Party conference bombed at the Grand Brighton Hotel in Brighton?

☐ 1983 ☐ 1984 ☐ 1985 ☐ 1986

Send your answer with your name and address to TD April competition, PO Box 735, London SE26 5NQ, or email truedetective@truecrimelibrary.com, with the subject “TD April comp.” The first correct answer out of the hat after the closing date of **March XXth** will win. The winner will be announced in the June issue. The winner of February’s competition with the answer *Greater Manchester* is Margaret Sims from Petham. Well done – your prize of a hardback copy of *On the Trail of the Yorkshire Ripper – His Final Secrets Revealed* by Richard Charles Cobb will be with you soon...



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Ashley Young, 31, was a popular young woman from Michigan, US, who hadn't yet met the right man. Perhaps she thought Jared Chance (*right*) would be the one. The pair had connected through Facebook and, after exchanging messages and photos, finally met. Soon they would be boyfriend and girlfriend. But when trusting Ashley inexplicably went missing after a night out at a bar with the jobless Chance in late November 2018, her mother's worst suspicions were confirmed. Turn to page 4 and "Tell Me Where The Rest of My Daughter Is" for the full story.

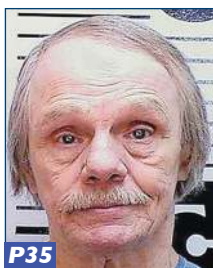
Crimes That Made The Headlines – Devon Kidnapper Revealed As Killer Too looks at the extraordinary case of west country would-be master criminal Keith Rose. Public school-educated Rose brooded endlessly on the best way to get rich quick and chose kidnapping as the best option. Trouble was, even the best laid plans have a way of going wrong. See page 8 for the full story.

The crimes of multiple Iowa killer and drug kingpin Dustin Honken and his one-time girlfriend and accomplice Angela Johnson are the focus of *America's Most Evil – Killing Couple Sentenced To Die*, on page 30. Honken could have been an academic but instead chose a career in methamphetamine. Pity anyone who stood in his way...

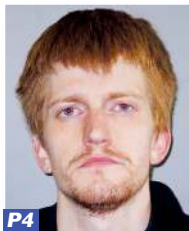
Enjoy the read – and let us know what you think!

● **Order a True Detective subscription for the crime buff in your life – or for yourself. See page 47 for full details.**

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TRUE DETECTIVE APRIL 2020

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THIRTY-YEAR-OLD Jared Chance told a neighbour: “I know how to kill someone if I want to.”

The neighbour had proof of that assertion soon enough. He and Chance shared a basement storage facility below their rented apartments and three weeks before Christmas 2018 the smell emanating from the basement was so overwhelming that the neighbour, standing at the top of the stairs, wanted to be sick.

“I sure was reluctant to go and have a look,” the neighbour said later. “It smelled like dead rats or rotten food. It was awful.”

Overcoming his nausea, he went into the basement and saw a bag, or a tarpaulin, with blood coming out of it. He called the police, who found the dismembered remains of a young woman. This was Jared Chance’s former girlfriend Ashley Young, 31.

On a stairway landing by the basement they also found a cardboard box, with Chance’s name written on the label. Ashley Young’s arms and legs, which had been sawn from her torso, were inside the box.

They then went upstairs to Chance’s flat and found other body parts, and “equipment that could have been used to dismember a corpse.”

Chance met Ashley, who lived near Kalamazoo, Michigan, through Facebook, after exchanging messages

Ashley Young and Jared Chance



Cruel Killer Dismembered “TELL ME WHERE THE REST OF DAUGHTER IS

and pictures. She was a popular girl who hadn’t yet met the right man.

Chance also lived in Michigan – on Franklin Avenue, Grand Rapids. Frequently drunk, unemployed and playing loud music late at night, he was anything but the ideal neighbour.

When he met Ashley he spun her a hard luck story. He had never had

a break in his life, he had no place to live, he had no job prospects and was estranged from his parents. None of this was true. His apartment in fact was owned by his father, who allowed him to live there rent-free. But Ashley had a big heart and was too trusting, and she believed everything he said.

That was her one weakness, and it led

her to a gruesome death in the basement of her lover’s apartment.

To this day no one knows exactly how Chance killed her, or even why. No murder weapon has been found and no witnesses to the killing have come forward. Only half her body has been found – Chance refuses to say what he has done with the rest of it.

But there were ominous clues found in his flat, apart from the body parts. There were bottles of bleach and other heavy-duty cleaning supplies that had recently been acquired but not yet used.

And there was a box. Karen Curtis, an investigator working for Grand Rapids police, said, "When I looked inside the



Holding a box containing body parts of her murdered daughter, Kristine Young (above) screamed at the killer: "I'd like to rip you limb from limb! If I want a hug, I have to hug a box!"

d Ashley HERE MY S"

Case report by
**Richard
Spencer**

box I saw limbs. It wasn't a pretty sight."

The police were still in the apartment when Chance returned. He was arrested on the spot. Who was the dead woman? He didn't know, he said, or he wasn't saying. But the police soon found out. In their curious police-speak the court was told: "Jared Chance was with a female acquaintance two days prior. The female



Ashley Young. Chance gave no indication why he murdered his girlfriend. He then refused to reveal how he had killed her, and how and where he had disposed of the remainder of her body

acquaintance has since been reported missing and she has not been located."

The female acquaintance, as everyone knew, was Ashley Young, and she was last seen alive on November 29th, 2018, three days before Chance's neighbour went to investigate the basement smell. She had not answered her mother's phone calls or texts. This was so out of character that Ashley's friends set up a Facebook page asking for information from anyone who had seen her recently.

Her mother, Mrs. Kristine Young, had an appointment to meet her daughter on November 29th to co-sign a lease for Ashley's new apartment in Kalamazoo. She started to worry when Ashley didn't

turn up.

Kristine was already aware that her daughter had befriended Chance. When Ashley suddenly disappeared she began to fear the worst.

Her fears were shared by Grand Rapids Police Sergeant Dan Adams. He knew that Jared Chance had previous criminal convictions. In 2011 he was arrested for resisting arrest and obstructing police in a bar-room brawl. And in 2016 he was convicted of possessing methadone and Oxycodone.

Chance was spared a custodial sentence on the last charges because he agreed to enter a drug treatment programme and live with his parents.

Then news of Ashley's disappearance was posted on Facebook, the announcement revealed Jared Chance's name and number. That caused Kristine Young to leave a message on his voicemail which said: "Hello, Jared. My name is Kristine Young; I'm looking for my daughter. I believe she was last with you. Is she with you? She needs to contact me. Tell her I am contacting the police to file a missing-person report."

That call clearly spooked Chance. He sprang into action. He texted Kristine back, telling her that Ashley had left



Jared Chance's neighbour noticed a foul smell in the basement storage space they shared in this house

her phone in the lounge of a bar called Mulligan's, and she had gone to pick it up.

Chance then sent Ashley's worried mom a number of texts. In them he claimed he had just spoken to Ashley and added some phone numbers to call. In an attempt to reassure her he said in another message that Ashley was a friend of his and he would never hurt her.

But all the numbers he sent to Kristine were fakes.

Kristine, not getting much help from the police at that time, decided she had to start asking questions of her own. She went to Mulligan's Bar and Pub and asked to see the CCTV footage of the night her daughter was last seen alive in the early hours of November 29th.

The video showed Ashley in no signs of distress as she and Chance went into the bar and ordered drinks. Ashley drank a couple of tequilas, which she didn't finish; Chance drank Budweiser beer.

The video showed Chance returning to Mulligan's later, this time alone. This gave the lie to his claim that it was Ashley who had gone back to the bar because she had left her mobile phone there. There were no images of him looking for a phone or asking any of the bar staff if a mobile phone had been found and handed in.

Chance was brought to trial in September 2019. It was rare for a murder case to proceed without a body being found. In this case it was only parts of Ashley's body that had been recovered. Her head, hands and feet were still missing.

Three witnesses who knew Chance well gave their versions of what the accused was doing just before and just after the murder:

THE YOUNGER BROTHER

Konrad Chance spent some hours with his brother several days before Ashley went missing. He knew his brother had a Smith and Wesson .22-calibre revolver, he said.

"While he was hanging out with Ashley, Jared pulled out the gun, pointed it at me, and put his finger on the trigger," Konrad recalled. "I think he was being playful, but I told him he should never do that."

The next time Konrad saw his brother, Jared was driving around town with their parents looking for Ashley's car, a Ford Focus. When they found it, Jared collected some items from it and put them in his parents' car.

Konrad struggled to recollect where the family went after that because he was high on cannabis that day. "We went to Jared's apartment but I stayed in the car," he said. "My brother looked very upset."

CHANCE'S PAL

Demetrius Taylor testified that Chance wanted him to help cover up for Ashley's disappearance by telling a false story to Kristine, Ashley's mother. Taylor refused to oblige.



Chance's lack of cooperation saw a minimum 100-year sentence imposed by the judge

"I told him if Ashley's mom called me, I'd tell her I had no idea where her daughter was and that I'd never seen her before."

Later, he added, Chance sent him a series of texts, one of which read, "*You screwed me up.*"

THE FAMILY FRIEND

David Smith said he had known Chance since they were children. "As a young boy he behaved normally, but in his teenage years he became violent and angry. He started hanging out with the wrong people, and began using drugs and alcohol. He lost control."

Detective Shawn Hamson told the court that Chance was buying beer, ammonia, rubbish bags and other items on November 28th, the day before the murder. These purchases matched three ammonia bottles, plastic bags and similar items found in his apartment.

The detective said that CCTV showed Chance dumping a big bag and a pair of jeans in a rubbish bin.

"I believe Ashley Young was shot in the head with a .22 revolver, the same weapon he had shown his brother," the detective added. "Two spent .22 casings were found in the basement furnace in the building."

CCTV cameras also revealed Chance's movements in the days after the killing before the discovery of Ashley's body parts. He was picked up by his parents and driven back to their home. Media commentators pointed out that his father, James Chance, 76, a retired Illinois detective, would have been familiar with ways to conceal evidence.

According to an affidavit, James Chance and his wife Barbara, 63, knew that their son had cut Ashley's body into multiple pieces and that he had hidden some of the pieces. But they failed to report the death and the mutilation.

The parents were duly arrested and charged with perjury, lying to the police, and being accessories after the fact. They pleaded not guilty.

Mulligan's bartender Emily Potgetter testified that when Chance and Ashley came into her bar she noticed nothing unusual about them. "Definitely nothing to make me think she would be missing forever in a couple of days," she said.

Chance had been told before the hearing that if he pleaded guilty and told where the head and other missing pieces of his victim were, he would be given a reduced prison sentence of 31 years before eligibility for parole. This, it was pointed out to him, would spare Ashley's family having to relive the gory horrors of her death. If he refused to plead guilty he could face a lifetime behind bars.

Against his legal team's advice, Chance turned down this plea-bargain offer, instead opting to try his luck at a trial in court. That made tough work for his leading defence lawyer, Andrew Rodenhouse. If Chance lost out, he faced a massive prison sentence.

Mr. Rodenhouse told the jury: "You must look at the hard facts of this case, and not be ruled by your emotions. The state has not produced a motive, a murder weapon, or witnesses. No one knows how or when Ashley Young died. Even the state pathologist calls it 'homicide by unspecified means.'"

The jury, however, were more specific. They called it second-degree murder, mutilation and tampering with the evidence, and they specified that Chance was the killer, and found him guilty. Before the sentencing came the victim impact statement, delivered by Kristine Young, and what she said electrified the court.

"You turned down multiple chances to tell me where the rest of my daughter is," she told Chance. "You won't tell me where she is because you like to torment people. You enjoy hurting them. You don't tell us because you are a coward."

Holding the box containing the remains of her daughter she went on: "If I want a hug I have to hug a box. You were offered a deal but you stupidly turned it down. You could have been out of prison in your early 60s, but you arrogantly thought 12 of your peers would believe you."

Tearful, her voice sometimes trembling, sometimes screaming, she said, "Jared Chance, I hate you! I want to tear you limb from limb and discard you just like you did to Ashley. You threw her out like trash, and she was your friend. Why?"

There was no answer to that question. And observers in court must have been wondering how Chance was feeling when, having turned down an offer of 31 years in jail, he heard Judge Mark Truscock hand him down a minimum 100-year sentence.

The sentence exceeded state guidelines, but the judge was unfazed by that. "Those guidelines don't account for the level of callous brutality in the death of this poor young woman," he told Chance. "You'll never be free to pose a threat to society again."

YOUR LETTERS

Your Letters, PO Box 735, London SE26 5NQ
or email truedetective@truecrimelibrary.com (please put your address on emails). We pay £8 for any that are published

More Bamber Evidence

I was very interested to read the article "Will Bamber Go Free?" (February). As an author of a book about this case I take a keen interest in coverage of it. Your article was excellent in explaining the very complex issues for both the defence and prosecution.

Your readers may be interested to know that since Bamber was convicted in 1986, hundreds of crime scene photographs, police statements, forensics reports and logs of radio communications from the day of the shootings have been revealed. As the defence was not aware of their existence, the jury could not consider the important information they contained when reaching their verdict. In fact, most of these were only handed to Bamber's legal team in 2004, almost two decades after the crime for which he was convicted. There are still more than 200 crime scene photographs and thousands of documents that Bamber's legal team have not been allowed to see. The statements of several officers who were amongst the first to arrive at the scene have never been revealed.

Whatever people think about Bamber's guilt or innocence, in a criminal trial it is of paramount importance that a jury hears the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. That non-disclosure of evidence continues to be practised in this case (and in many other criminal cases) is a serious concern.

Scott Lomax, Chesterfield

Death Sentence Figures Explained

I read with interest Gaynor McKnight's letter ("Why Fewer Gaynond Women?" March) regarding the *Execution USA* articles. I think I saw the same TV documentary where it mentioned 8,000 death sentences, but this refers to the total passed since states resumed capital trials following the US Supreme Court's 1972 decision in "Furman v Georgia" which temporarily overturned the death penalty.

The Death Row population in the USA as of October 1st, 2019, was 2,639, of which 53 were women (or 2.01 per cent). Some 1,514 have been executed, making a total of 4,153. The other c.4,000 can be accounted for by a myriad of reasons including acquittals, natural deaths, suicides, murder by other inmates, state abolitions, courts ruling state laws to be unconstitutional, gubernatorial or parole board

commutations and US Supreme Court rulings abolishing the death penalty for those who are intellectually disabled, insane, or those who committed murder under 18 years of age.

During this 45-year period of c.8,000 death sentences, there have been c.840,000 homicides classified as murder or non-negligent manslaughter, so it is possibly difficult to claim that Americans like to execute murderers.

Martin Chaffe, via email

Turn to page 35 for Martin's latest *Execution USA* column.

Druitt Named As Jack

How interesting to see the photo of Montague Druitt in *TD's Crime Photos* (March). Ripperologists Christine Ward-Agius and Jonathan Hainsworth finger Druitt as Jack in their soon-to-publish *The Escape of Jack the Ripper*. "A blood-stained Druitt was arrested in Whitechapel, but deployed his pedigree as the nephew of a famous physician to bluff his way to freedom," the book claims.

Part of the fascination of Ripperworld is the endlessly shifting suspicion. Last year, Polish barber Aaron Kosminski was in the frame. Forensic analyst Dr. Jari Louhelainen claimed Kosminski's DNA was a close match to evidence found on victim Catherine Eddowes' shawl but other analysts say the results were inconclusive.

In 2019, historian Stephen Sinise claimed in *False Flag: Jack the Ripper* that witness George Hutchinson was the killer – what better way to shift suspicion than to claim you had seen someone else in the role of Jack? Hutchinson moved to Australia in 1888, shortly after the last Ripper killing.

Also in 2019, surgeon Wynne Weston-Davies, a direct descendent of Mary Kelly, nominated the editor of the *East London Advertiser*, Francis Craig, as Jack, claiming he was Mary's estranged husband seeking revenge.

There are many other suspects – I wonder if other readers have their own particular favourite?

Andrew Stephenson, Newhaven

Dr. Tombstone Nightmares

"The Deadly Man Nicole Met on the Phone: He Called Himself Dr. Tombstone" (February) has got to be one of the

most disturbing stories I've ever read in your crime magazines. Not only because of the way in which poor 13-year-old Nicole Lovell was murdered – the multiple stab wounds and finally her throat being cut was shocking enough – but having two teenage daughters myself, this case has given me nightmares.

I'm not sure if other readers will agree, but no matter how much you check your teens' phones and monitor messages, there is always an app you don't know about until a short time after it's been installed. By then the damage could already have been done. People like "Dr. Tombstone" could be getting inside your child's head within hours of the installation.

Other than taking mobile phones away completely, I can only come to the conclusion that allowing teens mobile phones requires a considerable amount of trust.

As for David Eisenhower and Natalie Keepers, the murderer and instigator, it astounds me that they appeared to be model students and nobody within their circle of friends could ever have suspected them of committing such a heinous crime.

It also amazes me how criminals such as these seem to get through day-to-day life without anyone ever suspecting them of having any psychological problems. Psychiatrist David Schneider branded Natalie a "psychopath." So, if the people closest to her didn't think she was capable, what chance do complete strangers online have?

Mrs. Sharon Carey, Runcorn

Tragedy Of The Twin Sisters

Shocking but sad is how I'd describe your case report "Two Twins, One Boyfriend.... One Murder" (March). After binge-drinking all night, twins Anna and Amanda Ramirez got into an argument over a boyfriend who was seemingly seeing both – a cad if ever there was one. This argument ended up in the twins' New Jersey apartment when Amanda grabbed a knife and stuck it in her sister's chest. Anna later died in hospital from her wound.

It's so awful to imagine one identical twin killing another, so close must be their bond. One has to remember there was a large amount of alcohol consumed before this tragedy. Plus the aforementioned cad didn't help.

Amanda received three to 10 years for a plea-bargain second-degree manslaughter charge. I'm in two minds as to whether this was a lenient sentence.

Michael Minihan, Limerick

Your Letters True Detective 7



Convicted of five murders: Jeremy Bamber



Above, Montague Druitt. Below, Aaron Kosminski



Teen-killer: David Eisenhower

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CRIMES THAT MADE THE HEADLINES

Former public schoolboy Keith Rose pumped six bullets into a tycoon's wife when his plan to take her hostage went wrong – and for eight years got away with murder. Then he chose another victim for his get-rich-quick masterplan...

Devon Kidnapper Revealed As Killer Too

KEITH ROSE thought he was a master crook who would commit the perfect crime and live in luxury for the rest of his life. But fate and his own conceit had a way of tripping him up time after time.

Public school-educated and believing himself a cut above the fruit and veg salesman job that paid his wages, he read books about crime and brooded endlessly over the best way to fulfil his ambition.

A bank robbery seemed the logical choice, but it demanded teamwork and

Case report by Francesca Morrison

profit-sharing, neither of which appealed to him. So he settled on kidnapping as it could be carried out single-handed and would have a big ransom at the end – if he chose his victim carefully enough.

Juliet Rowe, 42, lived in an isolated house in Budleigh Salterton, Devon, with her supermarket tycoon husband and their two children. Rose had sometimes called on Gerald Rowe when he worked as a sales rep for the giant Portsmouth-based grocery distribution company Foodbrokers Ltd. He knew Gerald was rich.

His plan was to lure Gerald away from the house with a bogus business appointment and pose as a telephone engineer to gain access to his home when Juliet was alone.

It was a September evening in 1981 and, armed with his tool bag and a Colt Woodsman .22 pistol, he managed to blag his way indoors on the pretext of



Keith Rose – a judge called him evil and exceptionally dangerous

looking for faulty sockets.

He rounded on Juliet seconds later, truculently outlining his plan to bleed her husband in return for her safety. But she was too quick for him, and managed to reach a panic button that connected directly with the local police station.

Rose was furious and frightened. A bungled kidnap was too much for his arrogance, especially if he was caught. Coldly and viciously, he turned his outrage on the terrified woman, shooting her six times at point-blank range – four bullets in her back, and two

in her head and heart.

He'd fled by the time the police arrived, leaving them baffled by the apparently motiveless killing. Fingerprints and palm prints were found in the house, but there was no match at the Criminal Records Office at Scotland Yard. Whoever had left them had never been convicted of a criminal offence, so they could have belonged to any visitor.

Initial suspicion fell on Gerald Rowe as in nine cases out of 10 the killer is known to the victim. In addition to his bereavement, he suffered years of distrust.

As part of the police investigation, every registered owner of a .22 firearm in Devon – some 12,000 people – was contacted and questioned about their movements on the day of the murder, and their weapons taken away to be test-fired.

Rose, living at Copplestone near Exeter, was questioned four days after the crime, but when he proffered his pistol – dismantled and rusty – the police deemed it too dangerous to test-fire for ballistics comparison. Nor did they check his alibi, so he congratulated himself for slipping through the net and getting away with murder.

Married with two children, Rose refused to give up his dream of the good life. Mediocrity wasn't an option. Having failed as a criminal, he now focused on becoming a business bigwig, at first trading in detergents, then cashing in on the early boom in computer technology. While it lasted, he

bought a Porsche, designer clothes, took flying lessons, and stayed in five-star hotels.

The firm collapsed after a year, but Rose created a new company operating from the same premises. When that also folded, his behaviour grew wildly erratic. He'd sit in his office with a crowbar, threatening people he owed money to, and throwing computers around if creditors challenged him.

With his business in ruins, Rose had to sell the Porsche and company premises and move in with his brother. He was living on social security and his wife had left him. Eight years after the tragic debacle of Juliet Rowe, it was time to start plotting a new crime. This time, he told himself, there would be no mistakes.

He decided to target Foodbrokers Ltd., his

former employers, as he was still angry about a poor reference they'd given him when he left. The company had a £106 million turnover and its boss was Desmond Cracknell. His

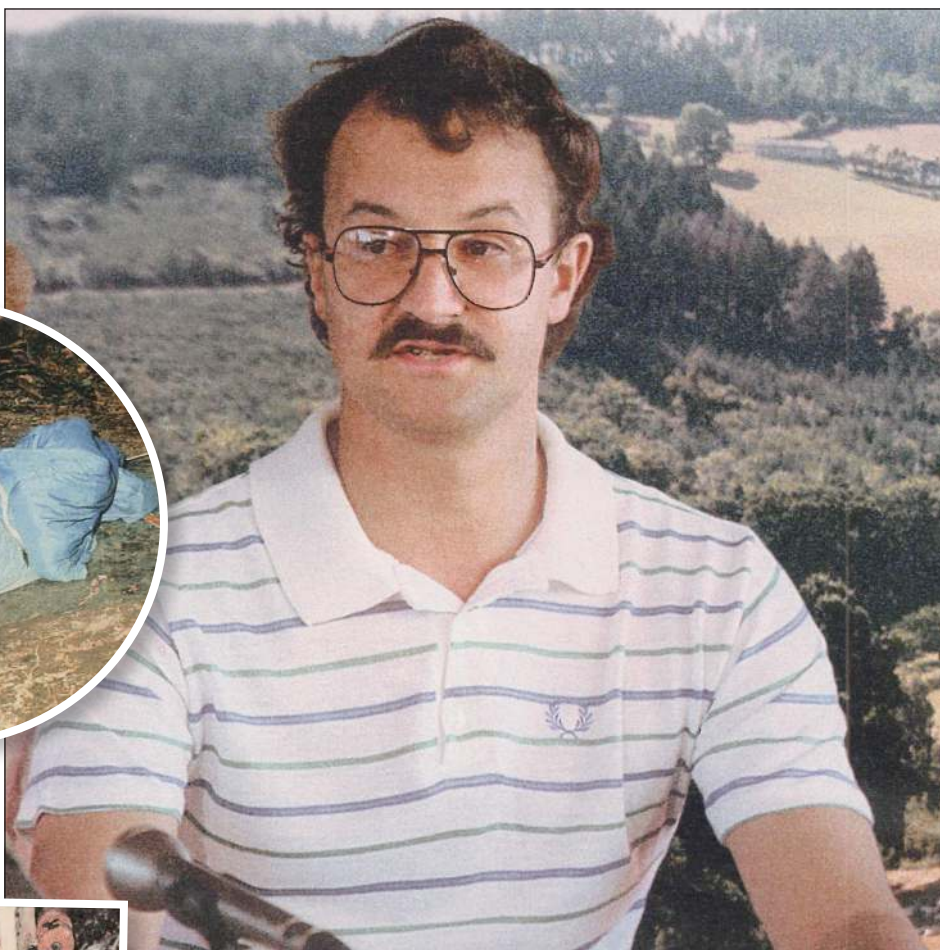
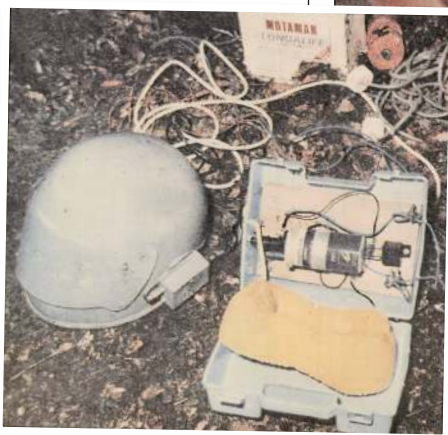
32-year-old son Victor was deputy chairman.

Rose arrived in the early hours of Monday, August 14th, 1989, at Victor's up-market home in the pleasant Surrey village of East Horsley. Dressed in a black balaclava, sunglasses, and army fatigues, he padded unseen through tree-lined lanes among the expensive detached houses.

He stopped behind a bush on Victor's front lawn, and checked inside his holdall for a crowbar, two pairs of handcuffs and a sawn-off shotgun. The place was in darkness, and he set to work with the crowbar on the frame of a ground-floor window. Minutes later, he was over the sill and inside.

Victor and his wife Deborah were sleeping soundly upstairs. Along the landing, their four sons were unaware of any danger.

Victor awoke with a start as the bedroom light snapped on. A tall man was standing at the foot of the bed



Above, Victor Cracknell who woke in the early hours to find an intruder in his bedroom brandishing a sawn-off shotgun. Insets left, top to bottom, the sleeping bag in which Mr. Cracknell was bound up; the helmet he was forced to wear – Rose had threatened to pump an electric current through it

pointing a gun at him. Before Deborah could scream, the intruder told her to keep quiet.

"I'm not going to harm you," he said. "I'm only interested in cash. Please, no heroics. This shotgun is loaded."

The gunman reached into his pocket and placed a sheet of paper on

The note was was a ransom demand for £1 million for the release of her husband. It warned that if the police or press were informed he would be killed

the dressing table, signalling to Mrs. Cracknell to read it. Typed in what appeared to be broken English, the note purported to come from a terrorist group called the People's Revolutionary Group Active Service Unit. It was a ransom demand for £1 million for the release of her husband who, it said, was being kidnapped. The note warned that if the police or press were informed, he would be killed. Failure to pay would

lead to his mutilation and eventual execution. Delays and cheating would result in loss of a finger, ear and nose.

Rose ordered Victor to dress, and told Deborah to manacle her husband with the handcuffs he'd thrown on the bed, and blindfold him with sticky tape. Then he directed her to kneel, and with the gun pressed against her cheek, instructed her to cuff herself to the dressing table.

Grabbing Victor in the back with the gun, he pushed him out of the bedroom, telling Deborah: "If you want to see your husband alive again, pay the ransom."

A few seconds later, she heard the sound of Victor's BMW being driven away into the night.

It took her precious hours to free herself and contact her father-in-law, millionaire businessman Desmond Cracknell. He decided to ignore the kidnapper's orders, and rang the police.

Detective Superintendent John Milner took charge of the investigation, realising the police could do little at that moment except see what the kidnapper did next. He doubted that the ransom demand came from a terrorist group, but had no way of knowing whether this was the work of a gang or someone alone. Either way, the demand was short and to the point: £1 million by Thursday or Victor



Cracknell would be murdered. Thursday was only three days away.

Milner had to convince the kidnapper that the police were not involved, so he left a small party of detectives hidden in

the house, but fitted recorders and trackers to every phone in the Cracknell family.

Meanwhile, Victor was trussed like a trapped animal on the back seat of a car being driven to south Devon. After leaving the house in the BMW, the kidnapper had forced him into another vehicle waiting in the car park at East Horsley station. Still blindfolded and manacled, he endured the 200-mile journey with his hands pinioned



Juliet Rowe – she was brutally murdered in her own home by Rose in September 1981

painfully behind his legs. Now, from the quiet and birdsong, he knew he must be deep in the country.

Bracken, brambles and nettles tore at his trousers and stung his ankles as Rose propelled him through the undergrowth. When at last they stopped, Rose zipped him tightly into a sleeping bag, covered his eyes with new tape, plugged his ears with Plasticine, and gagged him. He wound a “cable tie” collar round his neck with a wire tethered to a tree so if he moved too far it would throttle him.

Before he left, Rose forced his hostage to tape a message for his family to prove he was still alive. His children heard their father sobbing and pleading: “Please, Dad. Do what they say or I’ll be killed.”

Although he occasionally brought his prisoner water and a sandwich, Rose left him alone day and night in the deep, wooded ravine, regardless of the weather. At one stage, a downpour left him and the sleeping bag sodden.



Keith Rose relaxing at home – the “master criminal” had refused to give up his dream of the good life, and mediocrity wasn’t an option

On Tuesday afternoon, Rose rang the Cracknells’ home and made his first ransom demand: the full amount in used £10, £20 and £50 notes. Next day he rang again, this time more insistent. But Desmond Cracknell said he

Rose forced his hostage to tape a message for his family to prove he was still alive. His children heard their father pleading: “Do what they say or I’ll be killed”

couldn’t raise £1 million in cash. Would £130,000 be enough?

Rose refused the offer angrily, but over the course of several more calls Desmond Cracknell gradually convinced him that £1 million was an unrealistic

figure. He pledged to add another £12,000 raised from family, friends and colleagues.

Police worked feverishly to trace the calls, but could only tell they were coming from somewhere west of Bristol.

The Thursday deadline came and went, then Rose called again. He’d decided to accept £142,000 and instructed Cracknell to leave it in a clearing close to a lay-by on the A31 Hogs Back near Guildford. Rose warned that any attempt to intercept the drop meant death for his son.

Late that night, the money was picked up by a shadowy figure who stowed it in the boot of an Audi car and accelerated away. Undercover officers, camouflaged and hidden in the fields and hedgerows, were watching, and for the next three hours the Audi was followed as it headed for Devon and a large Victorian house in Prospect Park, Exeter.



Keith Rose enters a police car after his arrest

Police continued their covert surveillance, waiting for Rose to lead them to Victor before they seized him. But the impasse was suddenly resolved when news came that Victor had managed to escape.

Cold, hungry and frightened, he'd struggled free of the sleeping bag and made a run for it with the choke collar still round his neck, his wrists still cuffed. Stumbling across fields, he'd spotted a farm and begged the owners to dial 999.

Firemen used bolt cutters on the manacles that had been round Victor's wrists since the beginning of his ordeal 96 hours ago. He was taken to hospital suffering from hypothermia, but was soon able to tell police the full story of his captivity.

Now he was safe they were free to make the arrest, and squads of armed officers surrounded the house in Prospect Park. Marksmen swarmed



Above, Parkhurst Prison. Below, left to right, a bearded Keith Rose and fellow-escapees Andrew Rodger and Matthew Williams



inside, guns drawn, rounding up people in the building's nine flats. They found £110,920 of the ransom cash still in Rose's wardrobe, the sawn-off shotgun, and the rest of the ransom deposited at other addresses he'd visited earlier in the day.

Rose told detectives he'd planned to buy a £40,000 Maserati, a deer park, two farms with fish ponds, and a £10,000 diamond ring for his second wife.

At his Old Bailey trial in September 1990, prosecuting counsel Mr. Godfrey Carey QC told the court that Rose had been jealous of Victor Cracknell's wealth and this had made him "determined to sting him."

While awaiting trial, Rose attempted suicide after hearing his wife had moved a lover into their bungalow.

In sentencing him to 15 years, Mr. Justice Henry Pownall told him: "You are vicious, violent, dangerous, evil, callous and warped."

Yet again, the lawbreaker and killer who saw himself as a born again 007

was forced to face further humiliating failures. But a new and astonishing twist in the story was about to emerge.

With the media blackout lifted, press and TV carried accounts of Rose's appearance in court. In Devon, the story snared Gerald Rowe's attention.

Rose told detectives he'd planned to buy a £40,000 Maserati, a deer park, two farms with fish ponds, and a £10,000 diamond ring for his second wife

The mention of the Cracknell family's company, Foodbrokers Ltd., reminded him that he'd done business with them around the time of his wife's murder eight years ago. Her killer, of course, had never been caught.

Now he remembered that a month before Victor Cracknell's kidnap, he'd

been sitting in a pub near Budleigh Salterton when a stranger approached him at the bar and said: "Remember me? I used to call on you when I was working as a sales rep for Foodbrokers."

Rowe told the man he didn't recall his face, but he continued: "I was pulled in by the police over the murder of your wife because they were checking all the licensed guns in the area and I own a pistol similar to the one that killed her."

At the time, Rowe had dismissed the encounter as trivial. But now he suspected a connection and reported it to the police. Detective Superintendent Mike Walsh asked him to describe the man. It was Keith Rose.

Walsh dug out the archived case file. Fingerprints from the crime scene – which had never been identified – were now found to match Rose's. He also found that the gun, examined in 1981, was still in Rose's possession. But this time it was test-fired, showing scratches on the bullets identical to the ones that had killed Juliet Rowe.

Rose was now brought from prison to

stand trial again, this time for murder. But the Cracknell kidnap was not referred to during the proceedings in case it prejudiced the jury.

Rose denied the charge, saying he'd been at a business appointment in Barnstaple at the time of the murder, and must have left fingerprints when he'd visited the Rowses' home some weeks previously to install a cordless phone.

But after a 16-day trial, jurors found him guilty, and in March 1991 Mr. Justice Ognall sentenced him to life saying: "You are an evil and exceptionally dangerous man. This life sentence means life."

Rose interrupted, blurting out: "I'm not guilty of murdering Mrs. Rowe," and as he was dragged away he shouted: "My lord, I believe in capital punishment."

His mental condition had been a concern throughout the trial, and prison officers had found razor blades among his clothes. Rose, it seemed, had planned to commit suicide by slashing his throat in front of a packed courtroom.

While Detective Superintendent Walsh was commended by the judge for his fresh investigation into Juliet Rowe's murder, the trial prompted two major criticisms of police negligence at the time she died: firstly that Rose's pistol had not been test-fired, and secondly that his alibi was never checked. The oversights had left Rose free for eight years to plot more crimes.

Walsh admitted there had been flaws, but pointed out that computerisation of crime records had now replaced the cumbersome card index system in use in 1981, and police efficiency was therefore much improved.

For the next four years, Rose kept his head down in Parkhurst maximum-security prison on the Isle of Wight. Known as Britain's "Alcatraz," it was one of the toughest jails in the country, incarcerating infamous killers like Ian Brady, the Yorkshire Ripper and the Krays.

At the time of his conviction, Rose was considered so dangerous he joined the "exclusive" ranks of prisoners serving "whole life" sentences, never to be released.

Faced with endless imprisonment, his I-can-do-anything hubris surfaced again, and he joined forces with fellow-murderer Andrew Rodger and Hitler-worshipping Matthew Williams who was serving life for arson, explosions and poisoning. All three men may have been brutal, but they were certainly not unintelligent, and over the months they devised an outrageous escape plan that would prove a major embarrassment to Home Secretary Michael Howard.

Exercising huge patience and resolve, the men managed to construct and hide a three-section metal ladder during classes in the prison's welding workshop. With nothing more than meticulous



A bespectacled Keith Rose as a boy – he remains behind bars

observation, they also copied and forged a passkey which could unlock virtually every door in Parkhurst.

The escape was planned for the first Sunday in January, and at dusk the men finished their usual exercise session, but hid in the gym afterwards instead of returning to their cells with the other prisoners. Back on the wing, the warders didn't notice 10 prisoners had somehow become seven.

Rose denied the charge, saying he'd been at a business appointment at the time of the murder, and must have left fingerprints when he'd visited the Rowses' home weeks previously

Wearing their own clothes under their prison uniform, they carried the ladder along the corridors, using the passkey to unlock door after door. Scaling the 25ft perimeter wall, they cut through the fence, undetected by security cameras, and walked along the road to Newport until they reached a town taxi rank.

"We want the private airfield at Shankhill," Rose told the cabbie. "Think it's about eight miles away?"

The men had planned to avoid ferries

and spurned the idea of a makeshift DIY boat across the five-mile stretch of the Solent. Rose was an amateur pilot, so stealing a plane seemed the stylish route to freedom, especially as they knew the little airfield would be deserted at this time of year. But it was a gamble, a long shot with unforeseen complications.

When they arrived, the only plane not locked up in the main hangar was a small Cessna 105, a light training aircraft meant to carry two people. With three heavy men on board, they'd have no chance of taking off.

They had to use a crowbar to open the Cessna's door, and then found there was no cockpit or ignition key. Rose tried a crude piece of metal to get the engine going, but it broke off in the lock.

With the Cessna a write-off, they had to find somewhere to hide as they knew the search would be escalating. Woods and derelict farm buildings littered that area of the island, and the men quickly sought shelter.

For five days they evaded 250 police officers, helicopters with searchlights, aircraft with infra-red detection, radar scanning and 120,000 island residents familiar with "wanted" posters.

On the sixth night, an off-duty prison officer spotted them trudging along the Newport-Ryde road, cold, hungry and miserable. Rose and Rodger gave themselves up, but Williams took off across open fields, pursued by police and dogs. Little did he realise it, but he was heading straight back towards Parkhurst, only two miles from the perimeter wall he'd scaled five days earlier.

Constable Tony Woolcock and his dog Bongo finally cornered Williams at the island marina. Desperate and exhausted, he threw himself off a pontoon into the icy water, but was pulled out minutes later by Woolcock, defeated and severely hypothermic.

Keith Rose had spent 26 years in maximum security when he appealed to the High Court to be moved to a cushier jail as he was a "changed" man. His lawyers argued it was a waste of taxpayers' money to keep someone in a Category A cell when they could now be trusted in more open conditions.

The appeal was an opening skirmish in Rose's fight to be released from prison on licence as high-security prisoners are not eligible for release under those conditions.

In a review of his case in 2016, Mr. Justice Akenhead ruled that Rose's continued protestations of innocence and allegations of mistreatment by the prison system were "irrelevant" to the minimum of 30 years he must serve for murdering Juliet Rowe and the 15 years for kidnapping Victor Cracknell.

Perhaps Keith Rose sometimes reflects that if he hadn't tapped Gerald Rowe on the shoulder that evening in the pub, his 15-year sentence would already be finished, and he'd be a free man. Arrogance was always his undoing.

Kidnapper given life for execution of shop magnate's wife

By Paul Stokes

A COMPANY director was jailed for life last night for the "callous execution" of a supermarket magnate's wife a decade ago.

Keith Rose, 42, was convicted after a 16-day trial at Exeter Crown Court of murdering Mrs Juliet Rowe at her country home.

The jury had not been aware that he was already serving 15 years for kidnapping Mr Victor Cracknell, 34, a food company tycoon's son, at gunpoint. Mr Cracknell was held for a £1 million ransom.

Rose's arrest for that crime in 1989 put detectives on the path to solving Mrs Rowe's



Keith Rose: 'a truly

described as the callous, brutal act of an executioner."

It is believed Rose, armed with a .22 Colt Woodsman pistol, posed as a telephone engineer to persuade the mother of two to let him in as she was doing the housework.

Rose, of Coplestone, Exeter, was questioned during routine police inquiries four days after the killing.

All 22 gun owners in Devon were questioned and their weapons test-fired. But Rose's pistol was not tested because it was handed in dismantled and thought unsafe to use.

The brief account he was asked to give of his movements on the day of the murder also went unchecked. He did not

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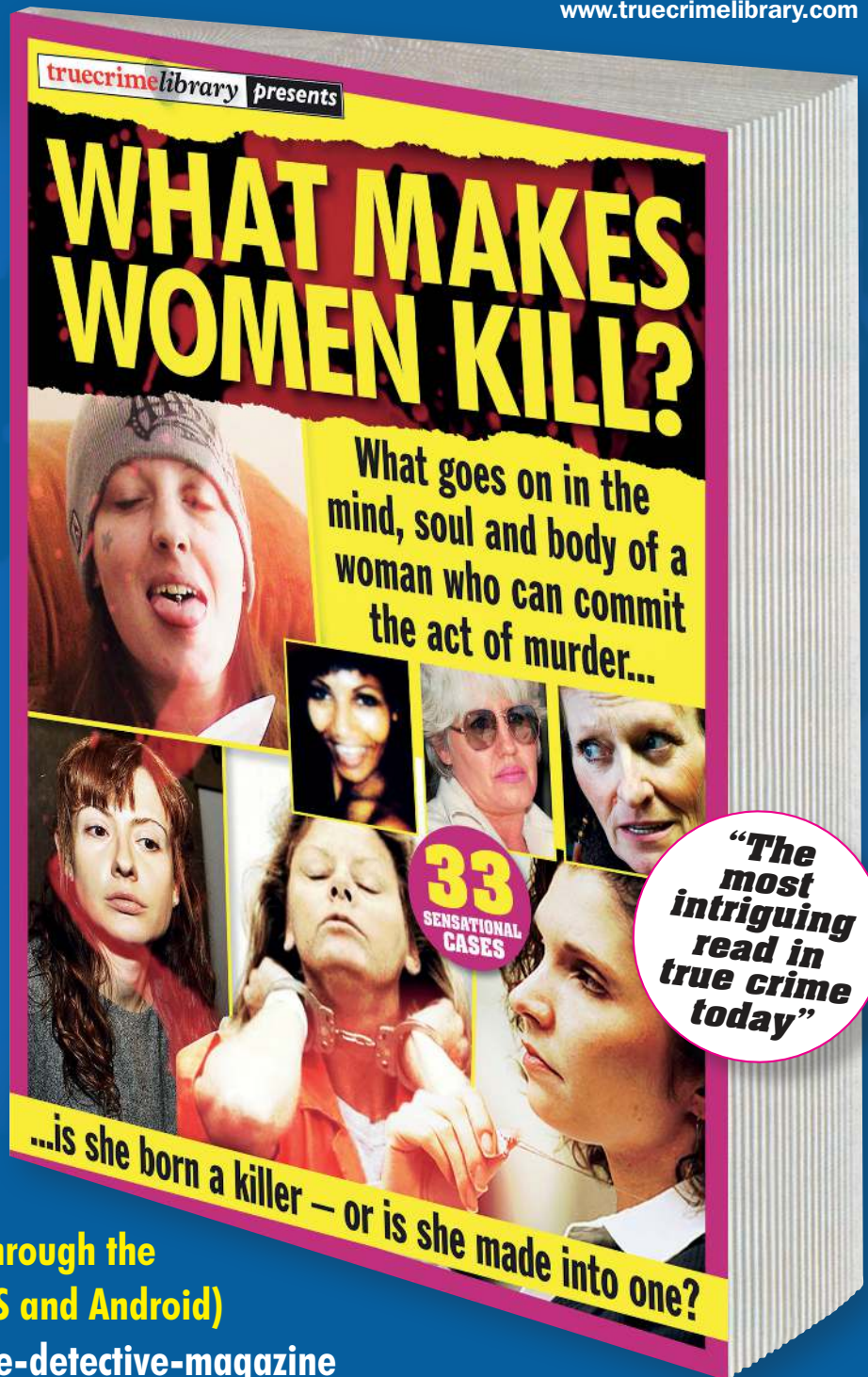
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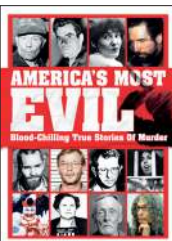
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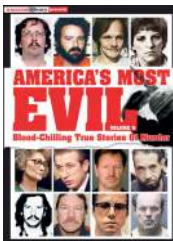
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"Fingerprint Every Man" MANHUNT ON NEVER BEFORE

ALICE BEATRICE Cox was one of those who keep going when the rest have stopped. Widowed and living alone, at 74 she was still working at the Reading Co-op dairy to supplement her pension. Ill-health, however, had compelled her to take time off recently, and on April 1st, 1966, her Salisbury Road neighbours became concerned when they noticed that her curtains were still drawn at 10 a.m.

This was unusual, but they thought she was perhaps having a lie-in as she had been suffering from bronchitis. Her curtains were still drawn an hour later, however, so one of her neighbours went to investigate. She had known Mrs. Cox for 20 years and had a key to the house, but the front door had been left ajar and swung open at her touch.

She went inside with another woman neighbour, who accompanied her upstairs to Mrs. Cox's bedroom. They were surprised to find it in total disorder, with drawers open and underwear and papers scattered about. The counterpane, sheets and blankets had been rolled into a bundle on one side of the bed, exposing the mattress on the other side. They saw nothing of Mrs. Cox, so they

Starting in Salisbury Road, 89 officers took part in this operation. By the end of a week they had taken 10,113 sets of prints from men and youths living within a third of a mile of the crime scene



55 Salisbury Road, home of Alice Cox

left the house and telephoned her son.

He joined them shortly afterwards, and one of the women re-entered the house with him. This time she walked right round Mrs. Cox's bed, and she was startled to see a leg hanging out from the far side.

The police were called, and Constable Hubert White found that a window at the back of the house had been opened, the place had been ransacked, and the gas meter emptied. Mrs. Cox lay dead on her bed, with a pillow pressed over her head.

The Home Office pathologist Professor Keith Simpson was called to the scene, and his autopsy found that Mrs. Cox had died in the early hours of April 1st from suffocation. She also had a shallow stab wound in her chest, and

her face was slightly bruised.

Meanwhile detectives found that the intruder had apparently drunk a bottle of stout and eaten two packets of crisps before he went upstairs. Footprints in the back garden suggested an opportunist thief, and more footprints were found in the back garden of a house two doors away, the home of a neighbour who said Mrs. Cox had been very active for her age.

He said that "Auntie Bea," as she was known, "was always on the go and went to work every day. She was always getting around, and always had time for a friendly word with anyone she met. Why anyone should want to break into her house I can't understand."

"Mrs. Cox always made a perfect cup of tea," said the assistant manager of the

le In Reading!"

A SCALE

E SEEN

Case report by
MATTHEW SPICER

Fingerprints discovered on the window ledge at 55 Salisbury Road proved instrumental in catching the killer



Above, the murder scene and body of Alice Cox (right). The cause of death was suffocation but the pathologist also found a stab wound and bruising on the victim

dairy where she had been the tea-lady and office cleaner for 26 years. "She arrived here every morning six days a week on the dot of seven o'clock, and left at four-thirty in the afternoon."

The police were told that the lights at her house had been seen to go out at 9 p.m. on March 31st, and at one o'clock the following morning a neighbour heard a single scream but did nothing about it.

A week into the investigation, Scotland Yard was called in and Detective Superintendent Herbert Guiver arrived from London to lead the inquiry. He began by issuing a photograph of the knife that was believed to have inflicted Mrs. Cox's chest wound. It had traces of blood on its six-inch blade, had been



found on a building site near her home, and Professor Simpson said it could have been used for the stabbing.

Fingerprints which were not Mrs. Cox's had been found on a pane of the opened window and on a deed box in her bedroom. Whoever left them had no criminal record, for they were not on file

at Scotland Yard. So who was he?

To find out, Guiver gave the order: "Fingerprint every male in Reading." So the prints were taken of every man or boy over the age of 14. All the prints would be destroyed when the investigation was completed, the Chief Constable of Reading, Mr. Arthur Iveson, assured the public.

Starting in Salisbury Road, 89 officers took part in this operation. By the end of a week they had taken 10,113 sets of prints from men and youths living within a third of a mile of the crime scene. The prints were then checked at Reading's former Oxford ballroom where an incident room had been set up, but none of them matched those found at Mrs. Cox's home.

One occupant of a house in the area covered, however, had yet to be seen. This was a Cambridge Street lodging house about 500 yards from the crime scene. So many West Indian lodgers lived there that the police had paid the house several visits, and even then their trawl was incomplete. Another man was sleeping in the house, the officers were told, but he was seldom seen. He was using a room at the very top of the house, and the other lodgers knew him only as "Frank." They said they thought he crept in late at night when everyone else was asleep.

The landlord at first said the room was unoccupied, but when he was questioned again he dropped this pretence and handed the officers the key.

They found that the room was sparsely furnished but clearly lived in. The mystery lodger, they learned, was Benjamin Frank Achilles Comas, a 27-year-old unemployed stoker from the Caribbean island of St. Vincent. He had formerly lived at the landlord's other house, 57 Salisbury Road, next-door to Mrs. Cox's, and he was nowhere to be seen.

The officers sent for Detective Sergeant Ivor Dyer, a fingerprint

specialist who lifted a clear set of prints from the lodger's tin of boot polish. One glance was enough to tell him they looked promising, and back at the incident room he found they matched the prints lifted from Mrs. Cox's deed box and window.

Nobody in Cambridge Street seemed able to describe Comas in any detail, but further inquiries amongst the town's West Indian community soon yielded a good description.

At 10.15 p.m. on April 24th two constables spotted a man they believed to be him at a coffee stall just off Oxford Road. He said he was Benjamin Brown of 11 Waylen Street, and told them they had taken his fingerprints the previous day. They told him there was a query about 11 Waylen Street, and asked him to accompany them to the incident room.

"I had them done yesterday," he repeated. "I'm not coming. I have to meet my wife. The only way you can get me there is to lock me up for the night."

So they arrested him.

Questioned by Superintendent Guiver at the incident room, the man again claimed that his prints had been taken and that he was Benjamin Brown.

"We'll check this with our records," said Detective Inspector Arthur Wooldridge. "It'll only take a few minutes."



The murderer seemed to have gained access through an open window at the rear of the house

"I was just going to meet my wife in St. Mary's Butts," the suspect objected. "She'll be on the half-past ten bus. I hope it won't take long."

Wooldridge returned shortly afterwards and shook his head.

"We have no record of Benjamin Brown's fingerprints," Guiver told the suspect. "The quickest way to clear this matter up is for us to take your fingerprints now."

"But you must have them," the man protested. "You've taken them once, two days ago, and you're not having them again."

"You can't have had them taken," Wooldridge told him. "Otherwise we'd have them on record. Let us take them and if they are cleared you can get away."

"You are not taking them again."

"Well, you'll have to remain here until this matter is cleared up one way or the other," said Guiver, leaving the room.

Ten minutes later, he returned to tell the suspect: "We believe that your name is Comas, and that we have not yet taken your fingerprints."

The suspect made for the door and began to struggle and shout as Guiver grabbed his arm. Seconds later, however, he calmed down. "All right," he said, "you can take my fingerprints now."

They were taken, and at 11.20 p.m. Guiver told him: "As a result of what we now know you will be taken to Reading police station where you will be detained and charged with killing Mrs. Alice Beatrice Cox."

Comas began to struggle again, so he was handcuffed to Wooldridge before being taken to Reading's police headquarters, where Guiver arrived shortly afterwards.

"I think you should know that your fingerprints are identical with those found at 55 Salisbury Road, where an elderly lady was found murdered in her bed on April 1st," the superintendent told Comas. "That is the house next door to 57 Salisbury Road where I believe you used to live."

"I've never been in 55 Salisbury Road," Comas replied.

He was ordered to take off his clothes, which were replaced with others, and he was told he would be detained overnight.

"My landlord made me do it," he suddenly blurted out. "He gave me knife and tell me to stick lady if she squeal."

"Do you want to tell me what happened?" asked Guiver.

"Yes, I will tell you."

"Do you want to write it yourself? You can if you want to."

"I don't read too good. You write,"

Comas replied, and after being cautioned he dictated a statement.

When he described the knife, he was asked if he had seen the photograph of it in the newspapers. "No," he said, so he was shown the photo. "Yes, that's the knife," he told the superintendent.

In a later statement he said that his landlord lived at 57 Salisbury Road, and had told him there was an old lady next

G

THE WORLD'S **WORST** KILLERS

Belle Gunness

• **United States**

BRYNHILD PAULSDATTER Størseth was born on November 11th, 1859, in Selbu, Norway, but moved to the USA in 1881, and as "Belle" set out to make her fortune in Chicago, Illinois. The "accidental" deaths of her first two husbands and her children – all heavily-insured – made her wealthy but raised suspicions amongst the family of her latest unfortunate spouse.

When the insurance cheques came in, she opted for a quieter life and bought a farm. During her transition to La Porte, Indiana, newly-widowed, fellow Norwegian Peter Gunness became her next husband, marrying on April 1st, 1902. A week later his infant daughter died while alone in the house with Belle, and in December 1902, Gunness met with a "tragic accident." According to Belle, part of a sausage-grinding machine fell from a high shelf, causing a fatal head injury.

Another \$3,000 richer, and despite the local coroner accusing her of

murder (which she was acquitted of), Belle now started a "lonely-hearts" venture, drawing many wealthy middle-aged men into her web with classified ads. Farm help and lover Ray Lamphere helped her rob and kill and dispose of her suitors. But when Lamphere and Belle fell out, and the relatives of her victims began to realise all trails led to her door, it was time for her next move.

On April 28th, 1908, her farm burnt down. Lamphere was arrested and accused of arson and the murder of Belle and her children. He claimed that the headless female body found in the embers was not Belle, and tests proved strychnine had indeed been the cause of death.

Investigators found human bones and bodies, many in the pig pen, of 20 to 40 victims but Belle, it seems, escaped to claim her place in folklore...



Got a suggestion for the **World's Worst Killers**? Write to us at True Detective, P.O. Box 736, London SE26 6NQ, UK or email truedetective@truecriminallibrary.com



Scotland Yard issued a photograph of a bloody knife found nearby that they believed to be the murder weapon

door who had money. Comas claimed that the landlord said that if he got into her house and got him the money he would give him £30. The landlord threatened to shoot him, Comas said, if he did not do what he wanted. They entered the house together and went upstairs to Mrs. Cox's bedroom, where the landlord showed him a box. He put his hand on Mrs. Cox's face, she squealed, and the landlord left.

Comas claimed he did not know he had cut Mrs. Cox until she squealed. He said he then went to Cambridge Street, where the landlord told him to stay indoors until Comas started work again. He did not take any money.

When detectives questioned the landlord, he denied any involvement in the crime. He said Comas had failed to pay his rent, and had been threatened with prosecution if he continued to sleep at the Cambridge Street house without paying.

On July 11th, 1966, Comas stepped into the dock at Gloucester Assizes. He denied murder, but admitted house-breaking with intent to steal.

The court was told that although he was living on National Assistance, he had been seen with more than £30 in his possession. The police had found only sixpence halfpenny in Mrs. Cox's house.

Mr. Douglas Draycott, defending, said that Comas would say he was standing at the foot of Mrs. Cox's bed, interfering with her deed box, when she woke up. He had a knife sticking out of his pocket, and he would say that when Mrs. Cox sat up and grabbed at him, he fell on her bed and the knife accidentally caused her chest wound.

"I can conceive that it is possible that that is the way the wound was inflicted," the defence counsel told the jury.

Comas's landlord denied giving him £30, and said that Comas was not at 57 Salisbury Road on the night of the murder. He also denied telling Comas, "If you are after money look next door for some."

In the witness-box, Comas said he had asked his landlord for money to settle an affiliation debt, and the landlord had given him £30.

On the night of Mrs. Cox's death he was at the landlord's Salisbury Road house. He saw the landlord, who asked him to repay the £30. He had no money, and the landlord told him, "Mrs. Cox is living next door – you could get in

through the back window."

Comas said he thought about this and took it as a laugh. But then he told the landlord, "All right, then."

The landlord gave him a knife to open the latch of a window, but he found one open and pushed it up. The knife was in his coat pocket.

Inside the house he found nothing to steal downstairs, so he went up to the front bedroom. He looked in the drawers of the dressing-table but saw nothing he wanted. He found nothing in the wardrobe, either, and then saw a box on a stand beside the bed. As he picked it up, Mrs. Cox caught hold of him and

had lied in saying his landlord went into Mrs. Cox's house with him. He said that when he told the landlord what had happened, the landlord said, "Keep away and say nothing." The landlord later told him that Mrs. Cox was dead, and repeated that he had better stay away.

Mr. Justice Stable asked: "Why did Mrs. Cox stop screaming?"

"I don't know," Comas replied.

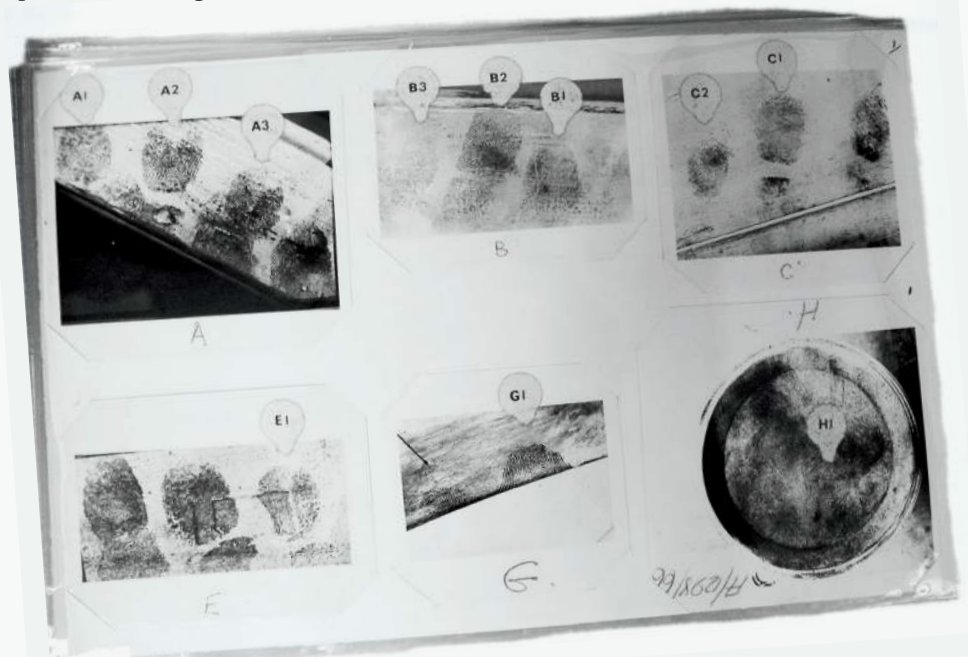
"You said earlier that a light came on in the bedroom. Did you turn it on?"

"No, Mrs. Cox put it on. She was groaning but was alive when I left. The light was still on as I left."

In cross-examination, the prosecutor Mr. F. Blennerhassett told Comas: "You yourself took this pillow and jammed it in this lady's face so that she could not breathe."

"No."

"You took money from her box and left the house with it."



Multiple fingerprints from the scene of the crime (above) would eventually prove the killer's downfall

he pushed her away. At the same time he fell forward, putting his hand on the knife. He fell on Mrs. Cox, and when she squealed he got up to get away.

He felt something wet on his wrist, and saw it was blood when a light was switched on. Mrs. Cox was holding her thigh.

It was he who screamed, Comas said. He asked Mrs. Cox if she was hurt, but she didn't reply. He picked up the box, put it on the bed and left the house through the front door. He had not intended to hurt Mrs. Cox, and he was frightened and sorry.

He denied putting a pillow or any bedclothes over her face, and said she was awake when he left.

He admitted that in his statement he

"No."

To nobody's surprise, the jury didn't believe Comas's story. Jailing him for life, the judge told him: "You have been found guilty on the plainest possible evidence of the horrible murder of a defenceless old lady of 74. One's blood runs cold to imagine the agony of fear that was her last conscious experience."

After serving nearly 12 years, Frank Comas was released and deported in May 1978.

EDITOR'S NOTE

After his trial it emerged that Frank Comas had formerly lived at 9 Lake Avenue, Slough, where a young woman was murdered in 1964. But he had nothing to do with that crime. The victim, 32-year-old Sylvia Bull, was stabbed to death by an ex-lover, Kenneth Howard, from Barbados, who was jailed for life.

Richard Justin • 1876 **LITTLE ANNIE'S TORMENTOR WAS HER "DA"**

FOUR IS a tender age to have enemies, but little Annie Thompson had one and she could do nothing about it. There was no escaping her persecutor. He beat her. He punched her. He burnt her. And Annie could only cry her little heart out with each fresh, undeserved punishment. She couldn't avoid her attacker because they lived in the same house. He was her father.

Annie was his illegitimate daughter, and he couldn't stand the sight of her. He had two sons by his first wife, and eight years after her death he had

But as the months passed Justin's violence intensified. On the morning of Friday, March 12th, 1909, little Annie could take no more. She found peace at last with the final savage beating administered that day, because she died.

Seeing the child's injuries, the police were suspicious when Justin explained that Annie was hyperactive, forever hurting herself when she bumped into things. The officers' suspicions were confirmed at the coroner's inquest three days after Annie's death.

The court heard that six weeks earlier neighbours had seen little Annie with a black eye. The next day her other eye was blackened, and when questioned the child said her father was responsible. One neighbour had heard Mrs. Justin say to her husband, "Hit me, and leave the child alone."

Mrs. McWilliams had become suspicious about Annie's black eyes, swollen chin, a missing tooth and a burn on her wrist. Fresh marks appeared on Annie's face every day. In February

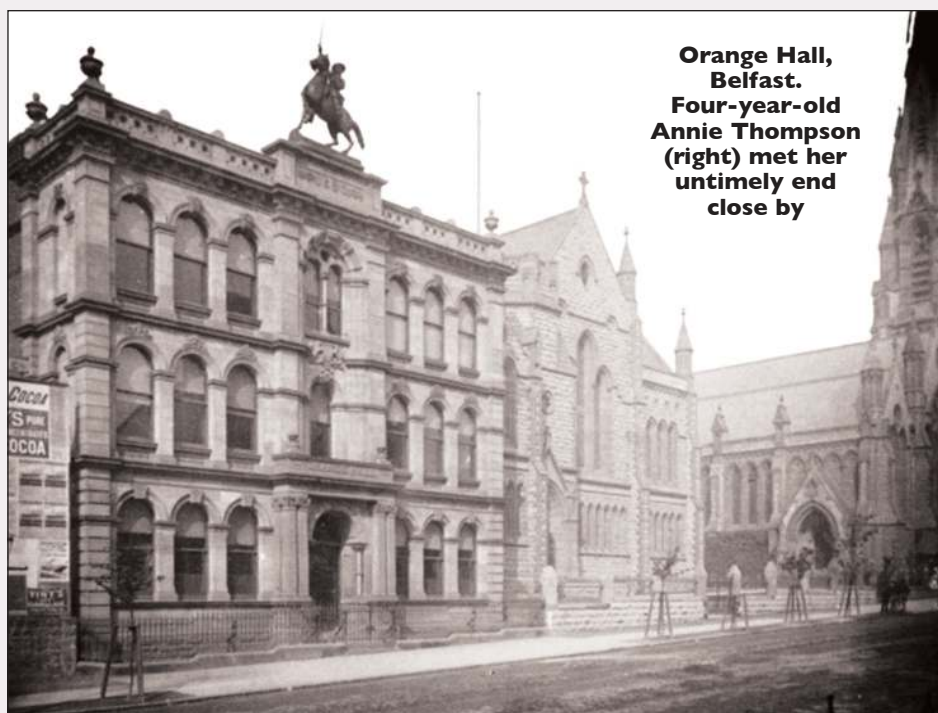
also displayed the marks of a beating. The physician said he thought the injuries had been inflicted with a cane. Annie's death had finally been caused by blows to her head.

At the conclusion of the inquest Richard Justin was arrested. By the time he denied murdering his daughter, at Belfast Assizes in July, the prosecution had further evidence of his brutality.

The attorney-general, the Rt. Hon. R. R. Cherry KC, MP, claimed that Justin's plan was to beat his daughter systematically. She would then be so weakened that her death would appear to be from natural causes and he would be freed from the reproach of having an illegitimate child.

When police searched Annie's room, said Mr. Cherry, they had found three instruments of torture: a bamboo cane, an iron rod and a block of wood. It was believed that the wood had caused the fatal injury to the child's head, which inside was a mass of blood.

Mrs. Margaret Craig had lived in



married Annie's mother, Margaret Ellen Thompson, in 1908.

Thick-set and with a moustache, 31-year-old Richard Justin was a labourer employed by Belfast Corporation at Alexandra Park, and on his marriage to Margaret Thompson they went to live at 84 Lepper Street. There he beat his defenceless daughter unmercifully whenever he felt like it, which was daily.

Little Annie had a respite from this treatment during the day, however, because her mother went out to work at a mill and left her with a neighbour, Mrs. Bridget McWilliams, who looked after Annie until Mrs. Justin came home in the evening. Prior to her mother's marriage, Annie had lived with Mrs. McWilliams, who had become fond of her, describing her as a good child.

***"Da, Da, don't beat
me any more!"
Little Annie cried***

the neighbour had stripped the child to examine her, finding that she was bruised from head to toe. She asked Annie who had done this, and the child said it was her "da."

Confronted by Mrs. McWilliams, who threatened to report the matter to the authorities, Annie's mother assured the neighbour that the child would come to no further harm. But Mrs. McWilliams never saw Annie again.

A doctor told the court that Annie's wrists had been burnt, probably with a red-hot poker. Her back and buttocks

the same house as the Justins. She said that in December 1908, on their first night as her neighbours, Justin pushed the little girl out into the yard as if she were a pig and began punching her. Mrs. Craig testified that after that she repeatedly heard cries from the child, particularly when her mother was out. On one occasion she heard Annie cry: "Da, da, don't beat me any more!"

Mrs. Justin's sister Annie told the court that she had stayed with the couple over Christmas and the New Year. She said that every night Justin had stripped his daughter and lashed her with a bamboo cane, explaining that this was to stop her going too near the fire.

Spectators in the court wept audibly as another neighbour, Annie Loughins, recalled the day Annie Thompson died.

Justin had come to Miss Loughins at 9 a.m., saying that his daughter had fallen out of bed.

The child had a black eye, scratches on her face, and black marks on her chin and thigh. Miss Loughins told Justin to fetch a doctor, which he did. But two hours passed before the physician arrived, and by then little Annie had died.

Annie McGeough, who worked at Whitehouse Mill, said that before noon on March 12th Justin came to the factory and told his wife to come home because Annie had fallen out of bed. Mrs. Justin had replied, "I knewed you would finish her at last."

The court heard from Professor Symmers of Belfast University that in addition to the injuries detailed at the inquest, a post-mortem examination had revealed that Annie's chest was severely bruised, as if she had been beaten with



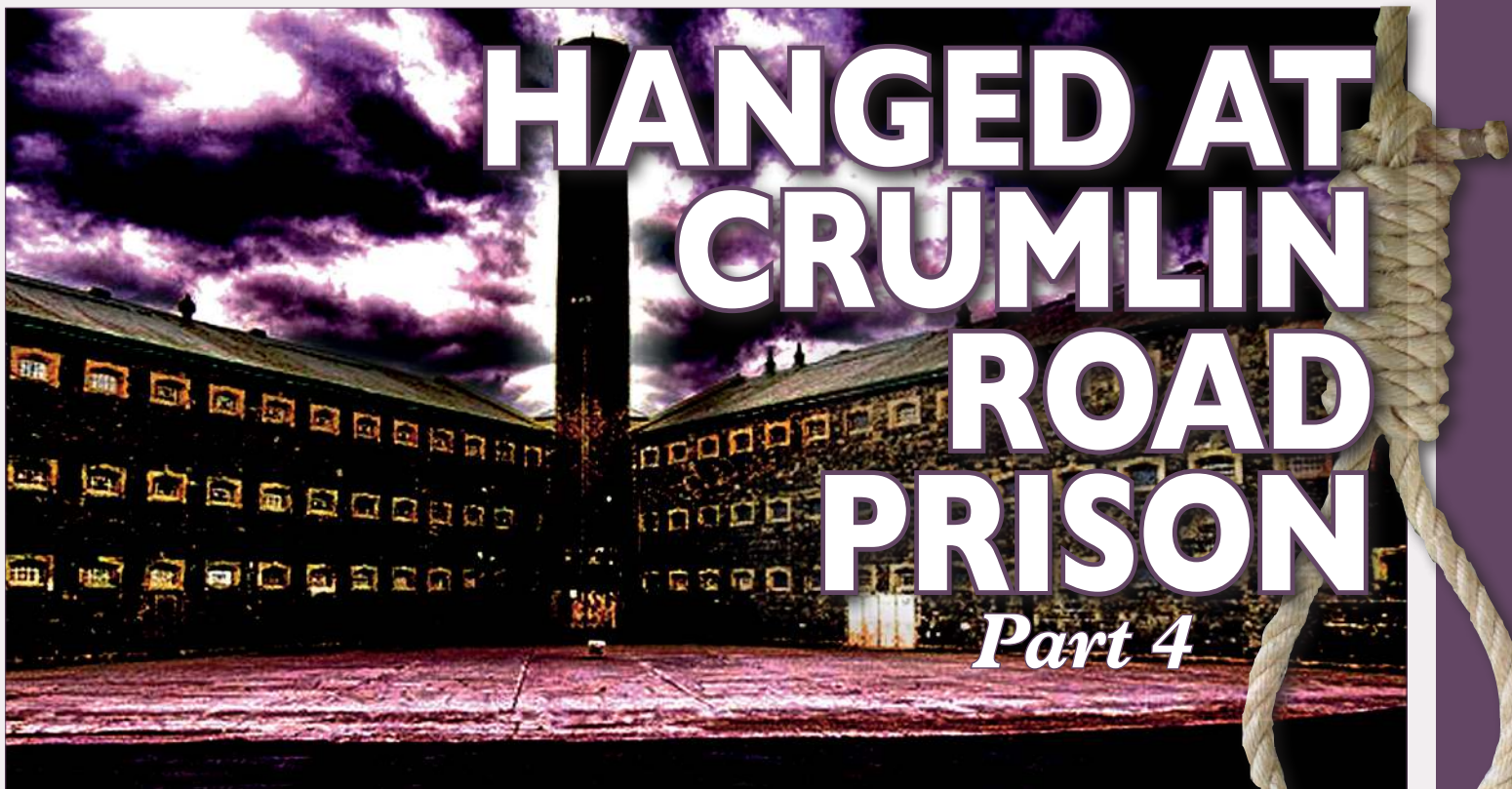
**Above, Richard Justin was an inmate at the prison in 1876.
Below, Crumlin Road Prison today**

forehead.

Mr. Campbell concluded the defence by claiming that several of the prosecution witnesses had been hostile to Justin, who was a victim of prejudice. He asked the jury to weigh the evidence of those witnesses against that given by Justin's mother and son, who had testified that far from being cruel to his daughter, Justin had been kind.

In his final speech for the prosecution Mr. John Gordon, KC, MP, reminded the jury that the medical evidence had shown that Annie's death could not have been caused by a fall from her bed. Several blows to her head were responsible, and it was clear that Justin's son had been lying.

Summing-up, the judge said that although Justin probably had no notion of murder in his head on the morning of March 12th, an intention to murder was not a necessary ingredient of



an iron rod. The professor had been a pathologist in Cairo, and he said that the injuries on Annie's back were worse than those he had seen on a prisoner in Egypt who had been beaten with a cat-o'-nine-tails. She had died from a brain haemorrhage resulting from blows to her head.

Head Constable Moore told the court that when Justin was arrested on March 15th he claimed that his daughter's injuries had been inflicted by Mrs. McWilliams at her home in Hardinge Street.

Mr. Thomas Campbell, defending, called Justin's brother John, who testified that he had often seen his sister-in-law beating Annie with a cane. He said the child was always bumping into things, and the mother – who was sulky and ill-tempered – used to bang Annie's

"I knewed you would finish her at last," Mrs. Justin said to her husband

head against a wall.

"Did you ever interfere?" asked Mr. Justice Wright.

"No, it was not my business."

Justin's mother told the court that her son had been very fond of Annie, even fonder than he was of his sons. Justin's 11-year-old son testified that he had never seen his father beat Annie, who had nothing wrong with her until she fell out of bed. She lay on the floor until he lifted her, but she had lost consciousness and had a mark on her

the crime. If a man beat a child with such violence that death ensued, that imputed malice.

Mr. Justice Wright said that in all his experience he had never heard an account such as Professor Symmers had given of the injuries suffered by Annie Thompson. Whoever inflicted them was a human fiend. If the jury found that Justin was responsible, then he was guilty of murder, although the judge said he would not withdraw the option of a manslaughter verdict.

After retiring for 45 minutes the jury returned to find Richard Justin guilty of his daughter's murder. Sentencing him to death, Mr. Justice Wright told him that during the last few unhappy months of her life Annie Thompson had been the victim of his systematic,

WHY THE SYMPATHY?

Richard Justin's crime was heinous beyond belief but a local newspaper campaigned for "Justice for Justin." They were concerned that parental authority would be undermined. And later the *Weekend Telegraph*, in publishing the report below, showed surprising sympathy for the man the judge had described as a human fiend...

On Wednesday the condemned man, who, in his cell, had been under the close surveillance of warders by night and day, had interviews with a number of his relatives, the scenes being most pathetic, as he said "Good-bye" to his aged parents, and expressed the hope that he would some day meet them in Heaven. His children had visited him previously, and each of them he kissed as they left the cell to see his face no more.

One of his last acts was to send his children a number of books which had been kindly given to him by friends during his confinement, and he also sent farewell messages to his parents and other relatives.

The last farewell of his brothers and sisters, who cried piteously as they bade him their final good-bye, was deeply affecting. It is said that both Justin and

his friends completely broke down, and that the spectacle within the grim prison walls was painful beyond description. Both to the grief-stricken friends and to the unfortunate man on the brink of eternity the officials of the prison were kindness personified, and their splendid humanity and ably-displayed tact did much to mitigate the bitterly distressing character of the occasion.

Justin was awake at an early hour this morning. He took a hearty breakfast and displayed great resignation. Then, about a quarter to eight, the peremptory summons for the body came from the High Sheriff who was accompanied by the Under Sheriff, both being present at an execution for the first time. The governor of the prison (Mr. Thos. Stringer) having formally handed over Justin, he was escorted by the executioner, Pierrepont, from the condemned cell to the death chamber, which is on the same landing, and only some 12 feet distant.

The pinioning process and the adjustment of the cap occupied the briefest imaginable space of time, and while they were proceeding the occasion was solemnised by the recital of the words of the burial service by the minister. The prisoner stood steadily on the trap-doors,

from which he was so speedily to be launched into eternity. Pierrepont, having adjusted the noose, stepped nimbly aside and released the bolt; Justin, with a prayer on his lips, disappearing instantly from sight. There was but a slight quivering of the rope, and death was instantaneous. The execution was most expeditiously, expertly, and humanely performed.

For a considerable time after the carrying out of the death sentence, large crowds remained in the vicinity of the jail, eagerly scanning the official notices that had been posted outside, and awaiting the arrival of the coroner and jury. The inquest was held at 10 o'clock in the office of the jail governor, Alderman Tougher being foreman of the jury. The body was received in an outhouse in the prison grounds, being placed in a plain deal coffin, with rope handles at the head and foot. Justin was in his own clothing, as worn at the trial, and at his feet lay his cap and a red muffler. He had grown a short dark beard during his imprisonment, and the face was pinched, wan, and careworn. The appearance of the features indicated that death had been painless.

During one of the interviews he had with friends, Justin is stated to have expressed the hope that God would forgive the witnesses who swore against him.

brutal and inhuman violence. In finding him guilty of the child's murder after hearing the evidence, the jury had reached the only possible verdict.

Unbelievably, in view of the horrific nature of the case, a local newspaper demanded a reprieve. Launching a campaign, "Justice for Justin," the paper claimed that if Justin were executed, parental authority would be undermined!

Richard Justin was nevertheless hanged on Thursday, August 19th, 1909. His execution was the fifth to take place within Belfast's Crumlin Road Prison instead of outside in public view, and it was the first from which the Press were also excluded.

Justin, who had now grown a beard and had lost a lot of weight, was reported to have parted tearfully from his elderly father and mother in his cell on the eve of his hanging. He was also said still to protest his innocence, expressing the hope that God would forgive the witnesses who had testified against him.

He woke early the next morning and ate a good

breakfast. Then he walked resolutely to the execution chamber, where he was despatched by the hangman Henry Pierrepont.

Although no newspapermen were present, they obtained an eyewitness account from officials who attended. "The prisoner stood steadily on the trap-doors," it was reported. "Pierrepont, having adjusted the noose, stepped nimbly aside and released the

bolt; Justin, with a prayer on his lips, disappeared instantly from sight. There was but a slight quivering of the rope and death was instantaneous."

After the execution Belfast's high sheriff, Mr. Francis Curley, said that throughout his time in prison Justin had been docile and amenable. "This morning I heard him saying his prayers and sending his good wishes to his mother, father and children, and to the children he sent some religious books which had been given to him by friends."

But Richard Justin had apparently sent no last good wishes to his wife...little Annie's mother, who had helped to send him to the scaffold when she told him, "I knowed you would finish her at last."



Simon McGeown • 1922 THE CAVEHILL MURDER

COINCIDENTALLY, another little girl was the victim of the next prisoner to take his place on the scaffold in Crumlin Road Jail.

Times had changed. It was now 1922, a period of civil unrest. In that year alone, Belfast experienced no fewer than 231 murders, compared with just four in 1918. But the slaying which brought the

The gamekeeper saw a small foot protruding from leaves. At first he thought it was a discarded doll

prison its next execution was unrelated to the Irish "Troubles." It had more to do with India...

Simon McGeown had always wanted to join the army. At 14 he lied about his age and enlisted as a boy-soldier. He was 18 when he was posted to India, where he succumbed to malaria. He made a good physical recovery, but his officers

noticed a change in his behaviour. He had always been a model soldier, but now his superiors found themselves overlooking small breaches of discipline by McGeown, giving him the benefit of any doubts because of his past exemplary record.

His behaviour continued to deteriorate, however, and 18 months later he was discharged following a court-martial. Returning to his native Lurgan, he took a series of poorly paid jobs in Belfast. The outbreak of the First World War gave him the opportunity to enlist again. Every

home by seven, Mr. Fullerton set out to look for her. Then he went to the police.

A three-day search yielded no results, other than to confirm that Maggie was missing. The police could only hope that she had been abducted and that her kidnapper would eventually release her.

To the north of the city's docks was the beauty spot known as Cavehill. Much of the area lay within Lord Shaftesbury's estate, comprising prime land for farming and shooting.

As dawn broke on June 3rd the estate's gamekeeper, Samuel Armstrong, set

revealed, ravaged by rats and infested with maggots. Armstrong ran the two miles to the nearest police station, and by lunch-time 30 officers were at the scene.

A Cavehill farmer, Mr. Kirkwood, gave detectives a description of a stranger he'd seen carrying a child across his fields at about 9 p.m. on May 30th. Half an hour later the farmer had observed the little girl walking hand-in-hand with the man...but she was crying.

The police first checked their list of sex-offenders. None of them matched the man's description, so they turned



Above, Simon McGeown, who was wounded and gassed while serving in France (left). Below, Cavehill, where a farmer saw a man carrying a child across the fields

man was needed, and the authorities were no longer so choosy. They were prepared to overlook McGeown's poor military record, and he went on to spend three years in France. There he was wounded, gassed twice, and eventually he was invalided out of the army, returning to convalesce in Ireland.

He supplemented his small army pension by drifting from one job to another. Then he took up petty crime, becoming a burglar and dealing in stolen goods. With six convictions between 1918 and 1922, he spent a total of 30 months behind bars. But he was out of prison again on the warm evening of Tuesday, May 30th, 1922, when eight-year-old Maggie Fullerton disappeared.

The Fullertons lived in Belfast's Little York Street, in an area comparatively unaffected by the "Troubles." So Robert Fullerton had no qualms when at about 6 p.m. he gave Maggie twopence to go to buy some sweets.

When she didn't return within minutes her parents weren't anxious. They assumed she was playing with some of her friends. But when she still wasn't



out to shoot a hawk which was preying on game. His dog, however, seemed more interested in something else it had found. They were in a plantation which was used as a rubbish tip and, on going to investigate, Armstrong saw a small foot protruding from leaves. At first he thought someone had discarded a doll. But as he shuffled the leaves aside, the naked body of a child was

to their records of burglars. McGeown fitted the appearance of the man the farmer had seen and he was already in custody. Significantly, he was being questioned about the theft of some clothes at his lodgings in Henry Street, which crossed Little York Street where the Fullertons lived.

Further inquiries were made in the neighbourhood, and another child told

the police of a man who had tried to entice her away. Annie Addis said that a few minutes later she had seen the man speaking to Maggie.

Interrogating McGeown wasn't easy as he was high on methylated spirits. A police surgeon said he was a chronic alcoholic, and when the suspect was identified by the farmer and charged with Maggie Fullerton's murder, he said that he could remember nothing.

"Who's that?" he asked when he was first interviewed by Sergeant Brown. "Where does she come from? What do I know about Maggie Fullerton or any other Maggie? I never saw the woman in my life. I wouldn't know her."

Local feeling against him ran high,

and to prevent attempts on his life he was placed under an armed guard both in prison and when he appeared at the City Commission on July 22nd, small, clean-shaven and collarless, to deny the murder charge.

Mr. John McGonigal KC, prosecuting, said that Maggie had been stripped and raped. She had then been beaten about the head and strangled, and McGeown was her killer.

Annie Addis identified McGeown as the man who had tried to entice her, and who she had later seen with Maggie. Samuel Armstrong described the strange behaviour of his dog which had led to the body's discovery. The animal was well-trained, he said, and usually kept

well to heel. After he shot the hawk the dog refused to answer his signal telling it to return to him, and on going to it he found Maggie's corpse.

Mr. G. B. Hanna MP, defending, claimed that there was insufficient evidence to identify McGeown as the man seen with Maggie, or to connect him with the murder. If they had the slightest doubt, he told the jury, then McGeown was entitled to its benefit.

For the prosecution Mr. G. Hill Smith KC countered that McGeown had been identified by three witnesses: Annie Addis, the farmer and a watchman. These, he said, were three strands in the rope of evidence, and no attempt had been made by McGeown to establish an alibi.

In his summing-up Lord Justice Andrews reminded the jury of an overcoat which had been seen both at Henry Street and by the farmer when he saw the man he identified as McGeown. But the judge added that it was in McGeown's favour that, if he were guilty, it was strange that he had returned to the haunts where he had been living and from which Maggie had been taken.

Near to tears, the judge said that Maggie's fate was perhaps the most tragic story he or the jury had ever heard in a court.

After 45 minutes' retirement the jury found 38-year-old Simon McGeown guilty of Maggie Fullerton's murder. Sentencing him to death, the judge told him he had been rightly convicted of one of the most brutal killings in the annals of crime.

McGeown appeared unmoved. Then in response to a tap on his shoulder from a warder, he turned smartly and with a soldierly step passed swiftly to the stairs leading to the underground passage which linked the court with Crumlin Road Prison.

His solicitor petitioned the governor of Northern Ireland for a reprieve, claiming that McGeown was insane, his mind having been turned by his illness in India. But no reprieve was forthcoming, and on August 17th Simon McGeown became the sixth man to be hanged within the prison's walls.

The sentence was carried out by John Ellis and William Willis. In the condemned cell McGeown had neither denied nor admitted his guilt. He simply said he had no recollection of the day in question: he had drunk a lot of methylated spirits at the time.

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DEATH RIDDLE AFTER THE ORGY

An affair with the housekeeper, pregnant party girls, all-night sex sessions – rumours abounded about the goings-on at the Levine farm while the boss was away. The only tangible evidence was the body in the study...

SOME TOWNS are run by cliques, some by families, some by determined men who rule the roost on their own. Waterville was run by the Levine family – Louis Levine, who couldn't read or write, and his four sons. People raised their hats when they passed a Levine in the street. A family oozing money and power has that kind of effect.

So it was like a bomb had hit the central plaza in Waterville, in the New England state of Maine, when Abie Levine, the second of the four brothers, was found dead by his roll-top desk.

Case recalled by Fred H. Thompson

What made it worse was that at that moment Louis Levine was out west, looking for a property in Nevada and a divorce in Reno. His wife, the mother of his four sons, was in a mental hospital in Augusta, and he had left Abie in charge of everything.

Two of the remaining three Levine brothers crowded into the ranch house study and gazed in awe at the crumpled body of their stricken sibling, blood still dripping from a great gash in his head. They were Merton, 22, and Sam, the youngest at 16, both of whom had rushed in from a dance in the town when someone told them the tragic news.

Who could have done this to Abie, their beloved brother, who was still only 19 and as gentle as a lamb?

The missing brother was Milton, the eldest. He was something of an intellectual and had no interest in business. He had left home some months ago because of a tiff with his father, according to rumour. Louis Levine had founded the Levine company and wanted the undivided attention of all four of his sons.

Despite his illiteracy, Louis was known as the cattle king of central Maine. He had made a fortune buying and selling cattle, and now his speciality was buying up meat markets taken over by the banks from debtors. He owned an abattoir in Waterville and a big



Victim Abie Levine – he was in the middle of signing a cheque when he was murdered

sprawling farm and ranch house along the Sidney Road on the edge of town.

It was here, in the ranch house, that his third son Abie now lay dead.

He had been in the act of writing a cheque when he was struck from behind with such force that his face made a crimson imprint on the floor. Police Captain George Beckett, the first officer to arrive at the house, studied the cheque thoughtfully. It was number 1415, dated that day, Saturday, September 26th, 1931, for \$10 and made out to someone called Leland Gray.

After the printed word "For" on the lower left corner was scrawled almost illegibly what looked like "Mrs

"I remember when I was upstairs getting ready to go to the cinema two men pulled up in a big black car. Perhaps there was a row about money"

Johnson cash," seemingly in a different handwriting.

After the word "By" below the printed signature, "Louis Levine and Sons," was written "Abraha," ending with a blot and a line where the pen had trailed for nearly an inch to the right and dropped from Abie's fingers.

"Abraha" was of course the beginning of "Abraham," Abie's real name. He had been killed in the very act of signing the cheque.

Merton Levine put his arm around the shoulders of his brother Sam, who was shaking with grief and shock. "Mrs. Johnson must have done this," he said angrily. "She's the housekeeper. Her name is on the cheque my brother was writing." He had no idea, he added, who Leland Gray was.

Nor did he have anything more to add when Captain Beckett politely pointed out that it would have been at least unusual for an employee to attack her boss at the very moment when he was writing out her salary cheque. Unless, of course, the housekeeper thought it should have been \$20, and not \$10.

The best way of finding out was to confront her. Mrs. Eleanor Johnson was duly brought into the study. She was sobbing as Beckett motioned her to an armchair.

"Do you know if Abie was in trouble with anyone?" Beckett asked her. "Who do you think might have killed him?"

"Everyone liked Abie," she sniffed into her handkerchief. She thought for a moment. "I remember when I was upstairs getting ready to go to the cinema two men pulled up outside the house in a big black car. It could have been them, but I didn't get a look at them before they drove off again. Perhaps there was a row about money.

"Then again, there's a photo of a pretty girl on Abie's desk. He was always looking at it, but I don't know who she is. Perhaps there was a quarrel over her."

Beckett sent a couple of detectives off with the task of identifying the girl. Another couple of officers went in search of the mysterious Leland Gray. Both these trails were to prove

extremely difficult to follow.

Eleanor Johnson's story was that Abie was the only family member home for supper that night. Nothing untoward happened, apart from the arrival of "the big, black car," and the two men in it. Someone called out, "I'll be right out in a minute." It sounded like Abie's voice, and indeed at that time he was the only person in the house apart from herself.

Two minutes later there was a slamming of car doors and the car sped off towards Waterville.

A few minutes after that the local cab driver, Peter Testa, arrived to drive Eleanor to the cinema. After the movie, she walked round to the Castle Garden dancehall to see if she could hitch a ride home with Merton and Sam Levine. Merton wasn't ready to go home, so she tried Herbert Hart, the tailor, who lived close to the Levines.

She had to wait until just after 11 p.m. for Hart, and 10 minutes later they arrived at the Levine house. All the lights on the ground floor were on, except for the study, which was unusual at that time of night. Hart went in with her and when she saw a man lying on the floor in a pool of blood in the study she did not at first realise it was Abie.

"Possibly the killer scribbled in the housekeeper's name to throw suspicion on her, and did it so hastily he left out a letter"

She screamed and called the police. Then Hart drove her back to Waterville to speak to Merton.

All this fitted perfectly with the known facts. Mrs. Johnson's phone call to the police was taken at 11.30. by the night duty officer and duly recorded in the events book.

Although unmarried, Eleanor Johnson had a son who until recently had worked on the Levine farm and according to rumour had been sacked after a row with one of the brothers. He was 20-year-old Emmons Young. So where was he? In Smithfield, said Mrs. Johnson promptly – a township 20 miles away. He had an iron-clad alibi – he had been nowhere near the farm that night.

The arrival of the police doctor Dr. James Towne put a new slant on the case. "He has been shot in the stomach," he announced, after a cursory examination of Abie's body. "And I can feel another bullet behind his left ear. That's what smashed his skull." This was important because the post-mortem would provide the bullets, which might lead to the gun and its owner.

Another important clue was the chequebook. But the stub of cheque number 1415 had been torn out of the book. The stub would show the purpose



The desk at which Abie Levine was sitting when murdered. Note the framed picture of the girl whose identity initially baffled the police. Below, the cheque the victim was writing

for which the cheque was being drawn, and had obviously been removed by the killer after he had murdered Abie.

The clue of the chequebook fascinated Waterville's Police Chief Alfred Poirier.

"One possibility is that it could have been removed in order to plant a false clue that would lead us astray," he suggested, studying the cheque. A triangular piece was missing from the left end, eleven-sixteenths of an inch wide at the bottom of the cheque and running to an apex two and one-eighth inches up to the left end.

"Possibly the killer scribbled in the housekeeper's name to throw suspicion on her, and did it so hastily he left out a

to trumpet its testimony against her. If Abie had removed the cheque stub it would be somewhere on him or in his study, and it isn't."

Another strange fact: there were two guard dogs on the farm and according to near neighbours neither had barked that evening. One belonged to the Levine boys and the other to Eleanor Johnson, and they were known to make a fearful racket when strangers appeared, especially at night. A veterinary test revealed that they hadn't been sedated, so the killer must have been someone they knew.

Meanwhile, a handwriting expert declared that the body of the unfinished cheque had been written naturally



letter. He ripped out the cheque, tearing a piece off the end in his frantic haste, and tore out the stub with it.

"He destroyed the stub because something Abie had written on it might be a clue to the identity of the murderer, or would contradict the apparent fact that the cheque was intended as cash for Mrs. Johnson.

"Otherwise, why leave the cheque there on the desk in plain sight and destroy the cheque stub? The housekeeper obviously wouldn't bother to destroy the stub and leave the cheque

by a left-handed person, while the supposedly posthumous addition, "Mrs ohnson cash," was written by a right-handed person in a disguised hand. Abie was left-handed.

So far the inquiry had produced only theories on what was missing – the cheque stub, the murder weapon, and importantly, a motive. Who wanted Abie Levine dead?

The post-mortem revealed that he had been shot not twice, but four times – in the chest, the stomach and twice in the back of the head. The shots in

the head suggested a gangster killing by a professional gunman, or revenge by someone who must have bitterly hated the victim.

The two bullets removed from Abie's head were badly mushroomed but those found in his abdomen and chest were in good shape. They were identified as having been fired from an old Iver Johnson .32-calibre revolver of not very great power.

Time of death was now crucial. The police doctor thought Abie was killed between 9.30 and 10 o'clock that Saturday night. But the digestive organs were sent to the state chemist for an analysis that would fix the time with much greater accuracy, because according to Mrs. Johnson Abie ate his last meal at 6.15 that evening.

The importance of this sort of minutiae was because there was no known motive, no definite suspect, no one shown to have had an exclusive opportunity to kill, and no identifying clues. Everyone who had known Abie Levine, including his closest kinfolk, was now under suspicion until they were eliminated.

And as the investigation broadened and widened, no one was found who could identify Leland Gray, and no one who could identify the pretty girl whose picture was on Abie's desk.

Merton and Sam Levine had been away from home all that Saturday afternoon and evening, until Herbert Hart and Mrs. Johnson arrived at the dancehall to tell them about the tragedy.

There were two farmhands at the Levine farm – Sam Belanger and Harry Clifford. Belanger worked until 6.30 p.m. that Saturday, and then, carrying a jug of cider, went off to spend the rest of the day with his wife and family. Clifford worked until noon before setting off to visit friends in Portland, having been given the rest of the weekend off.

Peter Testa, Eleanor Johnson's cabby, confirmed the housekeeper's story, save for two particulars. He was positive that "all downstairs was lighted up" when he drove into the farmyard to collect her, whereas she was insistent she had turned out every light except the one on the side porch.

He was equally positive that it was about 9 p.m. when he received the call from Mrs. Johnson to take his taxi to the Levine farm, instead of 8 p.m. as claimed by her. He remembered being in a barber's shop when he received the call, glancing at his watch, and mentioning the time to the shop owner, who corroborated his story.

Where was the murder weapon? It was so important that the Waterville fire department pumped two wells dry, dragged the local river with a strong magnet, and then lowered the water to the riverbed. Every inch of ground was combed for miles around, but there was no trace of the revolver.

Detectives pondered Louis Levine's acute domestic situation. His sons must

have known all about his decision to divorce his mentally ill wife. Did this complication have any bearing on a possible motive, they wondered? What about Milton, the eldest? How did he feel about the divorcing of his mother, who had loved him? Did he know that Abie had been elevated above him in the family business, and if so, did he care?

Merton too had clearly been sidelined by the absent father in favour of Abie. How did he feel about that?

Louis Levine had heard the news of his son's death in tragic fashion. On his way to Nevada he fell into conversation with a man on the train, to whom he mentioned that he lived in Waterville.

The stranger was reading a newspaper at the time and casually remarked, "I see there was a murder in your home town on Saturday night."

"Who got killed?" Louis asked, just as



Young Rinaldo Roy points to the spot at the town dump where he and a pal discovered the murder weapon

casually.

"A young fellow named Abie Levine."

Before Louis retraced his steps and arrived home, Milton Levine drove into Waterville. He had been staying upstate, and he too had heard the news and hurried home. He astonished detectives by bursting into a violent denunciation of the housekeeper, Eleanor Johnson.

"I left home because I couldn't stand her," he told them. "That woman is the very devil. She hated Abie because he wouldn't accept that she had any authority in the household. I heard her threaten him several times, and once she even tried to poison him."

Questioned further, however, he became evasive. He didn't want to be pinned down on anything. All he would say was that when his father installed Mrs. Johnson as housekeeper two years earlier, she had assumed full charge of everything in the home and that even his own father rarely ventured to

oppose her will.

The farmhand Harry Clifford, who was eliminated as a suspect, didn't think Eleanor Johnson could have done it. "It must have been some stranger," he told detectives. "You know, Abie was quite a ladies' man. It seems more like revenge by some wronged man."

Even so, the investigators didn't much like Mrs. Johnson. And using new evidence they closed in on her.

Their first piece of new information was the chemical analysis on the contents of Abie's stomach. This showed that if he ate his supper about 6 to 6.15 p.m., as the best available evidence indicated, he was killed not earlier than 8.30 and not later than 9.15 p.m.

Taxi driver Peter Testa's story placed Eleanor Johnson alone in the house with Abie until 9 p.m. or a little later. But she disputed that, saying she left at 8 p.m. Until now the investigators had been limited by the police doctor's decision that the crime was committed not earlier than 9.30 p.m., which was now considered wrong.

The county attorney voiced everyone's feelings when he said: "Get evidence to support Testa's story and smash her alibi."

Barbers and their customers who had been at the barber's shop that Saturday evening were rounded up. Some were positive that the phone call for a taxi had come from the Levine farm about 8 p.m., as Eleanor Johnson had suggested. Others were equally certain that the time was nearer 9 p.m., which was the view of the cab driver.

For the housekeeper the disputed hour was a vital one. Her life hung upon it.

Taken in again for questioning, Eleanor came up with her cinema ticket stub. The serial number showed that it was the 57th ticket sold after 8 p.m. on Saturday evening, and the cinema manager was positive that this placed her at the ticket window not later than 8.25 p.m.

Biting back their disappointment, the investigators gave up on that line of inquiry.

Then came a startling new lead. Slowly it was emerging that the Levine family wasn't as clean as Waterville's notables believed. Their farm, so rumours said, had been the scene of orgies and wild sex parties during Louis Levine's absence. There had been goings-on, it was suggested, that could have aroused someone to vengeance.

A pregnant 16-year-old girl had demanded money from Abie, but he had refused her and she had contracted a hasty marriage with a local youth. A recently married woman admitted that she had sexual intercourse with several men at a Levine party, and another woman said she had multiple sexual encounters all in one night at the farm, "but my fiancé knows all about it."

These events were leaked out to the press and for a week Waterville was

treated to headlines like WHOOPEE PARTIES MURDER CLUE and SEX AND ALL NIGHT ORGIES AT LEVINE FARM.

Louis Levine, back in Waterville, was indignant. He hired a lawyer "to protect the family's civil rights," but refused police entreaties to offer a reward for the capture of Abie's murderer.

"The lawyer's already costing me a fistful," he complained. "He wants \$100 a day when he's on the case in Waterville, and \$50 a day even when he's sitting in his office."

The police insisted that the offering of a substantial reward – \$1,000 was suggested – would produce someone who knew Abie's killer. But the Levine family were not noted for their generosity. Louis said: "My lawyer won't let me do that."

Like his son Merton, he was convinced that Eleanor Johnson was the murderer. Curiously, though, no one had any complaints about her housekeeping abilities. She was by all accounts an impeccable servant.

The investigation was virtually at a stalemate when building worker John Bingham called at police headquarters.

He told Captain Beckett: "I know the girl whose photo was on Abie Levine's desk. She was going out with a guy named Dostie, or something like that, who was very jealous of her. I know his uncle, who lives in Waterville."

He took an envelope from his pocket and laid a couple of photos on Beckett's desk. "This is her with Dostie," he said.

Beckett could see at once that it was the same girl. He located the young man's uncle, who said: "Yes, that's my nephew. But his name isn't Dostie. It's Leland Gray."

Suddenly Beckett had the impression he was getting somewhere fast. In nearby Oldfield the police unearthed Leland Gray. He knew nothing about the murder, and several local people corroborated his story that he hadn't been out of the village for six weeks. He had no idea why his name should appear on a Levine cheque. He knew the girl in the photograph, whose name was Eva Gagnon, but not well enough to be jealous.

Eva Gagnon was quickly traced. She lived 50 miles away and was mystified when officers called on her. "I don't know any family named Levine," she said. "I can't think why one of them had my picture on his desk."

The riddle was soon solved. She had a married sister in Waterville. Apparently Abie Levine had appropriated the picture from Eva's brother-in-law for no other reason than he thought she was a pretty girl.

Perplexed, Captain Beckett stroked his chin. The fast track had suddenly disappeared up a blind alley.

Ten days after the murder, Merton Levine hurried into police headquarters. He had just received a death threat note and he looked badly frightened. The pencilled note read: "Made a mistake.

Got your brother, but will get you for the wrong you did my sister. M. C."

Who was "M.C.?" One possibility, Beckett decided, was that it was Merton Levine himself. Merton was questioned for five hours, and furiously denied the suggestion.

Things became complicated when more death threat notes, this time typewritten, were sent to Merton. The writer was traced – and turned out to be one of the participants in the sex parties at the Levine farm. He did it for a joke, he said, after reading about the

Massachusetts. The number of the gun – 57803 – was for assembling purposes but it was also quoted in sales records. The first sale of this type of gun, which went into production in June 1920, was a delivery of 50 on October 17th, 1920, to the Edward Walker Company in Portland.

Hours of digging through old records revealed a sale of five of the guns to the local gas company – and one of them was number 57803.

On May 20th, 1931, the gas company sold them to a pawnbroker, whose



The rusty murder weapon – a .32-calibre Iver Johnson revolver

pencilled note in the newspapers.

So far all the clues had turned out to be red herrings. Chief Poirier remained adamant that the only way forward was to find the murder weapon. The search went on across the length and breadth of Maine and even as far as the Panama Canal. And yet when the weapon was eventually found it was right there in Waterville, on their doorstep.

It was discovered by two local boys, Rinaldo Roy and Fred Boduc, searching the town dump for old car

The police felt offering a substantial reward would produce someone who knew Abie's killer. But the Levine family were not known for their generosity

tyres. Excitedly, they ran all the way to police headquarters with it. Later, half a yard away from where the boys found the gun, police found a green bag containing five more live bullets.

Although it was encrusted with rust, the revolver was identifiable as an Iver Johnson .32-calibre. It held one live bullet and four empty shells. The police firearms expert turned it over in his hands and said: "This is undoubtedly the gun used by the murderer."

Then began the arduous task of tracing its history. Iver Johnson revolvers were made in Fitchburg,

records showed that number 57803 was sold on July 25th that year to Sam Morrison, of 12 Waterville Street, Portland.

The sense that the police were closing in on their quarry was heightened when they learned that Sam Morrison had vanished two days after the murder of Abie Levine. He was speedily tracked down to the nearby hamlet of Bath, where he was living with his girlfriend, Delphine Bowles, a seamstress.

Both were brought to Waterville police headquarters and both were immediately willing to talk.

Morrison said Eleanor Johnson gave him money to buy the revolver and bullets. She told him one of the Levine boys wanted it to kill rats at the family abattoir. Two days after the murder he received an unsigned note in Eleanor Johnson's handwriting. It read: "For God's sake don't tell anyone about gun you bought me."

Morrison rightly suspected at that point that he had bought the Levine murder weapon and decided to make himself scarce.

Eleanor Johnson didn't bat an eyelid when the revolver was put in front of her, nor did she so much as twitch as Morrison repeated his story. What did she say to that, she was asked? She replied: "I have nothing to say."

She then agreed to say something if Merton Levine was present. He was duly brought in, and the watching detectives noted that he looked pale and uneasy.

Mrs. Johnson said: "Merton asked me to buy this revolver. I thought they might refuse to sell a gun to a woman so I asked Sam Morrison to buy it for me. I carried the gun and the bullets in my handbag and gave them to Merton."

Merton shouted: "You're a liar! You know I did not kill my brother! You're trying to frame me!"

Who was telling the truth? Deciding to take no chances, the police charged them both with murder. Merton asked them to call his father. Eleanor Johnson went to her cell with a cheerful smile, apparently well pleased with herself.

The arrests caused a sensation in the state of Maine. Participants in the sex parties walked around with grim looks on their faces. How much would be revealed, they wondered, and would they be implicated?



Louis Levine threw his money behind the defence of Merton, causing the county prosecutor to admonish the police for arresting the young man, for, he said, the evidence against him was virtually non-existent. The grand jury thought so too. They threw out the case against Merton and returned an indictment for murder against Eleanor Johnson.

She faced a jury of 11 men and one woman at the Superior Court of Maine in February 1932, as if she hadn't a care in the world. Her defence was simply that she couldn't have done it because she was in the cinema at 8.15 that evening, a fact corroborated by her ticket, and the two women who sat on either side of her.

She faced the jury with a friendly smile and talked amiably to them. Yes, she said, she and Merton were having a bit of an affair. The problem was that Abie didn't like what she called their friendship, and Merton asked her to buy a revolver.

After Abie was dead and Merton had returned to the house with his younger brother Sam, she found Merton in the front-room wringing his hands and moaning, "Oh, my poor brother. Why did I do it?"

And yes, she had at first lied about not recognising the two men in the big black car that drove up to the house while she was getting ready to go to the movies. She lied because she wanted to protect "dear Merton." She could now swear that when Abie called out, "I'll be



Above, Mrs. Eleanor Johnson, housekeeper to the Levines and the pivotal figure in the case. Above right, Merton Levine, one of Abie's brothers, and one of two people charged with the murder. Above left, part of the Levine home in Waterville. The room where Abie was murdered is circled

down in a minute," Merton was already sitting in the car and said, "Make it snappy!"

Called as a witness for the prosecution, Merton agreed he had been "very friendly" with his father's housekeeper, but he denied knowing anything about the murder or the

"Merton asked me to buy this revolver. I thought they might refuse to sell a gun to a woman so I asked Sam Morrison to buy it for me. I gave the gun to Merton"

murder weapon.

The prosecutor argued that Eleanor Johnson shot Abie because he insisted she must break off her affair with his brother and find another job at once. The murder was committed, he contended, before she took the taxi to Waterville later than she claimed. He held that her alibi witnesses were honestly mistaken. However, he didn't seem to have any answer to her cinema ticket evidence.

It took the jury three hours to find her not guilty. The court broke into pandemonium, while Mrs. Johnson went off to fulfil a promise she had made to the women inmates in the county jail.

While she was on remand there she had entertained her fellow-prisoners to hours of singing spirituals. When



the day of her trial came round she promised that if she was acquitted, as she expected to be, she would come back and sing to them for the rest of the day. As unperturbed as ever, that was exactly what she did.

For Eleanor Johnson, it was a happy ending. For the police, who had the murder gun and who knew how it entered the Levine farm, it was nothing if not unsatisfactory. It left a raft of unanswered questions, like who was the killer and what was the motive? Why should Abie have made a cheque out to Leland Gray, someone who apparently didn't know him?

And was the story about the Eva Gagnon photograph in his study really convincing? After all, how many men put a picture of a woman they have never met on their office desk?

The truth was, the murder of Abie Levine was an enigma wrapped up in a conundrum because too many people were covering up. Too many people had too much to hide.



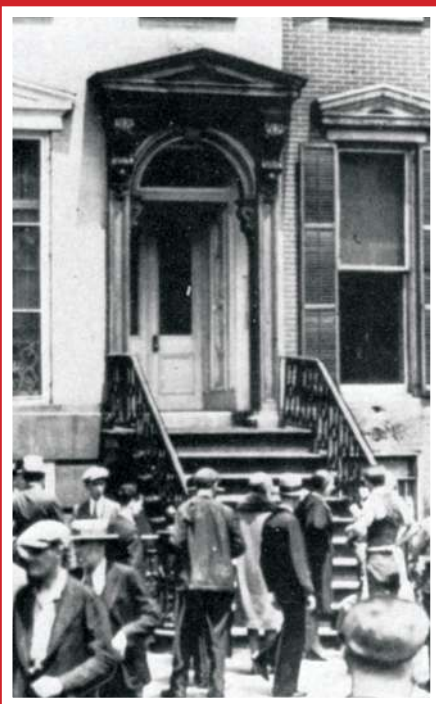
UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

By D.L. Champion

STARR FAITHFULL was beautiful even in death. But that death was shrouded in mystery. Although the investigation uncovered bizarre tales of rape, drugs and sexual inadequacy, it left one question unanswered. Did Starr Faithfull commit suicide or was she murdered?

Early on the morning of June 8th, 1931, a man strolling along the shore of New York's Long Beach on Long Island stumbled on the body of a woman lying on the sand.

By midday the victim had been identified as Starr Faithfull. When police visited the family home in St. Luke's Place in Greenwich Village, they learned that Starr was last seen at the docks where two Atlantic liners, *Mauritania* and *Ile de France*, were preparing to sail.



The house in St. Luke's Place, Greenwich Village, that Starr shared with her parents and sister (right) at the time of her death

THE STARR FAITHFULL ENIGMA

Starr's mother explained that her daughter took great pleasure in haunting the New York docks as the luxury liners were leaving. Indeed, she often joined late-night shipboard parties and came ashore only when the ships prepared to sail.

So could Starr have fallen overboard at one of these

constantly alluded to one with the initials A.J.P., a man who had apparently both attracted and repelled her. But who was he and was he a killer?

Results of the forensic tests found a strong sleep-inducing sedative in her bloodstream and sand in the trachea – indicating that Starr's head had been held



Long Beach. The X indicates the spot where Starr's body was found

parties? Or was she thrown overboard by a jealous lover?

A search of Starr's bedroom yielded a journal. The diary indicated that sex played a prominent role in her life.

In the diary Starr's sexual partners were identified only by their initials, and she

under water and supporting a murder theory.

The fact that her coat, hat, shoes and undergarments were never found reinforced the suspicion of foul play.

However, several rambling and almost incoherent letters written by Starr to friends



revealed a darker, suicidal side to her nature.

The authorities accepted the letters at face value and attributed Starr Faithfull's death to suicide and the case was closed. But despite the official verdict Starr's family remained unconvinced. Many lawmen and reporters were also dissatisfied with the coroner's



Above, detectives grouped around the body of party girl Starr Faithfull (right) – beautiful and vivacious in life, enigmatic in death (below)



Left and right, Starr Faithfull as she was discovered on the shore at Long Island. She had been drugged and drowned. Her vigorous romantic life and inner sorrow were scrutinised for clues to her death – and her killer



The Atlantic liners *Mauritanian* (right) and *Ile de France*. Both were preparing to sail from New York when Starr met her death



verdict.

The periodic reappearance of the case in newspapers, magazines and books continues to intrigue new generations of readers, but the passage of time has added nothing to our knowledge of the events surrounding Starr Faithfull's death. It remains an intriguing unsolved crime.



He was Iowa's first methamphetamine kingpin, a small-town boy with a knack for chemistry who let nothing stand in the way of success. And when his drugs empire came under threat, five people – including a mother and her two children – were ruthlessly dispatched...

Iowa's First Death Penalty Case For Decades

Killing Couple Sentenced To Die

SHE'D GOT lost on her rounds selling cosmetics, said the girl who knocked on Lori Duncan's door. So could she use Lori's telephone directory?

It seemed a reasonable request, and Lori didn't want to be unhelpful. So she let the girl in, unaware that she was signing her family's death warrant.

Case report by Gary Fox

Years later, what happened that day would horrify all Iowa when the story of Dustin Honken and his one-time girlfriend Angela Johnson made headlines.

Honken was a bright young man – too bright for his own good, or anyone else's. After three community college classes, he knew he had a knack for chemistry. His lab was a garage, and he won a scholarship to study at North Iowa College in Mason City. But in 1991 he abandoned his academic career for a future in methamphetamine. He already had customers who paid him thousands of dollars to supply cocaine, and he knew meth was even more lucrative.

With his knowledge he believed he could produce the toxic stimulant himself. He could cut out the middle-man and get seriously rich. So he invested \$7,000 in chemicals and lab equipment, also researching chemical reactions at a local library and photocopying pages from scientific journals.

Within months he was producing several pounds of meth which he sold to customers in Iowa, one sale alone



Dustin Honken and his former girlfriend Angela Johnson. He had a knack for chemistry but quit academia for a future in methamphetamine

netting more than \$20,000. As his operation became more sophisticated, he proposed writing a how-to book on making and marketing the drug, and planned to expand his business by using the internet. He also kept meticulous records of his enterprise. At least one customer owed him more than \$30,000, and like any entrepreneur he knew that debts were one of the risks of doing business.

With his partner Tim Cutkomp, he bought a home in Tucson, Arizona, where his new neighbours had no

notion of his activities. But as his business grew, so did his financial dependence on the drug. He was Iowa's first methamphetamine kingpin, a small-town boy who craved money and power and let nothing stand in the way of his success.

He and Cutkomp had two years of big-time drug dealing behind them when they were arrested in March 1993. Another dealer, Greg Nicholson, 34, had helped Honken secure a network of buyers throughout Iowa. But then Nicholson was caught in a federal



Above, victims Lori Duncan and her daughters Kandi, 10, and Amber, six. They disappeared around the same time as her new boyfriend Greg Nicholson (below, left). Four months later Terry DeGeus (bottom, right), a former customer of Honken's, also disappeared after he agreed to talk to the FBI. Below, a tent covers the spot where police disinterred the victims' bodies, seven years after they disappeared



government swoop, and he was offered a deal in return for helping to set up a sting on Honken.

Working with federal agents, Nicholson tape-recorded Honken making a \$5,000 deal while Cutkomp waited in the car. Honken was consequently arrested, but was out on bail when Nicholson mysteriously vanished on July 25th, 1993, along with his girlfriend and her two daughters.

Five days after those disappearances, Honken pleaded not guilty to the drugs charge in a federal court in Cedar Rapids. Four months later another drug dealer and former customer of Honken, Terry DeGeus, vanished after he agreed to talk to the FBI about Honken. With no sign of the federal government's key witnesses, the two missing drug dealers, the charges against Honken and Cutkomp had to be dropped.

"When I asked Dustin about Nicholson and DeGeus, he said he was

ninety-nine per cent certain they would never show up again," Cutkomp would later testify.

Further damaging evidence would be given by Dan Cobeen, who invested in Honken's new meth lab and became a government informer in the summer of 1995. "Honken told me that if I ever crossed him, he knew somebody who could knock on my door and – boom!" Cobeen said.

Honken and Cutkomp were arrested again after federal agents raided

"When I asked Dustin about Nicholson and DeGeus, he said he was ninety-nine per cent certain they would never show up again"



Honken's garage, helped by Cobeen. However, they were again released from jail to await trial, Honken asking

acquaintances where Cobeen lived and arranging to buy a gun.

Then Honken and Cutkomp staked out a warehouse where Honken believed the authorities were storing his laboratory equipment. He talked about shooting Cobeen as well as constructing a bomb to blow up the warehouse, but he was arrested again before he could carry out his plan. And this time the informant was Cutkomp, his closest friend since their schooldays.

Cutkomp had begun to distrust his partner, fearing he would link him with the disappearances of Nicholson and DeGeus. So he started wearing a concealed tape-recorder.

In one taped conversation Honken told him, "Even if I go to prison for fifteen years, when I come out, Cobeen will be dead." In another, he compared the thrill of killing to excitement before a football match. "Once you go a certain distance," he said, "there ain't no turning back. You dream about the job being done, and when things go to plan there ain't no better feeling. In this game, you got to be a team player. If you start having your own agenda, you're a dead man."

While in jail Honken made elaborate plans to kill other witnesses including Cutkomp, drawing maps and plans of his partner's home and offering fellow-inmates \$10,000 to carry out the hit. He also planned to kill federal investigators and the US Attorney Patrick Reinert, who equipped his car and home with alarm systems.

Honken was eventually convicted in 1997 of manufacturing and distributing methamphetamine, and in February 1998 he was sentenced to 27 years. Cutkomp admitted conspiracy and got four years, the prosecutors acknowledging the "extraordinary assistance" he had given them.

Turning down Honken's plea for a reduced sentence, the Appeal Court noted that "one could easily conclude" that he was involved in the 1993 witness disappearances. But with no bodies or evidence that the witnesses had been murdered, there seemed little chance that Honken would ever be convicted.

Nevertheless, the investigation continued, the authorities focusing on his girlfriend Angela Johnson. And the more they learned about her, the more strongly they suspected she was involved in the disappearances.

The day before Honken was due to appear in court in 1993, Angela had gone out with him to look for Nicholson, the street-dealer-turned-federal-snitch. A week earlier, Nicholson had moved into the home of his new girlfriend Lori Duncan and her two daughters, Kandi, 10, and Amber, six.

Lori had no idea that Nicholson had been a drug dealer or that he was about to testify against Honken. She and Nicholson had been seeing each other only a short while, and she'd agreed to his moving into her apartment because



Above, Dustin Honken after a court appearance in August 2004 when he was accused of soliciting the murders of five people, and below, following his murder conviction

she needed help paying the bills.

After Nicholson, Lori and her daughters disappeared, Angela was interviewed twice by the police, and each time she denied knowing any of the missing people or having been to Lori's home. But detectives learned that she was a former girlfriend of DeGeus, and the night he vanished he had dropped his daughter off with his mother, saying he was going to meet "an old girlfriend."

The police also re-interviewed Angela's long-time friend Christi Gaubetz, who admitted that Angela had confided to her that she had been involved in the 1993 disappearances.



"Angela made it clear that Dustin must not find out that she had told me anything," Christi said. "And I was afraid of what could happen to me or my family. That's why I lied to the police before. But now that Dustin is inside, I feel he can't harm us any more."

A grand jury was convened, and it found there was enough evidence to justify arresting and charging Angela. When Honken was questioned further in prison and was told of Angela's arrest, he feared she might spill the beans. So he claimed that his former girlfriend, who was heavily pregnant at the time of the disappearances, might have been involved in them.

In the spring of 2000 he and Angela were both now in federal prisons, Honken serving his 27-year sentence, Angela awaiting charges. A jailhouse snitch, Robert McNeese, serving a life sentence for drugs and weapons offences, was placed in a cell next to Angela's. He was trying to get his sentence reduced, and had already successfully informed on other prisoners awaiting trial.

"I told Angela the only way she was going to beat this rap would be to tell me how those people died and where their bodies were," he said later. "I knew plenty of guys serving life without parole who would admit to the killings in return for favours for their families. I told Angela that if she gave me the details of the murders, someone else could cop to it. Then, I told her, she could claim false imprisonment and sue the authorities. She knew her friend Christi was talking to the feds, and she was facing a whole lot of trouble."

"At first she said she wanted me to

help her escape, but I told her it wasn't possible. So she drew me some maps indicating where the bodies could be found, and how they were disposed of. She passed the maps to me from her cell and I handed them over."

Aided by the maps, federal agents found the bodies of Nicholson, Lori, her two daughters and DeGeus seven years after they vanished.

In August 2004 Dustin Honken was the first to go to trial on five counts of murder as well as weapons, conspiracy and drugs charges.

No one in Iowa had been executed since 1963, over 40 years ago, and in 1965 the state's death penalty was abolished altogether. But the federal death penalty had been restored in 1988, and the federal prosecutors exercised their authority to seek it because the case involved the murder of children and federal witnesses.

The court heard that on several occasions in the summer of 1993, Angela had told Christi Gaubetz that she and Honken needed to borrow her car. Angela had also asked Christi to baby-sit her daughter from a previous relationship while she and Honken went out.

"They went out around four p.m. every day and returned about midnight," Christi testified. "Angela didn't tell me until later that they were looking for Nicholson. We were friends,

"Angela said Dustin took the two adults first and shot them. Then he came back and got the children, and she said she heard more shots"

we waitressed together in the same café and baby-sat for each other. We even had keys to each other's homes. We were like sisters.

"Angela complained afterwards that they could never find Nicholson alone even after they knew where he lived. A few months later I found a gun in her cosmetics bag. She told me not to worry about it, that Dustin would take care of it, and I never saw it again."

Christi went on to say that a bigger shock followed a year later. "Angela told me she had to talk. She said that on July 25th, 1993, she posed as a lost cosmetics saleswoman and asked Lori Duncan if she could use her telephone book."

The jury was told that this ruse enabled Angela and Honken to gain entry to Lori's home, where Nicholson was asleep. Angela told Christi that Honken intended to make a videotape of Nicholson exonerating him on the federal drug charges, but things got out of hand once the couple got inside the apartment.

Christi said Angela told her that



A handcuffed Angela Johnson seen before a court appearance. When Lori Duncan let her into her house she was signing her own and her children's death warrant

she and Honken took Lori and her daughters upstairs, telling the children to pack some things because they were going away for a few days. Then they took the four victims to a wooded area outside Mason City.

"Angela said Dustin took the two adults first and shot them," Christi testified. "Then he came back and got the children, and she said she heard more shots."

Angela had added that all four were buried in the same shallow grave which had already been dug.

A few weeks after that conversation,

Christi continued, Angela phoned her again, in a flood of tears. "She said she'd been having nightmares, especially about the two little girls. She then told me about the night she called Terry DeGeus, asking him to come to the Mason City Country Club where she was working. She told me that when Terry arrived they got into his car and drove to an abandoned farm where Honken was waiting. She said he emptied a handgun's entire clip, but DeGeus didn't die until Dustin hit him on the head with a baseball bat which he retrieved from the car."

M

THE WORLD'S WORST KILLERS

Václav Mrázek

"THE PHANTOM OF CHOMUTOV"

• Czech Republic

Born in 1925 in the Czech village of Svinarov, Mrázek was one of 12 children. Arrested for theft, he was sent to jail for 18 months in 1941. Too small for military service, after the war he was signed up as an escort on convoys bringing food to Bulgaria and Romania.

Now empowered and emboldened by the rifle he carried, he bartered food from the convoy for sex with the desperate women, and cultivated an interest in sadistic pornography and particularly necrophilia-themed stories.

Married at 26, he was financially secure for the first time. It was then that he chose to terrify the region where he lived, close to the German border, prowling the forest trails around the town.

On August 22nd, 1951, as he passed Hana Chloubova, 15, Mrázek beat her and raped her lifeless body.

He shot and raped his next victim, Bronislava Pajurkova, 32, on September 16th.

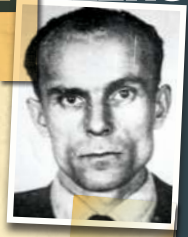
After three attacks ended in failure, he killed 16-year-old Marie Dvorakova on June 1st, 1952. He struck next on July 14th, 1954, ambushing Jirina Helmichova, 17, in the forest.

On August 9th, 1955, he murdered lovers Karel Trlifaj, 26, and Libuse Dufkova, 19, in a copse. His last murder victim was a friend's wife, Alzbeta Beranova, 56. She recognised him and screamed his name before he killed her with an axe. After ransacking the house and raping the couple's 11-year-old granddaughter, he fled.

On March 17th, 1957, after a workplace altercation police were called and discovered items stolen from his victims amongst his belongings. Vaclav Mrazek was arrested, tried and found guilty of seven murders and 120 other offences, including a number of earlier rapes of minors.

Sentenced to death, he was executed by hanging on December 30th, 1957, in Pankrác prison, Prague.

● Suggested by reader Jana Dohnalova



Got a suggestion for the **World's Worst Killers**? Write to us at True Detective, P.O. Box 735, London SE26 5NQ, UK or email truedetective@truecrimelibrary.com

Iowa's chief medical examiner Dr. Julia Goodin told the court that the three adult victims received multiple gunshot wounds, and the children each died of a single gunshot to the head. Both Nicholson and Lori had been bound with clothesline-like rope at their wrists and ankles, and green cloth stuffed into their mouths which were then covered with duct tape.

DeGeus's body had been found a few feet away, with gunshot wounds to the head, chest and upper arms.

Tim Lowell, a former drug dealer, testified that he helped Honken melt down a gun in 1993 after Honken told him his girlfriend didn't need it any more. Another witness, pawnbroker David Simons, said that Honken had bought a black and silver weapon of the same calibre a few weeks earlier.

At the trial's conclusion Honken, now 39, was found guilty of the five

murders, and for the slayings of the two children he was sentenced to death.

When Angela Johnson's trial began in April 2005, her lawyer Justin Willet said she had been trapped in the schemes of the man she loved, by whom she was heavily pregnant at the time of the shootings. She had no prior knowledge of Honken's plans to kill the people who might jeopardise his drugs empire, Willet claimed.

"Like many, she fell prey to Honken's power to manipulate others. She would learn of his plan, but not in time to stop it. Angela Johnson may be guilty of many things, but she did not assist or aid Dustin Honken for the purpose of murdering anyone. Guilt by association is unjust, and yet it's the principal evidence."

But federal prosecutor Clint Williams countered: "This is the trial of a woman who made possible the murder of five

people, done for the purpose of evading justice and allowing Dustin Honken to continue his drug operation."

Angela tried to commit suicide in her cell after the bodies were found, and she had subsequently been treated by mental health specialists. But an insanity plea was not offered, although her lawyer raised the question of her mental state during the sentencing phase of her trial.

Christi Gaubetz, Simons, Lowell and the jailhouse snitch McNeese all testified against her, and she too was convicted of all five murders and given the death penalty for the shooting of the two children.

"It's very unusual for both perpetrators to get death sentences for the same crime, because one perpetrator's actions are usually worse than the other's," said Clint Williams.

"And of the one hundred and

"She fell prey to Honken's power to manipulate others. She would learn of his plan but not in time to stop it"

thirty-six defendants who received the death penalty in 2004, only five were women. But I'm sure the people of Iowa have no problem at all with both of these people getting this sentence. I don't think people here will find it objectionable at all. I certainly don't."

Jurors handed down four death sentences to Angela Johnson, but the presiding judge remained concerned, saying, "I am troubled by the lack of certainty in the record concerning the precise involvement of Angela Johnson in these crimes."

Under federal law, however, he was bound by the jury's verdict and in July 2007 the US Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit upheld the conviction. However, five years later, in March 2012, a federal judge vacated the death sentence, citing a failure by Angela's attorneys to introduce evidence about her mental state.

Prosecutors decided not to pursue another death sentence, and in December 2014 Angela Johnson was re-sentenced to life without parole.

Honken, however, remained on Death Row. He was scheduled to be executed on January 15th, 2020, but won a reprieve. His death penalty was one of four federal cases put on hold by a US District judge over the issue of a new federal death penalty lethal injection protocol.

Under the plan, there would be a simplified method of lethal injection using a single drug, pentobarbital, rather than using a three-drug cocktail.

For now the remorseless drug kingpin Honken remains locked up at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana.

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APRIL

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A DROP OF THE DEADLY STUFF

Lana's Murder
Method Defied Belief



PORN-ADDICT NEIGHBOUR STRANGLED JO
- Then Dumped Her Body In The Snow

FOOTBALLER SHOT DEAD IN A SALFORD STREET



Parents' Anguish At Adelle's Murder



"We'll Never Be Able To Bury Our Daughter - There Are Pieces Of Her All Over The City"

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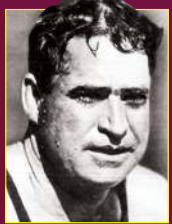
WHY PRIVATE MARGARET STABBED SERGEANT-MAJOR MONTY



CORPSES WERE TRAVELLING KILLER'S CALLING CARDS

THE MAN WHO BETRAYED AL CAPONE

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Doctor Injected His Lover With HIV

On sale at W.H. Smith and all good newsagents from March 26th or see the offer on page 47



EXECUTION USA

News and updates from December 2019 • Researched by Martin Chaffe

TWENTY-TWO KILLERS WERE EXECUTED IN 2019

ANNUAL REPORT

THE NUMBER of new death sentences in the USA in 2019 was 34, the fifth year in succession when the total was below 50. This compares with 73 in 2014 and 315 in 1996. There were 22 executions in the USA in 2019 including the 1,500th since resumption in 1977. This annual total compares with 25 in 2018, 23 in 2017 and 20 in 2016 which had been the lowest since 1991. The totals by state were: Texas, nine; Alabama, three; Georgia, three; Tennessee, three; Florida, two; Missouri, one; and South Dakota, one.

The number of executions has been suppressed for eight years by the continuing difficulty for some states in acquiring barbiturates. It seemed the US government would start executing federal inmates in December for the first time since 2003, but legal action by inmates has blocked this for some months, and even longer if they prevail.

There has been no sign yet that Donald Trump's administration was prepared to channel its presumed source of barbiturates to individual states that needed it. Also, in May, the US Attorney-General ruled that the Food and Drug Administration could



John William King (centre). He was executed in April 2019 at the Huntsville Unit, Texas, for the 1998 racially motivated murder of James Byrd Jr.

not continue to ban states from secretly importing barbiturates from abroad for the purpose of executions, but there is no evidence yet that any state has managed to import any drugs.

The states which have managed to acquire drugs have purchased them from compounding pharmacies within the US, but many states have been

unable to find such a pharmacy. They insist on complete secrecy from fear of being harassed by anti-death penalty activists.

Oklahoma and Alabama have been working on nitrogen gas hypoxia execution methods for 21 months but there is no sign yet of a protocol being published. Any protocol would then inevitably be challenged by lawyers for Death Row inmates.

The last year in which executions took place in states with the death penalty but none in 2019 are: Arizona (2014); Arkansas (2017); California (2006); Colorado (1997); Idaho (2012); Indiana (2009); Kansas (1965); Kentucky (2008); Louisiana (2010); Mississippi (2012); Montana (2006); Nebraska (2018); Nevada (2006); North Carolina (2006); Ohio (2017); Oklahoma (2015); Oregon (1998); Pennsylvania (1999); South Carolina (2011); Utah (2010); Virginia (2017); Wyoming (1992); Federal (2003); Military (1961).

Following New Hampshire's abolition of the death penalty in 2019, 21 states and Washington DC have no death penalty and these are shown with the year of the last non-federal execution. Alaska (never); Connecticut (2005); Delaware (2012); Hawaii (never); Illinois (1999); Iowa (1962); Maine (1885); Maryland (2005); Massachusetts (1947); Michigan (1836); Minnesota (1906); New Hampshire (1939); New Jersey (1963); New Mexico (2001); New York (1963); North Dakota (1905); Rhode Island (1845); Vermont (1954); Washington (2010); Washington DC (1957); West

TWO JOLTS FOR PETROL BOMB KILLER EXECUTED DECEMBER 5th, 2019:

LEROY HALL, 53 • Electrocutation • Tennessee



HALL

Hall spent 27 years on Death Row for the brutal murder of his ex-girlfriend in April 1991. Twenty-two-year-old Traci Crozier, who had left him because of his abusive behaviour, was sitting in her car when Hall threw in a petrol bomb which exploded inflicting burns on 90 per cent of her body. She was still conscious when the ambulance arrived, telling paramedics that she was worried about the loss of her hair, but died the following day in hospital. Hall's attorneys claimed unsuccessfully that his trial was tainted by a female juror who had failed to declare that she had been raped and abused by a former partner.

Hall had gone blind in prison from poorly treated glaucoma so was unable to see his last meal of Philly cheesesteak, onion rings, cheesecake and Pepsi cola.

Since executions resumed in Tennessee in 2018, following a nine-year hiatus, Hall was the fourth condemned man out of six to choose the electric chair instead of the Midazolam three-drug protocol. His last statement was, "People can learn forgiveness and love to make this world a better place."

Following the two jolts of electricity, during which smoke or steam was seen coming from his head, he was pronounced dead at 7.26 p.m.

Virginia (1959) and Wisconsin (1851).

The US Government can seek the death penalty in any state or territory such as Puerto Rico, regardless of whether there is a state or local death penalty, for murders done during or in furtherance of crimes including terrorism, racial hatred, racketeering, carjacking, skyjacking, kidnapping, killing of federal employees or the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Murders in national parks, Indian reservations and on the high seas are also prosecuted federally. The death penalty is also available to courts martial of all the armed services.

STATE DEATH PENALTIES **CALIFORNIA: MOTHER-KILLER SENTENCED TO DEATH**

A man from Salt Lake City, Utah, who burned his mother to death after pouring petrol on her has been condemned to die in Indio, Riverside County.

Israel Guardado-Ramirez, 38, attacked his 61-year-old mother, Francisca Ramirez, outside her workplace in January 2018, causing second- and third-degree burns and she died in hospital three weeks later when her lungs failed. There had been a disagreement over the custody of his eldest daughter.



**Petrol
attack:
Israel
Guardado-
Ramirez**

The jurors convicted the killer of first-degree murder with two of California's death-qualifying circumstances of "lying in wait" and "inflicting a torturous death."

Guardado defended himself in the penalty phase and told the jurors, "It's totally up to you guys. Whatever you think I should get, I'm fine with it."

However, with Governor Gavin Newsom's moratorium in place and around 740 on Death Row in the queue ahead of him, the death sentence is probably only a symbolic gesture.

CALIFORNIA: TOOLBOX KILLER DIES IN PRISON

One of California's most notorious serial killers, **Lawrence "Pliers" Bittaker**, died on December 13th in San Quentin prison at the age of 79. He had been on Death Row since March 1981 for a series of abduction, sex and torture murders in 1979 with his accomplice Roy Lewis Norris. The murderers were dubbed "The Toolbox Killers" by the press for using screwdrivers, pliers and ice-picks to murder their victims.

The killings began on June 24th with 16-year-old Lucinda Schaefer. She was kidnapped near Redondo Beach, raped by both men in the back of their van and strangled with a wire coat-hanger tightened with pliers.

On July 8th, Andrea Hall was talked into the van while out hitchhiking, raped by both men, stabbed in the

THROAT SLASHER'S GOODBYE "WOOF"

EXECUTED DECEMBER 11th, 2019:

TRAVIS TREVINO RUNNELS, 46 • Lethal injection • Texas



RUNNELS

Runnels was put to death for murdering a prison supervisor, following a disagreement, in January 2003. Stanley Wiley, 38, had his throat cut to the bone by a leather-trimming knife in the shoe and boot factory at the Clements Unit in Potter County. At the time of the crime Runnels was serving a 70-year sentence imposed in Dallas for armed robbery.

At his trial in Amarillo in 2005, he admitted the murder but the jury thought that he would be a continuing danger as long as he lived. His execution was delayed for an hour by an unsuccessful appeal to the US Supreme Court claiming that a prosecution witness had provided false testimony.

On the gurney Runnels replied, "No" when asked if he wanted to make a final statement. Just before the execution began he blew kisses and called out "Woof! Woof!" to three female friends and two attorneys looking through an observation window.

He was pronounced dead at 7.26 p.m., 22 minutes after the Pentobarbital was injected.

eardrums with the ice pick, strangled and thrown over a cliff.

On September 3rd, Jackie Gillam, 15, and Leah Lamp, 13, were waiting for a bus when they decided to accept a lift. The two girls were raped and tortured for two days while the men made an audio recording. Both girls were stabbed in the eardrums with the ice pick, strangled and bludgeoned with a sledgehammer before being dumped over a cliff.

On September 30th, Shirley Sanders was abducted and raped but managed to escape.

The last murder was on October 31st, when Lynette Ledford, 16, was raped, stabbed and tortured with pliers. When she would not stop screaming, Bittaker smashed her elbows with a sledgehammer before tightening a coat-hanger around her throat with the pliers. Her body was dumped on a lawn in Hermosa Beach, causing public uproar as the "Hillside Stranglers," Angelo Buono and Kenneth Bianchi, had recently been arrested for a different series of murders.

Norris, now 71 and serving a life sentence, became eligible for parole in 2009 but failed to show up for the hearing. His next parole hearing was due some time in 2019, but it seems unlikely that it would be granted.

CALIFORNIA: SERIAL KILLER AND NECROPHILE DEAD

Another serial killer of women was found dead in his cell at San Quentin on December 27th. **Phillip Carl**



**Above,
Lawrence
Bittaker.
Below, Roy
Norris**



Jablonski, 73, was sentenced to die in San Mateo County in August 1994 for murdering his third wife and mother-in-law after being paroled for the second-degree murder and attempted rape of his second wife in 1978.

Carol Spadoni, 46, had met Jablonski while he was serving his life sentence and married him, but when he came up for parole she told the authorities that she was frightened of him and did not want to meet him. He was ordered not to go to her home in Burlingame, near San Francisco, but a few months later in April 1991 he did so and murdered Ms. Spadoni and her mother Eva Peterson, 72. The women were shot, strangled, stabbed and mutilated and the mother was raped after she was dead.

Jablonski had been paroled for good behaviour despite trying to strangle his mother with a shoelace during a prison visit in 1985. In 1991, Jablonski also murdered two other women – Fathyma Vann, 38, in Indio, California, and Margie Rogers, 58, in Utah, before being arrested in Missouri.

Back in the 1960s, Jablonski had tried to kill his first wife, and while a sergeant in the US Army in 1969 was discharged due to a "schizophrenic illness."

FLORIDA: WIFE-KILLER CONDEMNED TO DIE

All 12 members of a Lee County jury in Fort Myers have voted for the execution of **Mark Sievers**, 51, for arranging the murder of his doctor wife. In the guilt phase they had convicted him of first-degree murder and conspiracy to murder and in the penalty phase found true two aggravating factors, namely that the murder was for



**Monster:
Phillip Carl
Jablonski**

pecuniary or financial gain and that the murder was committed in a cold, calculated and premeditated manner without any moral or legal justification.

The defence were unable to persuade the jury to show mercy with factors such as that he loved his daughters, his parents divorced when he was young, he had moved home a lot during childhood, and he had been involved in charity work.

In June 2015, 46-year-old Dr. Teresa Sievers flew back home from a family gathering in Connecticut while Sievers and his two daughters stayed behind. Sievers' childhood friend Curtis Wright, 51, and an accomplice, Jimmy Rodgers, 29, then drove from Missouri and entered the Bonita Springs family home. Dr. Sievers, a specialist in holistic, anti-ageing, integrative and functional medicine, was found bludgeoned to death with hammers in her kitchen after failing to turn up for work. Mark Sievers had hoped to receive a large insurance pay-out.

Wright pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in exchange for a 25-year sentence and his testimony against the other two. Rodgers was acquitted of murder in the first degree but found guilty of second-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole.

FLORIDA: LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE FOR TEEN'S KILLER

Derrick McLean, 42, has dodged the needle after a re-sentencing jury in Orlando, Orange County, could not agree unanimously to recommend his execution. Back in September 2007 the original jury voted by nine to three for execution and he was condemned to die, but new retroactive rules operative from July 2002 mandate that only unanimous juries can recommend or impose death sentences.

McLean will serve life without parole for the November 2004 murder of 16-year-old Jahvon Thompson, who was shot three times in the chest in his home when McLean and two accomplices were looking for drugs and cash. McLean also shot and wounded a neighbour before making off with 5lb of marijuana in a pillowcase.

The boy's father was also murdered in December 2006, although it is not known if the killings were related.



Left to right, killer **Mark Sievers** and his victim **Dr. Teresa Sievers**

KENTUCKY: GOVERNOR TAKES KILLERS OFF DEATH ROW

In his last few days in office, Governor Matt Bevin commuted two death sentences to 30 years to life. **Gregory Wilson**, 63, was sentenced to die in 1988 and will be able to apply for parole immediately. Mr. Bevin said that Wilson was "involved in a brutal murder but to say his legal defence was inadequate would be the understatement of the year. Justice should be served on all sides. It was not."

At the time of Wilson's trial, no attorneys in northern Kentucky would defend him because the maximum state fee at the time of \$2,500 was too low. He was eventually defended by a rookie who had never defended any felony charge and a "burned-out alcoholic" acting as lead counsel who had no office and legal books and was only contactable at a local pub.

Wilson was sentenced to die for the May 1987 abduction, rape, robbery and strangulation of assistant restaurant manager Debbie Pooley, 36. Wilson's prostitute girlfriend, **Brenda Humphrey**, was convicted of kidnapping and facilitation of rape and murder, driving the car in which Ms. Pooley was raped on the back seat.

Brenda Humphrey, pictured in 2014, has since been paroled after serving a minimum-25-year life sentence. She testified against Wilson but during the trial was taken to the chambers of another judge where sex sessions took place. State and federal courts had ruled that this did not prejudice the case against Wilson.

Ten months before the murder, Wilson had been paroled in Ohio after serving 13 years for two rapes. He survived a September 16th, 2010, execution date due to a late claim of mental retardation, which was denied, but the lack of lethal injection drugs had prevented a new date from being set.

In the case of **Leif Christian Halvorsen**, 65, Governor Bevin said: "He has a powerful voice that needs to be heard by more people."

Halvorsen's lawyer said that he had started reconciliation programmes across the country and counselled troubled youth and others to turn their lives around so that they "would not go down the path Leif went down."

A retired Fayette County attorney was dismayed with the decision, calling it laughable.

In January 1983, Halvorsen and Mitchell Willoughby shot 19-year-old Jacqueline Greene eight times in the



Above, **Gregory Wilson**. Below, **Brenda Humphrey**



back of the head. Her boyfriend Joe Norman, 28, and another man, Joey Durham, 23, were also shot multiple times in a drugs-related triple-murder.

Halvorsen had exhausted all his appeals and Willoughby, who was not spared by the governor, remains on Death Row, having lost his penultimate appeal in August.

LOUISIANA: RESTAURANT KILLER OFF DEATH ROW

Rogers LaCaze, 42, has dodged the needle after 24 years on Death Row. He will spend the rest of his life in prison for a triple-murder committed with his older girlfriend **Antoinette Frank**, who was a serving detective on the New Orleans Police Department.

In March 1995, LaCaze, then 18, and Antoinette Frank, 23, robbed a Vietnamese restaurant in the city where she had

worked as a security guard. Off-duty police officer Ronald Williams,

25, Antoinette Frank's

partner on the force, also working in the restaurant off-duty as a guard, was shot by LaCaze three times in the back of the head and once in the back. Antoinette Frank shot two of the restaurant owner's children, a son, Cuong Vu, 17, and daughter Ha Vu, 24, as they begged for their lives on their knees. Other members of the family had hidden in a walk-in freezer and witnessed the slayings through a window.

When the police later arrived, Antoinette Frank was one of the investigating officers and the survivors were able to denounce her to her colleagues.

LaCaze's death sentence was overturned due to ineffective counsel and prosecutors decided not to seek it again. Antoinette Frank, now 48, is the only woman on the state's Death Row. ● For a full account of the case, see TD's sister magazine *Murder Most Foul* (107). Copies are still available via the back issues section of our website shop at www.truecrimelibrary.com or by phoning Forum Press on 020 8778 0514.



Left to right, **Rogers LaCaze** and **Antoinette Frank**



Drugs-related killings: **Leif Christian Halvorsen**

FEDERAL DEATH PENALTIES

The four federal executions scheduled for December and January were called off after the US Supreme Court (USSC) refused to lift a stay by a federal judge in Washington DC which had also been upheld by a three-judge panel of the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. The appeal revolves around the wording of the 1994 Federal Death Penalty Act which states that inmates must be executed in the same "manner" as the state

where the federal death sentence was handed down. The federal government is proposing lethal injection using an overdose of Pentobarbital which has been found to be constitutional by the USSC, but the inmates are claiming that if the state where the sentence was handed down uses different drugs or different methods of inserting catheters etc., then the “manner” is different. The federal government will argue that “manner” was not intended to be so specific and was intended to differentiate between electrocution, lethal gas, firing squad, hanging and injection.

The last federal execution was in 2003 and the hiatus was exacerbated by President Obama’s eight years of inaction and difficulties in finding drugs.

JAPAN DEATH PENALTY OSAKA: DOUBLE-KILLER’S DEATH SENTENCE COMMUTED

The Supreme Court of Japan (SCJ) has confirmed the commutation of the death sentence to life in prison for 44-year-old **Kyozo Osohi**. He had been sentenced to hang in Osaka in June 2015 for a random knife attack which took two lives in the city in June 2012. Shingo Minamino, 42, a music producer, and Toshi Sasaki, 66, a restaurant manager, were stabbed to death with a butcher’s knife in a busy downtown street.



Life behind bars: Kyozo Osohi

The three professional judges and six lay jurors in Osaka District Court agreed with the prosecutors that Isohi should die for the premeditated nature and cruelty of the attacks. The families of the victims had demanded the death penalty, claiming that Isohi had shown no real signs of regret. However, the SCJ ruled that he was suffering from auditory hallucinations at the time of the murders and disagreed with the prosecutors that the two killings were premeditated.

Since the new lay court system started to hand down death sentences in 2011, five death sentences have been commuted. Previously guilt and sentence had been determined by a judge sitting alone.

FUKUOKA: GALLOWS FOR KILLER POLICE SERGEANT

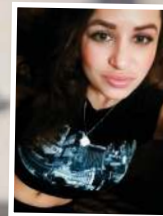
A serving police sergeant who murdered his wife and two children has been sentenced to hang in Fukuoka District Court. **Mitsuru Nakata**, 41, has always denied that he strangled Yukiko Nakata, 38; son Ryosuke, nine; and daughter Miyu, six. They died on June 5th, 2017, and their bodies were found 24 hours later by Yukiko’s sister



A sketch of Nakata in court

BULLET FOR KILLER “BEAST”

Killer Alyaksandr Asipovich in custody. Inset right, top to bottom: his victims Krystsina Krukshina and Alesya Klimava



BELARUS DEATH PENALTY

A man who lured two women back to his flat in Babruysk after meeting them in a nightclub before bludgeoning and stabbing them to death was executed by pistol shot to the back of the head on December 17th.

In July 2018, **Alyaksandr Asipovich**, 36, struck Alesya Klimava, 27, 77 times with his fists and a hammer. Krystsina Krukshina, 26, was stabbed 16 times. Before they were killed they had been locked in a bathroom and Ms. Klimava had phoned the police on her mobile phone, but

she could only name the street and not the number of the flat. The police eventually arrived after the murders had taken place but thwarted Asipovich’s intention to dismember the bodies.

At his unsuccessful appeal hearing last May before the Belarus Supreme Court Asipovich had wept before the judges, claiming that the women had attacked him first with intent to rob. Ms. Klimava’s mother told the court she had not been able to see her daughter’s face before the funeral because her head had been smashed to pieces.

She added that Asipovich was an unrepentant beast who would always remain a beast.

when she visited after Nakata had gone to work. The prosecution said that the couple’s relationship was strained and that there was no evidence from CCTV footage that an intruder had committed the murders. Nakata also had a wound on his arm caused by a victim and he was known to be in the home at the time the victims were forensically proven to have died.

Presiding Judge Toshihiro Shibata said the death sentence was warranted due to the social impact of the shocking crime.

FUKUOKA: FAMILY-KILLER AND ROBBER HANGED

On December 26th, Chinese national **Wei Wei**, 40, was hanged in Fukuoka for his role in the robbery and murder of a family of four. In June 2003, Wei, a Japanese language student, and two other Chinese students, Yang Ning and Wang Liang, entered the home of clothing retailer Shinjiro Matsumoto, 41. Once inside they knocked him unconscious and strangled him and his son Kai, 11, and daughter Hina, eight. His wife Chika, 40, was drowned in the bath. The bodies were then loaded into the family Mercedes, driven to a pier at Hakata Port, weighed down with



Condemned to die: Chinese national Wei Wei

dumbbells and thrown into the waters below.

After the crime, Yang and Wang fled back to China but were arrested there, where the authorities took matters into their own hands and executed 25-year-old Yang for the crime on July 12th, 2005.

Wang, 22, received a life sentence in 2004 after co-operating with police.

Authorising her first execution as justice minister, Masako Mori said: “The crimes were extremely savage and cruel. Wei had slain a whole happy family for very selfish reasons. It was an extremely deplorable crime.”

This brings to three the number of executions in 2019 and was the first of a foreign national since 2009 when another Chinese man was hanged.

A spokesman for Amnesty International described the execution as a shameful black mark on Japan’s human rights record.

“More than 100 countries worldwide have abolished the death penalty, while Japan persists with this barbaric punishment,” the spokesman added.

He urged Japan to establish an immediate moratorium and promote an informed debate as first steps to abolition.

More news from Death Row and beyond in next month’s issue

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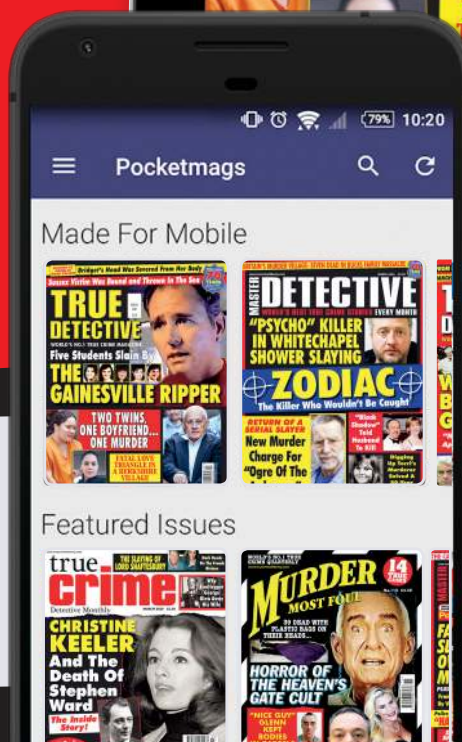
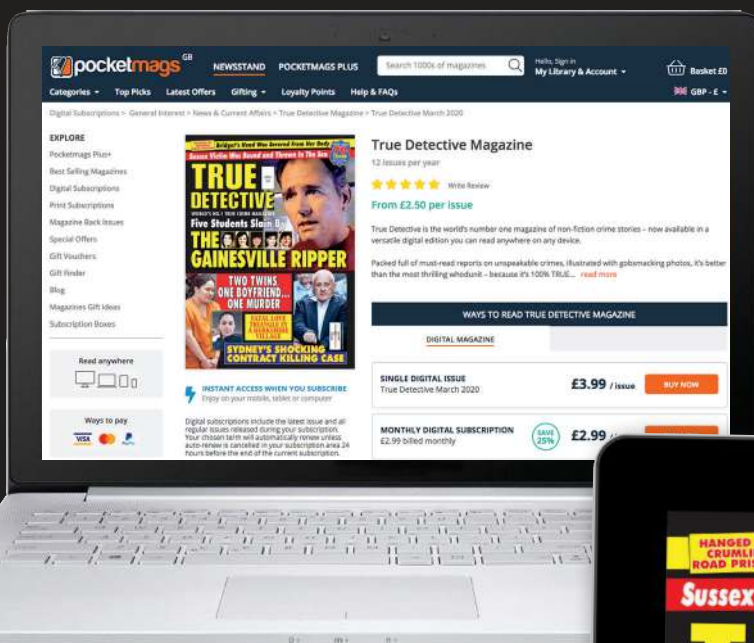
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HANGED IN AUSTRALIA

Shooting Adelaide

Joe Coleman was brimming over with anger when he was being drunk. He stormed out of the court, vowing a slight the judiciary had done to

FISHERMAN JAMES “Joe” Coleman was furious when he was hauled before the magistrates. All over a bit of Saturday night boozing after a hard day’s work! It was preposterous!

To make matters worse, the officer responsible for his arrest was none other than his old buddy Albert (“Bert”) Ring. They’d always been the best of pals. And now here he was, in the dock for the first time in his life, at nine o’clock in the evening, of all times.

“How do you plead?” the clerk of the court asked him.

“Sir, I am not guilty. I do not deserve this kind of treatment.”

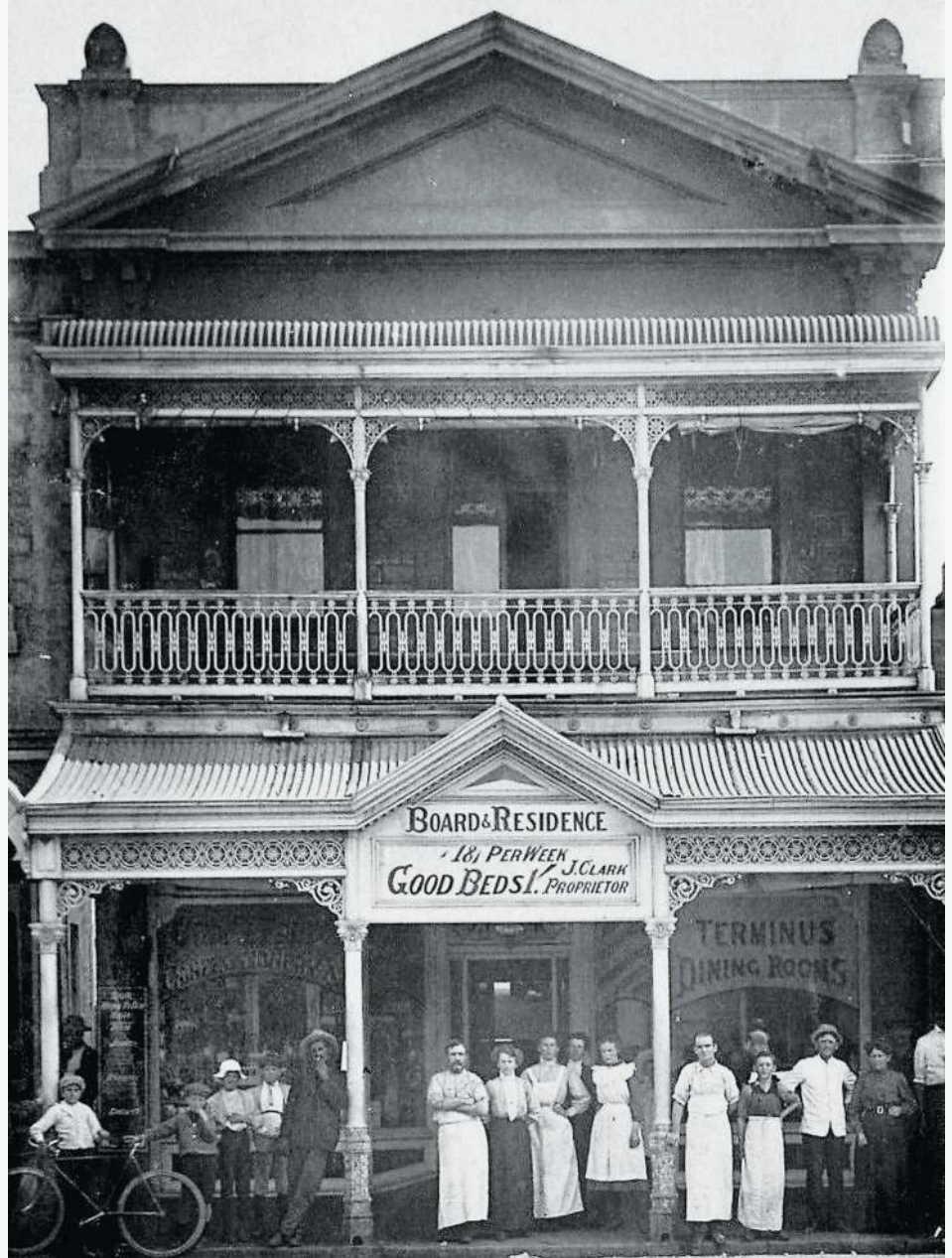
The magistrate, a Mr. Hicks, said sonorously: “Mr. Coleman, you were found drunk in a public place and PC Ring arranged for you to appear in court tonight so that you may take your fishing boat out early on tomorrow’s tide. I find you guilty. Fined five shillings, or seven days’ imprisonment for non-payment.”

Coleman sighed and plunged his hand into his trouser pocket. “Here’s your five bob,” he said. “I still say I don’t deserve this. It was Ring’s fault. I will shoot him. I’ve lived in this town for 30 years and I’ve never been in any trouble before.”

This town was Glenelg, a beach suburb in the south-east corner of Australia, and the minor courtroom drama involving James Coleman happened on Saturday, March 28th, 1908. Long enough to be forgotten, you may think, but in this case there was a sequel that lived on in local memories.

In those days Glenelg was a fishing port and a cluster of houses around a High Street. It was named after Lord Glenelg, Britain’s Secretary for War and the Colonies; the original name came from the town of Glenelg in the

Case recalled by **MATTHEW SPICER**



The Terminus Hotel in Glenelg (right) was where PC Ring would wait at the end of each day as the last Adelaide trains arrived

Death Of An Copper

was fined five shillings for terrible vengeance for the him...

Scottish Highlands. Today it is the oldest European settlement on mainland South Australia.

As, sullen and resentful, Coleman stalked out of the courtroom he repaired immediately to the Pier Hotel, where he downed several whiskies and told everyone within earshot about the outrageous thing that had happened to him in court.

"But don't worry about it," he said. "I'm going to fix things, you'll see."

Fix things? The audience in the bar stared at him quizzically. But Coleman didn't explain. Instead he went off home to Reid Street, a small lane off Glenelg High Street, where his wife was tidying the kitchen.

"I'm going to shoot myself. You'll soon be a widow," he announced.

Apparently unmoved, Mrs. Coleman, who knew about his scrap with the Law, said: "I met Mr. Hicks the magistrate when I was coming home. He told me to try to keep you out of trouble."

Coleman said nothing. He went to a cupboard, took out his old muzzle-loading rifle and started to load it. Alarmed, his wife made a grab for the gun and managed to wrest the ramrod away from him. Now more sullen than ever, Coleman pushed her aside and went out into the street, still clutching the gun.

He knew what he was looking for. He knew that Constable Ring routinely met the last two trains from Adelaide to Glenelg, and that he would be standing outside the Terminus Hotel at 11 p.m. Arriving at the hotel, he marched up and down, betraying all his fury to passers-by

That was swiftly noted by Charles Ranford, an old friend. "What's up, Joe?" he inquired.

Coleman replied: "That b----- Ring got me today. Revenge is sweet. I'm going to shoot him, and then shoot myself. Life means nothing to me."

Mr. Ranford looked perplexed. "Why



Victim Albert Ring. The police constable's kindness towards his friend "Joe" Coleman proved instrumental in his death

don't you go home, and get a good night's sleep?" he suggested.

But Coleman wasn't in the mood for taking advice. In the event, further conversation was stifled by the din of the steam train's arrival from Adelaide.

PC Ring stepped forward to meet the train and at once saw Coleman, holding a rifle.

"What have you got there, Joe?" he asked suspiciously. The noise from the train obliterated Coleman's reply. Next, the police officer said, "You had better go home, Joe."

The train had almost reached the point where they were both standing. To distract Coleman, PC Ring shouted, "Look out, Joe!" At that moment Coleman raised the rifle to waist height and fired. The officer staggered back and slumped to the ground. He raised himself to a sitting position, then fell back, lifeless.

Mr. Ranford, who had been watching, ran forward and bent over the constable. "Someone go for the doctor!" he



The funeral of PC Ring was attended by 10,000 mourners along the route



The spot (marked) on the Sturt Creek where Coleman was captured by police

shouted. In the confusion, as passengers spilled off the train and surrounded the horrific scene outside the station, Coleman slipped away into the High Street. He made for the Pier Hotel, intent only on getting himself another drink, but he was refused admission.

In Glenelg in those days everyone knew everyone else. A Mr. Ross, who

had come off the Adelaide train, spotted Coleman in the town and said, "Joe, PC Fitzgerald is down at the station looking for you."

Coleman replied, "I'm in big trouble." They sat on a seat and Coleman briefly told Ross what he had done. When they separated Ross made off towards the police station. Coleman walked to the jetty, and threw the rifle and the powder flask into the sea before vanishing into the darkness.

All that night and into the next day, Sunday, the hunt for the fugitive went on. His house was put under 24-hour surveillance but he still hadn't returned when on Monday afternoon the inquest opened on his victim in Glenelg Town Hall.

PC Fitzgerald

told the court that he last saw PC Ring at 11 p.m. on Saturday night. He heard a gunshot at 12.05 a.m. and hurried to the scene. He found PC Ring dead on the ground, and then hurried back to the police station to retrieve a revolver, intending to start searching for Coleman.

"Why wasn't PC Ring armed?" the

coroner, Dr. Ramsey Smith, asked in some consternation. "I thought mounted police always carried firearms."

PC Fitzgerald replied: "That is normally so for officers on night duty. But there is no regulation that compels an officer to carry a gun."

"If he had been carrying his gun he could have disarmed Coleman," the coroner said. "In these days, when criminals seem to hold the lives of honest people and police officers so cheaply, there is too much sentiment and too little firm dealing with the criminal population."

The coroner was at pains to point out that the victim had acted with great kindness towards Coleman. "If the accused had been kept locked up until Monday morning, then PC Ring would still be alive," he observed.

The day after the inquest PC Ring was buried in an impressive funeral. It was estimated that at least 10,000 people lined the procession route between Glenelg and the cemetery.

Meanwhile, the fugitive was still on the run. The sand hills along the coastline were thoroughly searched, but the manhunt concentrated on the local fishing boats because police believed Coleman might try to sail to Kangaroo Island. This is Australia's third-largest island; it was where Coleman did most of his fishing and he knew the place like the back of his hand.

During the next few days the hunted man was often spotted at a distance. A man named Forsyth living in Morphett Vale reported that a stranger had called at his house seeking directions and asking for a drink of water. "I'm sure it was Coleman. I knew him at Glenelg 25 years ago," Mr. Forsyth said.

A woman said that one morning she saw Coleman filling a can at her rainwater butt. By the time she contacted the police he had moved on.

Meanwhile, three days after the murder, police recovered the murder weapon from the sea at the jetty, and a week after that they found the powder flask.

Such was the interest in the manhunt that reporters from Adelaide now shared hotel rooms with policemen brought in from the city to bolster the search parties.

Two weeks after the shooting police formed a long dragline of searchers along the Adelaide coastline. Two officers in the dragline, Detective Nettle and PC Deacon, were walking along the Sturt Creek near the bridge on the Morphett road when they saw a bag on the bank of the creek.

About 50 yards away a man was reclining on the bank looking in the opposite direction to the officers. They

walked up to him, and PC Deacon said, "Hello, old fellow. What are you doing here? Aren't you Coleman?"

The man replied, "Yes," then changed that at once to "No." Detective Nettle said, "Whether you are or not, you're coming with us."

The man was told to roll up his trousers above the right knee, revealing the name "J.A. Coleman" tattooed on it. Quite why Coleman should have chosen to have labelled himself indelibly in this fashion wasn't made clear, but it was evidently something the police knew about.

Coleman was taken to the police station. He was in a sorry state, dirty and hungry. "But I kept myself busy reading about the police searching for me," he said.

There was plenty more to read about him when two months later, on Thursday June 4th, 1908, he stood before Mr. Justice Homburg in the dock at Adelaide Criminal Court charged with murder.

The prosecution had a damning piece of evidence against the prisoner – Coleman's diary. He had kept a day-by-day account of his movements and it was clear from what he had written that he hadn't any sympathy for his victim.

Coleman could only plead manslaughter on the grounds of being drunk, but it was a poor defence because he had announced to the magistrate Mr. Hicks that he would shoot PC Ring.

In desperation, the defence called Sir James Boucaut, a celebrated South

Thursday, July 2nd, 1908, at Adelaide Prison. As Coleman left the dock he waved his hat at the public gallery.

If South Australia was determined to execute James Coleman, the same couldn't be said for a large section of Adelaide's residents. As soon as the verdict was announced several thousand people gathered at Queen Victoria's statue in Victoria Square in protest. Hundreds more assembled at the offices of the *Adelaide Advertiser*.

The purpose of the gatherings was to ask the state government to intervene. But the politicians stood firm. There would be no reprieve, they announced. And indeed, Coleman wasn't expecting one. On the morning of the execution he was led to the scaffold and hanged without incident.

The chaplain, the Rev W. Clark, recalled, "He was cheerful all the time and he went to his doom without flinching. He attributed his courage to divine help, and his last thoughts were for his wife. He kept himself well in hand during his last hour, and prayed once or twice."

As the condemned man plunged through the trap-door, fish shops in the city food market closed their doors for five minutes and the gaslights were dimmed in homage to a fellow-fisherman.

After the execution it was revealed that Coleman had written a statement in the death cell. It read:

"I am deeply sorry for the deed I committed and face to face with death I can truthfully say that if I had not been mad with

drink I would not have dreamed of shooting poor Ring. We were always good friends, and I only knew what I had done when I was told afterwards.

"I wish to thank all those who have been so kind to my dear wife as well as to myself. I die in the assurance of God's forgiveness."

The hanging brought about some changes in South Australia's judiciary procedure. Coleman's execution was to be the last at which newspaper reporters were admitted; henceforth in capital cases members of the press were only permitted to attend inquests.

And after an inquiry into the arming of police officers, when it was found that only one revolver was kept at Glenelg police station, Adelaide's police authority bought new weapons for its force.



James "Joe" Coleman went bravely to his death and left a note expressing his remorse for the killing

Australian politician, as a character witness. "Coleman has often worked on my boat and I have never seen him in an intoxicated state and I've never had any trouble with him," Sir James told the court.

All this was to no avail. It took the jury only 30 minutes to find the fisherman guilty of murder. Had he anything to say, he was asked? Yes, he had. "You read out only the two worst parts of my diary," he complained. "I also wrote, 'To think I've done such a thing as to shoot my friend Mr. Ring.'

"I have no excuses to make. As I said before, I was not responsible for my actions. My mind seems a blank. At the present time I can still hardly realise it."

Without further ado he was sentenced to hang, the execution to take place on

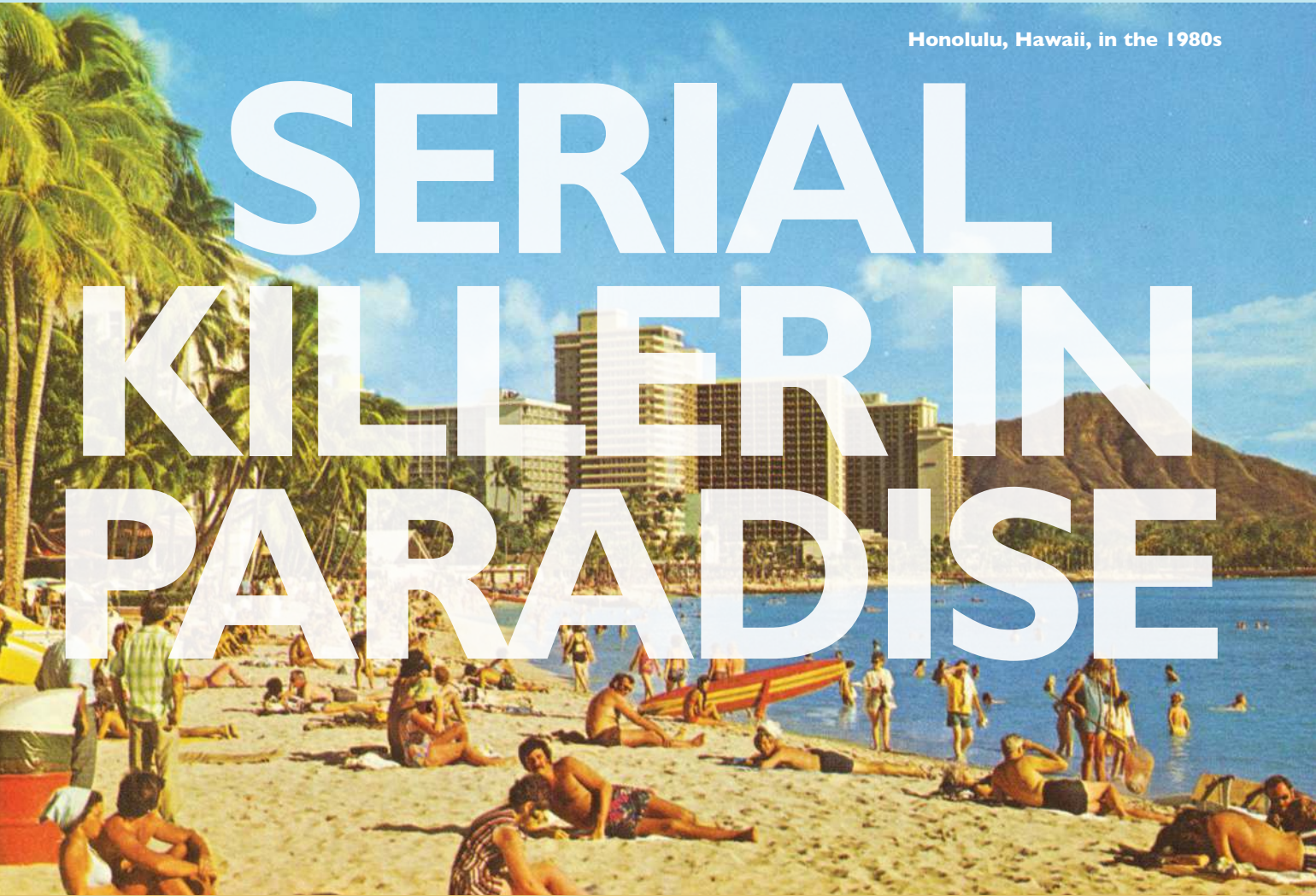


The arresting officers: Detective Nettle (above) and PC Deacon (below)



Honolulu, Hawaii, in the 1980s

SERIAL KILLER IN PARADISE



More than 30 years after the five savage murders occurred, a suspect was finally given the opportunity to seek justice for the victims he bound, raped and strangled.

Was This The Ho

VICTIM #1



Vicki Gail Purdy, 25

VICTIM #2



Regina Sakamoto, 17

VICTIM #3



Denise Hughes, 21

WHAT SPRINGS to mind when you think of Hawaii? Bleached sandy beaches caressed by the midday sun; the courage and agility of the islands' big wave surfers; tropical shirts emblazoned in rainbow colours; hula dancers?

And when you think of crime and Hawaii, depending on your age you might recall golden age detective Charlie Chan (based on real-life Honolulu detective Chang Apana), *Hawaiian Eye* with Connie Stevens or perhaps Steve McGarrett and *Hawaii Five-O*. What you probably don't think of, though, is serial killers.

By American standards, Hawaii's biggest city Honolulu is a safe place to party. So when it became clear that a series of related killings was taking place among the clubs and bars of Waikiki in the mid-1980s, the city of peace was shocked to its core.

Quickly labelled the Honolulu Strangler, he was Hawaii's first known serial killer.

His first victim was twice-married blonde military wife Vicki Gail Purdy, 25. She set off to go clubbing with friends on May 29th, 1985, but she never met up with them. She was last seen at the Shorebird Hotel around midnight.

Vicki, a former cheerleader, worked at the Wahiawa Video Rental store. She was found the next day, still in her yellow jumpsuit, by the Ke'ehi Lagoon. Someone had bound her with cord,



Howard Gay. The smooth-talker from Buffalo, New York, brought himself to the attention of murder detectives by announcing that a psychic had told him the location of Linda Pesce's remains

inally named. But the
ad long since passed...

Honolulu Strangler?

VICTIM #4



Louise Medeiros, 25

VICTIM #5



Linda Pesce, 36

raped and strangled her.

Vicki's husband Gary Purdy, Chief Warrant Officer in the 24th Aviation Battalion, was devastated – and confused. "Vicki was not a woman to be messed with," he explained. "Early in our marriage, when we had problems, she kicked the s—t out of me."

Gary, a helicopter pilot, thought the video store might be a link. It had a dark reputation and was known to rent pornographic movies. Gary objected to Vicki working there. In December, 1984, an assistant at the store, Terry Lee Foxx, 39, and a co-owner, Carol Drake, 56, were stabbed to death by a disgruntled customer – but officers were unable to link these earlier deaths to Vicki.

Honolulu police officers were on full alert. "First and foremost in an officer's mind, or investigator's mind, is that we don't want anybody else to get hurt," retired Major Louis Souza said in 2002.

Months went by – months during which the killer’s confidence must have grown. He struck again on January 14th, 1986. Shy and petite high school student Regina Sakamoto, 17, missed her school bus in the morning. She rang her boyfriend to say she would be late to school.

“She was very bookish and smart. She used to look out for me,” said her brother. “I kinda looked up to her. She was last seen sitting at a bus stop in front of a diner.”

From Kansas, Regina’s Japanese family name came from her stepfather, a military serviceman. The next day, Regina was found semi-naked in a blue tank top and sweatshirt at Ke’ehi Lagoon. As with Vicki, Regina was bound, raped and strangled.

Her stepfather, Maurice Sakamoto, was estranged from Regina’s mother. “I warned her not to move with the two kids to Wahiawa. I warned her Regina was pretty and a target in an area with a high number of transients.”

Officers were quick to see the connection between the two young women – a connection reinforced by the disappearance on January 30th of Denise Hughes, 21, a telephonist and naval wife from Washington state. Her husband, Chuck, served aboard a ship at Pearl Harbor. Denise was found by fishermen the next day in a blue dress, wrapped in blue canvas, bound, raped

and strangled.

Her supervisor had been amazed at Denise’s constant smile. “One time, we all had flu in the office and Denise was on reception. She beamed at people as they entered and left. I said to her, ‘It’s wonderful, the way you smile all the time – the way you smile at life.’”

A task force was created under the leadership of Major Chester Hughes – no relation to Denise. The team included officers from the Honolulu Police Department and the FBI.

The task of identifying the killer was immense – Honolulu was swamped with tourists, itinerant workers and temporary military personnel from the nearby base. In an effort to flush out the killer, brave women police officers were sent undercover at transport hubs and night clubs.

Pregnant single mother Louise Medeiros, 25, arrived by plane at Honolulu on March 26th. She was returning from the island of Kauai after the funeral of her mother. She rang her boyfriend to say she would take the bus home from the airport. But she never arrived.

“I warned her not to wait at bus stops late at night,” said her sister. “She shrugged it off as she wanted to get home to her three sons staying at her boyfriend’s place.”

Road workers found Louise’s semi-naked remains in a drainage ditch

on April 2nd. As with the others, she had been bound, raped and strangled.

The final acknowledged victim was single mother Linda Pesce, 36, from California. She left work at 6.30 p.m. on April 29th. She was excited – she’d learned that day that she’d been promoted in her job as a sales representative at McCaw Telepage.

She never reached home.

Officers struggled to find Linda but were helped when Howard Andrew Gay, 43, from Buffalo, NY, walked into a police station. He explained that a psychic had told him where he could find Linda’s remains. “He came forward and said he saw some bones or a body on Sand Island in the harbour,” said Major Souza of Honolulu PD.

Gay had known Linda. She had tried to sell him a pager. Her name was found in notes at his place of work.

It took a while to find her but on May 3rd, Linda’s remains were discovered on the island by some friends foraging for squid.

Howard Gay, an aircraft mechanics trainer, became an immediate suspect – but if he was the killer, why would he expose himself in such a crude and obvious way? Profilers suggested he might be seeking attention or wanting something to happen to help him stop. “I believed there was enough probable cause to arrest him,” said Souza.

Gay’s ex-wife and current girlfriend both described him as a smooth talker who enjoyed control and bondage sex. “Before you know it, he’d be talking to you about sex,” one said.

His girlfriend recalled that on each of the five murder nights, he had left their apartment in Ewa Beach after an argument. Both the killer and Gay had had vasectomies, as indicated by the sperm count on the victims.

Further evidence against Gay came when a woman came forward to say she’d seen him with Linda the night Linda disappeared. The witness was able to pick Gay from a photo line-up – but she wasn’t prepared to testify to that as she feared for her own safety.

Gay agreed to take a polygraph test. He failed the test but such tests are acknowledged as unreliable. There was little physical evidence to link him to the deaths. The prosecutor’s office didn’t feel they had enough, so Gay was released 10 hours after his arrest.

Howard Gay moved to the mainland when his son died in an accident and became a born-again Christian. He died of kidney failure in Victorville in 2003.

Did five victims represent the full list of victims? Investigators from the TV show *Breaking Homicide* suggest a sixth should be added. Lisa Au, 19, a hairdresser, disappeared soon after midnight on January 21st, 1982. Her remains were found 10 days later. Four others are in the frame.

Howard Gay wasn’t named in the media until *Breaking Homicide* aired their investigation in 2018.

H

THE WORLD’S WORST KILLERS

Dr. H. H. Holmes

• United States

HERMAN WEBSTER Mudgett, more commonly known by his alias of Dr. Henry Howard Holmes, is considered to be one of the first modern American serial killers. He eventually confessed to killing 27 people, then retracted his statement and claimed two deaths, which had arisen as a result of involvement in a life insurance fraud.

After gaining a doctor’s degree from the University of Michigan, and committing bigamy, he moved from fraud and swindles to torture and murder. Holmes took his sadistic pleasures to an unprecedented level with the construction of his three-storey hotel in Englewood, Chicago.

Purpose-built as a slaughterhouse to capitalise on the flow of visitors to the 1893 World’s Fair, its middle floor was a maze of almost 100 windowless rooms that worked as torture chambers and gas chambers, with concealed staircases, trap-doors and greased body chutes leading to acid vats, lime pits and cremation facilities in the basement.

Following the World’s Fair, Holmes left Chicago and allegedly continued his trail of murder and manipulation as he traveled around the

country. He was arrested in 1895 when he was discovered with the bodies of a former business associate, Benjamin Pitezel, and three of his children.

On August 19th, that year Holmes’s “castle” in Englewood burnt down and the remains revealed the carnage that had taken place there. Holmes’s habit of taking out insurance policies on his victims before killing them had also been discovered. The number of his victims has typically been estimated between 20 and 100, and even as high as 200. These victims were primarily women, but included some men and children.

Holmes was eventually executed, for the murder of Pitezel at Moyamensing Prison, Philadelphia, on May 7th, 1896, aged 35.



Got a suggestion for the **World’s Worst Killers**? Write to us at True Detective, P.O. Box 735, London SE26 5NQ, UK or email truedetective@truecriminallibrary.com

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TD0420

“YOU DO look a picture,” cooed Molly, her mother, as Bessie Sheppard (sometimes spelled Shepherd), 17, set off from her home in Papplewick, north of Nottingham, on July 6th, 1817.

It was a warm summer's day. The sunlight dappled patterns of variegated light along the footpath that would take Bessie the six miles through Harlow Wood into Mansfield. More or less a straight line, the path lies along the route now taken by the A60.

A sweet girl in a happy frame of mind, dressed in her Sunday best clothes with new shoes, Bessie smiled and skipped along the narrow path, swinging her yellow umbrella. The tall hedgerows on either side were backed by the tallest firs, beech and ash trees in the county. They sang with the morning's birdsong.

Bessie's thoughts may have drifted to Robin Hood and the local legend that Alan a'Dale, Robin's minstrel, was buried in Papplewick. The village was blessed with his muse.

“I should like to find work in Mansfield,” she had told her mother days earlier and in this she proved successful, gaining a position as a domestic servant.

That night she stayed in Mansfield, but the next day, eager to tell her mother the good news, she set off on the return journey. The weather remained fine and the pretty umbrella she carried with her was used more as a parasol.

About halfway home, Bessie stumbled over something by the side of the road. It was a man!

Charles Rotherham, 33, was sleeping off a heavy lunchtime session of seven pints which he had imbibed at the 15th-century Hutt pub in Ravenshead, near Newstead Abbey – the ancestral home of Lord Byron. Now he woke with a start – “What the Devil!”

Without further ado, Rotherham grabbed a hedge stake and beat poor Bessie ruthlessly about the head until she was dead. He left her in the ditch after an unsuccessful attempt to remove her gown.

Like many, Sheffield-born Rotherham, a former soldier with 12 years' service in Egypt, Portugal, Spain and France, had been laid off at the end of the Napoleonic War without a pension. Many in the Duke of Wellington's army were ex-prisoners who signed up to escape penal servitude. “The scum of the earth – the mere scum of the earth,” was how the Duke, who had no illusions on these matters, described them.

After being demobbed, many of the old soldiers roamed the country, doing whatever it took to make a living. Married, with no children, Rotherham was always short of cash. He ground a living of sorts from being an itinerant scissor-grinder, sharpening instruments on an oiled wheel of stone.

Dressed well for her job-seeking

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Anna Gibson wrote via email requesting an account of a Nottinghamshire murder from 1817 that still intrigues today. Bessie Sheppard was just 17 when her life came to a terrible end at the hands of a former soldier. The case had never previously featured in TD – so it was high time we put that right! For all our readers here's our report by **Donald Carne**



Market Place, Mansfield, today. Bessie obtained a position as a domestic servant in the town but didn't ever get the opportunity to start work...

Twenty Th Watch Be

adventure, Bessie looked wealthier than she was. All that Rotherham could claim for her young, innocent life was an umbrella and a pair of shoes. He tried and failed to sell these in the Hutt.

Thwarted in his desire to make a quick sale, he continued south. The day yielded to the translucent light of the long summer evening. As he hobbled along the lane, Rotherham passed a woman of middle age coming in the opposite direction.

The woman was Bessie's mother.

Worried at her daughter's late return, she had set off along the path to meet her. As she passed Rotherham, she may have seen the umbrella and shoes he carried.

Rotherham continued until he reached the Three Crowns in Redhill. On the way, he tried and failed to dispose of the shoes at the Ginger Beer House by 7-Mile Stone. Rotherham touted the shoes and the umbrella to customers at the Three Crowns, having cleaned the shoes up a bit to make them



Clockwise from above left: the path through Harlow Wood today; The Hutt pub in Ravenshead where the killer had drunk before he struck; Bessie's memorial stone; St. Andrew's Church, Nottingham, situated next to the former Gallows Hill



Thousand Came To Bessie's Killer Die

presentable. "Nearly new!" There were no takers.

Rotherham downed a few more beers and sang some songs – a good time was had by all. He stayed the night and left the shoes behind when he departed. There is some evidence that he kept the umbrella and sold it in Bunny.

The next day, Bessie was found in a ditch by some quarrymen. She was in a terrible state – her brain protruded through her skull and an eye was dislodged from its socket. Some loose

coins – all that she had – were found nearby.

The search for the killer began at the same time as Rotherham pulled on his boots and set off for Loughborough, his next port of call. He was stopped on a canal bridge as he looked at the water. He offered no resistance and told Constable Ben Barnes, "I am guilty of the crime and must suffer the course of the law."

Rotherham was returned to the scene and showed officers the stake he

used to beat Bessie. His clothes were spattered in her blood. He pleaded guilty at Nottingham Assizes but was persuaded by the judge to change his plea. Even so, the case against him was overwhelming.

Found guilty, Rotherham confessed in his cell to the Reverend Dr. Wood. On July 28th, 1817, Rotherham was hanged on Gallows Hill – close to St. Andrew's Church today, at the junction of Forest Road and Mansfield Road. A crowd of 20,000 turned up to watch. Afterwards,

Rotherham's body was cut down and handed to a surgeon for dissection. A souvenir broadsheet produced for the occasion sold in large quantity.

Touched by the pointless death of the popular and innocent girl, Anthony Buckles of Mansfield raised the funds to erect a stone in Bessie's memory. It was placed initially between Thieves Wood and Rickets Lane on the east side of what is now the A60. Bessie's remains, meanwhile, were interred in St. James's churchyard, Papplewick, near the church tower.

The story does not end there. Shocked by her sudden exit from this world, Bessie is said by some to haunt the stone erected in her name. Sightings become more prevalent when the stone is disturbed. "Between two worlds, life hovers like a star, twixt night and morn," as Byron wrote.

In the 1960s, when the A60 was widened, the stone was moved a few feet further back from the road. It

A full and par-
OF
Life and



ticular Account
THE
Execution of

Charles Rotherham,

Who was Executed at Nottingham, this Day (Monday),
July 28, 1817, for the Wilful Murder of ELIZABETH
SHEPHERD, by beating out her brains with a Hedge

Above, a contemporary report of Rotherham's execution. Below, an artist's impression of the ghost of Bessie Sheppard

now lies off the Robin Hood Way long-distance footpath – opposite a road sign that welcomes you to Ashfield District.

For several days after the stone was moved, wispy sightings of a woman in white were reported by passing

motorists. A similar event occurred when the stone was hit by a car.

At regular intervals, travellers have reported giving a lift to a quiet, quaintly-dressed young woman who disappeared from within the car. Staff at Harlow Wood hospital have also reported seeing Bessie in the corridors – though what her connection with the hospital might be is less than clear.

Finally, in 1988, Bessie's headstone disappeared from Papplewick graveyard. A police officer asked to check on the memorial stone by the A60 touched it and saw a vision of

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Bessie's headstone hidden in the church yard. He was able to retrieve the stone and return it to its rightful location.

What could have been the motive for Rotherham's vicious attack? He provided no reason. He had six shillings in his pocket – about £25 today – so the few coins and possessions that Bessie owned may not have been significant.

There may be another reason. Today, an irrational response to a sudden noise from an old soldier might be attributed to post-traumatic stress disorder. Could Rotherham, a survivor of the Peninsular campaign and Napoleonic wars, have believed he was under attack – his very life at risk – and responded in kind?

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