

**HANGED IN AUSTRALIA: AXE HORROR IN SLEEPY HOLLOW**

# TRUE DETECTIVE

JULY  
2018

WORLD'S NO.1 TRUE CRIME MAGAZINE

# NILSEN

## THE FULL HORRIFIC STORY



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IN A CHATHAM  
CAR PARK**



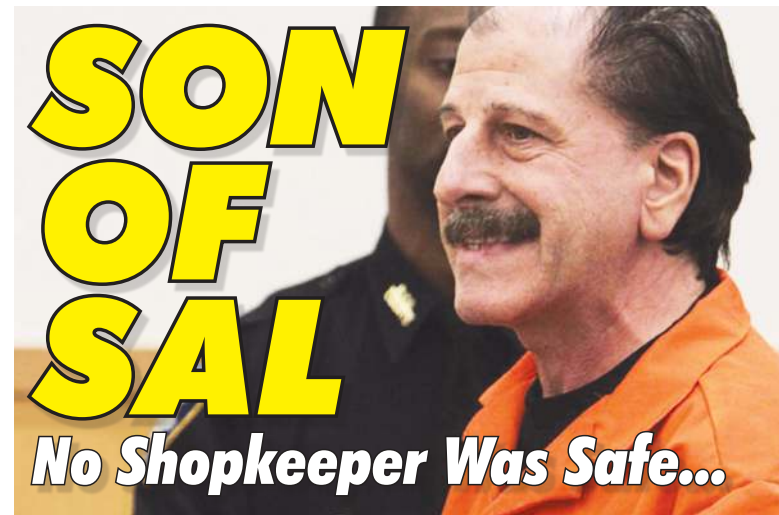
**MURDER IN SUFFOLK**

**WOULD  
THEY  
HANG  
YOUNG  
JAMES?**



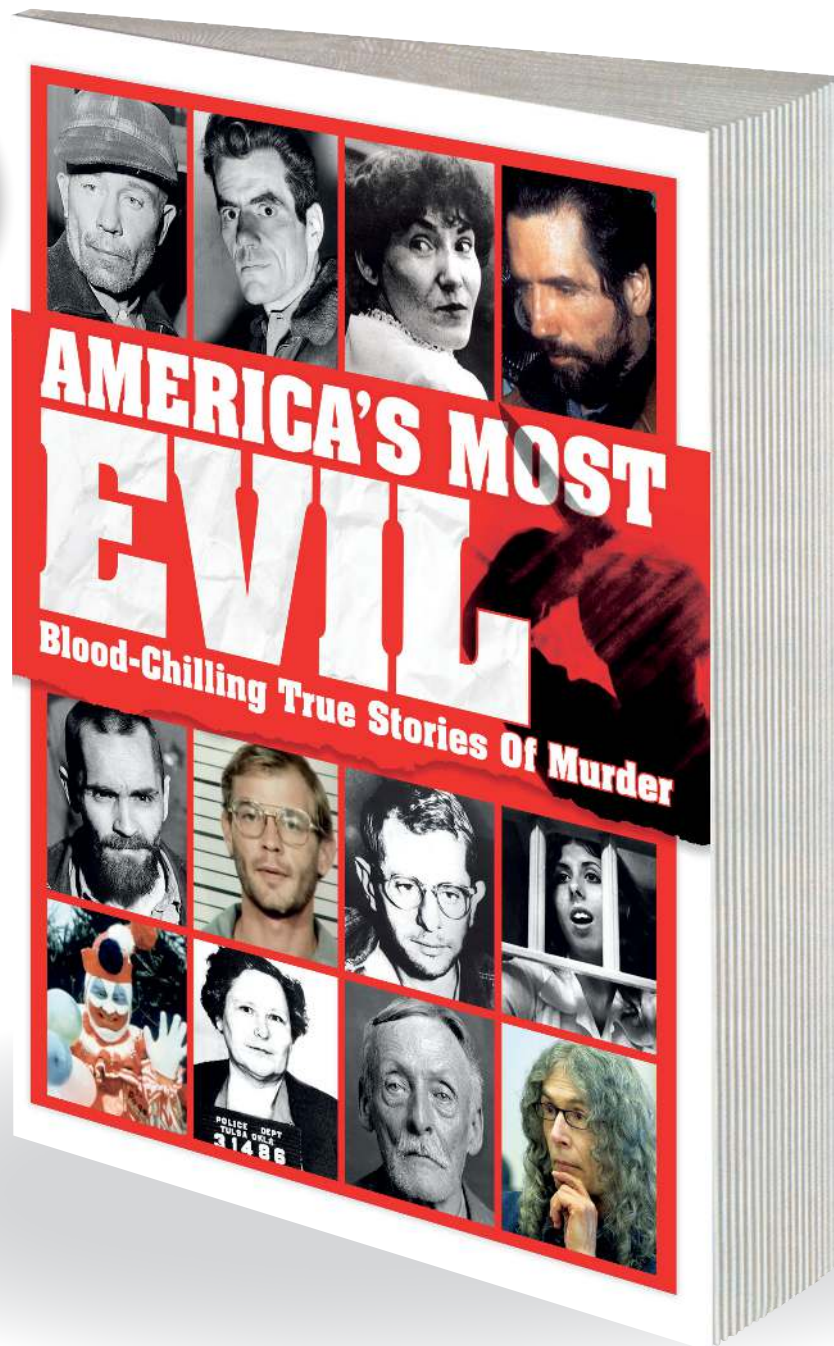
**SON  
OF  
SAL**

*No Shopkeeper Was Safe...*



**"I SAW MY HUSBAND'S KILLER DIE IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR"**

***Prepare to be shocked at the  
evil men – and women – do...***



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“I put the head in a pot, popped the lid on and lit the stove. When the head was coming to the boil I turned the pot down to simmer; then I took the dog out for a walk...Later I watched TV as the head was simmering.”

So said the remorseless Dennis Nilsen, Britain's second-worst-ever serial killer, after being captured by police in 1983, and confessing to a spree of “15 or 16” killings over five years. Scottish-born Nilsen, who died behind bars in May this year, aged 72, was a compulsive killer. His victims were mostly vulnerable men and boys whom he lured to two rented London properties. The case was major news back in the 80s and our series *Crimes That Made The Headlines* provides the perfect opportunity to revisit the case. See page 8, *Nilsen – The Full, Horrific Story*, for Brian Marriner's astonishing account.

Salesman-turned-serial killer Salvatore Perrone had once dreamed of making it big in the world of wholesale clothing but financial problems had blunted his ambitions. In 2012, he sought a deadly, warped revenge. New Yorker Perrone, dubbed Son of Sal by those with memories of 70s serial killer Son of Sam, is the subject of this month's *America's Most Evil* on page 22. “You're lucky we don't have the death penalty here in New York. You would be a prime candidate,” the captured killer was told by the judge.

Arkansas, of course, still executes its worst killers – as it did in the 40s after Eldon Chitwood shot dead Raymond Morris at a Mena drugstore. Chitwood went on to plead to Morris's widow Clara for clemency, but she insisted that the sentence be carried out. Would you? Turn to “*I Saw My Husband's Killer Die In The Electric Chair*,” on page 30, for Clara's fascinating first-hand account.

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 40 for full details.**

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## TRUE DETECTIVE JULY 2018

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**M**OLLY'S KILLER made no effort to cover his tracks. Security cameras at PureGym close to the Dockside Outlet Centre in Chatham captured him following her to an isolated exercise room, minutes before he attacked her.

Tired of his stalking over the previous two weeks, Molly McLaren, 23, bravely confronted 26-year-old Josh Stimpson in the gym. That seemed to have done the trick, because the cameras showed him walking down the stairs with his sports bag slung over his shoulder and out of the building.

It was 11 a.m. on June 29th, 2017, a warm summer's day. Stimpson waited for Molly in his car in the outlet centre's car park, surrounded by a shopping centre, restaurants and a cinema.

Stimpson, a warehouseman from Wouldham, and Molly, a part-time barmaid and university student from Cobham, had met on Tinder, the dating website, in November 2016.

As the weeks ticked by in their relationship, Molly became bored. She told her mother that Stimpson was

bipolar. She said he had been assessed by a doctor in July 2016 and put on medication but had failed to stick with it.

In March 2017, Molly told Stimpson she wanted to spend some time apart – give each other a bit of space. She went on holiday with friends to Tenerife. When she returned, she told her mum she had “no feelings” for Stimpson. In April, she was angry when she discovered he had been filming her without her knowledge. He said he wanted “proof” in case they argued.

**Case Report by  
Donald Carne**

On June 17th, whilst on a night out in Maidstone, she told him they should split. He was angry that she'd done this in

public – but then, there's never a good time to dump someone. It's always hard on the party being dumped when it happens but people need to get over it.

Not Josh Stimpson.

Two days later, he began posting things on Facebook about Molly – horrible things, lies. In one, he said, “There's worse to come.” He began to follow her on the nights she went out, when she went shopping, even when she went for a job interview at a gym in

Rochester. He was always there, in her face.

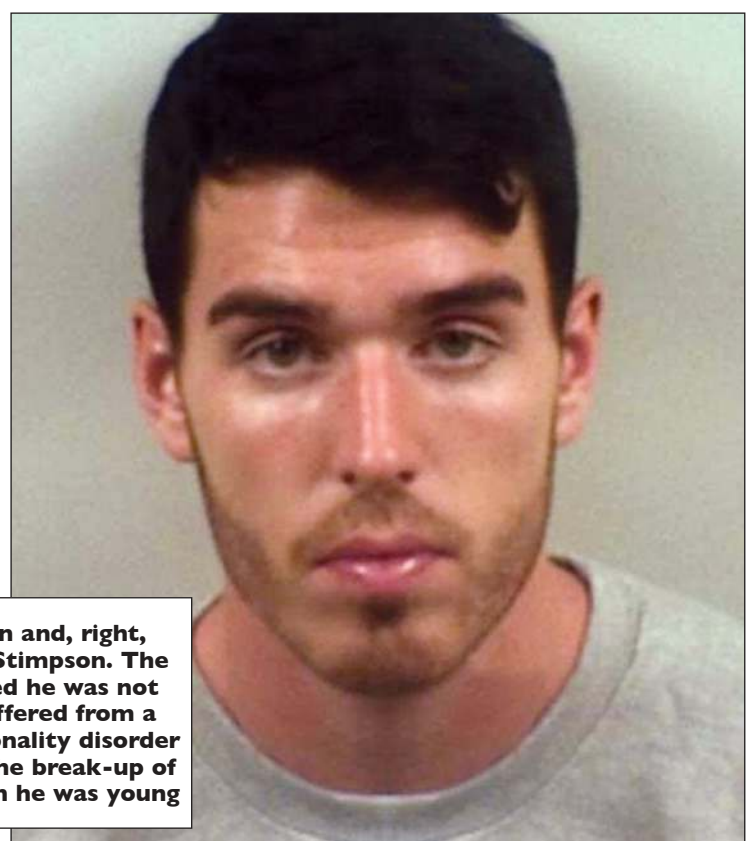
As the pressure intensified, Molly, who had spent several years as a teen battling against anxiety-induced bulimia, felt she could do without this. She texted her friends: “He's literally lost the plot. I was worried he was going to turn up at my house. I'm actually scared of what he might do to me.”

On June 22nd, at the end of her tether, Molly went to North Kent police station with her mother. In their presence, the officer called Stimpson and told him to stop what he was doing or face prosecution. “We wouldn't want Molly to come to the police station again about you, would we?” the officer asked.

“Wouldn't we?” Stimpson replied.



# SLAUGHTER CHATHAM C



**Molly McLaren and, right, her killer Josh Stimpson. The defence claimed he was not bipolar but suffered from a borderline personality disorder brought on by the break-up of his parents when he was young**

**F**ive days later, Stimpson joined PureGym, the same gym that Molly used, and the messages continued. He was spoken to again by the police. But later that day he bought a Sabatier paring knife from Asda and a Saxon pickaxe from Homebase.

The day before she died, Molly posted a selfie on Instagram to say she was going to the Ship and Trades pub in Chatham with some friends that night. Stimpson was seen at the pub watching her from the smoking area. As she left, Molly told her friends not to worry about “that psycho.” It was the last time they would see her.

The next morning, Molly arrived at 10 a.m. for a workout at the gym. She was studying Exercise Science at



**Top, Stimpson is caught on camera inside a Homebase DIY where he purchased a pickaxe (right). Above, the blood-smeared knife that he used in his frenzied attack, found at the murder scene**

# IN A CAR PARK

university and wanted to film some exercises for her course. Half an hour later, Stimpson entered the room – he must have followed her. He paced up and down the stairs to the exercise room a few times, in an agitated state, and then entered the workout area.

He placed his mat close to Molly. There was no one else in the room. Molly tried to ignore him and continued with her stretch exercise – but how could she ignore what he was doing. What was he playing at?

She confronted him. It’s unclear from the security tape what words

were used but Stimpson blanked her and continued with an inept attempt to exercise. The tension is evident from the tape as they both turn their backs and sip water.

“Mum he’s turned up at the gym and come next to me,” Molly texted. Her mother advised her to leave.

At 11 a.m., 20 minutes after entering, Stimpson left the gym. Molly followed three minutes later. On her way out, distressed and angry, she messaged a friend on WhatsApp: “I feel like I’m looking over my shoulder all the time.”

Molly went straight to her Citroen C2

and made to drive off, but Stimpson was waiting. He got out of his car, walked swiftly in an arc to the Citroen and pulled open the driver’s door. Molly, defenceless, was trapped inside.

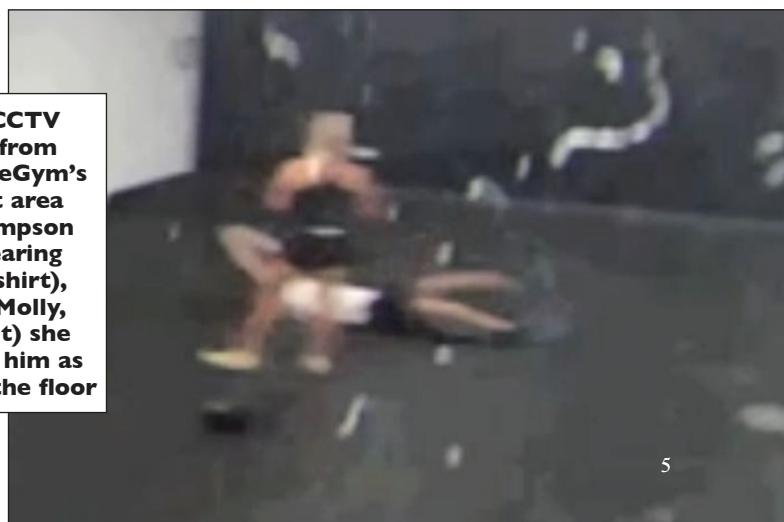
Immediately, Stimpson slashed Molly with the knife he had brought for that purpose, the purchase captured on the security camera at Asda. Deliberately, he aimed at Molly’s throat, determined to end the young woman’s life. In an uncontrolled frenzy, Molly was stabbed at least 75 times.

A brave passer-by did what he could to stop Stimpson, banging on the bonnet of the car and bashing the car door against Stimpson’s leg. At considerable personal risk, he clawed at Molly’s attacker and tried to pull him away, but his hands slipped away on the blood. At a certain point, he later said, “I knew I could do no more. She would not recover from this.”

When it was over, Stimpson waited passively in the car park, walking up and down in his bloodied shirt, until the police came to arrest him. “You want me,” he said, wiping blood from his face. “I’ve killed her. She’s in the car.”



**Blurry CCTV images from inside PureGym’s workout area show Stimpson (left, wearing a white shirt), pass by Molly, and (right) she confronts him as he lies on the floor**



**C**harged with Molly's murder, Josh Stimpson admitted manslaughter due to diminished responsibility. He was brought before Maidstone Crown Court in January 2018.

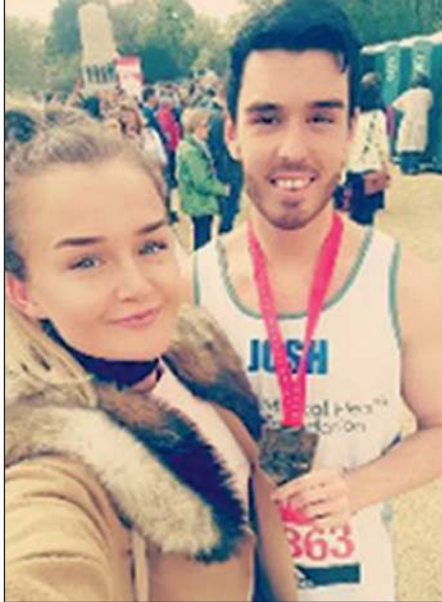
The basis of diminished responsibility is a deep-seated condition that affects personality or reason. The onus is on the defence to establish the condition.

Oliver Saxby QC, for the defence, claimed his client was not bipolar, so the medication he had been prescribed had not helped. Instead, he suffered from a borderline personality disorder that resulted from his parents breaking up when he was young.

He hadn't taken the break-up well, Mr. Saxby continued, and had been referred for counselling. He struggled with rejection.

Prosecutor Philip Bennetts QC dismissed the claim. He said Stimpson had "carefully considered the execution of Molly." He had "followed her movements, waiting for the moment that he had chosen to kill her."

Two of Stimpson's former girlfriends testified that he had stalked them, too, when they had split up. One, whom we'll call Hannah, said he followed her, took pictures of her when they weren't together and criticised her choice of clothes. He had sent her a photo of her own back garden – to show how easy it was to enter – and had threatened to attack her when she went on holiday. "I'm going to fly out and drown you," he texted, before adding: "There's a surprise for you when you get back."



never be released.

"This was an act of wickedness," Judge Williams said. "You took away Molly's life quite deliberately in the most vicious fashion. You were determined to punish her for ending the relationship with you. She was 23 years old, beautiful and intelligent.

"I am sure you are not suffering from a personality disorder. You planned this killing. This was a cruel, calculated and cowardly act."

**Left, Josh wearing a medal celebrates with Molly during their brief relationship. Below, Molly's Citroen C2 in the gym car-park that she was killed in**



Judge Williams commended the passer-by who had tried to stop Stimpson on his bravery.

Molly's family said the verdict had brought them some peace and also thanked the passer-by for his selfless attempt at rescue. They added, "We are serving a lifetime of pain, anguish and loss. We feel that there needs to be more awareness over the dangers of stalking and the need for people to report any concerns over stalking to the police."

They have created a foundation – the Molly McLaren Foundation – to pursue this work.

A joint report by the Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Crown Prosecution Service – *Living in Fear*, released in July 2017 – reviewed 112 cases of stalking and concluded that none of them had been dealt with correctly. It raised the question, do the police receive enough training in how to deal with the problems of emotional male violence – or do we still live in an age where these things are considered "domestic"?

**Molly's story is one we've sadly heard far too often before. An immature rejected male, his ego dented, takes the ultimate "revenge." How should officers respond when the victim makes an initial complaint?**



**Stimpson still in his white t-shirt gives himself up to the approaching police**

"I got home and all four tyres of my car had been slashed top to bottom," Hannah told the court.

Outside the court, she added, "I was lucky enough to get away from him. I'm mortified. This twisted ---- made my life hell and the police were informed yet did nothing about it. This poor girl did the same and still nothing. I can't even imagine what her family are going through."

"He started off normal but then got a bit possessive," she added. "He took pictures of me asking why I was wearing certain clothes. Sometimes he called me a slag and stuff. He was following me

around."

Another former girlfriend of Stimpson said he spat on her at a nightclub after they had split, and then waited for hours outside the club until she left. He turned up at her flat at 2 o'clock one morning "to charge his phone." He cried when she wouldn't let him in.

It took less than four hours for the jury to find Josh Stimpson guilty of Molly's murder.

At the sentence hearing, Judge Adele Williams sentenced Stimpson, dressed in a dark suit and white shirt, to life with a minimum period of 26 years. He showed no emotion as he was told he might

# YOUR LETTERS

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## Nipper's Note Of Regret

I was interested to read your report by James Morton on Jack the Stripper, Freddie Mills and the Krays (*"Who Killed Freddie Mills?"* – June). When I was researching the Stripper case in the early 1990s, I received a nice letter from "Nipper" Read regretting his statement that the murderer had been a boxer who committed suicide, as it had been misconstrued as implicating Freddie Mills. He probably meant the official Scotland Yard suspect at the time, Mungo Ireland, presumably a former boxer who became a security guard, and who committed suicide by carbon monoxide poisoning.

Subsequent years have uncovered no viable evidence against either Freddie Mills or Mr. Ireland. Interestingly, both Read and the Krays were former boxers themselves.

During my research, driving through Barnes in south-west London, I noticed a shop called "Jack the Stripper." It appeared to be a pine furniture store!

**Nick Warren, Pinner**

## Tragic Miscarriage Of Justice

I wonder if *True Detective* has ever told the story of Lesley Molseed. The 11-year-old's body was found close to a layby on the A627 road near Rishworth Moor in West Yorkshire on October 8th, 1975. A man was wrongly convicted of her murder and endured 16 years in prison before the conviction was overturned. The real killer was not apprehended until 2006, and the case has been described as "the worst miscarriage of justice of all time."

**Stuart Davies, Barnstaple**

*It's some years since TD looked at this controversial case. Would other readers like to read more about it?*

## Horror Of Evil Hamilton

Time and time again we hear of convicted felons getting early release from prison and then going on to commit more crimes – and often of a more heinous nature. Never has this been more evident than in the horrific murder of 65-year-old Attracta Harron (*"Irish Murder Case Made*

*Legal History"* – June). A trusting and devoted housewife, Mrs. Harron took a lift from 21-year-old Trevor Hamilton, a convicted rapist who had served just over three years of a seven-year sentence. Despite the fact that Hamilton was the most supervised sex offender in Northern Ireland he still had plenty of time to carry out his sick crime. The very fact that this evil killer was on the streets in the first place leaves a lot to be desired.

At his trial, legal history was made in Northern Ireland when the jury was allowed to hear evidence of Hamilton's previous convictions but this was of little comfort to Mrs. Harron's grieving family. Will lessons ever be learnt? However, it is some solace to all that Hamilton will have to serve 35 years behind bars before parole can be considered.

**Michael Minihan, Limerick**

## Addiction Led To Infanticide

I was initially baffled by the six infanticides committed by Megan Huntsman (*"World's Worst Killers"* – June). Why would a mother-of-three give birth to another six babies, hiding the pregnancies then murdering them as soon as they entered the world? Then I read about her alcoholism and addiction to methamphetamine and I understood.

Sadly, addicts often spend everything they can earn (or steal) on their drug of choice, leaving no cash for contraceptives and Megan Huntsman lived in the United States where health insurance is expensive. As a shy addict, she would also have dreaded an examination by a gynaecologist so, in her warped world, repeated infanticide was the cheapest and easiest choice.

**C. Davis, Weston-super-Mare**

## Fewer Cops, More Crime?

Am I alone in thinking that the 16 per cent reduction in police officers since 2009 – now down to 121,929 – might have something to do with the current surge in police recorded crime – up 30 per cent since 2014? Compare this with Germany, which has 100,000 more officers than us, and ranks much lower on the FBI Crime Index for major crime. Germany also saw a 10 per cent

further reduction last year.

With wave after wave of new imperatives – knife crime, cybercrime, people trafficking, hate crime, child protection and more – you wonder how the remaining officers ever find time to sleep. Back in the 60s, there were fewer police officers but more "on the beat" with their own patch. They knew their patch well and earned respect, and recorded crime was much less. Can we still learn from this approach?

I'm sure many other factors are involved and I would be interested in hearing what others feel is the way forward – the number of young deaths from knife crime, in particular, I find harrowing.

**Andrew Stephenson, Newhaven**

## Not Enough Proof To Convict

How about covering some Scottish cases where murder suspects were afforded the verdict of "Not Proven"? In many cases the suspects were probably guilty of the crime but the evidence was just not available to convict them fully.

**Iris Ann Dutton, Telford**

*That's an interesting idea. What do other readers think?*

## Spicer Case And Executions

John Sanders's feature on Alfred Spicer (*"Christmas Horror At South Creek"* – January) was well researched but needs one correction. John writes that there had not been an execution in New South Wales since 1924 – that case was Jimmy Campbell. But there were a couple after him – Moxley (1932) and Hickey (1936). Massey and Leighton may have squeezed in before Spicer.

The dog-handler featured in the story, Constable Denholm (John?), was most likely the same Denholm who shot double police-killer Tom Kennedy. Denholm was a motorcycle policeman who rushed (with others, including a football player given a gun by a detective!) to Kennedy's cottage, thrusting his pistol through a window and wounding Kennedy, but later dying (1931).

Keep up the great work!

**Mark Griffith, Queensland**

Your Letters True Detective 7



**Former Met man: Leonard "Nipper" Read**



**Convicted killer: Trevor Hamilton**



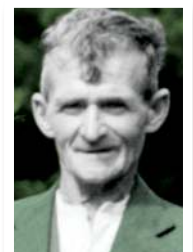
**As they were: a "Bobby" on the beat**



**Murder victim: Lesley Molseed**



**Shy addict: Megan Huntsman**



**Condemned to die: Alfred Spicer**

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# CRIMES THAT MADE THE HEADLINES <sup>70</sup>

In May, notorious necrophiliac serial killer Dennis Nilsen died in prison, having spent 35 years behind bars. His sickening spree claimed the lives of up to 15 boys and men in north London. Nilsen stowed victims' bodies under the floorboards – and was caught when some remains he flushed down the toilet blocked the drain...

# NILSEN

## THE FULL HORRIFIC STORY

**D**ENNIS ANDREW Nilsen was a very rare killer. In his 50 prison notebooks, which he handed to author Brian Masters so that he could write his incisive book on the case, *Killing for Company*, Nilsen leaves you with the feeling that, in many ways, he was a thoroughly nice man. Highly intelligent and articulate, sensitive and kind, he was a person you might have valued as a friend.

But he was also a twisted pervert; a killer of intense ferocity, with dirty little motives which scabbed his soul.

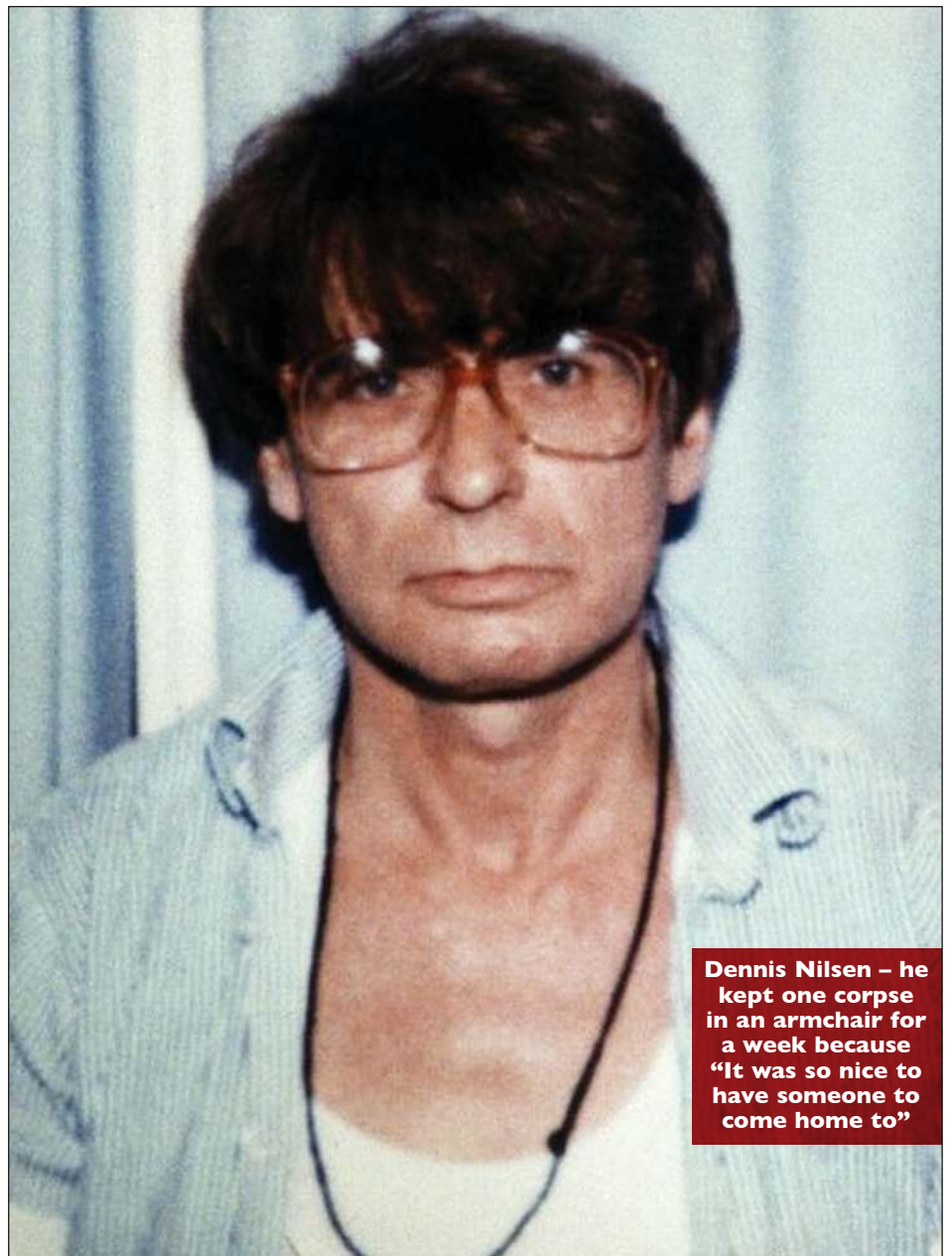
### Case report by Brian Marriner

He masturbated over his victims. Took them out from under the floorboards periodically to fondle them and “have sex with them” by placing his penis between their thighs.

He sat them in the opposite armchair to watch TV with him or listen to music or simply join him in conversation. He kept one corpse in an armchair for a week because “It was so nice to have someone to come home to.”

Lonely, shy, friendless, Nilsen truly killed for company. At one period he had six bodies under the floorboards of his flat and was not alone any more, but then he would burn them or cut them into pieces to flush down the lavatory. He lived a fantasy obsessed with death, but he also loved music and poetry.

The closer one gets to Nilsen the greater the enigma becomes: at once potent and pathetic; innocent and demonic. He was also a man of such low self-esteem with a life he considered to be so insignificant that he was determined to create his own legend. And in this Nilsen



Dennis Nilsen – he kept one corpse in an armchair for a week because “It was so nice to have someone to come home to”





**Above, a handcuffed Nilsen is led to the police station after his arrest. Above right, his home in Cranley Gardens, Muswell Hill. Below, his former home in Melrose Avenue, Cricklewood, where most of his victims were murdered**

succeeded only too well. When he stepped into the dock at the Old Bailey on October 24th, 1983, he was the legendary killer of the “House of Horror,” murderer of 15 young men and the attempted killer of seven others. Yet, since he created his own legend – this clever, manipulative psychopath – even the legend is not true.

Any attempt to view the real Dennis Nilsen objectively is a difficult task – Nilsen was very sick, his murders stomach-churning, and simply reading about them is very much like stepping into an abattoir – but the task is worth undertaking. Nilsen presents us with the classic psychiatric model of the serial sex killer, and the quest for his real identity and motives can lead to valuable insights into the drives of all sex killers.

**N**ilsen was born on November 23rd, 1945, in the Scottish town of Fraserburgh, the son of a Norwegian father and a Scottish mother. The most important episode in his early life came at the age of seven, when he viewed the dead body of his grandfather. He could not believe that something which had once been so vital was now dead, beyond all feeling or sensation. He wrote later that the sight of the corpse had a profound effect on him, and that the experience blighted his personality permanently.

At 14 he joined the Army Cadets and revelled in the uniform: it made him feel important. He joined the Regular Army in September 1961, aged 15, to train as a chef in the Catering Corps. He was taught the skills of butchery. He later served in Aden, the Persian Gulf and Germany. During this period he discovered his own homosexuality but repressed his feelings.

In 1971 he was posted to the Shetland Islands, where he developed an interest in film-making. Corporal Nilsen took many films

of a private whom he instructed to lie still and “play dead.” This was the first manifestation of his necrophile streak, and was an important clue to his later development. When he left the Army, in 1972, his conduct was recorded as being “exemplary.”

In December 1972, aged 27, he joined



the Metropolitan Police and was posted as a probationer to Willesden Green police station as Constable Q287. During the course of his duties he came across London’s gay scene and visited many gay pubs. He gave expression to his homosexuality by having an affair with one man, and smuggling another back into his Police Section room for anal sex. But he was not very happy. After a year, to

the surprise of his colleagues, he resigned from the Force. It lacked the camaraderie he had known in the Army.

For a time he wandered from job to job, working as a security guard until he got fed up with that. Putting on a uniform no longer conferred a sense of identity. Finally he was forced to sign on the dole, where he was persuaded to apply for a clerical post with the Department of Employment.

He was appointed to the Denmark Street Job Centre in London’s West End. Here he stayed for the next few years, having many homosexual affairs and contacts, picking up young men from the many gay pubs he frequented and taking them back to his home. To his colleagues at work, Nilsen was a prickly and hostile character who made it painfully clear that he wanted to be left alone. He made no friends there, and remained reclusive. But outside work he was different.

All had been well to begin with. In November 1975 he made friends with a young man 10 years his junior. His new friend was not gay, but he and Nilsen got on well enough and very soon the two men were sharing a flat. Nilsen’s friend provided him with the sense of stability and security that was previously missing from his life. What Nilsen provided in return was harder to discern. But they lived together happily.

When, in May 1977, Nilsen’s friend announced that he could not stand London any more, Nilsen was devastated. He felt rejected and betrayed. He felt no better when his friend’s place was taken over by a young male prostitute. The relationship didn’t work and the boy soon left.

Nilsen’s flat at 195 Melrose Avenue, Cricklewood, now felt very empty and friendless. He began drinking himself into a stupor every night, listening to pop music over headphones with manic intensity.

By 1978 Nilsen was using make-up to give himself the





appearance of a corpse – dark eyes and dead white flesh – and masturbated while looking at himself in a mirror. He had become totally obsessed with the idea of death. He spent Christmas of

that year alone in his flat, with only his dog Bleep for company. He was feeling acutely lonely and depressed. At this time he picked up young men and took them home – but they always left afterwards. The next one would not be leaving.

**H**is first victim, picked up in the Cricklewood Arms, was Stephen Dean Holmes, a 14-year-old Irish youth. They slept together that night – December 30th, 1978 – but when Nilsen awoke in the morning he found he had strangled his sleeping companion with one of his collection of 15 ties. He washed the body in the bath, put it back in bed and attempted to have sex with it. Later, before putting the body under the floorboards, he masturbated over it.

He said later, “I took possession of a new kind of flat-mate.” He added that he had been determined to have company – “even if it was only a body”.

That first killing shocked Nilsen: he said he shook uncontrollably for hours afterwards, wondering if he should give himself up to the police or commit suicide. The reason he gave for not doing either was that there would be nobody to take care of his dog. That first victim remained under the floorboards at Melrose Avenue for seven and a half months, until Nilsen burned the body on a bonfire in the garden on August 11th, 1979.

There had been an earlier clue to Nilsen’s homicidal nature. In 1976 he had attacked a young man he had brought back to his flat, again attempting to strangle him with a tie. The young man fought him off and fled, reporting the incident to the police. Nilsen found himself being questioned at the police station at which he had once served. But as there was no obvious injury to the young man – who didn’t want to press charges anyway – and since Nilsen had said he was drunk and could remember nothing, the matter was dropped.

On October 31st, 1979, Nilsen picked up a young Chinese student in a pub near Trafalgar Square. He took him back to Melrose Avenue, and after a few drinks attempted to strangle him. The intended victim fought him off, knocking him unconscious with a brass candlestick. He then reported the incident to the police because he feared he might have killed Nilsen. Again Nilsen pleaded drunkenness, and again the matter was dropped.



**Murdered boy: Nilsen’s first victim Stephen Dean Holmes**

The second victim was a young Canadian tourist, Kenneth Ockenden, aged 23. He was not gay, but was delighted when a polite Scotsman took an interest in him. Nilsen met him on December 3rd, 1979, in the Princess Louise pub in High Holborn. He took the young man on a guided tour of London, then escorted him back to Melrose Avenue for a meal and some drinks. After a bout of heavy drinking Nilsen persuaded Ockenden to listen to pop music on the headphones. Then he

*“The flesh looked just like any other meat one could see in a butcher’s shop, and having been trained in butchery I wasn’t subject to any traumatic shocks”*

strangled him with the headphone cord. Nilsen said later, “I kept him with me for the rest of the night. There was no sex, just caressing etc.”

He sat the body in an armchair and made the face up with cosmetics. He watched TV with the corpse and held conversations with it. Eventually Nilsen put it under the floorboards, but took it back out at least four times in the next fortnight. He had sex with the corpse via the thighs. He washed the corpse, as he was to do with most of his victims. This ritual washing of the corpse was a demonstration of his total power over the



**Tragic tourist: Nilsen’s second victim Kenneth Ockenden**

victim, a ritual of symbolic importance.

Nilsen said he felt remorse after the death of Kenneth Ockenden, especially when he saw TV news reports about the young man’s disappearance. He was bewildered and frightened by his own actions and again wanted to give himself up to the police. But again he never did.

After two murders Nilsen said he came to feel “less emotional” about it all, and accepted the fact that he was a compulsive killer. So unconcerned did he become about the act of murder that he kept small items belonging to his victims around his flat. He wore a watch belonging to one victim, and a pair of spectacles belonging to another. He told police: “I did not feel that it was theft as the owners hadn’t really gone away.” Indeed they hadn’t; they were still under the floorboards.

In May 1980 Nilsen picked up his next victim, Martyn Duffey, 16, a Liverpool youth who had a record for petty theft and drug-addiction. Once at Melrose Avenue Nilsen strangled him unconscious and then drowned him in the bath. Afterwards he washed the corpse and placed it on the bed, masturbating over it. Duffey too would later be put under the floorboards.

To cover the smell of putrefaction



**Nowhere to sleep: victim William “Billy” Sutherland**

Nilsen was using air-fresheners and disinfectant. When the “smell problem,” as Nilsen termed it, became too strong to ignore, Nilsen took the bodies up and dissected them on the kitchen floor. The heads went into plastic bags, the bulky parts into two suitcases which he stored in the garden shed. Duffey’s arms and hands were buried in a hole in the garden, and the internal organs of both men were just dumped in the street. A man found a plastic bag full of entrails and reported it to the police: they dismissed it as being simply refuse.

William “Billy” Sutherland, 27, was a hard-case from Edinburgh. He was picked up in a pub near in Piccadilly Circus, and, having nowhere to sleep, agreed to accompany Nilsen back to Melrose Avenue. There Nilsen strangled him. He left him sitting dead in an armchair for two days before putting him under the floorboards. Nilsen liked to keep his victims as long as he could, bathing them

and changing their underwear so he could fondle them.

The next four victims were never identified, but all were young men. Number five Nilsen called the "Mex" because of his Latin appearance. Number six was Irish, picked up in the Cricklewood Arms. The seventh was a pathetic creature, a young man of emaciated looks who Nilsen said reminded him of a Belsen victim. Nilsen took him home and fed him, then when he fell asleep in the chair strangled him with a tie.

He was later to describe how the young man's legs had cycled frantically in the air as he fought for life. Nilsen said that this murder "was as easy as taking candy from a baby." That body too went under the floorboards.

By now, of course, all these corpses were becoming something of a nuisance. They were all over the place. Nilsen would take them out periodically to cuddle, caress or just talk to, but he wouldn't necessarily put them back in the same place. Occasionally he forgot where he had put them. In September 1980 he went to get a shirt from the wardrobe and a body fell out on top of him. Even for Nilsen this was a bit of shock, and with a sigh of exasperation, he decided something had to be done.

He took all the bodies out and dissected them. He said later, "The flesh looked just like any other meat one could see in a butcher's shop, and having been trained in butchery I was not subject to any traumatic shocks." It was then that he had his second bonfire in the garden, putting car tyres on the blaze to disguise the smell of burning flesh. Children gathered round to watch as the fire burned all through the day. The following morning Nilsen used a roller to crush the remaining evidence, the skulls and bones, into fragments.

With a sense of relief – the bodies finally out of the way – Nilsen went out that night to a pub and picked up a young man, taking him back to the flat for sex. He did not kill this one: he left next morning. But on November 10th, 1980, he picked up a 26-year-old fellow-Scot who agreed to go back to Melrose Avenue for a drink and fell asleep in the chair. He woke to find his ankles tied and Nilsen trying to strangle him with a ligature. He managed to fight Nilsen off and grabbed a carving knife to make good his escape. The victim reported the attack to the police, but the two officers who responded to his call concluded that it had been a lovers' quarrel and took it no further.

Five more people died in 1981. Nilsen's murderous lust had not died with that fire. He had been turned down for promotion, and had also been mugged in the street and robbed. With his self-esteem at rock-bottom he needed to kill again. He killed for fear of something worse. Murder was a safety-valve; it served as a catharsis and stopped him from going insane.

That year, 1981, had been a bad one all round for Nilsen. On June 8th his flat had been vandalised and he had called in the police. Detectives stood in his flat, unaware of the bodies under their feet.

The next victim, the eighth, was a



**Clockwise from above left: human remains bagged up in bin liners; a tea-chest containing newspaper-wrapped human remains; Nilsen's kitchen where he cooked victims' body parts; a necktie knotted to a piece of string used to strangle his final victim, a knife used for dismemberment and a pot for boiling heads**



tall young hippy with long fair hair. Nilsen picked him up in the West End, and his strangled body went under the floorboards. Victim number nine was another Scot, picked up in a Soho pub early in 1981. His body too went under the floorboards. Victim number 10 was Irish. Nilsen could not remember strangling him, but woke up one morning to find him dead on the floor.

Victim 11 was an aggressive Cockney

*Barlow insisted on a drink. Later, Nilsen admitted that he strangled him because he was a "nuisance." He was hidden under the sink, later to be placed on the bonfire*

skinhead with a dotted line tattooed around his neck with the inscription: "Cut along dotted line." Nilsen picked him up in Leicester Square, took him back to the flat and plied him with drink. When he passed out Nilsen strangled him. Of this victim Nilsen wrote: "I went to bed thinking: end of a day. End of the drinking. End of a person." He too went into the crowded space beneath the floorboards.

The next victim literally fell into Nilsen's lap. Malcolm Barlow, 24, was an

orphan from Rotherham who suffered from epilepsy. On September 17th, 1981, he had a fit in Melrose Avenue, and Nilsen found the vagrant slumped against a wall, sitting on the pavement. He telephoned for an ambulance. The following day Barlow had himself released from hospital and went in search of the Good Samaritan. He found Nilsen's flat and waited for him to arrive home from work, then invited himself in for a drink.

Nilsen was seriously concerned about him, warning him not to mix alcohol with the tablets he was taking because of the possibility of an adverse effect. But Barlow insisted on a drink. Later, Nilsen admitted that he strangled him because he was a "nuisance" and for no other reason. He was hidden under the sink, later to be placed intact on the going-away bonfire.

Nilsen had been offered another flat at 23 Cranley Gardens, London N10, and was promised £1,000 by his landlord if he would agree to move. Nilsen arranged to move into the new flat in October, but first he had to get rid of the embarrassing four bodies under the floorboards. He dissected them, cutting along the dotted line on the skinhead's neck, and then had another huge bonfire, burning the bodies and throwing the entrails over the garden hedge for vermin to dispose of, before moving out on October 5th, 1981.

Cranley Gardens is a long and pleasant road in the Muswell Hill suburb of



north London, lined with large semi-detached houses. It was into one of these – number 23 – that Nilsen moved. Managed by a local estate agent on behalf of the owner, the house had been

converted into six flats, and Nilsen moved into the very top flat in the attic, an apartment consisting of two rooms and a kitchen and bathroom. Here he lived with his dog, Bleep.

By now Nilsen had been promoted to executive officer and was working at the Job Centre in Kentish Town, where he was known to his colleagues as “Des.” He had also become branch officer for the civil service union, CPSA, and seemed to delight in tweaking the nose of authority, battling against the system. The tall, thin, stooping figure of Des Nilsen, wearing the spectacles of victim Martyn Duffy, was a man of mystery to the people who shared the house. He hardly ever spoke, and made friends with none of them. He lived alone in his dingy flat, making no attempt to clean it or keep it tidy.

**B**etween January 1978 and September 1981 Nilsen had killed 12 men at Melrose Avenue. At Cranley Gardens he was to begin killing again. In 1982 he killed twice, but before these successes he attempted to kill a 19-year-old student he met in a West End pub on November 23rd, 1981. He took him back to Cranley Gardens and cooked him a meal, after which they went to bed together for sex-play. The victim woke at six in the morning to find that he had a raging headache, and when he looked in the bathroom mirror he was astonished to see that his eyes were bloodshot and his throat badly bruised. Nilsen told him that he had probably caught his neck in the zip of the sleeping bag.

The fact was that he had attempted to strangle the youth during the night, but for some reason desisted from killing him. When the victim left that morning a solicitous Nilsen advised him to see a doctor and gave him his telephone number, expressing the hope that they would meet again.

The first victim to be murdered at Cranley Gardens was known to Nilsen only as “John the Guardsman.” He was later to be identified as John Howlett, 23, from High Wycombe. He was a drifter who lied that he had been in the Guards. They had first met casually in December 1981, but met again by chance in March 1982 in a pub.

Nilsen invited him back to the flat for a drink, but was annoyed when his visitor made himself too much at home. Nilsen remarked acidly: “I didn’t know you were moving in.” When Howlett fell into a drunken stupor Nilsen put a ligature



**Epileptic “nuisance”:  
victim Malcolm Barlow**

around his neck, saying viciously, “I think it’s time you went!” He throttled him unconscious and then placed him in the bath to drown.

Nilsen dissected Howlett quickly: a friend was due to visit the next day. He boiled the head in a large pot on the stove then flushed the internal organs and some flesh down the toilet. The rest he packed into a tea-chest which stood in the corner of the flat. He later told police, “I put all the large bones out with the rubbish for the dustmen.”

In April 1982 Nilsen met a male dancer in the Black Cap pub in Camden Town. Nilsen took the 21-year-old back to Cranley Gardens and they went to bed together.

*“I put the head in a pot, popped the lid on and lit the stove. When the head was coming to the boil I turned the pot down to simmer, then I took the dog out for a walk”*

In the middle of the night the dancer awoke to a living nightmare. He was being strangled, and was too weak to resist. He felt himself being lifted and carried, then plunged into a bath of water. Several times his head was pushed under the water, while he tried to beg for mercy. He then lapsed into unconsciousness.

The victim awoke to find himself back in bed with the dog licking his face. In actual fact Nilsen thought he had succeeded in killing the dancer, and was surprised when he revived. But once he realised he was alive Nilsen made every attempt to bring him round, turning on all the bars of the electric fire to warm him. He persuaded the man that he must have got his neck stuck in the zipper of the sleeping bag and almost choked himself.

Much was to be made at the subsequent trial of this strange episode. Why had Nilsen spared the dancer? How had he been able to snap out of his killing state? It seemed to suggest that there were two Nilsens, a Jekyll and Hyde in real life.

The next murder was that of 28-year-old Graham Allan, from Glasgow. The exact date of his death is unknown, but it was some time in mid-1982.

Allan, a drug-addict, was strangled and then dissected in the bath. He was later identified from an X-ray plate of his skull, which bore a distinctive fracture.

On New Year’s Day 1983 Nilsen attempted to strangle Toshimitu Ozawa, a young Japanese student. Ozawa managed to fight Nilsen off and fled the house in terror. Because there was no obvious physical injury, police dismissed the matter.

Nilsen was later to tell police that he never went out looking for a victim to kill. He simply went out looking for company, and never knew when the urge to kill might come on him. Sometimes he could not remember having killed. On January 27th, 1983 he woke to find a dead man in the armchair with a tie around his neck. A piece of string had been attached to the tie to make it long enough to function as a noose – this suggested premeditation, since the ligature must have been constructed in advance. But Nilsen claimed it was all a mystery.

This time the victim was Stephen Sinclair, 20, a punk and drug-addict. He had a borstal and prison record and suffered from hepatitis. Nilsen had picked him up in the Charing Cross Road on the evening of January 26th. Back at the flat Nilsen strangled him, then lay naked beside the body with an erection.

Nilsen later told police of how he had attempted to dispose of Sinclair. “I put the head in a pot, popped the lid on and lit the stove. When the head was coming to the boil I turned the pot down to simmer, then I took the dog out for a walk...Later I watched TV as the head was simmering.”

Most of Sinclair’s dissected corpse was found in two black bags in the wardrobe. Nilsen tried to flush pieces of flesh down the toilet, but the toilets became blocked.

In February 1983 the residents of the other flats reported the blocked toilets to the landlord, who arranged for a plumber to call on Saturday February 5th. He arrived, but decided that the job was too big for him and advised the estate agent to call in DynoRod.

On Monday 7th February Nilsen went to work as usual. The DynoRod engineer arrived at 6.15 p.m. on Tuesday. The engineer lifted a large manhole cover and climbed down into the sewer. There was a revolting smell, and he noticed what looked like lumps of flesh blocking the outlet pipes.

It was getting dark, and since he had not been long with the company and did not want to make a fool of himself, he packed up for the night, saying he would return the following day. However, he reported his grim find to his boss by telephone.

That night Dennis Nilsen went down into the sewer and removed most of the flesh into plastic carrier bags, throwing them over the back garden hedge. But his neighbours had seen him at his midnight task.

Nilsen knew that the next day would be crucial: his luck was running out. Again he thought of suicide, but again the thought of his dog Bleep deterred him. He went to work as usual, and before leaving at

the end of the day he left a note in an envelope in his desk. The note said that if he were to be arrested there would be no truth in reports that he had committed suicide in his cell.

While Nilsen was at work the engineer and his boss returned to the manhole at Cranley Gardens with police officers. Portions of flesh were recovered from blocked pipes and were taken to a pathologist who declared them to be human tissue.

**W**hen Nilsen returned home on the evening of February 9th he found three burly policemen waiting for him. They were Detective Chief Inspector Peter Jay, Detective Inspector Stephen McCusker and Detective Constable Jeffrey Butler. They had checked Nilsen's background, and knew that he had been a policeman and might therefore prove tricky.

Inspector Jay said to the 37-year-old Nilsen: "I've come about your drains."

Nilsen replied: "Why should the police be interested in drains?"

Jay went on: "The reason I'm interested in your drains is that they are blocked with human remains."

Nilsen said: "Good God! That's terrible. Where did it come from?"

The policeman would have none of this. "Don't mess about," he said. "Where's the rest of the body?"

Nilsen confessed immediately, all resistance gone. "In plastic bags in the wardrobe," he said.

He took the officers up to his flat and showed them. Nilsen was immediately charged on suspicion of murder.

In the police car taking them to Hornsey Police Station, DI McCusker asked Nilsen idly: "Are we talking about one body or two?"

Nilsen replied: "Fifteen or sixteen since 1978. I'll tell you everything. It's a relief to be able to get it off my mind."

Once at the police station an incredulous Detective Chief Inspector asked Nilsen: "Let's get this straight. Are you telling us that since 1978 you have killed sixteen people?"

"Yes," Nilsen replied. "Three at Cranley Gardens and about thirteen at my previous address, 195 Melrose Avenue in Cricklewood."

The human remains recovered from Nilsen's wardrobe were examined at Hornsey Mortuary by pathologist Professor Bowden. He found several plastic carrier bags inside the two large black plastic bin-liners. In one bag was the left side of a man's chest including the arm, in another a torso, in a third a heart, lungs, spleen, liver, gall bladder, kidneys and intestines. Dissection had been skilful, the pathologist noted. Slowly he was able to reassemble the body of Stephen Sinclair.

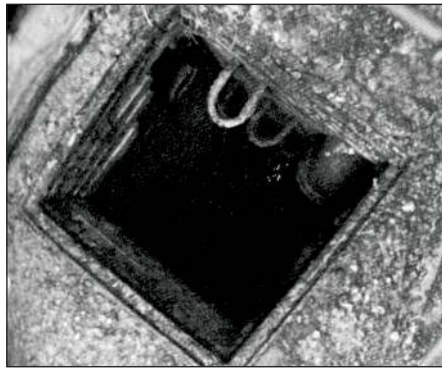
The questioning of Nilsen began on February 11th, 1983, at Hornsey Police Station, led by Peter Jay. It was to last 30 hours spread over a week, and the story which emerged chilled the listening detectives. With dispassionate calm, like

the civil servant he was, Nilsen dictated a precise and detailed account of his many murders. He said that of the three people murdered at Cranley Gardens he knew only Stephen Sinclair by name. He said he was relieved he had been caught now, because "If I had been arrested at sixty-five years of age there might have been thousands of bodies behind me."

While telling detectives about how he had cut up bodies and flushed them down the toilet, he asked for an ashtray to stub out his cigarette. When a young constable told him to flush it down the toilet Nilsen replied drily, "The last time I flushed something down the toilet I got into trouble."

He cooperated fully in the interrogation, as if anxious to have all his deeds recorded. While in custody he wrote a document entitled *Unscrambling Behaviour* in which he attempted to explain his motives. He displayed no signs of remorse at any time and admitted, "I can't weep for my victims."

The detectives tried to establish if the murders had been premeditated, if Nilsen had lured young men to his flat with the express intention of killing them. "No," said Nilsen, "it just happened." He said



**Human flesh blocked the drain (above) at Cranley Gardens**

that far more people had visited his flat and left alive than had been killed. Asked how he could have cut up bodies and dabbled in flesh without feeling sick, Nilsen replied simply: "The victim is the dirty platter after the feast and the washing-up is a clinically ordinary task." He also told detectives about the seven attempted murders.

The detectives noted that there had been a gap of a year between the first and second killings, and then 10 victims had been strangled within 18 months, in 1980-81. Was there any reason for this? Could Nilsen supply any motive for the murders? Nilsen said he could not. He wasn't a sex-maniac or a robber or a sadist. "What I am is totally irresponsible," he said.

When his solicitor had finished reading his terrible confession he raised his eyes to Nilsen and asked, "Why?" Nilsen shrugged. "I was hoping you would tell me that," he said.

Nilsen was remanded to Brixton Prison, from where he sent a letter to the detectives handling his case, complimenting them on the professional

way in which they had handled the inquiry. He was very conscious of the media interest in him, conscious that he had at last become a somebody.

Once in prison Nilsen was made a Category A prisoner and was surprised at the hostility shown against him by fellow-prisoners. But he made a bad prisoner. He tried to fight the system, protesting and going on hunger strikes. He once tried assaulting the prison staff: he got a black eye and lost a tooth as a result. Convinced that he was being treated unfairly, he complained bitterly to the prison governor, and ended by sacking his legal counsel.

At this time he also fell in love with a fellow-prisoner, a transvestite who eventually committed suicide in prison. Nilsen had begun writing his own account of his crimes in his many notebooks in an attempt at self-analysis.

He wrote that he would welcome being executed and complained that he had been "used" by a power to which he had surrendered control. He seemed convinced he was a victim of demonic possession, a fact that explains the cryptic words written after he was convicted. "They think they have the real me safely locked away here, but the real me is hundreds of miles away..."

**T**he trial of Nilsen began at the Old Bailey on Monday, October 24th, 1983, with Mr. Justice Croom-Johnson presiding. Mr. Alan Green prosecuted, with Mr. Ivan Lawrence for the defence. Nilsen was charged with six murders and two attempted murders. He pleaded not guilty to murder but guilty to manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility.

The prosecutor told the jury of eight men and four women the facts relating to the arrest of Nilsen. He said that seven victims had now been identified, although only six were on the indictment. The prosecution set out to show the pattern of the murders. Each victim was a man. Each had been picked up in a pub. All were strangers to Nilsen. All, with the exception of Ockenden, had no permanent address. All had been strangled. Some were male prostitutes. Nilsen had had sexual connections with six of the bodies.

Nilsen's confession was read out to a shocked court. When the police had asked him about the ties which he used to strangle his victims Nilsen said he had started out with 15 and only had one left at the time of his arrest. Asked how many bodies were under the floorboards at any one time, he had replied flippantly: "I'm not sure. I did not do a stock check." He had told police he had taken on a "quasi-God role" in killing.

The first prosecution witness was the now 29-year-old victim who had fought Nilsen off with a carving knife. He told of Nilsen's abortive attempt to strangle him. On Tuesday, October 25th, two witnesses told of having been attacked by Nilsen. The victim, a 19-year-old at the time of the attack, told of having sex-play in bed with Nilsen, then waking up to find himself half-strangled. "There were no whites to my eyes; they were all bloodshot.

I had a sore throat and I felt very sick.” He said Nilsen had told him: “God, you look bloody awful.”

The male dancer told of being picked up in a pub by Nilsen. He had been feeling very depressed at the time, and told Nilsen he wished he were dead. Nilsen told him not to be silly – he should not throw his life away. They went to bed, and then “I woke up feeling something around my neck. My head was hurting and I couldn’t breathe properly...He was saying in a sort of whispering shouting voice: ‘Stay still! Stay still!’ Then I passed out...I vaguely remember hearing water running...I was being carried. I knew I was in the water and he was trying to drown me. He kept pushing me into the water.

“The third time I came up I said: ‘No more, please, no more’ and he pushed me under again...I passed out.” The victim said he woke up to find himself on the couch, the dog licking his face. Nilsen was solicitous and helped him to the tube station.

The defence counsel asked him: “Was the defendant both calm and concerned before and after the ‘incident’ as though he was unaware that he had done anything to harm you?”

When the witness replied yes, Mr. Lawrence ruminated aloud, “How odd that was...” and then sat down.

Defence counsel established that the police only knew about the various attempted murders because Nilsen had volunteered the information. Now they showed how Nilsen had spared the dancer’s life when he had him at his mercy. It was an attempt to establish the prisoner’s claim to “diminished responsibility”.

The document *Unscrambling Behaviour*, written by Nilsen at Hornsey Police Station, was read out in part:

*I guess I may be a creative psychopath who, when in a loss of rationality situation, lapses temporarily into a destructive psychopath...At the subconscious root lies a sense of total social isolation and a desperate search for sexual identity...God only knows what thoughts go through my mind when it’s captive within a destructive binge. Maybe the cunning, stalking killer instinct is the only single concentration released from a mind which in that state knows no morality... There is no disputing that I am a violent killer under certain circumstances...It amazes me that I have no tears for the victims. I have no tears for myself...*

His personal letter to Chief Inspector Jay had read: “My remorse is of a deep and personal kind which will eat away at me for the rest of my life...I have slain my own dragon as surely as the Press and the letter of the law will slay me.”

Mr. Jay agreed with defence counsel that Nilsen had been totally cooperative, and had given his confession in a matter-of-fact manner – a confession which Mr. Jay said he found “horrific.” Under cross-examination DI Chambers agreed that the police had managed to trace 14 men who had visited Nilsen’s flat and come to no harm.

On Wednesday Mr. Lawrence rose to

open the defence case. He told the jury that he did not have to prove that Nilsen was insane – just that at the time of the murders he had been suffering from an abnormality of the mind. He called the first witness for the defence, psychiatrist Dr. James MacKeith, who said that Nilsen suffered from a “severe personality disorder” and at the time of killing was in a state known as “disassociation,” as if watching someone else do the deed.

Under cross-examination the doctor admitted that all a psychiatrist could know of a person’s mental condition was what that person told him. There was the usual clash between the prosecution and psychiatrist which is endemic in these cases. The prosecution asserted that Nilsen was cunning, resourceful and had presence of mind.

Mr. Green said the fact that Nilsen had spared some of his victims proved that he could desist from killing when he wanted to; he had the power of choice. There was



**“Destructive binges” – Dennis Nilsen in the 1990s**

a shouting match between Mr. Green and the witness, which ended with the doctor withdrawing his diagnosis that Nilsen had been suffering from diminished responsibility.

Dr. Patrick Gallwey fared no better. He said Nilsen suffered from a “false self syndrome”, a theory developed by R.D. Laing from ideas postulated by Jean-Paul Sartre. It was simply another formulation of the “Jekyll and Hyde” story. According to the doctor, this type of personality is fine when things are going well, but quickly falls apart under stress. The doctor went so far as to say: “I don’t see how he can have had malice aforethought when he had no feelings.” This brought a stern rebuke from the judge, who said he was trespassing on the law and should confine himself to medical matters.

The prosecution had stressed Nilsen’s ability to make choices. He chose to invite men to his flat. He chose to kill Barlow because he was a nuisance. Re-examination of Dr. Gallwey by Mr. Lawrence clarified the issue. The doctor said that Nilsen killed to save himself from going insane. The acts of murder pointed the prisoner’s destruction

outward instead of inward. Without the acts of murder Nilsen’s mind would have collapsed into psychosis.

The doctor said that while Nilsen had known intellectually what he was doing, he had not known emotionally, and without emotion a man behaves like an automaton, a robot.

The prosecution psychiatrist was Dr. Paul Bowden. He had seen Nilsen on 16 occasions over an eight-month period and had determined that Nilsen was not sick. His report had stated “I am unable to show that Dennis Nilsen had any abnormality of mind.”

Mr. Lawrence asked Dr. Bowden: “Were not his murders evidence of abnormal behaviour?”

The doctor replied, “Of course strangling people is not normal behaviour.”

Mr. Lawrence was able to trip him up on a number of points, establishing that the law and psychiatry do not mix. One deals in intangibles, the other in tangible evidence.

In his closing speech the prosecutor said: “You are dealing with a defendant who liked killing people and derived satisfaction from the act itself. The defence says this man was simply out of his mind. The defence says he couldn’t really help it. The Crown says, oh yes he could.”

For the defence Mr. Lawrence opened by saying: “Does not common speech oblige one to say of the perpetrator of these killings, he must be out of his mind?”

The judge spent four hours summing up the case to the jury, and his bias against Nilsen and psychiatry was evident. He said: “There are evil people who do evil things. Committing murder is one of them...A mind can be evil without being abnormal.”

The jury retired on the morning of Thursday, November 3rd. At 4.30 p.m. the judge asked them if they could agree a verdict. The response was no, and the jury were sequestered in a hotel overnight. They resumed their deliberations at 10 a.m. the next day. At 11.25 a.m. the judge told them he was prepared to accept a majority verdict, and at 4.25 p.m. the jury returned. On every count the decision was a 10-2 majority verdict of guilty, except for the attempted murder of the 19-year-old man when all 12 jurors agreed on guilty. The judge sentenced Nilsen to life imprisonment, with a recommendation that he should serve a minimum of 25 years.

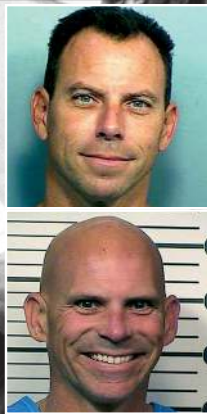
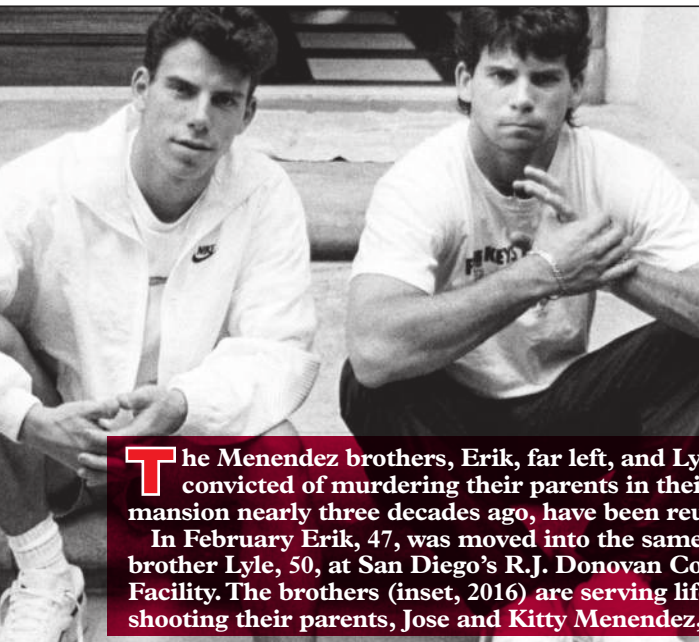
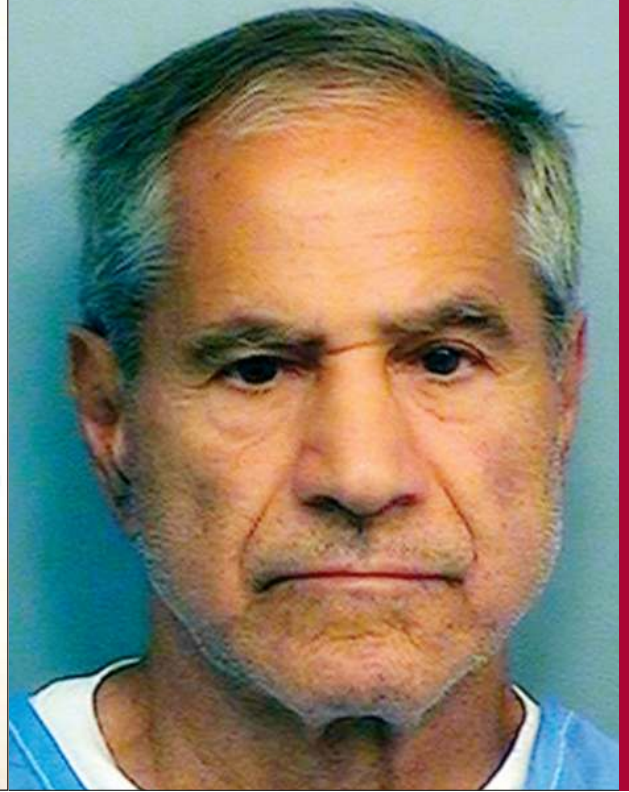
In 1994, the then Home Secretary Michael Howard increased the sentence to a whole-life tariff, meaning Nilsen would never be released. And so it proved when he died, aged 72, at Full Sutton Prison, on Saturday, May 12th, 2018.

**Nilsen was believed to be Britain’s second most prolific serial killer after Dr. Harold Shipman. Had his despicable spree not been stopped when the drains blocked at Cranley Gardens, he could well have gone on to kill many more.**



**O**n June 5th, 1968, Senator Robert F. Kennedy (above) and five others were shot by Sirhan Sirhan (right, after arrest) at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. Kennedy died almost 26 hours later but the other five wounded recovered. The world reeled again at the assassination of a Kennedy.

Sirhan was found guilty of murder and was sentenced to death in 1969 (commuted to life three years later). He was once again denied parole at his 15th hearing in 2016 (far right) and, now 74, remains incarcerated



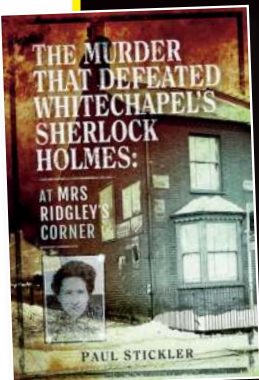
**T**he Menendez brothers, Erik, far left, and Lyle, who were convicted of murdering their parents in their Beverly Hills mansion nearly three decades ago, have been reunited.

In February Erik, 47, was moved into the same unit as his brother Lyle, 50, at San Diego's R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility. The brothers (inset, 2016) are serving life sentences for shooting their parents, Jose and Kitty Menendez, in 1989.



**B**arbara Baekeland and her son Anthony in 1946. Despite phenomenal wealth the Bakelite heir grew up to murder his mother and later attack his grandmother with a knife. He committed suicide in a Rikers Island cell in March 1981.

## TD COMP: WIN THE MURDER THAT DEFEATED WHITECHAPEL'S SHERLOCK HOLMES



It is 1919: A shopkeeper with brutal head injuries and her dog are found dead in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. Following an extraordinary catalogue of events, a local police investigation concludes that both died as a result of a tragic accident. A second investigation by Scotland Yard leads to the arrest of an Irish war veteran – but the outcome remains far from conclusive. This book draws on original records and newly-discovered material and exposes the frailties of county policing just after the First World War. Offering a unique balance of story-telling and analysis, the book addresses a number of unanswered questions which the author tackles in the final chapter...

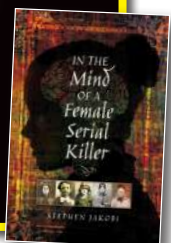
**To win a paperback copy of *The Murder That Defeated Whitechapel's Sherlock Holmes: At Mrs Ridgley's Corner* (published by Pen & Sword History; ISBN 9781526733856; £14.99) by Paul Stickler, answer this question:**

**Which year did the creator of Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, die?**

- 1928    
  1929    
  1930    
  1931

Send your answer with your name and address to TD July competition, PO Box 735, London SE26 5NQ, or email [truedetective@truecrimelibrary.com](mailto:truedetective@truecrimelibrary.com), with the subject "TD July comp." The first correct answer out of the hat after the closing date of **June 25th, 2018**, will win. The winner will be announced in the September 2018 issue.

The winner of May's competition with the answer Yorkshire is David Paton from Renfrew. Well done – your prize of a paperback copy of *In the Mind of a Female Serial Killer* will be with you soon.





Sydney

# HANGED IN AUSTRALIA

Case recalled by  
A.W. MOSS

**G**IVE ME the pistol! If you can't shoot him, I will!" Anne Phillips cried to her husband John.

At 2.30 a.m. she had been roused from sleep by a sound in the bank below their living quarters. John Phillips was the manager of the City Bank of Sydney's branch in Carcoar, a sleepy little hollow in New South Wales, and on the following day – Monday, September 25th, 1893 – he was to take up a new appointment as manager of the bank's larger branch in the town of Young, his wife and two young daughters remaining in their flat above the Carcoar bank until he'd found his family a new home.

But right now he had other things on his mind, his wife having woken him to alert him to an intruder. Through the open door of their bedroom he could see a light glimmering on the stairs, and he reached for the revolver under his pillow – all Australia's bank managers who lived on the premises were required to sleep

**She was making for the front door when the intruder caught up with her, killing her instantly with a single chop with his axe, the blow also severing two of the child's fingers**

with a loaded pistol.

Until that moment in the early hours of that Sunday, everything had been going well for the couple. Because of John's promotion, on the Saturday evening his wife's sister Susan Stoddart and her friend Frances Cavanagh, both in their early 20s, had come to stay with them to keep Anne company while her husband was away in Young.

The two women visitors shared a bed, three-year-old Dorothy Phillips was in the children's room, and her baby sister Gladys was sleeping in her parents' bedroom.

Now, as Anne lit a candle, John grabbed his revolver and left their bed. As they crept down the stairs to the landing, they saw that the dining-room door was open, a faint light flickering from within. A masked man stood just inside the dining-room. He was holding a hatchet, and as the couple reached the door he knocked the candle from Anne's hand and she pulled off his mask.

There was a brief exchange of words. Then the man lunged at Phillips, and Anne urged her husband to hand her the pistol. But the axe struck his head and he

"Mr. Phillips is not the manager now," she explained. "We have not got the keys here."

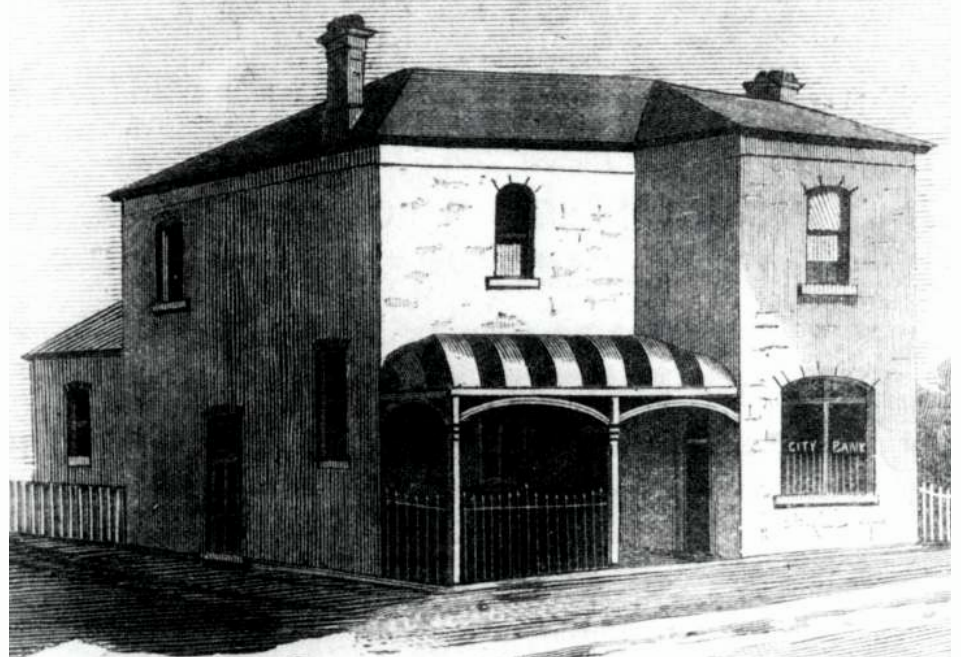
"Who has them?"

"Mr. Healy is the manager now. I don't know where the keys are."

"Where is he?"

"He's at one of the hotels."

Meanwhile the Phillipses' maid Agnes McVicar, who slept in the basement, had been woken by the commotion. Stumbling over Frances's body in the hallway, she saw blood on the stairs as she hurried up them to the Phillipses'



**An artist's impression of the City Bank in Carcoar. The Phillips family lived above it. Below, Herbert Edwin Glasson. He had a reputation as a loose cannon, but all who knew him found his arrest for murder incredible**

collapsed, groaning and nearly toppling her with him.

Thinking of the children, Anne shouted "Murder!" as she dashed back up the stairs to her room, pursued by the intruder. A blow to the cheek from his hatchet knocked her to the floor.

Hearing her cries, her sister Susan and Frances Cavanagh left their bed. Frances hurried to the Phillipses' bedroom, picked up the baby and ran down the stairs. She was making for the front door when the intruder caught up with her, killing her instantly with a single chop with his axe, the blow also severing two of the child's fingers.

**S**usan rushed to help her sister. "Oh Annie, you are hurt!" she cried, ignoring the intruder when he returned to the room.

"Money I want, and money I must have," he told Anne, demanding the keys to the bank's safe. She rose to her feet and staggered across the room to where her husband's trousers were hanging. As she took some keys from a pocket, the man grabbed them and rushed downstairs, only to return moments later. "You have given me the wrong keys," he said.





**Right, bank manager John Phillips and his wife Anne. They were attacked by an axe-wielding intruder the day before he was to take up a new position in another town...**

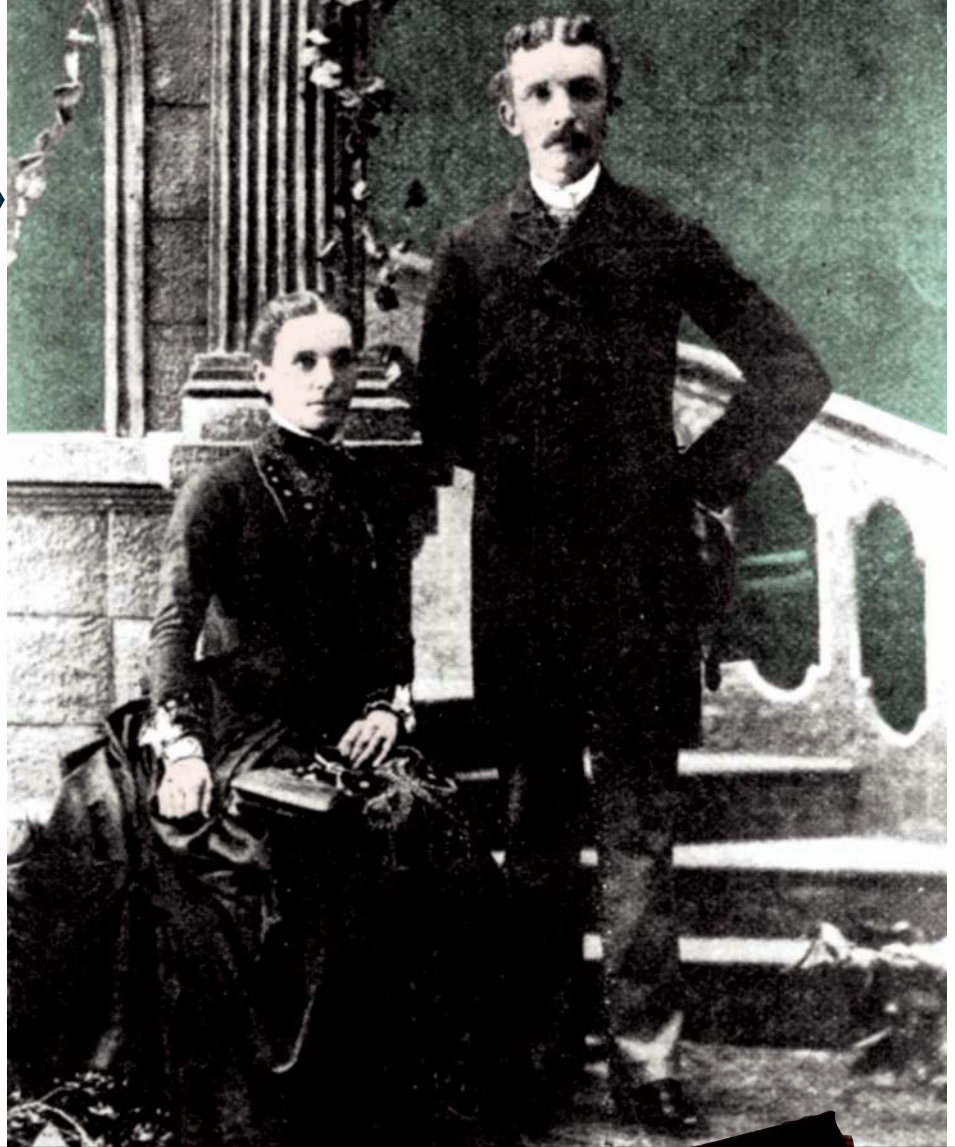
bedroom. There she found Anne on the bed, her face being bandaged by her sister. A man stood a few feet away, a candle in one hand, a hatchet in the other.

“For God’s sake leave me alone for the sake of my children,” Anne was saying, and as Agnes entered the room the intruder turned to face her. If she told anyone what she had seen he would kill her, he told her.

Then, backing out of the room, he ordered the three women: “Let none of you make a noise and scream. If you come further than the stairs I will kill you.”

For a few moments the women waited motionless, in stunned silence. Then Anne cried, “Are you gone?” There was no reply, so she left her bed and went to the door. “I must go down and see my Jack,” she said as her sister followed her.

In the hallway Susan found her dead friend Frances, the baby lying unconscious on top of her. Screaming hysterically, Susan and Agnes rushed out of the bank to the cashier’s house next door. Roused by their cries, Joseph Derwin pulled on his shirt and followed them back to the bank where Anne was



# AXE HORROR IN SLEEPY HOLLOW

**The court was asked this question about Herbert “Bertie” Glasson – would any sane man single-handedly try to rob a bank in a town where everyone knew him and where he would be recognised by his victims?**

now cradling her husband’s crushed head in her arms. “Annie, my Annie,” John Phillips was moaning.

Derwin checked the safe. It was still locked, and at 4.35 a.m. he dispatched a telegram: “*Bank entered 3 o’clock this morning. Mr. Phillips, Mrs. Phillips, Miss Cavanagh hacked with axe dreadfully. Former two not expected to live. Latter is dead. Nothing stolen. J.G. Derwin.*”

A second telegram followed less than an hour later: “*Mr. Phillips has since died. Nothing further.*”

At dawn, men from throughout the district set out on horseback to hunt for the killer. Near Cowra, 27 miles away, a man’s bloodstained hat and dark suit were found stuffed into a rock-cleft.

**A** few hours after the murders, Constable Roger Meagher made the rounds of Cowra’s hotels, recruiting men for the manhunt. At Taskers Hotel he spoke to Bertie Glasson who was having breakfast, telling him of the murders at Carcoar and the search parties that were

going out.

Glasson, the son of a wealthy local farmer, offered to join them. “A man who commits a murder like that is the most bloodthirsty scoundrel I ever heard of,” he said.

Shortly after 1 p.m. Meagher saw him again, this time in a Cowra barber’s shop. “From information I have received, I arrest you for murder,” he told Glasson.

“I did not do it!” Glasson cried, jumping to his feet. “I am mad!”

The 25-year-old suspect was a

popular figure in the community, a successful showjumper who had recently married a gifted musician, Annie May Summerbelle, whom he had known since his childhood. But he was also something of a playboy and the black sheep of his family. It was later to emerge that he had forged cheques totalling £1,200, but the matter had been settled out of court and hushed-up.

After his father's death in 1891, Herbert Edwin Glasson had managed the family's farm at Stanfield for a while. Then, to his brothers' relief, he had married and gone to live at the Hotel Metropole in Sydney, his bride preferring city life to that of the country.

Despite his reputation as a loose cannon, all who knew Bertie Glasson found his arrest for murder incredible. In shocked disbelief, they opened their newspapers to read a letter found in one of his pockets when he was taken into custody.

"My Darling Little Wife," it began. "Oh my precious Queen, I am going mad and felt it coming on for some time. I came to myself today, Sunday, in one of Stanfield's paddocks, and I had on a black suit of clothes all covered in blood. What I have done I have no idea. I remember leaving Sunday to go to Orange. I don't know whether I have been there or not. I suppose I have. I

**"When I saw him in Annie's bedroom he had a tomahawk covered in blood," Susan Stoddart told the police. "His eyes were staring out of his head. His hair was on end. I could see his features quite plainly"**

feel so terribly strange now, darling, and I don't know where I want to go. If I should get lost and die in the bush, I hope I will be found and that you will get this note. Better for me to be dead than for you to have a mad husband. If I live to get back to the Hotel Metropole I will never leave you a day. I will try to walk to Cowra to catch a train. Always, Bertie."

When he arrived at Carcoar by train and under escort, the crowd of spectators waiting to jeer him were shocked into silence by his changed appearance. The once jaunty young man about town was now haggard and ashen-faced.

"Hello, sergeant!" he shouted to Sergeant George Boyd when he arrived at Carcoar lock-up. "What are these for?" he asked, holding up his handcuffs.

"Didn't they tell you?" asked Boyd. "No. I know nothing. What have I



**Frances Cavanagh (left) and Susan Stoddart. They were staying with Anne and John Phillips when the "mad" axeman struck**

done?"

Was Bertie Glasson insane or just pretending? That would be for a court to decide.

Glasson had apparently travelled from Sydney on the train which took Susan Stoddart and Frances Cavanagh to Carcoar. He had been recognised on the train by another woman passenger who had known him since he was a boy.

At an identity parade, Susan soon picked him out. "That is the man," she cried. "Say what you said before - 'I want money.' Say it again. Speak out!"

But Glasson remained silent.

**A**nne Phillips had not been told of her husband's death, and she herself was not expected to live.

On her sick bed, she had told the police she had recognised the intruder as Glasson when she yanked the mask from his face. Her husband had recognised him too. "Bertie, why do you do this thing?" he had asked. "You will only get yourself into trouble. Go away, there's a good fellow."

Glasson's response had been the fatal blow with his hatchet.

**CARCOAR TRAGEDY.**  
 THE BASK ROBBERY AND MURDER.  
 AN UNPARALLELED CRIME.  
 INTENSE FEELING AROUSED.  
 A SENSATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.  
 ARREST OF A WELL-KNOWN RESIDENT.  
 EVIDENCE AGAINST THE ACCUSED.  
 SUSPICION OF MADNESS.  
 [BY ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.]  
 (FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)  
 SYDNEY, September 25.

"When I saw him in Annie's bedroom he had a tomahawk covered in blood," Susan Stoddart told the police. "His eyes were staring out of his head. His hair was on end. I could see his features quite plainly."

Agnes McVicar told the investigators she had been woken shortly after 2 a.m. by a tap on her window. She had got up, pulled down the blind, bolted her door and gone back to bed. Shortly afterwards she had been awakened again, this time by screams of "Murder!" These were followed by the sound of running footsteps, a cry of "Let me go!" and then a shout, "Oh, I am killed!" She had stood trembling behind her door while this was going on. Then a cry from one of the children had made her forget her fears.

She had unbolted her door and gone to see what was happening...

**D**erwin revealed that Glasson had been in financial difficulties. He had repeatedly been asked to reduce his overdraft, and John Phillips had eventually had to serve a writ. A horse in Sydney had been seized in the belief that it was Glasson's, but he had sold it two weeks previously. And on the Saturday morning when Glasson left Sydney for Carcoar, his butcher's shop in the town had been sold for £19 on the bank's instructions. The shop's manager had not been paid for three months.

At the murder victims' funeral on September 27th, the presiding clergyman did his best to help the mourners come to terms with the tragedy. "We deplore the terrible event which has taken place," he said, "and as we look at this providence which God has permitted, we cannot possibly understand His workings. It is hard to see where the light is, but although tears might blind our eyes, it must not blind our faith."

In Carcoar's lock-up, Glasson seemed calm and rational until anyone spoke to him. Then he became hysterical and

violent.

At the five-day inquest a grazier said that on the morning of the murders he was rounding up cattle when he saw a man riding a horse towards Cowra. He asked the man if he had seen any cattle, and the man replied, "No." The witness thought the man was Glasson.

Agnes McVicar said she had recognised the bank's intruder as Glasson as soon as she saw him in the Phillipps' bedroom. And a friend of the Glasson family told the court: "If the district were polled, Bertie Glasson would be the last man suspected of anything of this kind." When Glasson had visited him a few weeks ago, the witness said, "he had all the appearance of being as sane as I am at the present moment."

Constable Meagher testified that when Glasson was arrested, he said: "I don't know where I have been or what I have done. Oh, if I could only think. What will my poor wife say?"

A bloodstained matchbox had been found in his pocket, as well as the incriminating letter.



**John Phillips. Why didn't he fire the revolver when he confronted the axe-wielding intruder?**

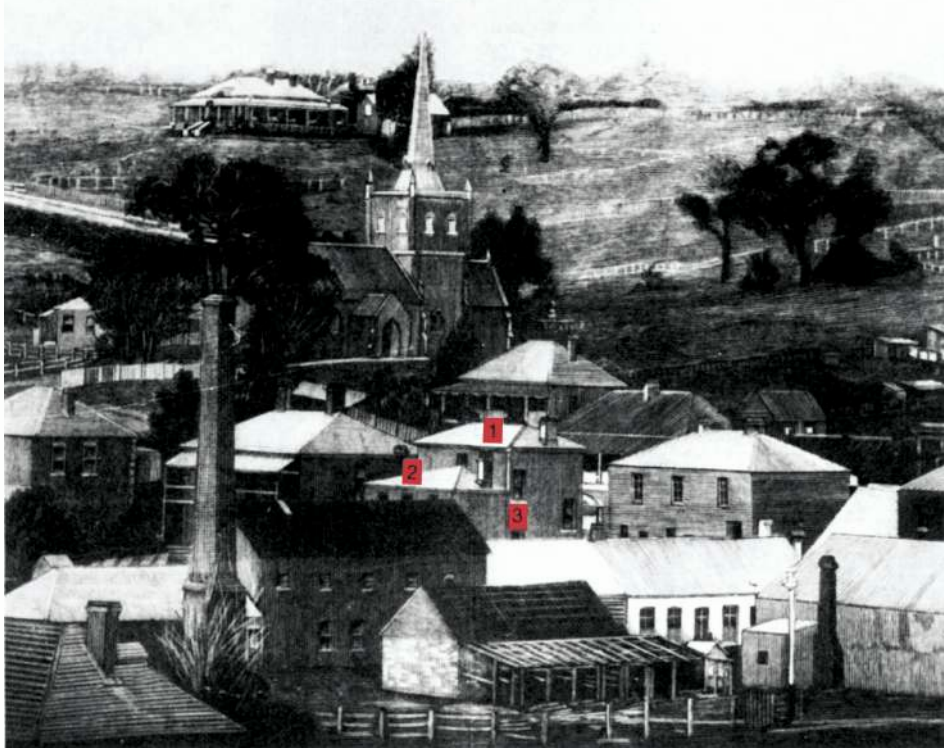
Susan Stoddart told the coroner: "I am positive the man called Bertie Glasson, the man who is in the dock, is the same man who came into the bedroom with a bloodstained axe in his hand. I know his face. I will never forget it."

Throughout the proceedings, a newspaper reported, Glasson sat motionless. "When spoken to, he puts on an idiotic expression."

At the inquest's conclusion, the coroner said the case was "one of the most painful, dreadful and shocking ever recorded in this country or any other."

Meanwhile Anne Phillips was slowly recovering. "She is a little lady of the most indomitable character and appears to have exhibited a degree of pluck rarely found, even in a man," a newspaper reported.

She kept asking about her husband, but nobody wanted to tell her he had died.



**An impression of the town of Carcoar in 1893, then a sleepy little hollow. 1. indicates the bank, 2. the room where the killer gained entry, and 3. the side entrance**



**Anne Phillips. Despite her grievous injury she eventually made a full recovery**

Why hadn't he shot the intruder? He was said to have been shy and nervous, but his hesitation could be explained by the fact that he recognised Glasson. It is not so easy to shoot someone you know, even when they are confronting you with a hatchet. And Phillips might have tried to fire the revolver. It was later found to have been out of order.

When Bertie Glasson's trial began before Mr. Justice Innes at Bathurst Assizes on October 20th, 1893, his wife told the court that she knew he was short of money, but had no idea how serious the shortage was. He was always affectionate, but had recently behaved strangely, complaining of insomnia and severe headaches.

A week before the murders he had suffered severe sunstroke while they were visiting Sydney's botanic gardens. He

had wept profusely, saying he was going mad.

When he left the Hotel Metropole on the Saturday, he told her he was going to Orange to collect some money. "God bless you," were his last words to her.

The court then heard the evidence of an old friend of the Glassons who had known Bertie's father in England. He said that several relatives on Bertie's mother's side were believed to be insane.

The next witness, an Orange physician, told the court he had attended



**Was Bertie Glasson insane or was it a ruse? The court heard witnesses attest that several relatives in England had been believed to be afflicted**

the defendant's mother. She showed signs of madness, he said, and had to be given sedatives to stop her becoming violent.

A second doctor quoted Henry Maudsley, a leading expert on insanity.

According to Maudsley, he said, a person could be mad without showing any sign of it except in one respect. Otherwise they would behave sanely, the madness becoming evident only when it was suddenly triggered by some circumstance.

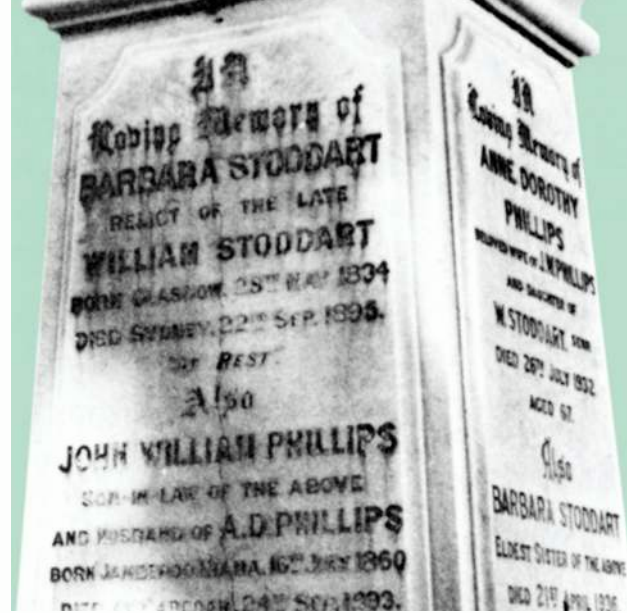
In his concluding speech for the defence, Glasson's counsel Mr. John Want asked if any sane man would act as his client was alleged to have done, single-handedly trying to rob a bank in a town where everyone knew him and where he would be recognised by his victims?

Three further questions, Mr. Want said, must be considered by the jury. Was there insanity in Glasson's family? Could a man known to be normally kindly

suddenly become a murderous thug while in a sane condition? And would a sane person commit the unnecessary butchery that had taken place at the bank?

On the evidence, the defence counsel said, he was confident that the jury would agree that if his client was the killer, he could not have been responsible for his actions.

**A** different view was taken by the *Sydney Morning Herald*. "Everything before and after the murders has the characteristics of deliberation," the paper commented. There was the "hour chosen in the dead



**The family memorial. Anne survived her husband by 39 years**

## MAKE A BREAK

N R G N N R I N L Z D A J H O C M  
 A P R E D A T O R B U R N S Z O B  
 M B N O W V E M V V O U I I C R M  
 T G N I T S E L O M D N N F A P F  
 A V A T C A S E M E N T D I T S R  
 L A M I Z D G E S P I O N A G E L  
 G O R O Y O I I W N T W V O G D R  
 C M A R A M L Y T N A D N E F E D  
 C L A D E A E V I S N E F F O N I  
 W H H I T S J C H I E F Y E K N B  
 R S I U S O T E N K O V N L L I R  
 W M R L W C D N N E B V N V E S O  
 X B K O L H V A Y S C H D I B R M  
 S U G O E I P P A T R O L M E N Q  
 X J U J D S N D E H S I N U P A O  
 B T H O S T A G E S R E N N I S B  
 N Q O J D R G A Q R Q L R I I H U

It's TD Wordsearch time! Can you find these 30 crime-related words hidden in the grid above? They can run across, up/down or diagonally, either forwards or backwards. Solution on page 50. Good luck!

CASEMENT  
 INVESTIGATOR  
 CHILLING  
 SINNERS  
 HOSTAGES  
 MORBID  
 NASH  
 DRIFTER  
 HAARMANN  
 SPANK

DENNIS  
 DOSS  
 DEFENDANT  
 PREDATOR  
 FISH  
 ESPIONAGE  
 ARREST  
 PATROLMEN  
 INNOCENCE  
 BONDAGE

MOLESTING  
 GLATMAN  
 INOFFENSIVE  
 NUDE  
 SADOMASOCHIST  
 CORPSE  
 PUNISHED  
 EYLER  
 BRUTALISED  
 BRAINWASHED

of night; the mask; the effort to silence everyone when the mask was removed; going to a distant town; changing clothes. Everything shows calculation, an eye to the danger involved and knowledge of the responsibility of the deed."

The prosecutor Mr. Wade had already said much the same thing. The crime was clearly premeditated, he had told the jury. "And the law is that when a man has a motive for a crime and pursues it after having made provision to escape detection, he is not mad."

Cautioned by the judge that they must not allow "the subtleties of the law of mania" to influence them unduly, the jury convicted Bertie Glasson and he was sentenced to death.

But he was not without sympathisers who thought he should have been found guilty but insane. In a letter to the *Herald* one of them quoted a passage from Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*: "No man morally sane could have been guilty of that crime upon so pitiful a provocation."

Glasson said his main concern was for his wife - "If I were alone I would not care so much, but to think of her and what she is to suffer is awful."

Still claiming he was "unconscious of any crime," Herbert Glasson was hanged at Bathurst Prison at 9 a.m. on November 29th, 1893. At his graveside his brother John was the sole mourner.

By this time Anne Phillips had made a full recovery, and a meeting was held to launch a public subscription for her and her husband's mother.

The town had now appointed a nightwatchman to patrol the streets from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. And the meeting passed a resolution declaring:

**"Carcoar desires to place on record its very high appreciation of the singular courage and wifely devotion by Anne Dorothy Phillips, widow of John William Phillips, on the occasion of the late, dreadful tragedy in the City of Sydney Bank, Carcoar, and to express its deep sympathy for those who lost their relatives on that sad occasion."**

# THIS SUMMER'S BEST TRUE CRIME STORIES...

...and where to find them

■ **HIS WIFE** and son stood in the bathroom staring at the naked body of Lanny Horwitz (left) as it twitched and gurgled in the pool of crimson water brimming over splintered tiles and glass. Blood was pumping from gunshot wounds to his arms and torso, but most conspicuously from the gaping red hole



that had once been his mouth.

Not content with merely killing him, Lanny's murderer had shoved the gun between his lips as he cried out in agony.

Crime of passion or cold-blooded execution? Find out in this year's *True Detective Summer Special*...

■ **WHEN JEFFREY** Pyne was charged with bludgeoning and stabbing his mother Ruth (right) to death in the garage of their Michigan home in May 2011, the case bewildered many people – from seasoned lawyers and legal commentators to family, friends and the community that even now continues to support him. He was sentenced to 20 to 60 years in jail.



Read his story in *True Detective Summer Special* and see what you think. Is he innocent or guilty?

■ **WHY DID** it take so many years to solve? – the murder of an attractive young Australian woman living in London and going about her shopping for a dinner when she was ruthlessly abducted...and was she naive to advertise selling her car in the window of the car itself, inviting approaches from strangers who could be dangerous?



Learn how Janie Shepherd's (above) vicious killer stayed one step ahead of the police for so long in *True Detective Summer Special*.

■ **"HOW YOU** disposed of her body must remain a mystery. It will serve no purpose for me to speculate as to what happened, but all the indications are that you burnt at least a part of her in the woodburner."



The horrific story of the ex-abattoir worker (above) and the little girl he abducted...in *Master Detective Summer Special*.

■ **SUNDAY BREAKFAST** was a leisurely affair at Mrs. Bryan's small boarding-house in County Durham. The house in Parker Terrace, Ferryhill, catered for working men and, as Sunday was their day off, the meal was unhurried, with time for conversation.

"I had a strange dream last night," Mrs. Bryan remarked as she served breakfast on Sunday, February 12th, 1928. "And it was about you," she told one of her lodgers.

"Well, if it was about me it must have been a nightmare," laughed William Byland Abbey, a 31-year-old cashier at a local bank.

"Yes," Mrs. Bryan continued, "I dreamt you were attacked at work and murdered!"

Tragically, that nightmare would come true...find out how in *Master Detective Summer Special*.

■ **ON THE DAY** before her 16th birthday Yvonne Blower told Billy McDonald she didn't want to go out with him again. The next time their paths crossed was in the mortuary of Blackburn's Royal Infirmary...

Read "The Butlin's Beauty Queen Murder" in *Master Detective Summer Special*.

■ **IN THE** SPRING of 1986 a cruel, perverted maniac (right) struck terror into the hearts of sick and elderly folk in south London...



Full astonishing case report in *Master Detective Summer Special*.

■ **DOING NINE** life sentences for nine murders, Pee Wee (below) couldn't resist just one more – and this while he was in a maximum-security penitentiary. It was a step too far – a step that finally took him to the chair... find out how in *True Crime Summer Special!*



■ **SUMMER RUST** (below) dreaded the sound of his key in the door. She knew there'd be a battle. But it was one she had to win. The children sensed her fear, and wanted more cuddles than usual before bedtime.

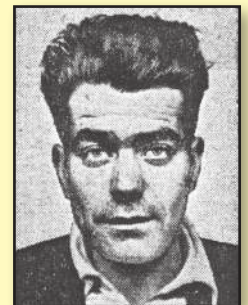


She loved the way they snuggled up on the sofa together in their fleecy pyjamas, falling asleep one by one. Three-year-old Evynn was the first to

nod off, then Teagin who was a year older, and finally the twins Kirsten and Autumn who were seven...

Find out what happens next – in *True Crime Summer Special*.

■ **THE CROWD** jostled to read the execution notice pinned on Leicester Prison's gates. Dennis Goodger stood apart from them, alone with his thoughts. There seemed nothing exceptional about this man in his brown bib-and-brace overalls and brick-dust-encrusted boots; nothing to link him with Joseph Reynolds (right) who had just gone to the scaffold.



But Dennis Goodger had a strong personal interest in Reynolds's execution. "I'm the luckiest man alive in the world today," he told a reporter. "I'm the one Reynolds really intended to kill."

And this was true...To find out why, read *True Crime Summer Special*.



How to make sure you don't miss out on this year's Summer Specials: see page 51

AMERICA'S MOST EVIL

He was once a family man with hopes of making it big in the world of wholesale clothing – but financial problems had left New Yorker Salvatore Perrone on the scrapheap. Three hard-working retailers, all known to the salesman-turned-killer, were gunned down over a deadly four-month spell. And, when cops nabbed him, they found a supply of ammunition intended for other victims

# SON OF SAL

## NO SHOPKEEPER WAS SAFE...

**S**ERIAL KILLER Salvatore Perrone is a lucky guy. And that's official. It came straight from Judge Alan Marrus just before he threw the book at him – a 75-year stretch for three shootings.

“You're lucky we don't have the death penalty here in New York. You would be a prime candidate,” said the Brooklyn

### Case report by Mark Davis

Supreme Court Justice.

They do things rather differently in the US. In Britain, victims' impact statements, read to a hushed court, tend to have a slow, quiet dignity about them. Across the Pond angry and anguished relatives don't hold back.

“You're a piece of shit,” the son of one of the victims told Perrone. The daughter of another victim told him: “You're pathetic. You will rot and die alone. You loser.”

Another addressed him as “You son of a bitch.” And a sister of one of those killed said: “May this animal rot and suffer in jail for the rest of his life.”

Perrone turned to face each of them. They stared right back at him and gave him both barrels. It might not have made much of an impression on the deranged killer of their well-loved, hard-working fathers, husbands and brothers, all shopkeepers in the Brooklyn suburbs. But it sure as hell made them feel better.

Sal Perrone, dubbed “Son of Sal” by the press after 1970s New York serial killer David “Son of Sam” Berkowitz, had been found guilty of the murders of Mohamed Gebeli, 65, Isaac Kadare, 59, and Rahmatollah Vahidipour, 78, in a four-month shooting spree in late 2012.



On each occasion, and no doubt on other nights, the salesman stalked the mean streets with his “kill kit” which he carried around in a black duffel bag that included screwdrivers, switchblades, a bloody eight-inch serrated knife, latex gloves, bleach, wire-cutters, and a loaded, sawn-off rifle. Police reckoned there would have been other victims in the weeks to come.

When they finally nabbed him and

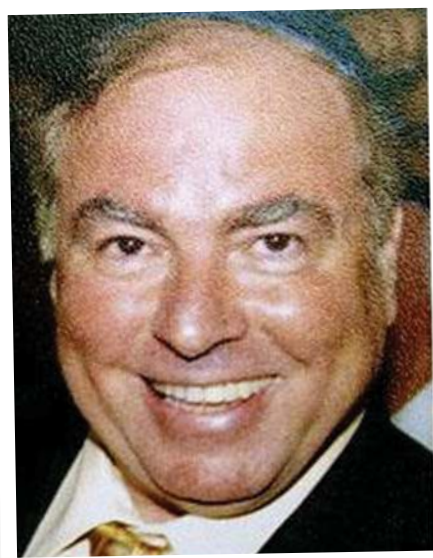
searched his home they found the basement lair of his semi-derelect house filled with ammunition, a 12-gauge shotgun and rolls of duct tape. The place had little furniture and was falling to bits.

Salvatore Perrone, 66, had gone from being a family man with two children and the potential for a thriving business in the fashion trade to one of life's losers, thrust on the scrapheap with

bewildering speed. He was found fit to plead. But it must have been a close call.

His family had left him at their comfortable home in Bensonhurst, New York, but he ended up living in a slowly deteriorating three-storey home on Staten Island that neighbours said had looked “haunted and unlivable” for years. His only company there was the odd rodent scuttling across the kitchen floor.

Perrone had had several run-ins with the law, with arrests on charges of



were around.

The series of murders began on July 6th, 2012, when many New Yorkers were on holiday to avoid the sweltering heat or away for the prolonged July 4th holidays. Mohamed Gebeli was found inside his store, Valentino Fashion, in Bay Ridge, with a single gunshot wound to the neck.

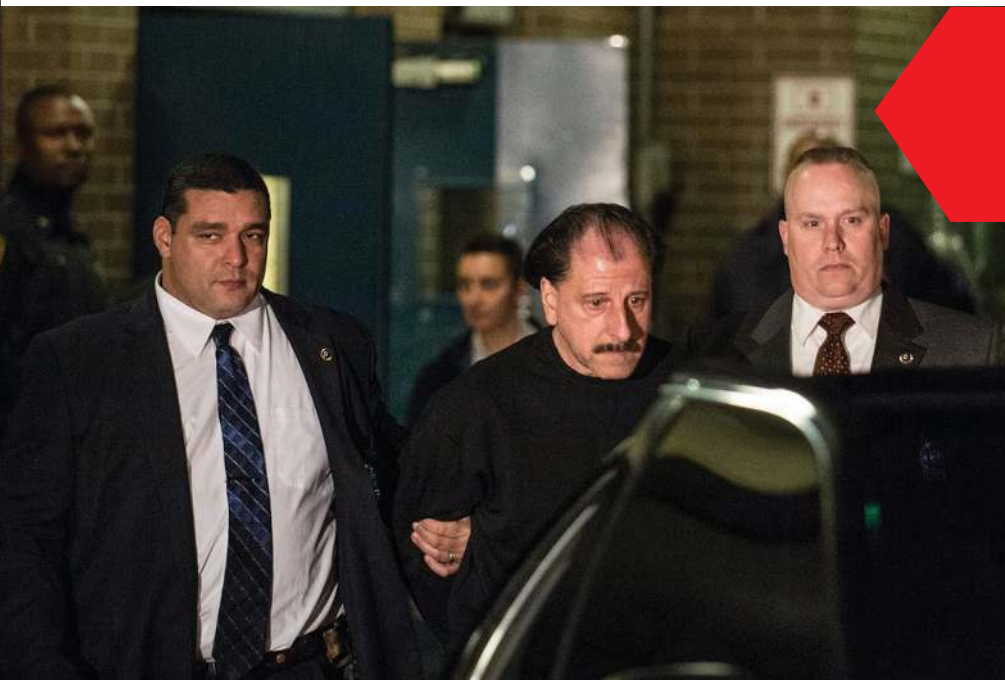
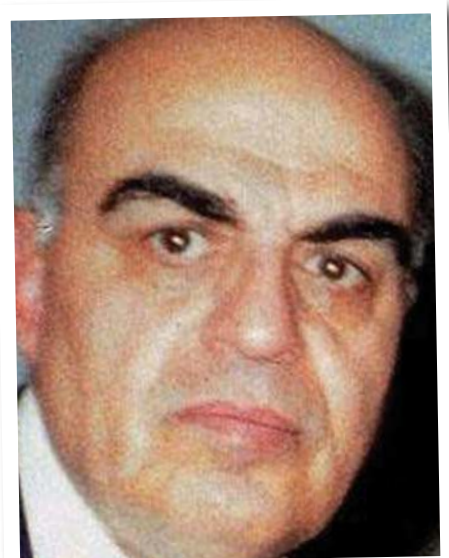
On August 2nd, Isaac Kadare was shot once in the head, and his throat was slit inside his shop, The Amazing 99 Cents Deals, on 86th Street in Bensonhurst. He was found in a pool



three bullets into a defenceless old guy.

Like Kadare, Vahidipour was an Indian immigrant and a Jew. Gebeli was a Muslim, but initially police weren't looking for a killer driven by a twisted hatred of people of Middle Eastern origins and weren't even sure that the murders were linked.

Robbery was not an issue as the cash registers in all the stores hadn't been touched. Kadare was left with more than \$170 untouched in his jacket pocket. Each victim was found on the floor of the store covered loosely



**Left opposite, killer Salvatore Perrone in court and, left, escorted by cops. Above, left to right, victims Isaac Kadare; Mohamed Gebeli; and Rahmatollah Vahidipour. Below, “Son of Sam” David Berkowitz**

drink-driving on Staten Island and in New Jersey and for theft, stalking and public harassment in Pennsylvania.

But there was nothing really to suggest that Perrone would upgrade to the status of a cold, calculating serial killer, who stalked his victims in their shops, selecting the premises that he knew had no CCTV, and waiting for them to close their stores at the end of the day when no customers

of blood.

The final shooting came on November 16th, when he shot his third victim, Rahmatollah Vahidipour, in the head, face and chest, inside She-She Boutique in Flatbush in the Prospect-Lefferts neighbourhood.

After the third cold-blooded killing Perrone took his girlfriend for a night's dancing. He had had “a hard day,” he told her. It must be tough work, pumping

by clothing and materials such as baking dishes in an effort to delay their discovery.

None of the shops had surveillance cameras outside but, after the third death, detectives found an image on a traffic camera outside the She-She Boutique of a man acting suspiciously.

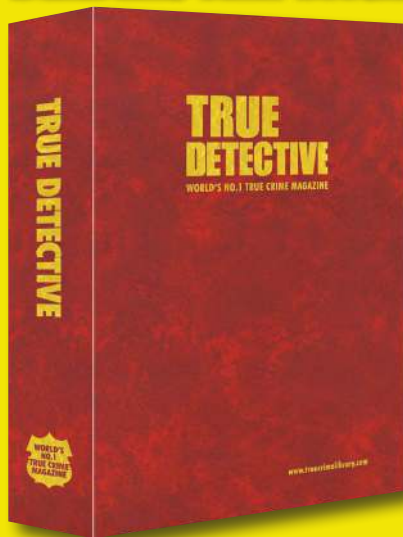
They took a screen grab and nicknamed him “The John Doe Duffel Bag Killer” after the dark bag he was carrying with him.

**B**y now the FBI were working with the NYPD on the investigation, particularly in forming a profile of the



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killer. The two agencies would stay in constant touch.

A few days later, investigators were led to Perrone after someone recognised him from the photograph on the window of a Bay Ridge pharmacy, which spotlighted the substantial rewards on offer. In a dawn raid, he was arrested on November 21st.

The police found a duffel bag in a cupboard inside his girlfriend's flat. Inside the bag was a sawn-off .22-calibre rifle, which would be connected through ballistics to the three murders, as well as a box of bullets and a kitchen knife covered with dried blood.

His girlfriend, Russian-speaking Natasha Charova, who had nothing to do with the murders and had no idea what her boyfriend was up to, said, "After Vahidipour was murdered, Sal called me and said he'd pick me up later as we were going to go out dancing that evening. He was happy and talkative, and told me he'd had a hard day at work and felt like going out and letting his hair down."

They went to a favourite haunt of theirs, the Crystal Dance Club in Bensonhurst, where the couple danced the night away. "He seemed the same – I didn't see any change," she added in a heavy accent. How was he? "He's a dancer, he's a talker, he was talking to people all night long. And when the DJ played his favourite disco songs he'd be up on the dance floor throwing shapes and getting other customers to dance with him."

Remorse and regret didn't seem to figure. But then, he'd had a hard day.

Ms. Charova, then 60, and Perrone's girlfriend of five years, said he took her home that night and spent the next four days at her Brooklyn apartment before police finally got him. She said whenever he did sleep at his home it would be in the basement, because the rest of his crumbling home was uninhabitable.

The police commissioner at the time, Raymond Kelly, had already called Perrone a serial killer and investigators found reason to believe that he had been planning to attack again.

Neighbours hated him. One said: "He was a nasty piece of work. He'd sit on the roof of his house staring down at people. Still, to think of him as this maniac stalking the streets killing shopkeepers is something else.

"He would constantly call government agencies to fabricate complaints about his neighbours. He was a mousey lurker who would hang out at local cafés and go to singles dances at night."

Another neighbour said: "He's a weird duck. He looked just like Edgar Allan Poe. Black coat, black vest, black shirt, black pants. Every time I saw him, he was wearing all black. He wasn't the sort of guy you'd want to approach unless it was an emergency. He's mad. If he's a serial killer, that's a long stretch. But if it is him, then we'll throw



Above, Perrone's mug-shot. Below, the killer's semi-derelict home on Staten Island where a store of ammunition was found

a block party. It'll be a fun night."

Another close neighbour reckoned: "This Perrone was an empty suit. A nobody. A rat. But you didn't think he could kill time, let alone three people, in cold blood. We went to the same barber. He wasn't a 'connected' guy, just a guy you'd see in the pork store or the bakery on 18th Avenue. When I see his face in the paper I could place him in the coffee shops, sipping an espresso, always with a big fat, long cigar, smoothing his thinning hair all the time.



"I heard he liked to gamble. The last thing you're thinking of is this guy is a serial killer out of some TV murder rerun," said Ben Elchonene, a neighbour of Natasha's. "He's a well dressed loner, obsessed with his hair, gambling and broods and hanging out at middle-aged singles dances. He was a wannabe tough guy who probably watched *The Godfather* too many times."

Think what you want about New Yorkers and their legendary reputation for being more surly than friendly, but they have a colourful turn of phrase when the occasion warrants it.

If Perrone's behaviour was strange before he was apprehended, his conduct while in custody and under interrogation certainly didn't change. He was indicted on three counts of



T

## Lyda Trueblood

### • United States

**L**YDA WAS born in 1892 in Keytsville, Missouri. She moved to Twin Falls, Idaho, and married Robert Dooley in 1912. Both Robert and his brother, Edward, had life insurance that would see Lyda collect \$1,000 on their death.

On August 9th, 1915, Edward Dooley fell suddenly ill and died days later from suspected typhoid. Lyda and her husband took out a second policy. This time the beneficiary would receive \$2,000.

In September 1915, Robert died of "typhoid" and six weeks later Lyda lost her daughter Lorraine, poisoned by water from a contaminated well.

William McHaffie became her second husband in 1917, and died of "flu" after they moved to Hardin, Montana. However, his \$5,000 insurance policy had lapsed and Lyda got nothing.

Moving to Denver, she married Harlan Lewis in May 1919, relocated to Billings, Montana, and insured him for \$5,000 in June. In July, "ptomaine poisoning" took care of him – and on

August 10th, Edward Meyer became her fourth husband in Pocatello, Idaho. An attempt to get a \$10,000 life insurance policy in his name failed but on September 7th he died in hospital.

A post-mortem found arsenic, but Lyda had fled to California. The exhumations of her family members found the same poison. While police assembled evidence, in Los Angeles Lyda married petty officer Paul Southard, in November 1920.

He was transferred by the Navy to Pearl Harbor and Lyda was arrested in Honolulu on an Idaho warrant on May 12th, 1921. At her trial she was convicted of one murder and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Lyda escaped from prison on May 4th, 1931, headed to Denver, Colorado, and acquired two more husbands before her arrest in Topeka, Kansas, on July 31st, 1932. Recaptured in August 1932, she was finally freed in October 1941.

Lyda, then known as Anna Shaw, died of a heart attack on February 5th, 1958, in Salt Lake City, Utah.



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](mailto:truedetective@truecrimelibrary.com)

murder and three counts of criminal possession of a weapon.

At one point he fell asleep during interrogation. At another he confessed to the murders and told detectives he was working for an Italian police intelligence agency and would be paid \$800,000 for his "mission."

He later claimed he thought he was confessing to Italian special agents but was actually confessing to Italian-speaking NYPD detectives. He also talked about his "grand plan for world peace," but did not describe any further motive for the killings. He was erratic and made various attempts to delay proceedings, especially in court up to and including his trial. He was removed from the courtroom several times for his antics.

At one time, Perrone's often rambling and incoherent outbursts suggested his defence team would enter an insanity plea. In one of his appearances before Judge Marrus in the Brooklyn Supreme Court, Perrone claimed District Attorney Charles Hynes had been suppressing evidence that would clear him of all the slayings.

Perrone made a statement suggesting it was impossible for him to be the killer because during the time of Vahadipour's murder he had been riding the subway to another part of town and there must be video evidence to prove this.

Insisting on a subpoena for the so-called video, Perrone contended that he had alibis for the other murders as well, seemingly reversing the confessions he'd made to the NYPD while claiming that his representation was unsatisfactory.

**Spent cartridges from the gun were found at all three murder scenes. "It was like a calling card. Like the killer was saying – Yes, it's me again"**

An abundance of forensic evidence linked Perrone to the murders. His fingerprints and DNA were found all over the weapon, and mobile phone data and CCTV videos placed him in the vicinity of the second and third killings. Spent cartridges from the gun were found at all three murder scenes. "It was like a calling card. Like the killer was saying – Yes, it's me again," said a detective.

Though Perrone's lawyers claimed he suffered from "severe personality and delusional disorder," he was declared fit for trial.

**P**rosecutors struggled to find a motive for the killing spree. What emerged was a portrait of a divorcee who once had ambitions as a wholesale clothing king. He had a lot of money through his hands but then suffered

from financial problems and eventually lost sight of his aspirations.

He had trademarked his own name in 2007 as part of an attempt to start a clothing line, suggesting he had high hopes for his future. Divorced from his wife Maria in 1985, Perrone had fallen behind on the mortgage repayments on the house and he had already been warned by his bank that he faced foreclosure if he didn't start paying back the money he owed.

At one time in his career in clothing, Perrone had a successful clothing store, and access to more than \$100,000, but at the time of his arrest, his bank account was down to \$1.84.

Perrone was working as a mercantile middle-man, peddling his wares shop to shop from a duffel bag. He knew all his victims.

Kadare's daughter Clemence testified to seeing Perrone walk into her father's store on the day he was killed. "He bought a can opener. I told him, 'Thank you and have a nice day,' and all he did was stare at me," she said. "He was casing the joint I guess, making sure we didn't have a CCTV camera."

It took the jury less than 30 minutes to find Perrone guilty on three counts of second-degree murder. "A mountain of evidence connected this serial killer to these murders, which took the lives of three decent, hard-working and honest businessmen who all left

behind devastated families," said Ken Thompson, the Brooklyn District Attorney. He regretted that it had taken over three years, to March 2016, before sentence was passed and the families could finally get some closure.

"Thankfully, this ruthless and cold-blooded killer will spend the rest of his life locked behind bars and the Brooklyn streets will be all the safer because of that," Thompson added.

Mourad Gebeli, Mohamed's son, said: "Perrone's life is over. But he will have access to a bed, food and TV when he should be executed. It's like a nursing home for him. It's not fair and it's not justice."

Marjan Vahidipour said she welcomed the jury's verdict on a crime that had turned her family upside down. "We're relieved, happy and very thankful Perrone is going to get what he deserves."

"Despite all the overwhelming evidence that convicted this defendant – videos, DNA, fingerprints, telephone records – the defendant is still in denial," Judge Marrus said with a hint of exasperation.

The judge, recently retired after 33 years on the criminal bench, explained that the killer had got 25 years to life for each murder.

**"That's 75 years to life," he explained slowly, in case it hadn't quite sunk in.**

Landlord Robert Bruton smiled cheerfully at his Saturday morning customer. A bargeman, he was a new regular at the Barge Pub in the North Woolwich docks, and Bob Bruton knew how to look after his new customers.

"I'll have a pint," the new customer said.

His name, he said, was William Goddard; he was originally from Ipswich and he was a mate on the barge *Speranza* docked at Sankey's Wharf. Landlord Bob knew the *Speranza*; indeed, its skipper Charles Lambert was also a regular at the Barge Pub.

The bar was busy, as was usual on a Saturday, for the bargemen were paid on Friday evenings. So Bruton didn't notice until much later that his new regular was dawdling over his pint – making it last for more than three hours, in fact.

At 3 p.m. William Goddard finally paid for his pint, and three hours later he was back again for another pint, and with it came a small bombshell.

"I'm a bit short of cash for the moment," Goddard told the landlord.

**"I'm worried about the *Speranza*, a barge on the Thames... something's happened there. It's to do with the skipper..."**

"Can you lend me ten shillings? Here, take this." So saying he produced a gold watch and chain and placed it on the counter. "I'll leave it as security until pay day."

Bruton's eyes narrowed. The gold watch and chain were clearly worth much more than ten shillings. But payday for the Thames bargemen was always Friday – and that was yesterday.

Goddard stayed drinking on his credit until 10 p.m. He didn't re-appear next day, and nor, for the first time for as long as the landlord could remember, did his skipper, Charlie Lambert. That too was odd, for Lambert always showed up at the pub during the weekend, and that had been the case for the past 40 years.

The world of Thames bargemen was the same as any other specialist workers' world – the workmen knew each other, looked out for each other, closed ranks if they were threatened from outside. The owner of the pub they all used was part of their world, which was why Bob Bruton was becoming increasingly anxious about Charlie Lambert.

Monday was always quiet, so Bruton took a stroll along the riverbank where the *Speranza* was berthed. The barge was locked up. There was no sign of the skipper, or his mate William Goddard.

***His head had been smashed in and there w***

**Report by  
John Sanders**



***Everyone knew everyone down at the waterfront. So how come the skipper of the *Speranza* had vanished – and his mate was also nowhere to be seen?***

*as a stiff rope around his neck, tied tightly in a double reef knot*

In fact, for the next three months there was still no sign of either of them. Goddard, it later transpired, had spent the interval in his hometown of Ipswich, for we next hear of him going into Ipswich Police Station, accompanied by his brother Percy. Goddard was seemingly distressed, and short of breath.

"I'm worried about the *Speranza*, a barge on the Thames," he blurted out. "Something's happened there. It's to do with the skipper..."

Then, pulling himself together, he added: "I have come to give myself up for murder. I killed the skipper of the *Speranza* last Saturday. I wish to make a statement."

It all started with an argument, he told detectives. "I picked up a hammer and the blows I gave him made him fall down into the cabin. He was moaning, and that made me think I should finish the poor ---- off. I then covered him with a blanket.

"It was foggy outside, so I could have done away with him. But then I

thought I couldn't do that."

During the interview Goddard's sister arrived at the police station. He told her: "You can tell mother there's no hope. I knew that, which was why I went to see her last night. I told her I had some serious trouble, but I didn't think it was coming to this."

Goddard was put into a cell, and an hour later another of his brothers arrived.

"Did the skipper hit you?" the brother wanted to know.

"Yes," Goddard replied. "On the back of the neck."

A detective examined his neck and found what he would later describe as "a small lump."

The police in Ipswich knew the Goddard family. They particularly knew William Goddard as a man who when he had been drinking was "very quick-tempered."

Back on the *Speranza* barge Detective Inspector Alexander Lawrence, in charge of the investigation, had found a writing pad. On it was written: "I have done this out of temper. If I'm caught, may God help me."

Attached to the writing pad was a piece of blotting paper with two Ipswich addresses on it. One was in Kemp Street, in the Stoke area of the town, where Goddard lived; the other was the Kemball Street home of his girlfriend Phyllis.

Later that day, acting on advice from Ipswich, North Woolwich police were heading along the riverfront to the locked-up barge. The way was difficult – although it was just after midday the river was enveloped in thick fog and the river police had to lead the way with torches.

When they arrived at the *Speranza*, it was the work of a few minutes to break into the barge. There, in front of the officers, was the body of Charlie Lambert, and there was a lot of blood.

The body, nearly fully clothed, lay

*Part Four*  
**River Of Death**  
*Murder, Mystery And The River Thames*

The body of skipper Charles Lambert lies dead inside his bunk onboard the *Speranza* barge and (above left) viewed from another angle



**WHO  
KILLED THE  
CAPTAIN  
ON THE  
THAMES  
BARGE?**

on its back, with hands tightly clenched together and legs slightly pulled up. It was partly covered by some old clothes and a blanket.

Lambert had been beaten savagely about the head, causing the police officers to describe his injuries as the consequence of a "ferocious attack." His head had been smashed in and there was a stiff rope around his neck, tied tightly in a double reef knot.

Goddard was transferred to the custody of North Woolwich police and from there he was taken to Brixton Prison. Meanwhile the local police medic, Dr. Richard Brews, carried out a lengthy examination of the body of the *Speranza's* skipper.

Bruising around the neck, and the protruding tongue, he noted, proved that

**TRAGEDY ON THAMES  
BARGE**

**Mate Charged with  
Murdering His Skipper**

**AN ALLEGED CONFESSION**

WILLIAM HAROLD GODDARD, aged 25, described as a barge hand, of Ipswich, appeared on remand at East Ham Police-court yesterday charged with the murder of his employer, Charles William Lambert, of Grays, Essex, whose body was found on a barge at North Woolwich.

Mr. E. Clayton, for the prosecution, described the case as a particularly brutal type of murder carried out in a very callous manner. Prisoner was the mate of the sailing barge, *Speranza*, and the dead man was the captain. They were



the rope had been a contributory factor in the victim's death – it had in fact "accelerated" death." In all probability Lambert, 57, was already unconscious when the rope was tied.

There had been four or five determined blows to the head. Apart from these serious injuries, there were a number of smaller injuries caused by a knife. The affray must have taken place outside the cabin where the body was found, because there were no signs of disturbance inside the cabin.

In Brixton Prison, Goddard was given another chance to explain what happened. Well, he said, the skipper had gone off to the City and came back with some letters. Goddard asked him if there was any mail for him.

**"Normally I got on well with Mr Lambert. We were on the best of terms"**

Lambert replied, according to Goddard, "Yes, there's a letter from your ---- old whore."

"That made me wild," Goddard said. "I went to hit him. He fell down the cabin stairs. I went to see how he was and I found him with the coal hammer. He struck at me. The blow caught me on the back of the head. I took the hammer away from him and hit him with it."

He added: "Normally I got on well with Mr. Lambert. We were on the best of terms."

His immediate thought was "to chuck the skipper's body over the side," which was why he put the rope around Lambert's neck. But he couldn't move the body, and in a panic he took the victim's watch and chain to make it look like a robbery.

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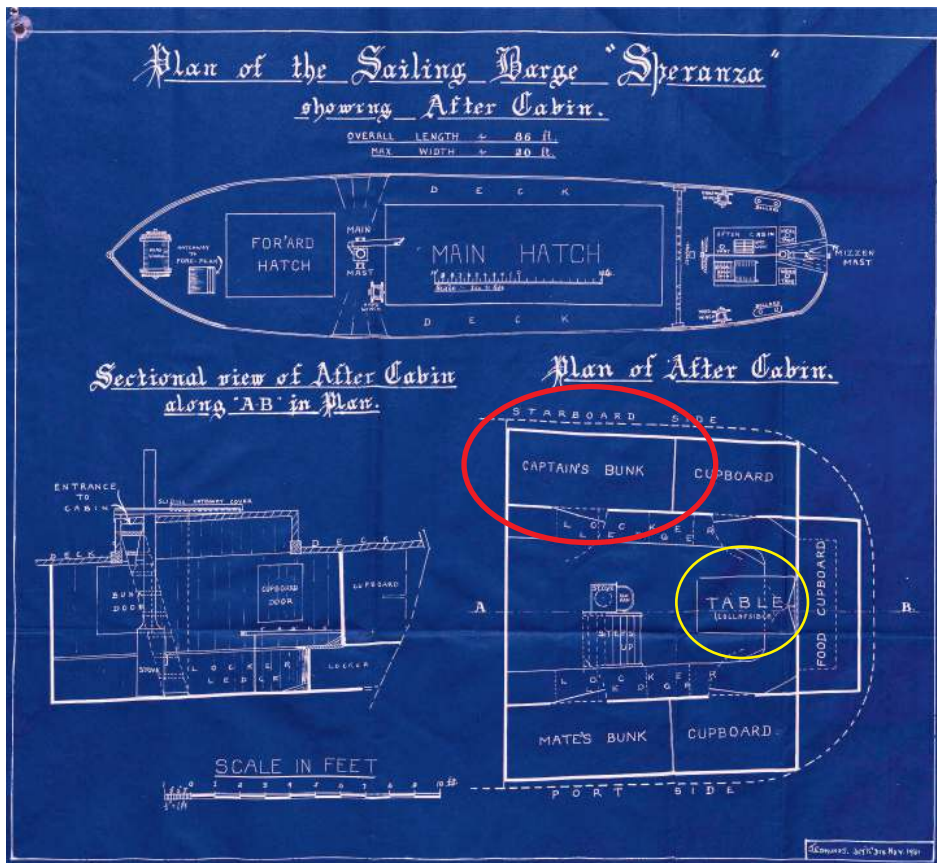
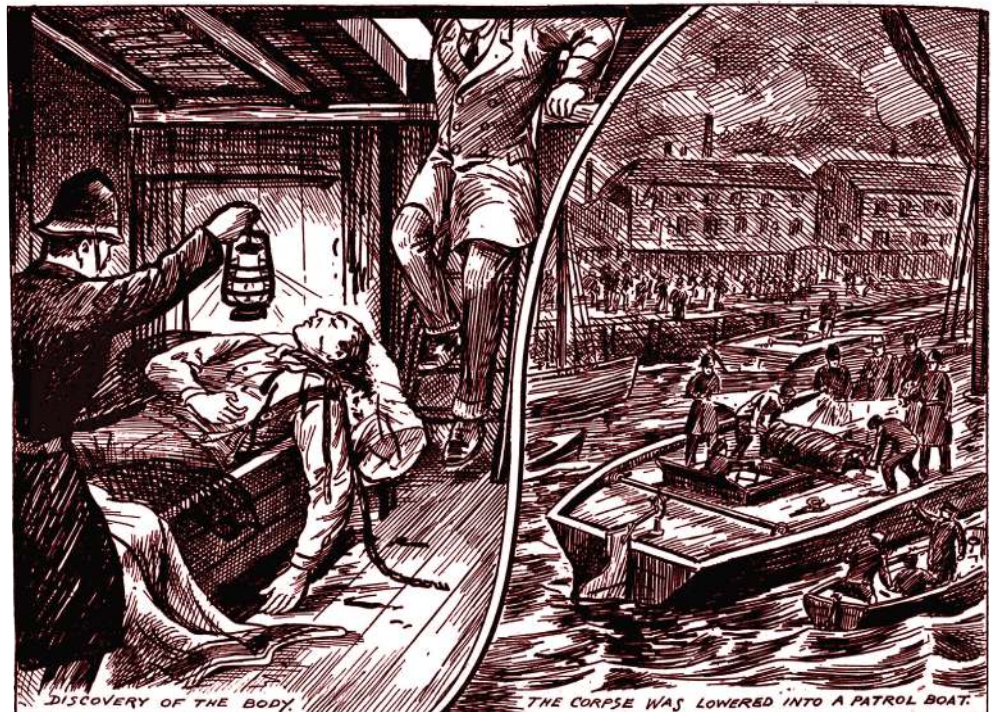
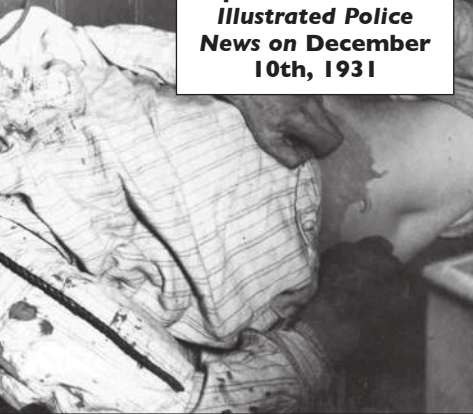
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**YOUNG GIRLS IN MURDEROUS ATTACK**  **"The Slender Man Made Me Do It"**

A rope is visible around Charles Lambert's neck after police remove his body from his bunk. Right, the brutal murder as pictured in *The Illustrated Police News* on December 10th, 1931



Left, a plan of the *Speranza* showing the captain's bunk on the starboard side (circled red) where Charles Lambert was killed.

Below, the cabin viewed from the opposite end next to the captain's bunk showing the hanging white scarf and the opened collapsible table (circled yellow, left) on plan



the objectionable remark was said in the first place – he had no need to use a hammer and a rope in retaliation. It was more probable that Goddard coveted the watch and chain, which he knew he could convert into cash to buy drink.

On January 20th, the second day of the trial, Goddard took the death sentence calmly. There was no recommendation to mercy and subsequently no reprieve, and he was hanged at Pentonville Prison at 9 a.m. on February 23rd, 1932, by Robert Baxter and Thomas Phillips.

**He left behind at least one sympathiser – an anonymous reader who sent a 10-shilling note to the *News Chronicle* requesting that it should somehow be used to Goddard's advantage. Goddard was told of the gift, but there appears to be no record of how it was used.**

**G**oddard had led a tempestuous life. Two years before he killed his skipper he tried to commit suicide by cutting his throat. "It was all down to drink and women trouble," he told a doctor at Brixton Prison. The self-inflicted wound had left a scar two and half inches long on his neck.

"I never had it treated in hospital," Goddard said. "I dealt with it myself."

This was not the first time he had stolen from a barge skipper. He had a criminal record for drunkenness and for five charges of theft.

On January 19th, 1932, he appeared at

the Old Bailey before Mr. Justice Finlay, pleading manslaughter because, he claimed, he had been severely provoked by the skipper's derogatory remarks about his girlfriend.

Defence counsel Gerald Howard told the jury: "Goddard was engaged to a girl he loved, and she loved him. How could he have held back his hand when an objectionable expression was used about her? Is there any man who would not think it was a shame on his manhood?"

The judge disagreed. He thought that even if Goddard had been really angered by what the skipper had said – if indeed

**I**AWOKE to hear someone pounding on my front door, pounding furiously as though trying to knock it down. Groping for my bedside lamp I switched it on and looked at the clock. It was after three on a bitter January morning.

The other twin bed, where my husband Raymond should have been sleeping, was empty. He had phoned earlier to say that he would be working late in the little drugstore we owned in Mena, Arkansas. The carbonator must be moved and he was doing the work himself to save money. He should have been home and in bed long before three o'clock.

Downstairs the impatient knocking continued. I fumbled my way to the door and opened it. A man stood there, warmly dressed against the icy wind.

"Where is your husband, Mrs. Morris?" His voice was gruff. Later I identified him as one of the two night policemen who patrol the streets of Mena, but at that moment I didn't know who he was. My voice trembled

**Suppose a killer murdered the one person dearest to you? What would your reaction be? This wife asked to see her husband's murderer electrocuted. Students of criminology will find reading her story a rare experience...**

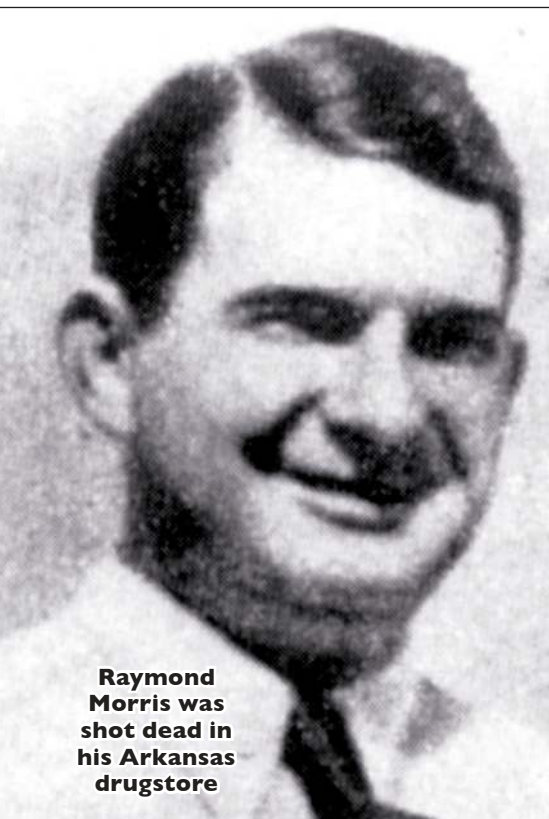
as I answered. "Why, he's working at the store tonight. But he should have come home before now. Has something happened?"

"Yes," he said. "There's been an accident at the store. I think you'd better come at once. Better dress Johnny Ray and take him with you because you



**"I knew he must die," Raymond Morris's widow Clara (above) stated. "I knew it was right that he should die"**

# "I SAW MY HUSBAND'S KILLER DIE IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR"



**Raymond Morris was shot dead in his Arkansas drugstore**

might have to be there some time. I'll go next door and get your parents."

That was all he would say. But I knew, with terrifying certainty, that something had happened to my Raymond.

My hands shook so badly I could hardly dress myself and our six-year-old son, Johnny Ray. The child was fast asleep and asked very few questions about being taken abruptly from his bed. In taking him with me to the store I was blindly obeying the well-meant suggestion of the policeman. If I had to go through the whole terrible night again, however, I would not take my child to see what he had to see that night. But now my nerves were on edge and I was not thinking too clearly.

The policeman hustled us into his car – my parents, who lived next door, myself and my small son. The policeman would tell us nothing, except to repeat that there had been "an accident." He drove rapidly. I held Johnny Ray tightly, his arms around my neck.

The car swung into an alley and stopped behind the Union Bank, next to our drugstore. We got out into the cold night. Lights were on in the store and a little group of men stood near the back

door. As I approached the door I saw a hole in the glass, a splintered hole. I thought it could have been made by a bullet.

I tried to push the door open. It went only so far and then stuck. I pushed harder and then one of the men present murmured something and helped me. The door gave a little and I slipped through. I stepped over the body of my husband.

I knew at once that he was dead. He was lying on his face in a vast pool of blood. Raymond was a big man, and healthy. I had never seen so much blood before in my life. Stricken, I stood in the prescription-room looking down at the body of the man I had loved, married, and given a son.

The screams of my mother and child brought me back to the living. "My God," screamed my mother. "It's Raymond! He's been murdered!"

I took Johnny Ray into my arms and tried to comfort him. I knew that I must keep my head. I must stay on my feet and keep working. Through the babble of voices around me I heard someone say that the sheriff was on his way.

I went to the cash register and checked it. It had been shot open

and all the money taken; a number of cheques littered the floor. About \$72 was missing. Next I examined our small safe and found it had not been tampered with.

Someone, probably someone who was drunk at the time or criminally insane, had murdered my husband for \$72. The criminal, or criminals, had slashed at the pockets of Raymond's trousers. His watch and some change were gone. Vaguely I thought that whoever had done this must have been a stranger in Mena, or they would never have expected to find much money in our store. It had taken every cent we could scrape together to buy it and we were still heavily in debt. Now, as the first numbing shock wore off, I wanted more than anything else to know who shot my husband. I wanted to see them caught and punished.

One of the policemen said: "Whoever did this took your car too, Mrs. Morris. It was parked in front of the store. Could you give me the licence number?"

I gave him the number, answered some other questions, and then we went home in the cold grey of the dawn. How I could bear to return to our house, and to look at Raymond's empty bed, I don't know. Somewhere I found the strength. Our family doctor came and gave me a sedative, and mother tried as best she could to comfort me.

The drug put me into a merciful sleep. Mother and I both remained in bed all day while neighbours took charge of Johnny Ray.

It was not until later that I knew of the manhunt which covered all of Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma.

Throughout the states, hundreds of policemen were on the lookout for the killer of my husband. I will tell it now as it came to me, through the words of friends and the police, and in the newspapers and over the radio.

**T**wo policemen, Drew Powell and James Roberts, had discovered my husband's body in the early morning of January 24th, 1946. They were making their rounds when Roberts noticed that the back door of the drugstore was open.

The lock of the door had been opened from the inside and there was a bullet hole in the pane. Someone had obviously knocked out the glass, then reached in and unlocked the door.

Raymond's crumpled body lay just inside. He had been shot twice, once through his neck, while the other bullet had struck at the base of his nose and penetrated his brain. "It's Raymond Morris!" cried one of the officers. "He's dead."

The other policeman studied the bullet hole in the glass. "Looks like someone fired through the door first, then shot him again when they got inside."

Then the owner of a nearby filling station called the Mena Police and

complained that his premises had been broken into.

"Someone blew the door of the station open," he said. "Looks like they used a .38 and they knew how to shoot. They ripped things to pieces. Place looks like a cyclone hit it."

Chief of Police Gordon Cannon went to the filling station. He came to the conclusion that it had been raided before the robbery and murder at our drugstore, and suspected that the robbers had got nothing for their pains.

The locks were secure on the petrol pumps and nothing seemed to be missing.

"Good," he thought. "The killer, or killers, will be short of gas for that stolen car and sooner or later they'll have to make a try for some, or start walking." He was positive that both crimes had been the work of the same criminals.

The bus station in Mena called and asked to speak to the officer in charge. When Sheriff Robert Hunter answered he heard a bus driver say: "I thought you people had better know about a black Chevrolet that's turned over out close to Y City. I didn't notice anyone around it."

A deputy sped to Y City, about 22 miles north of Mena, and called back to report that the car was ours. Now, at least, the police knew in which direction the murderer was heading.

While much of this was happening I was at



to get them."

The state police phoned Mena to announce they were throwing up road blocks. "We're putting up a block between Mansfield and Fort Smith," they said, "Nothing will get through us."

Then came a real break in the case.

## In her own words, Clara Morris tells the story of her husband's death, the search for his killer and the trial that followed

A few hours after the discovery of my husband's body, and still early in the morning, the owner of a Mena furniture store came hurrying to see the police. He reported finding the body of a man beneath his store. The premises were set on cement blocks and someone had apparently thrust the body of the man beneath the store in an effort to hide it.

Officers hurried to the spot to find that the man was not dead but only unconscious. "Looks like he's been

beaten over the head with a gun butt," said one of the police. "But I guess he'll live. Maybe when he comes out of it he can tell us something about who killed Raymond Morris."

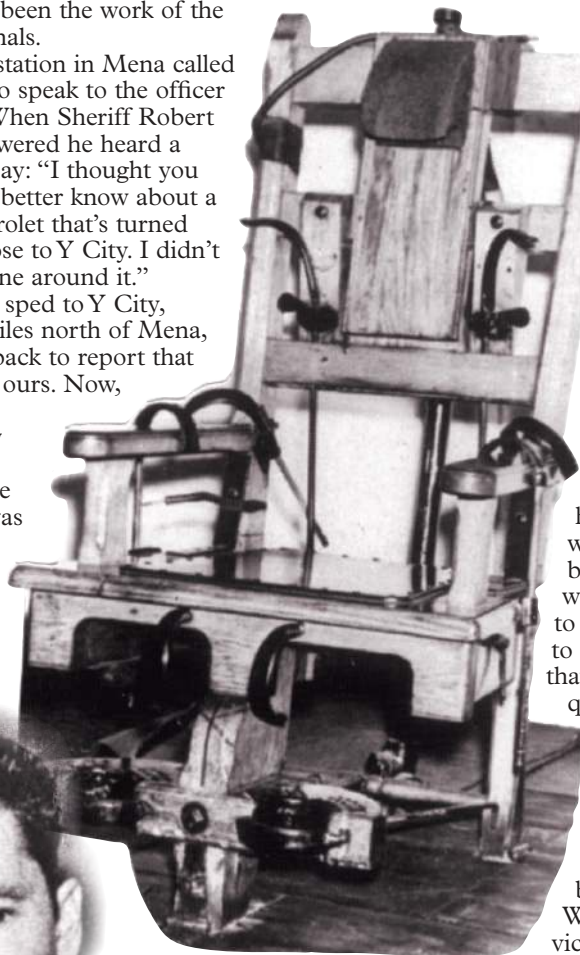
This man, later identified as an ex-convict who lived near Mena and had been going straight, was taken to the local hospital and a guard was stationed at his bedside. Doctors worked frantically to bring him back to consciousness so that the police could question him, but he was slow in responding to treatment.

Meanwhile the killers struck again. Sherman Caver, a butane gas dealer at Waldron, was the next victim. It was Caver who gave police the information that there were two fugitives, both young men and both armed.

He encountered them shortly after they wrecked our car. Caver, a former state trooper, stopped his truck and picked up the two men. He asked them if they were hurt or in any trouble and at first they talked pleasantly enough. Then they rode awhile without saying much. Suddenly the older of the two, a handsome youth with hard eyes, pulled a revolver from his shirt front.

"This is it," he snarled. "Just keep driving and don't give us any trouble and you won't get hurt."

Presently he made Caver stop the



**Chitwood wrote to Clara Morris begging to be spared death in the electric chair**

home waiting for the sedative to take effect. I remember Mother saying: "They'll get them, Clara. Don't fret about that. They're sure

truck and get out. They tied his hands behind him with his necktie and put him back in the truck. This time the older of the two gunmen drove. Soon they approached a tourist camp and the heavy truck, loaded with 1,200 gallons of butane, skidded and went off the road into thick mud. There it stuck.

Caver told the police, "They left me in the mired truck and went up the road to the tourist camp. I heard them banging on a door and then I heard loud voices. They were threatening somebody, the way it sounded."

Delbert Blair was the unlucky fellow who answered the knocking. The pair stuck him up and took his money, a .38 automatic he did not get a chance to use, and his car. They made him get into the car with them and drove off towards the village of Ione. Left alone,

and thankful for it, Sherman Caver freed his hands and walked to a phone and called the state police. What he told them brought patrol cars converging on the neighbourhood from every direction.

**B**y now, however, things were moving in Mena. Mother was called to the phone. It was the police. When she hung up she turned to me and said: "Well, now the police know who they're looking for. That man they found under the furniture store has regained consciousness and talked. His name is Arthur Smith and he's an ex-convict. He got drunk here in Mena yesterday afternoon with two acquaintances. Those two are the ones the police are after now.

"Smith says that when he was serving

his prison term he met a man named Eldon Chitwood. Yesterday afternoon Chitwood and another fellow, a kid by the name of E. J. Minor, came to Mena and propositioned him about committing a series of crimes. Chitwood wanted to start here and go to the west coast, making their living by robbery."

"I'm glad," I told mother, "that at last the police know who to look for. But is this Smith man sure that Chitwood and Minor killed Raymond?"

She nodded. "The police are sure of it. Smith claims that Chitwood beat him up and pushed him under the building when he wouldn't have any part of the crimes. They had been drinking all day and they were all drunk."

Mother went on to tell me what the police had said about Eldon Chitwood. Since he was 17 he had been constantly in trouble. Now he was 24 and wanted by the police as a parole violator. His family lived in Fort Smith, where he had served a term in a reformatory, but shortly after his release he was again arrested, convicted of robbery and kidnapping and sentenced to 21 years. Then he was released again on parole because he was a model prisoner.

I can't help thinking that if the parole board had been more careful my husband would be alive and by my side today.

"The other one, Minor, apparently has no criminal record," said mother. Later we were to learn that Minor was no man at all, but a 17-year-old who had allowed himself to be influenced by Chitwood.

The police now had Chitwood's description, his picture from the rogues' gallery, and his fingerprints. After the two left Sherman Caver and abducted Delbert Blair they struck out down the road toward Ione, driving like madmen. Blair, who later escaped unhurt, said he had never seen such driving. "Only a miracle kept us all from being killed."

Soon Blair's car began to heat up. The radiator went dry and clouds of steam and smoke poured from the bonnet. Chitwood, who was driving, turned off the main road and continued to push the car rapidly over a rough dirt road until he ran it into a ditch.

Leaving Blair, the two plunged into the heavy undergrowth bordering the road. Blair wiped sweat from his face and took his first deep breath in a long time, thankful that he was still alive. But he wasn't the last victim.

James Russell, who lived with his family on a lonely farm near Ione, was sleeping soundly when he was awakened by thundering knocks on his front door. Opening it, he found Chitwood and Minor. They had guns in their hands.

"You got a Ford out in front," Chitwood said. "Get your keys and come on. We're taking you and the car. And fill the radiator so we won't have any trouble!"


Frightened, but telling his wife not to worry, Russell obeyed. With him in the

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Detective Monthly




CRUEL  
KILLING  
OF A  
PREGNANT WIFE


What Was His Motive?

MAJOR BRITISH  
MURDER CASES




JOYCE  
AND  
FRED'S  
DEADLY  
DATE






"KILL MY DAD  
THEN WE'LL  
HAVE SEX,"  
SAID MORGAN


WAS NORA'S  
KILLER  
INSANE?






JOANNA'S  
MURDER  
SOLVED  
AT LAST?

GANGLAND  
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car they took off once more. Chitwood still drove wildly. They had hardly turned onto the highway when the wail of a police siren sounded behind them. But Chitwood pushed the Ford to the limit and by taking wild chances he managed to pull away slightly from pursuing troopers.

Then he saw a police block ahead. He jammed on the brakes and the Ford slid crazily towards a ditch, fought back to concrete, then skidded and almost turned over.

Chitwood turned to James Russell as the car careered to a stop. "Hit the ground when you get out," he commanded. "There's going to be shooting. The cops are waiting up the road for us."

But there was no shooting. Russell did as he was told and crawled on his belly towards the police car that had come up behind. Officers swarmed everywhere and Chitwood changed his mind about shooting it out. He sneaked into the brush beside the road and got away.

The 17-year-old Minor, frozen with fear, sat in the car and waited for the police to take him. Two troopers, their guns at the ready, approached him cautiously.

"Come out with your hands up," one of them ordered. Minor obeyed and started walking towards the police car. "Now halt," the troopers told him. "Who is in that car with you?"

"N-no one," quavered Minor. "Just me. Chitwood got away."

Bloodhounds were brought to the scene and went baying off through the woods after the killer.

I suppose Chitwood knew it was no use because on the evening of January 24th he gave himself up. Just about 16 hours after he had murdered my husband he walked into the jail at Van Buren and surrendered. He was unarmed, claiming he had tossed his gun into a creek. He said he was sorry for what he had done and that he knew it was no use trying to escape.

To say that I was elated or happy because Chitwood and Minor had been caught would not be true. For the boy, E. J. Minor, I could almost feel pity even though I knew he deserved all he would get. Where Eldon Chitwood was concerned I hardly thought at all, once the first spasm of hatred had passed. I knew he must die. I knew it was right that he should die. In society there must be laws and they must be enforced; otherwise neither person nor property will ever be safe.

**D**uring the first month after Chitwood's capture I worked hard at the drugstore and tried not to see the large brownish stain on the floor of the back-room. Sometimes I felt almost at peace. Soon Chitwood would pay for his crime and I could begin the hard task of forgetting, of building a new life.

I was due for a shock. Chitwood began to fight for his life. He used every



**Eldon Chitwood on Death Row awaiting the electric chair. His relatives had pleaded for his life, but Clara Morris explained: "The reason not to commute to life imprisonment is so that in just a few years he will not orphan another boy or widow another woman. I am not asking for pity for my own broken home, but only for justice..."**

device the law allowed. It began to look as though he might get off with life imprisonment or even less.

Immediately after his surrender, on the advice of his lawyers, he pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity. He was given permission to employ a psychiatrist in his defence and was committed to the state hospital for observation. However, after 10 days Dr. A. C. Kolb of that institution said that Chitwood was sane under the law.

Another factor in Chitwood's fight to escape the electric chair was the state of feeling in the town of Mena. My friends and neighbours had rallied around me and offered me all their sympathy and help. It was largely through their efforts that I was able to keep going and to keep the drugstore open.

The murderer's lawyers, however, seized upon the seething indignation of the townspeople as an excuse to seek a change of venue. Chitwood, they said, could not obtain a fair trial in Mena.

Their motion was overruled.

Additional deputies were sworn in and remained on guard throughout the trial. One man who had been drinking was quickly removed when he stood up and yelled: "Let's get a rope!"

No doubt some of the people of Mena favoured a quicker and cruder form of justice for Chitwood, but I was glad that nothing of the sort took place. I didn't want it that way. I wanted justice done but I wanted it to be legal and fair.

And so it was. Eldon Chitwood got more of a chance than ever he gave my husband. He didn't give Raymond one second in which to plead for his life, or to bid his loved ones goodbye.

So came the day, February 20th, 1946, when I sat in court and looked into the eyes of the murderer. Twist and squirm though he had, at last he was before the bar of justice. But of the two of us I am sure that I was the more nervous.

Chitwood's eyes were hard and he was neatly dressed. Every strand of his dark brown hair was in place. He smoked cigarette after cigarette but his fingers did not tremble in the least.

The chief witness against him was his companion in crime. His words were enough to seal the accused man's fate in the mind of every juror. Minor, looking like a boy who had never had his first shave, told the court: "Eldon didn't have to kill that man. He was drunk. We went around to the back of the drugstore and knocked on the door. The man came to the door but he wouldn't open it. He asked what we wanted. We said for him to open the door.

"Again he asked us what we wanted. And a third time. Then Chitwood just backed up and shot him through the door. After we got inside he shot him again. Chitwood knocked out some glass and reached in and opened the door. We went in and shot open the cash register and Chitwood slashed at the dead man's pockets. He took his watch and some money and gave them to me."

The jury was out for only 50 minutes. They found Chitwood guilty and he was sentenced to death.

Two days later Minor went to trial. He refused to accept a prison sentence of 21 years, preferring to fight for complete acquittal, but this time the jury was out for only 13 minutes. The verdict was first-degree murder and he too was sentenced to be electrocuted, but this was later commuted to life imprisonment.

**M**other and I decided that we wanted to see the act of justice carried out. We asked to be allowed to see the execution of Eldon Chitwood, but his appeal to the Supreme Court allowed him to cheat the executioner for a while and gave him new hope. And now an intensive campaign began, with me as the target, to beg clemency for the man who had so wantonly killed my husband.

I began to get letters from Chitwood. He begged for his life. He wrote that he was sorry, and that he had been drunk and hadn't known what he was doing at the time. He only wanted a chance to live and to spend the rest of his life in prison. These letters I did not answer. I had nothing to say to Raymond's murderer.

Soon relatives of Chitwood came from Van Buren to see me. They asked me to intercede and to ask for mercy for Chitwood. I told them I could do nothing. Next a minister who had known the murderer as a boy came to see me and pleaded for Chitwood's life. I gave him the same answer. But the telegrams and long-distance calls continued through all the months until at last I was notified that mother and I had been granted permission to witness the execution. The Supreme Court had turned down Chitwood's appeal and he was to die on Friday morning,

November 22nd, 1946. That was also the birthday of my son, who would be seven years old.

But until the very last, Governor Ben Laney was under heavy pressure from those who wanted Chitwood's sentence changed to life imprisonment. I sat down and wrote to the governor. Without hatred or bitterness I told him why I thought the death sentence should be carried out. Here is an excerpt from my letter:

"The reason I am pleading with you not to commute to life imprisonment the sentence of this murderer is so that in just a few years he will not orphan another boy or widow another woman. I am not asking for pity for my own broken home, but only for justice..."

I do not know if my letter swayed the governor in his decision. In any case he refused clemency and on the evening of November 21st mother and I checked into the Marion Hotel in Little Rock. Mother managed to catch a nap, but I found it impossible to sleep. I read in the Little Rock papers about Chitwood's last hours. One story said that he had found solace in religion and was quite ready to die. Although

**"His head jerked back  
and his chest leapt  
forward straining  
against the straps. His  
hands knotted into fists  
and he turned bright red.  
He gurgled in his throat.  
After a few seconds  
the power was turned  
off and a prison doctor  
examined him"**

I wanted to see my husband's death avenged by the law, and that very moment was preparing to sit through a terrible ordeal to see it done, I hoped that Chitwood had indeed found his God. I hoped he was sincere in what he said.

Mother and I checked out of the hotel at 3.30 in the morning. We had toast and coffee and then a policeman came for us and we drove out of Little Rock towards Tucker Farm. It was deathly cold. Even through our thick fur coats we felt the cold, but more, I think, from nervousness. I wondered what thoughts were passing through the mind of Eldon Chitwood as he sat in his lone cell and watched the seconds tick away.

We reached Tucker Farm and were admitted by a guard. In the dim murk of early morning the buildings of the penal farm, painted a drab grey, were like clumsy ghosts. We went to the superintendent's office and were glad to find a huge fire blazing in a pot-bellied stove. Around the fire a group of men were trying to keep warm. Most of them

were newspapermen and they wanted to ask me questions. I answered as best I could and found that, strangely enough, my attack of the shakes had worn off.

Soon we left the office in a group and went to the death house. It was nothing more than a small shack. It was very cold, with no fire and only bare planks to sit on. At the far end of the room, beyond a curtain which could be pulled across to hide it, was the electric chair.

I had my first look at the electric chair, the state's instrument of justice. It was a plain, light oak-coloured chair with leather straps and electrodes. I understood that the curtain would be drawn while the prisoner was led in and strapped to the chair. About this time I began to feel a little sick but it soon passed. Mother sat close to me, holding my hand and saying very little.

A young newspaperman spoke to me. "Are you nervous, Mrs. Morris? You look rather pale?"

"I was," I told him, "but I'm all right now."

He smiled. "Wish I could say the same. I'm as jumpy as a cat."

He went on to tell me about the meal Chitwood had eaten the night before. It had been a good one, he said, with steak, pie and ice cream. While we were talking, a man pulled the curtain across the room, screening the electric chair.

We heard them bringing Eldon Chitwood in. They pulled the curtain back. The death cap was already on Chitwood's head. I wondered if his eyes were still hard, if he was still smiling as he had at the trial.

A young man tested the straps on the chair. There was a pail of water sitting by the chair and I knew they must have put water on the electrodes. For a moment there was absolute silence, then the young fellow went to the wall and pulled a switch.

Water sizzled as the current struck Chitwood's body. His head jerked back and his chest leapt forward straining against the straps. His hands knotted into fists and he turned bright red. He gurgled in his throat. After a few seconds the power was turned off and a prison doctor examined him.

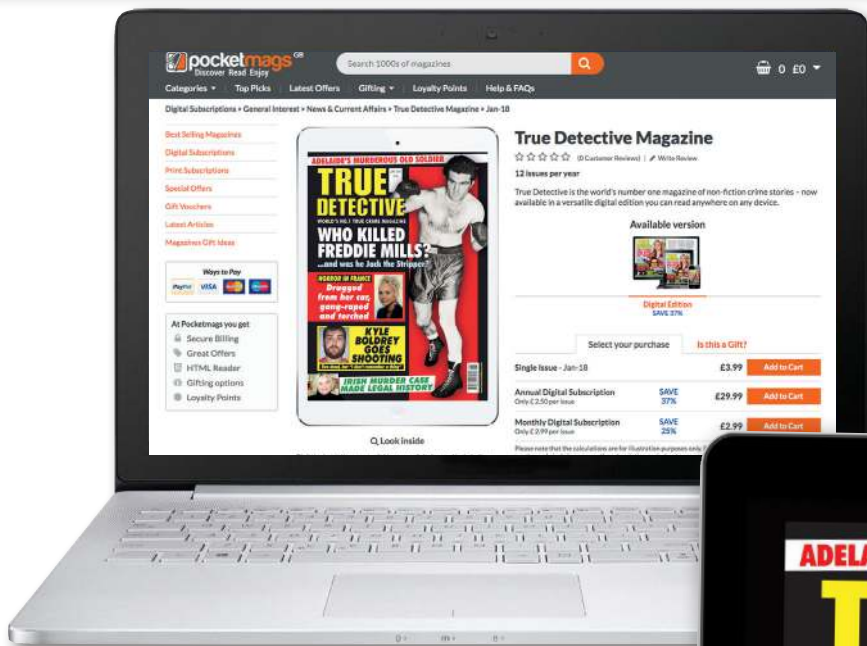
The doctor shook his head. "This man is not dead."

Again the current was turned on. Chitwood, who had been lolling against the straps which kept him in the chair, stiffened and his head arched back. When the electricity was shut off this time the doctor pronounced him dead.

**I looked at mother. Eldon Chitwood was dead. I felt nothing, only a dull, empty numbness. We went out into the cold, clean morning air. On the way back to Little Rock we were silent. As we drove, the sun came up and warmed the landscape. I remembered that it was Johnny Ray's birthday and that his father had promised him an electric train as soon as they became available. I would look for one.**

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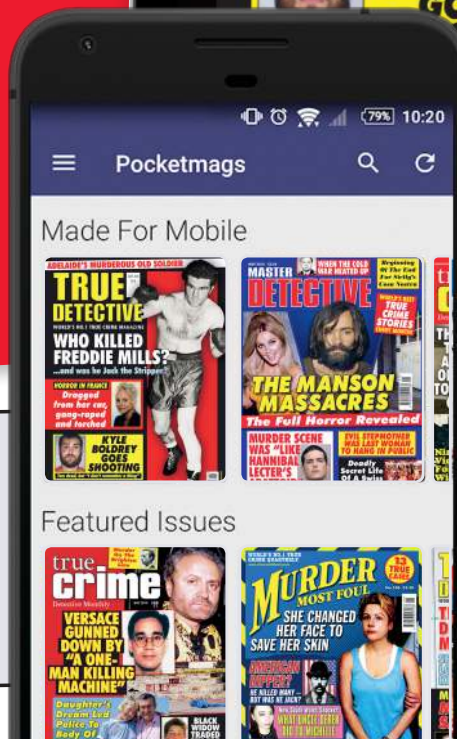
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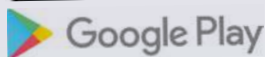
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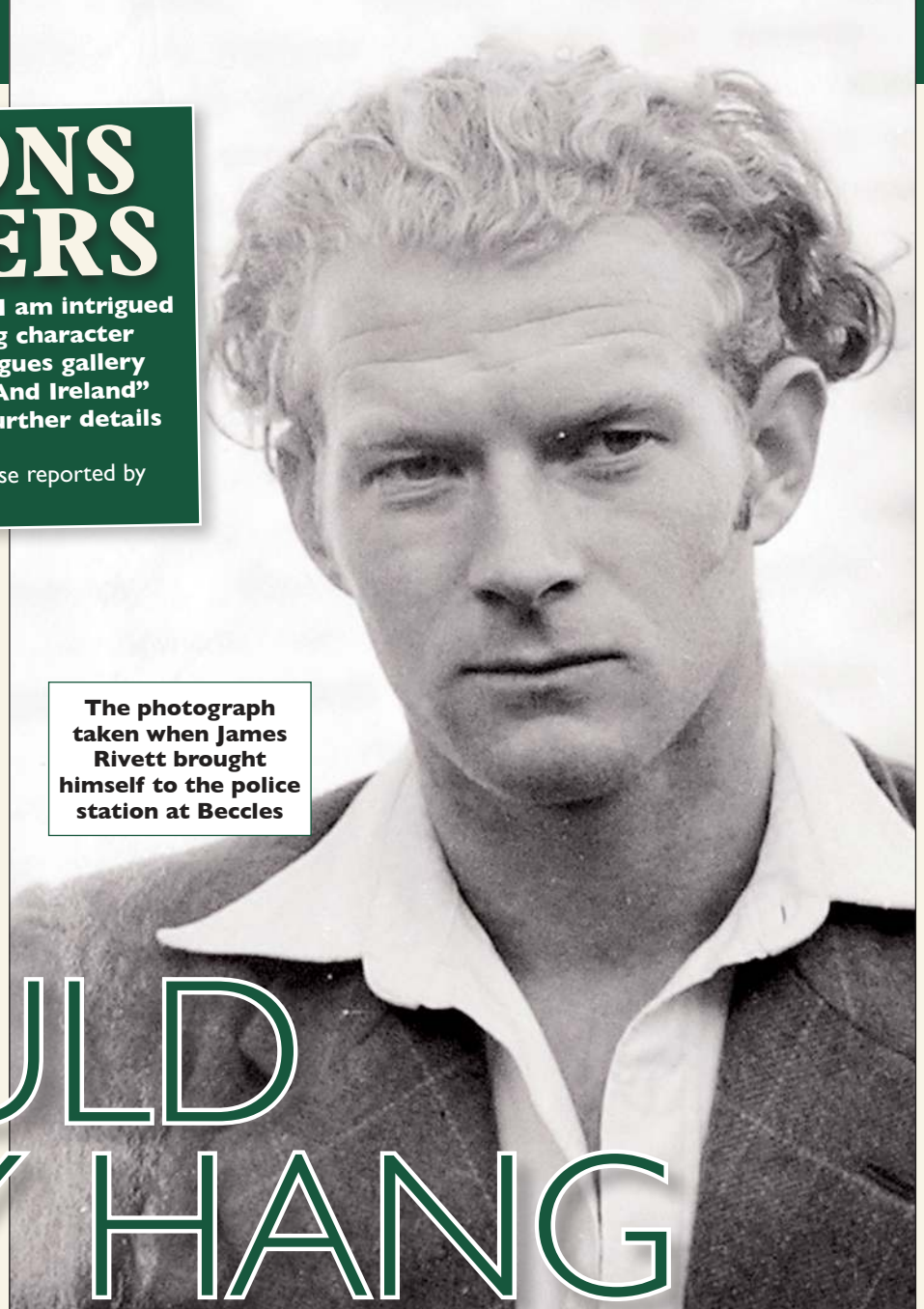
# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

B. Waters from Inverness wrote to us to ask: **I am intrigued by one particularly villainous-looking character from your latest collection in this rogues gallery ("96 Years Of Executions In Britain And Ireland" – December). Would you have any further details concerning James Rivett?**

Yes we have. Here's the full account of the case reported by Matthew Spicer

**H**E WAS only 21, well-built and good-looking, with curly fair hair and a pretty 17-year-old girlfriend. But James Rivett had a problem. His relationship with Christine Cuddon had begun when she was only 13. Since then she had matured and developed intellectually, but Rivett hadn't. Christine was very bright, her sights set on going to university. Rivett was a labourer with no prospect of ever being anything else.

They lived in Beccles, Suffolk, where Christine's father was a newsagent. She was his only daughter, and his ambition



The photograph taken when James Rivett brought himself to the police station at Beccles

# WOULD THEY HANG YOUNG JAMES?

was to see her become a teacher. With this in mind, she had stayed on at school after she was 15, and now – in 1949 – she was a hard-working student at the local grammar school, intent on passing the exams which would secure her a place at a university or a teacher-training college.

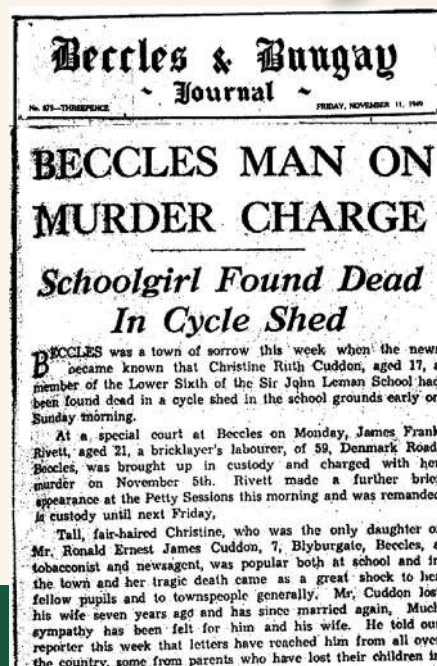
Four years earlier, when Rivett became her regular boyfriend, she realised that her father would think she was too young for romance and would put a stop to the relationship. So she saw James Rivett discreetly just once or twice a week, keeping the friendship secret. When she became 16, however, they began to have regular sex, and Christine told her father that she had a boyfriend.

Mr. Cuddon already suspected this, and he told her she had two options.

She could choose university and a career, which would mean that her relationship with her boyfriend would be difficult to sustain: or she could stay in Beccles, continue the relationship and find a job in the town when she left school.

Christine had just passed her exams with six distinctions and two credits. To achieve this she'd had to work harder than her fellow-pupils, as she'd had to have time off from school due to appendicitis. Was all this to come to nothing? She decided to put her career first and told her father that she would stop seeing Rivett.

This decision, however, coincided with the summer holidays. Although Christine helped in her father's shop, she was able to go out in the evenings. Torn by divided loyalties, she began



seeing Rivett again. Even when school resumed in September she still saw him every Saturday night.

As she was tall, blonde and pretty, Christine inevitably attracted attention, and her meetings with Rivett in the town centre were soon reported to her father. Mr. Cuddon realised that he could not stop his daughter from seeing Rivett, but he advised her that it was not fair on either of them to maintain their relationship if in the long run they were going to split up. He asked Christine to bring Rivett to see him, but this meeting never took place. Meanwhile the couple continued to meet most Saturday nights, as well as once or twice during the week.

The evening of Saturday, November 5th, 1949, was no exception. At 6.30 Christine set out from her home to go to the Regal cinema in Beccles, having arranged to meet Rivett when she came out after the first showing. At 8.30 Rivett was seen outside the cinema,



The bruises on the young victim's throat

and at 11.30 he called at a friend's home, saying, "I shan't see you any more. I have done my party in."

At first his friend didn't believe him, but Rivett then told him, "I did it at the Sir John Leman School about one hour and a half ago. I don't know if they have found her yet."

At about the same time an anxious Mr. Cuddon, wondering where Christine had got to, set out for the Regal cinema, thinking she might have missed the first house and gone to the second.

He watched everyone leave and saw the staff lock up but there was no sign of Christine, so he went home.

Around midnight James Rivett walked into Beccles police station carrying his shotgun. He told Constable Kenneth Day, "You had better lock me up. I have just killed a girl. It's right – not



The body as discovered at the murder scene

kidding. I strangled her. She's in the cycle-shed at the school. I was going to shoot myself. I don't know why I done it."

Then he handed his gun to the policeman. Inspector George Allison and Constable Harrison immediately went to the school's cycle-shed, where they found Christine Cuddon's body. The constable tried artificial respiration, but he was too late.

Shortly before 1 a.m. Rivett made a 16-word statement: "I admit I killed the girl, but I don't wish to say why I done it." Four hours later, after being questioned by Inspector George Read and Detective Sergeant Crossland, he made a second statement:

"I was very fond of Christine. I will tell you the lot, then you will see for yourself. It was the family."

Rivett went on to say that Christine had been under pressure to stop seeing him. Her father had kept on at her. After meeting outside the cinema they had gone to the cycle-shed at her school as they usually did, arriving at about 9.30.

They'd had sex, and afterwards "we stood talking about this, that and the other, and then she said she had better be going. Then I tied the scarf which she had just slung round her neck and pulled it tight. Then I twisted it. Then to make sure I did it again. She went down on her own and that was that. I thought she was gone and I kissed her and went round the town."

James Rivett was then charged with Christine Cuddon's murder.

The whole community was shocked, and mourners at Christine's funeral included 10 of her fellow-pupils from the Sir John Leman School. The headmaster, Mr. R. A. Bowman, said that she had been clever, conscientious and very popular.

At the inquest on November 8th Dr. T. H. Shaw said that a post-mortem examination he conducted had found

that Christine's death was caused by asphyxia due to strangulation. Semen found in her vagina indicated that she had had sexual intercourse shortly before she was strangled. There was also evidence of intercourse on previous occasions. In response to a question from a solicitor, the doctor said that Christine was not pregnant. Then the inquest was adjourned.

When James Rivett appeared before Beccles magistrates on December 2nd, pleading not guilty, Mr. E.G. McDermott, prosecuting, told the court: "It may be that this young man, who was not as well educated as the girl, thought she was getting rather above him and because of the attitude of her parent, he decided to kill her."

**"He has told me that he doesn't mind if he does die or is executed. I am told he had used an odd expression, like 'Roll on death,'" the doctor testified**

Christine's father testified: "I first knew of my daughter's association with a man named Rivett about three years ago. I went to look for him last September to have a chat with him, but I did not see him. I wanted to have a talk with him because my daughter was going to college. I did not want the man to stand in her way."

Committed for trial, Rivett appeared at Suffolk Assizes on Friday, January 20th, 1950, when at the suggestion of the prosecution a jury was sworn to decide if he was fit to plead. They decided that he was, although two doctors testified to the contrary.

Rivett's trial was then adjourned, and when he appeared at Norfolk Assizes

## **Beccles Murder Charge**

# **JURY FINDS ACCUSED IS FIT TO PLEAD**

**A jury at Norfolk Assizes today was called upon to decide, as was a jury at Ipswich last week, whether James Frank Rivett (21), a builders' labourer, of 59, Donmark Road, Beccles, was fit to plead on the indictment alleging that he strangled Christine Ruth Cuddon, a 17-year-old schoolgirl, at Beccles on November 5th.**

**After a seven-minute retirement the jury decided Rivett was fit to plead.**

a week later the defence asked for the question of his fitness to plead to be retried. The judge acceded, and a second jury heard evidence from two prison medical officers who had both had Rivett under observation. Both said they believed he was suffering from schizophrenia.

Dr. B. M. Tracey, medical officer at Norwich Prison, said that Rivett seemed entirely detached from events, with no wish to put forward a defence. "He has told me that he doesn't mind if he does die or is executed. I am told he had used an odd expression, like "Roll on death,"" the doctor testified.

But after retiring for only seven minutes the jury found that Rivett was fit to plead. A third jury was then sworn, and Rivett pleaded "Guilty." Mr. Justice Stable, however, directed a plea of "Not guilty" to be entered as Rivett's mental state was in question.

For the prosecution Mr. Granville Sharp KC claimed that Rivett had clearly intended to kill Christine Cuddon. His motive was jealousy - Christine was going up in the world

**The chief medical officer at Brixton Prison had been unable to elicit any real motive for the murder from Rivett, who would just smile "in a silly way" whenever the subject was broached**

and would no longer want to associate with him; her departure for a teacher-training college or university would effectively end their relationship. "You may think," the prosecutor told the jury, "that the killing was motivated by a sense of frustration, that he saw this girl taking a course which would progressively place her beyond his reach in intellectual development and attainment."

Testifying for the prosecution, Dr. C. Grantham-Hill said he had examined Rivett on November 6th. Although Rivett seemed unconcerned about his fate, he displayed no sign of mental abnormality.

For the defence Sir Charles Doughty KC sought a verdict of guilty but insane. He told the jury that although Christine wanted to become a teacher she would not have gone to a university for nearly two years. If the couple were still in love with each other it would not have been impossible for them to have continued their relationship.

Christine had shown Rivett all the favour a girl could, and there was no jealousy and no row, Sir Charles claimed. So why should Rivett kill her?



**James Rivett seemed convinced that his life would come to an early end by execution**

The defence counsel also pointed out that after the killing Rivett had gone home and read a book, and had then visited a friend before he went to the police station at midnight and gave himself up. He had fallen asleep in his cell at the police station, and detectives had not been able to question

him further until 5 a.m. Was this the behaviour of a normal man who had strangled someone?

One of Rivett's relatives, a teenage cousin, testified that he had often talked about death and being hanged for murder. She recalled that when she told him she was going to be a bridesmaid he said he didn't expect to marry as he was going to commit murder and would be hanged for it. When conscription was introduced and she asked him which service he would join he told her he would never be conscripted because he would commit murder and be executed for it. And when she mentioned his 21st birthday he said he would never have one as he would commit murder. These remarks struck her as strange, and she told her father about them.

Under cross-examination, however, she agreed that Rivett had a habit of joking, she hadn't taken his remarks seriously, and there was never anything abnormal about his behaviour. The court heard that Rivett had in fact served for two years in the Royal Navy.

Dr. J. C. M. Mathieson, chief medical officer at Brixton Prison, was a familiar figure in courts as a prosecution witness. But in this case he appeared for the defence, testifying that he had been unable to elicit any real motive for the murder from Rivett, who would just smile "in a silly way" whenever the subject was broached.

Stating that he had found Rivett detached and unconcerned, Dr. Mathieson told the court: "In my opinion there was disease of the brain on November 5th, 1949, and I am prepared to certify him now." In response to a question from Mr. Granville Sharp, Dr. Mathieson said: "I think if there was a policeman by his side at the time he would have done it."

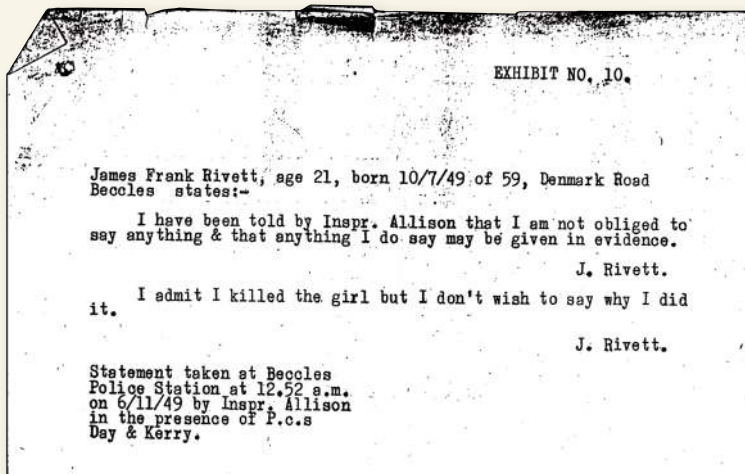
Dr. Tracey also said he believed that Rivett would have killed Christine in the presence of a policeman, even if afterwards he realised he had done wrong.

Mr. Justice Stable asked Dr. Tracey if he attached any significance to the fact that none of the witnesses, with the exception of Rivett's cousin, had said that Rivett's behaviour had ever struck them as out of the ordinary. Dr. Tracey replied that schizophrenia often passed unnoticed, and was recognised only when something appalling happened.

Dr. Louis Rose, a Harley Street psychiatrist, said that he too believed that Rivett was suffering from schizophrenia. He believed that Rivett knew what he was doing, but was incapable of distinguishing right from wrong.

"I am convinced," Dr. Rose testified, "that he has been preoccupied with death and self-destruction over a number of years. He has told me that he considered murdering a chief petty officer in the navy that he did not get on with."

The medical evidence, however,



**The initial statement that the accused gave to the police. It is a mere 16 words long**

made little impression on the jury. After less than two hours' retirement they returned with a verdict of "Guilty."

The court waited tensely to hear the next two words. If they were "but insane," Rivett would be committed to Broadmoor; if the words were "of murder," he would go to the condemned cell at Norwich Prison.

The words were the latter. The jury did not believe James Rivett was insane, and he was sentenced to death. Showing no emotion, he waved casually to the public gallery where members of his family were sitting.

**Not a single witness had spoken of ever having seen Rivett behave other than as a normal, sane man before the murder, and three juries had refused to find him insane. Furthermore, it was for a jury, and not for a medical man of whatever eminence, to determine the issue**



In the following month Rivett's defence counsel appealed on the grounds that the verdict of "Guilty" was not supported by the medical evidence heard at the trial. The only proper verdict on the evidence, Sir Charles Doughty argued, was that Rivett was guilty but insane at the time of the crime.

Was Christine Cuddon killed because she wanted to end her relationship with Rivett, and he wanted it to continue? Delivering the judgment of the Court of Criminal Appeal on Monday, February 27th, 1950, the Lord Chief Justice said that the courts were only too familiar with cases in which a couple had been indulging in extra-marital sexual intercourse.

"When there was a likelihood, as in this case, that the couple's illicit relationship would be brought to an end the result was often murder. This might be because the man resolved that no one else should enjoy the pleasures which had been his, or it might be that he had resolved to die with the woman; then, having killed her, his courage had failed him, so he had not used the weapon with which he had provided himself but had given himself up to justice, becoming indifferent to his fate."

The Lord Chief Justice went on to comment wryly on the evidence of Dr. Grantham-Hill, who had seen Rivett on the day of his arrest. The physician had seen no sign of mental abnormality, and he did not think Rivett's apparent detachment and lack of concern remarkable, "owing to his acquaintance with the phlegmatic disposition of the labouring class in East Anglia, but he agreed that it was remarkable for even an East Anglian to sleep soundly after committing murder."

If this comment raised the hopes of the defence they were soon dashed. The Lord Chief Justice went on to note that not a single witness had spoken of ever having seen Rivett behave other

than as a normal, sane man before the murder, and three juries had refused to find him insane. Furthermore, it was for a jury, and not for a medical man of whatever eminence, to determine the issue.

**Mr. Justice Stable (left) presided at James Rivett's trial**

than as a normal, sane man before the murder, and three juries had refused to find him insane. Furthermore, it was for a jury, and not for a medical man of whatever eminence, to determine the issue.

No doctor could say with scientific certainty that a disease existed in Rivett's case, because mental diseases did not display physical symptoms, the Lord Chief Justice continued. The jury had reached their verdict after hearing not only the medical evidence but also all the other facts relating to Rivett and the crime, facts which were not disputed. It was clear that Rivett knew he had done wrong, because he had given himself up to the police for committing murder.

"Let it be assumed he suffered from schizophrenia, or whatever doctors might call it," the Lord Chief Justice concluded. "Let it be assumed that he killed the girl on a sudden impulse. A jury of his country is satisfied that he

## Beccles Man Executed at Norwich Prison

The execution took place at Norwich Prison on Wednesday of James Frank Rivett (21), the Beccles bricklayer's labourer, sentenced to death for the murder of Christine Cuddon, a 17-year-old Beccles schoolgirl.

A few minutes after 9 a.m. the official notice intimating that the death sentence had been carried out according to law was posted on the main gate of the prison. Apart from six police officers and two newspaper men there was no-one there to read it.

It was signed by the High Sheriff of Suffolk (Lieut.-Col. P. T. Chevallier), Mr A. A. Rice a Norwich magistrate, the Rev S. Merrifield, prison chaplain, and the Governor of the Prison.

They elected Mr. Wybert Allen as their foreman. There was formal evidence from the Governor of the Prison (Mr S. G. Clarke) and the Prison Medical Officer (Dr B. M. Tracey) that the execution was expeditiously and humanely carried out and that death was instantaneous.

After the jury had intimated their wish to see the body the inquest proceedings lasted only a few minutes. The Coroner's Officer was P.C. W. Hoskins.

The verdict was that Rivett died from dislocation of the vertebrae by hanging, pursuant to due execution of the law.

Rivett was found fit to plead by two juries and had his plea of insanity rejected by a third. He appealed, but the appeal was dismissed. The Home

was responsible, and it is not for the Court of Criminal Appeal to say that he was not."

His appeal dismissed, James Rivett awaited his execution, which was scheduled for Wednesday, March 8th, 1950, at Norwich Prison. A petition raised by his father bore 1,700 signatures, but it cut no ice when it was presented to the Home Secretary. There was no reprieve, and James Rivett was duly hanged by Albert Pierrepoint and his assistant Harry Allen – not the Harry Allen who became Britain's last number one hangman but Herbert "Harry" Allen who was an ice-cream salesman from Birmingham.

Dr. Tracey, who had told three juries that he considered Rivett to be insane, now had the task of telling a coroner's jury that he had been "expeditiously and humanely" executed.

**There had been no crowd outside the prison to witness the posting of the execution notice; just a few policemen and reporters. James Rivett's indifference to his fate, it seemed, was shared by just about everyone else.**

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# EXECUTION USA

News and updates from March 2018 • Researched by Martin Chaffe

## DEATH PENALTY FOR WIFE AND DAUGHTER KILLER

### STATE DEATH PENALTIES

**ARKANSAS:** A GARLAND County jury in Hot Springs has selected death as the punishment for **Eric Allen Reid**, 57. In October 2015, Reid shot dead his wife Laura, 57, and his daughter Mary Ann, 32, in his home.

Shortly after the killings, he surrendered to the police in his driveway.

During the guilt phase of the trial, Reid told the jury that the killings were an accident. "I pretty much don't remember what happened. I saw a flash of light and blanked out." He also said that he remembered seeing flashes of Mary Ann in her Giants jersey and red blood spray on the wall. He also recalled his younger daughter Heather shouting at him to stop and to put the gun down. He then saw the gun in his hand. "It was like a fog or tunnel vision, like I was watching it happen."

However, the jury took just an hour to convict him of two counts of capital murder. The prosecution said that he had shot the women multiple times in the back "like a coward" after losing his temper and had needed to go and get the



**Shot victims in the back: Eric Allen Reid**

gun from his room and cock it before starting shooting. If he had been truly out of his mind he would have killed Heather too.

### CALIFORNIA: LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE FOR SHOP SHOOTER

A Riverside County jury in Indio has recommended life without parole for 42-year-old **Ernesto Salgado Martinez** after convicting him of a robbery and murder in August 1995. But Martinez will now be returned to Arizona where he is under sentence of death for the murder of a police officer.

Martinez was 19 when he set out on a road trip from Indio to see family members, but he shot dead Highway Patrol officer Bob Martin at a traffic stop. After fleeing back to California, he ran out of petrol and money and robbed a convenience store, shooting dead the owner, Randip Singh. He was eventually arrested after barricading himself inside a mobile home and crawled out of a window after the police threatened to send in tear gas.

Twelve years after he was condemned to die in Arizona, during which time he



**Robbery and murder: Ernesto Salgado Martinez**

taught himself to become an expert in the law, he was extradited to California in 2010 to be tried for the Singh murder. However, he managed to delay the trial for eight years, sacking his lawyers and outwitting local prosecutors. While in the county jail, he wounded a cellmate by stabbing him 50 times.

### CALIFORNIA: DEATH SENTENCE FOR MEXICAN KILLER-ROBBER

A jury in the state capital Sacramento has recommended the execution of illegal Mexican immigrant **Luis Bracamontes**, 37, for murdering two police officers in October 2014. Sacramento County sheriff's Deputy Danny Oliver, 47, and Placer County sheriff's Detective Michael Davis, 42, were gunned down during a rampage which Bracamontes conducted with his wife Janelle Monroy, 41. She was sentenced to 50 years for her complicity and will probably die in prison.

During his appearances in court in the guilt and sentencing phases of the trial, Bracamontes courted his conviction and death sentence, swearing and racially abusing a black juror, grinning at the families of the deceased and saying that he wanted to kill more police officers. Much of the time he was kept in a holding cell where he could watch proceedings via camera.



**Above, Luis Bracamontes. Below, his wife and accomplice Janelle Monroy**



### CARNIVAL WORKER'S LAST RIDE

**EXECUTED MARCH 15th, 2018:**

**MICHAEL WAYNE EGGERS, 50 • Lethal injection • Alabama** ❌



**EGGERS**

Eggers was put to death for murdering a woman who employed him to work for a travelling carnival. In December 2000, Eggers was out of work and broke during the off-season when he telephoned Mrs. Bennie Francis Murray, 67, asking for a job, but she could only employ him in March when the carnivals started again. She did offer to help him find a temporary job and an apartment, but at some point he lost his temper, kicking and punching her in the head before manually choking her. He then dragged her into woodland where he put a tree branch on her throat and stood on it to suffocate her. In recent months, Eggers decided not to pursue any appeals but his lawyers tried to halt the execution claiming that he was a delusional schizophrenic. State and

federal courts turned the appeals away.

**His execution was delayed for just under an hour by a last appeal to the US Supreme Court, and he replied "No ma'am," when asked by the warden, Cynthia Stewart, if he had any final words. He then gave a "thumbs-up" sign to family and friends before the three-drug Midazolam protocol commenced. He was pronounced dead 35 minutes later with no reports of extreme body movements.**

### MISSOURI: MEDICAL CONDITION HALTS EXECUTION

For the second time in four years, **Russell Bucklew**, 49, has received a stay of execution, by five votes to four, from the US Supreme Court (USSC) on the day he was scheduled to die. On May 21st, 2014, following 18 hours of legal drama when his execution was stayed, reinstated and delayed, the USSC ordered the federal appeals court in St. Louis to decide whether to hear his claim that a congenital medical condition could cause the possibility of a torturous death by lethal injection. Bucklew suffers from cavernous haemangioma, which causes weakened and malformed blood vessels and tumours in the nose, mouth and throat. Late in 2017 his appeals were rejected



**Stay of execution: Russell Bucklew**

and a new execution date of March 20th was set. However, the USSC wants to consider the appeal by his lawyers that Bucklew's tumours have enlarged further and could burst when his veins are injected with Pentobarbital, causing Bucklew to suffer an agonising death by drowning in his own blood before the barbiturate takes effect.

Bucklew is awaiting execution for raping his ex-girlfriend and stabbing to death her boyfriend in front of her and their children. While awaiting trial, he escaped and beat his ex-girlfriend's mother with a hammer.

**OHIO: ILL "VEIN DELAY" KILLER DIES ON DEATH ROW**

**Alva E. Campbell**, 69, who survived his November 15th, 2017, execution because guards could not find a usable vein, was found dead in his cell on March 3rd.

The attempt to execute him had been controversial as he had been suffering from lung and prostate cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease caused by a 40-a-day cigarette habit. The governor had reset the execution date to June 5th, 2019, but Campbell

was not expected to make the appointment.

In April 1997 he was awaiting trial for armed robbery when he feigned paralysis at a court house and escaped from custody, stealing a female police officer's gun. He then carjacked 18-year-old Charles Dials who was at the court to pay a fine and, after driving around with him for several hours, shot him twice in the back of the head.

Campbell had also previously served 20 years of a life sentence for robbing and shooting dead a Cleveland tavern owner in 1972. This was while he was on parole for shooting and wounding a police officer in 1967.

**OHIO: KILLER-ROBBER MOVES OFF DEATH ROW**

Governor John Kasich has followed a six-to-four recommendation by the Ohio Parole Board to commute the death sentence on **William Montgomery** to life in prison without parole. After nearly 32 years on Death Row, Montgomery,



**Found dead in his cell: Alva Campbell**

52, was scheduled to die on April 11th for the abduction, robbery and murder of 20-year-old Debra Ogle in March 1986.

Montgomery and Glover Heard were acquainted with Miss Ogle and asked her for a lift, but they forced her to drive to a wooded area in Lucas County where Montgomery shot her three times in the forehead at point-blank range. After the killing, they returned to Debra Ogle's Toledo apartment where they abducted Miss Ogle's 19-year-old roommate, Cynthia Tincher, and silenced her with a bullet in the head in the back of her car.

Montgomery's conviction had once been thrown out by a federal judge, but the federal appeals court in Cincinnati reinstated it. The majority on the Parole Board believed that there was residual doubt due to the prosecutors not permitting the jury to hear evidence from an eye-witness who said that Miss Ogle was alive four days after she was supposed to have been murdered.

Heard was given a life sentence and his testimony helped send Montgomery to Death Row. Lawyers for Montgomery say they will now fight for a new trial.



**Life behind bars: William Montgomery**

**OHIO: ABDUCTION-KILLER GETS LIFE BEHIND BARS**

**Brian Golsby**, 30, has been sentenced to life in prison without parole after Franklin County jurors in the state capital, Columbus, rejected a death sentence. They had convicted him of the abduction, rape and murder of 21-year-old university student Reagan Tokes in February 2017. After carjacking her at gunpoint when she left the coffee shop where she worked, he forced her to withdraw money from cash machines

**LETHAL INJECTION UPDATE**

● At a press conference on March 14th, the Oklahoma Attorney-General, Mike Hunter, and the Department of Corrections (DoC) director, Joe Allbaugh, said that the state was giving up on plans to produce a new lethal injection protocol due to the unavailability of drugs. They said that the DoC would now implement the Nitrogen hypoxia protocol as its primary execution method, probably using a face mask to administer the gas. The protocol would take three to four months to write and then inmates would be given a further five months to lodge appeals before execution dates were set. By that time at least 20 inmates would have exhausted all of their normal appeals as there have been no executions in the state since January 2015. Executions were put on hold after the wrong drug was delivered just before an execution was due, and a grand jury investigation into the failures of the DoC also put forward the recommendation of Nitrogen gas executions. Death is thought to be painless because the brain is destroyed due to lack of oxygen without the agonising build-up of carbon dioxide in the bloodstream. Although this method is

**NEEDLE FOR STOCKING STRANGLER**

**EXECUTED MARCH 15th, 2018:**

**CARLTON MICHAEL GARY, 67 • Lethal injection • Georgia**



**GARY**

Gary was convicted in 1986 of three of the seven murders attributed to the Columbus "Stocking Strangler" 40 years ago, but evidence from the four other murders was also used to sentence him to death. He was originally scheduled to die on December 16th, 2009, but the courts stopped the execution to allow for post-conviction DNA tests. These showed that another perpetrator was involved – Gary always insisted that a friend called Malvin Crittenden, who was never charged, was the actual killer – but Gary's semen was found in or on some of the victims. The courts then took more than seven years to decide that the jury in 1986, had it known all these facts, would still have convicted him and sentenced him to die.

The victims, all white women, raped and strangled with stockings and sashes over the autumn and winter of 1977-78, were: Mary Jackson, 59, on September 16th; Jean Dimenstein, 71, on September 24th; Florence Scheible, 89, on October 21st; Martha Thurmond, 70, on October 25th; Kathleen Woodruff, 74, on December 28th; Mildred Borom, 78, on February 12th; and Janet Cofer, 61, on April 20th. During the reign of terror, two other women were also attacked, one of whom was beaten and raped. Gary also raped and strangled Nellie Farmer, 85, during a burglary in Albany, New York, in April 1970. He then managed to get an accomplice convicted of the murder by testifying against him and pleaded guilty to burglary. Sentenced to 10 years, he served five. The other man's conviction was quashed when Gary's crimes in Georgia came to light.

Three months after his release on parole, Gary raped and strangled Marion Fisher, 40, in Syracuse, New York, in June 1975. This was confirmed by DNA tests in 2007. After the last known murder in 1978, Gary became an armed robber and drug-dealer in South Carolina. He was imprisoned in 1979 and escaped in 1984. Returning to Columbus to start robbing and raping again, he was caught once more and was eventually linked to the murders by a Ruger pistol he had stolen during a non-fatal burglary of two elderly women in 1977.

**Gary denied his guilt to the end, and the execution was delayed for three hours by a last appeal to the US Supreme Court.**

before raping her and shooting her twice in the head.

In the sentencing phase the prosecutors argued that Golsby knew right from wrong, but the defence argued that Golsby had been subjected to 13 adverse childhood experiences, including an absentee father, a drug-addicted mother who was abusive and sadistic, and a stranger who raped him when he was 12. This had led him to rape multiple five-year-old boys and a six-year-old girl and he had then been failed by the Department of Youth Services while in a sex-offender programme.



**Above, Brian Golsby. Below, his victim Reagan Tokes**



**PENNSYLVANIA: LIFE BEHIND BARS FOR INFAMOUS ESCAPEE**

**Joseph J. Kindler, 57**, has dodged the needle – 34 years after a jury said he should die. In July 1982, he and two accomplices, Scott Shaw and David Bernstein, were arrested after burgling a music store in Bucks County. Kindler escaped from custody and later, after Shaw and Bernstein were released on bail, he conspired with Shaw to murder Bernstein who had agreed with prosecutors to testify against them. After abducting him, Shaw poked him with an electric prod and Kindler knocked him unconscious with a baseball bat before



**Captured killer: Joseph Kindler in 1991**



**Changing plans: Mike Hunter (left) and Joe Allbaugh**

increasingly being used in assisted suicide, death penalty opponents and lawyers are already saying that its use on their clients would be “experimental.”

● On March 22nd, Governor Kay Ivey of Alabama signed into law the execution method of Nitrogen hypoxia which had been passed by the legislature. The Alabama House and Senate had been debating the execution method since before the failed execution of Doyle Hamm on February 22nd, when the execution team were unable to find a usable vein. Alabama becomes the third state after Oklahoma and Mississippi to propose this method and inmates would be allowed to choose lethal gas over the default

**SUITCASE SEX-KILLER PACKED OFF**

**EXECUTED MARCH 27th, 2018:**

**ROSENDO RODRIGUEZ, 38 • Lethal injection • Texas**



**RODRIGUEZ**

Rodriguez was a serial sex-murderer dubbed by the press as the “Lubbock Suitcase Killer.” His second victim was a 29-year-old, 10-weeks-pregnant prostitute called Summer Baldwin, who was found naked in a suitcase, which burst open under pressure from compacting equipment, at a landfill site. She had been raped, bludgeoned and choked to death in September 2005. Rodriguez was arrested after a barcode on the suitcase was traced to a local shop and the police were able to use a surveillance video and debit card transactions to link the crime to him. He was in the town on a training exercise with US Marine Reservists. At first, Rodriguez seemed to want to avoid the death penalty by also telling the police that he was responsible for murdering 16-year-old Joanna Rogers in 2004. He had agreed a plea-bargain to serve life without parole by saying that her body was also at the landfill site in a suitcase. Her body was eventually found in a mummified state. Later, he backed out of the agreement and tried to avoid a capital charge in the Summer Baldwin case by saying that they had consensual sex and he had later killed her during an argument. The Joanna Rogers murder, and the rapes of five other women, were left on file.

**On the gurney, he made a long rambling last statement, criticising the death penalty and urging people to boycott Texas businesses. His last words were, “The state may have my body but they never had my soul. I’ve fought the good fight, I have run the good race. Warden, I’m ready to join my father.” His mother lifted her arms as he took his last breaths, calling out, “I’m lifting you up to the Lord. Sleep tight. Sleep tight. Receive him Lord.”**

tying a breeze block round his neck and throwing him into the Delaware River to drown.

Kindler, immediately the prime suspect, was arrested. After being brought to trial, he was convicted of first-degree

murder and the jury recommended death. However, before the judge could pass sentence of death, Kindler escaped in September 1984 after using a smuggled hacksaw to cut through his cell bars. He then made his way to Canada where he was arrested in Montreal for burglary in April 1985. At first Canada would not extradite him because he faced the death penalty and he became a minor TV celebrity.

Eventually, Canada realised that it did not want to be a safe haven for murderers and agreed extradition, but before this could happen Kindler escaped again. Using 175 feet of bedsheets tied together he absconded down 13 storeys of a high-rise detention centre, but a fellow-escapee who followed him was not so lucky and fell 50 feet to his death after the sheets ripped.

Three years later the US TV programme *America’s Most Wanted* became involved, and in September 1988 viewers in New Brunswick recognised Kindler and he was arrested again. There then followed another three years of litigation before Kindler lost at the Supreme Court of Canada and was extradited in September 1991 and formally sentenced to death.

However, in 2011, the federal appeals court in Philadelphia ruled that he had received ineffective assistance from counsel at his trial in 1983, because very little mitigating evidence was presented to the jury. His sentence has now been

execution method of injection. This could be a mistake, because if the condemned can insist on injection, they may deliberately dehydrate themselves to make it difficult to access their veins, in the hope that the execution is called off. On March 27th, Doyle Hamm’s lawyer said that he had reached an agreement with Alabama that no more execution dates would be set for him, in exchange for Hamm agreeing to drop all legal actions claiming that the botched execution had tortured him. The exact terms of the agreement were confidential, but it would seem that Hamm, who is suffering from lymphatic and cranial cancer as well as Hepatitis C, will not face lethal gas either, so is effectively reprieved.

Hamm, 60, from Mississippi, has been on Death Row for 30 years for robbing and murdering a male hotel clerk.



**Above, Governor Kay Ivey. Below, Doyle Hamm**



commuted to life in prison without parole, because the current District Attorney in Philadelphia, Larry Krasner, promised during his 2017 election campaign never to seek the death penalty for murders in the city.

Kindler, who has become a Jehovah's Witness and had invented and patented a wireless smoke detector in the condemned cell, apologised for his past life saying, "I am truly sorry for what I have done."

### TENNESSEE: KILLER-ROBBER HEADS TO DEATH ROW

A Madison County jury in Jackson has condemned to death **Urshawn Miller**, 29, for the robbery and first-degree murder of a convenience store clerk. In November 2015, Miller shot 24-year-old Ahmad Dhalai in the head inside the Bull Market store in the town, when Mr. Dhalai hesitated in handing over cash. Another employee was also shot and wounded.

Psychiatrists for the defence said that Miller was abused and neglected as a child, with a lot of instability caused by eight house moves before he was 10 years of age. The prosecution countered that Miller had previously spent eight years in prison for robbing a petrol station. A video tape from that robbery showed one of the masked



**Killed a store clerk: Urshawn Miller**

robbers shouting at a female clerk to hand over the money or she would be shot in the face.

### TEXAS: PLEA-DEAL FOR KILLER-ROBBER

**Douglas Tyrone Armstrong**, 48, has dodged the needle after 11 years on Death Row. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals had ordered a new trial after finding that his trial attorneys had provided ineffective assistance in both the guilt and sentencing phase of his trial. However, prosecutors in Edinburg, Hidalgo County, have accepted a plea-deal in exchange for life without parole.



**Life without parole: Douglas Armstrong**

Armstrong was convicted of robbing 60-year-old Rafael Castelan in April 2006 and slitting his throat with a Stanley knife in the town of Donna. Armstrong had always denied his guilt, claiming he got covered in the victim's blood after finding him lying in the road and trying to walk him to hospital, but he decided not to risk a death sentence from a new jury.

### JAPAN DEATH PENALTIES SAITAMA: NOOSE FOR PERUVIAN SPREE KILLER

A Peruvian national, **Vayron Jonathan Nakada-Ludeña**, 32, has been sentenced to death by Saitama District

Court for a spree of killings which took six lives.

His brother, Pedro Pablo Nakada-Ludeña, is Peru's worst serial killer, dubbed "The Apostle of Death" for murdering 25 people between 2000 and 2006. He is serving 35 years in the psychiatric ward of Lurigancho Prison in Peru after being acquitted of murder due to paranoid schizophrenia. He claimed that God had told him to cleanse the world of homosexuals, prostitutes, drug addicts and criminals.

In the Japanese case, Vayron had been drifting around the country for 10 years when he was arrested in September 2015 for trespass. He escaped from custody and embarked on a burglary and murder spree, stabbing to death a middle-aged couple, an 84-year-old woman and a 41-year-old woman along with her daughters, aged 10 and seven. Some of the bodies were found hidden in cupboards. When the police moved in to arrest him he stabbed himself in the face, slashed his wrists and suffered a fractured skull after leaping head first out of a second-floor window.

He claimed at his trial that he had no memories of the crimes and there were ambiguous psychiatric tests which diagnosed both schizophrenia and a sound mind. The prosecution accepted that he was mentally ill, but the court decided that he knew right from wrong and that his "cruel and inhumane acts" deserved the noose.



**Six victims: Vayron Jonathan Nakada-Ludeña**

### YOKOHAMA: NURSING HOME SERIAL KILLER CONDEMNED

The Yokohama District Court has condemned to death **Hayato Imai**, 25, for serially murdering three residents at a nursing home in the town of Kawasaki where he worked. Mr. Tamio Ushizawa, 87; Mrs. Chieko Nakagawa, 86; and Mrs. Nobuko Asami, 96, were launched to their deaths from fourth- and sixth-floor balconies, on separate occasions, in November and December 2014.

Imai was the only person on duty when the deaths occurred, but the police did not begin to investigate until the following September and Imai was arrested in February 2016. He denied the crimes, insisting that his confessions were coerced by police bullying, and his defence team said that the victims may have committed suicide. The police claimed that Imai told them that the victims had been "troublesome."

**The presiding judge said that Imai's confession was "highly credible" and there had been "no leading by police officers."**



**Threw victims off balconies: Hayato Imai**

H

## THE WORLD'S WORST KILLERS

### Mary Ann Holder

• United States

**W**HY SHE killed five children before committing suicide in a shooting rampage remains unclear – but Mary Ann Holder, 36, left behind two notes taking responsibility for the shootings in Greensboro, Guilford County, North Carolina, and offering an apology for the pain she caused.

On the morning of Sunday, November 20th, 2011, Mary Ann shot her son Robert "Dylan" Smith, 17, his 15-year-old girlfriend Makayla Woods, her niece Hannaleigh Suttles, eight, and nephew Richard Suttles, 17, at her home on Cocoa Drive in Pleasant Garden. All victims were shot in the head.

Mary Ann then drove to the GTCC Aviation Center near the airport, where at 9 a.m. she shot Randy Lamb in the elbow and shoulder in the car park on Regional



Road. Lamb survived his injuries.

Mary Ann next collected her son Zach, 14, from a friend's house. She then drove her black Ford Explorer to Remora Road, where she shot Zach dead, before turning the gun on herself.

Ballistic tests revealed that the gun found in her hand was the same weapon used in all six shootings. Police said that mobile phone records also confirmed Mary Ann had been at the three different locations south of Greensboro where the shootings occurred.

Locals knew Mary Ann as a law-abiding, fun-loving and conscientious mother. Police said an extra-marital affair gone bad may have motivated the shooting spree.

Guilford County Sheriff B.J. Barnes said, "You can call it an execution, you can call it a shooting, you can call it whatever you want. The result is the same. We may never know exactly what her thoughts were and why."

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 [trueinvest@truecriminallibrary.com](mailto:trueinvest@truecriminallibrary.com)

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

# 120 WERE HANGED AT PENTONVILLE • PART 8



*London's Pentonville Prison. In the 20th century it saw 120 hangings, 105 of them for murder. In this fascinating series T.J. Leech brings you details of them all*

**T**HE BUSINESS of our courts reflects our times, and this was never more so than in November 1940, when four men accused of espionage were tried in secret at the Old Bailey before Mr. Justice Wrottesley...

## 70., 71. & 72.

### THREE SPIES GO TO THE GALLOWES

In September 1940 **Jose Walberg**, a 22-year-old German, and two Dutchmen, **Carl Heinrich Meier**, 24, and **Charles Albert van den Kielboom**, 26, together with a third Dutchman named Pons, landed at night near Dungeness and Hythe on the south-east coast of England in two parties, each equipped with a wireless transmitter, food, maps, and large sums of cash. Their mission was to obtain and transmit military information, and they failed miserably.

Kielboom, Pons and Meier were captured separately within a few hours of landing. Walberg was arrested a day



Coming ashore from a U-boat (above), Abwehr spies Albert van den Kielboom (below), Jose Walberg (lower) and Carl Meier were all caught before they could do any lasting harm – one by the landlady of a pub in Lydd (bottom of page)

later, but not before he managed to rig up an aerial in a tree and send a worthless radio message to his Nazi masters.

Pons and Kielboom claimed they had been blackmailed into joining the Abwehr, the German secret service, and that they had not intended to do any spying. Kielboom said they had planned to go to America, while Pons claimed he had intended to give himself up. Meier told a similar story, saying he had been induced to join the Abwehr by the prospect of good remuneration. Walberg, unlike the others, was a professional spy, and he admitted receiving two years' training in espionage.

All were charged under the Treachery Act which had come into force in 1940, and at their trial Walberg pleaded guilty;



Meier and Kielboom were also convicted, and all three were sentenced to death. Pons, however, managed to convince the jury that he had no intention of acting against England, and he was acquitted and interned as an alien.

"We are not concerned with the reasons spies may put forward as having induced them to take service with the enemy, whether it is duress, blackmail or that they only came because they wanted to come here without any intention of spying at all," a Home Office minister said at a meeting with the Secretary of State.

"These stories are only told after they are caught. If we were to accept excuses such as these men have put forward it would certainly assist the Gestapo in recruiting spies."

And the Gestapo was clearly in need of assistance, the swift

collaring of its would-be spies demonstrating the amateurishness of its early attempts at espionage, which were almost farcical. Walberg could not speak a word of English, although he was fluent in French. Two of the Dutchmen had no more than a smattering of English, and one of them had binoculars and a spare pair of shoes slung around his neck when he was spotted by the astonished Somerset Light Infantry private who captured him.



The only one of the four with a fluent command of English came unstuck through his ignorance of Britain's licensing laws. At a pub in Lydd, he tried to buy cider at breakfast-time. The landlady told him this could not be done legally until 10 a.m., and advised him meanwhile to take a look at the church. She was no fool, and on his return he was arrested.

After his conviction Walberg claimed he was French, and had been told by the Germans that if he did not undertake the mission his father would be shot. The Home Secretary found no grounds for reprieves, however, and at the request of the War Office, it was at first decided that no execution notices would be posted, and that to prevent any leaks the empanelling of a "picked" coroner's jury would be considered.

It was finally decided that brief press notices would be issued upon the receipt of confirmation that the spies had been hanged, and notices of execution would be posted an hour later.

On December 10th, 1940, Meier and Walberg were hanged together at Pentonville by Stanley Cross, assisted by Albert Pierrepont, Henry Critchell and Harry Kirk. Although the executions were carried out without a hitch, for the second time the prison's medical officer questioned Cross's competence. "I am of the opinion," he reported, "that he is not yet certain of working out drops. He is not good at figures."

Kielboom's execution had been postponed because he appealed. His appeal was dismissed, and on December 17th he was hanged by Cross, assisted by Herbert Morris. "Still needs supervision," the medical officer noted, and that was Cross's last execution as chief hangman.

## 73.

### A SOHO STABBING

The 39-year-old son of Italian immigrants, **Antonio "Babe" Mancini** ran the Palm Beach Bottle Party Club in the basement at 37 Wardour Street, in London's Soho. He also had an interest in several other clubs, including the West End Bridge and Billiards Club two floors above his Palm Beach premises, and in the early hours of May 1st, 1941, the billiards club was the scene of two brawls, both involving Edward Fletcher, a Hoxton gangster whom Mancini had barred from the Palm Beach club a few days earlier.

According to one account, the first brawl started when Fletcher and Harry "Scarface" Distleman, 38, tried to barge into the billiards club. Distleman demanded a cut of the club's profits, "or else," and in the fight that ensued the premises were ransacked and both men were ejected.

Mancini heard the disturbance, and later went upstairs to see what was wrong. At the same time Fletcher and Distleman returned intent on revenge.

There were conflicting accounts of what happened next. Several witnesses



**Above, Antonio "Babe" Mancini, proprietor of the West End Bridge and Billiards Club, seen above right. Right, the scene after the fight in which Harry Distleman was killed**



said Mancini attacked Fletcher, inflicting a knife wound that nearly cut off his arm, and when Distleman went to Fletcher's aid, Mancini stabbed him under his left armpit.

"Babe's done it!" Distleman cried as he was helped down the stairs, to collapse outside in the street where two policemen found him dead shortly afterwards.

"I admit stabbing Fletcher with a long dagger which I found on the floor of the club," Mancini told the police. "But I don't admit doing Distleman. Why should I do him? They threatened me as I came up the stairs and I got panicky."

On being charged the next day with Distleman's murder, he said, "That bit

about finding the dagger on the floor is wrong. I had it with me, with a bit of rag wrapped about it."

At his trial at the Old Bailey in July he claimed he had acted solely in self-defence, striking out wildly and not knowing whom he struck.

After 54 minutes' deliberation the jury found him guilty, making no recommendation to mercy, and he was sentenced to death.

Unusually, he was allowed three appeals. At the first appeal hearing the three judges were unable to agree, their difficulty being the question as to whether Distleman had brandished his penknife, which was found beside his body.

At the second appeal hearing five judges upheld Mancini's conviction, but on reviewing the case the attorney-general decided it should go to the House of Lords, the highest court in the land. Five law lords dismissed the appeal, and on October 31st, 1941, the killer was dispatched by Albert Pierrepont, carrying out his first execution as the number one hangman.

"Cheerio," said Mancini, as the noose was placed around his neck.

## 74.

### A DOUBLE POISONING IN GREENFORD

On June 30th, 1941, complaints of a bad smell coming from the garden behind a block of flats in Goring Way, Greenford, Middlesex, led to the discovery of the bodies of Phyllis Crocker, 28, and her 18-month-old illegitimate daughter Eileen, buried in a shallow pit. A medical



**Executioner Albert Pierrepont. During this period he carried out four hangings at Pentonville, including his first as number one hangman - that of "Babe" Mancini**

## Double Murder Charge Against Greenford Man

### BODIES BURIED IN GARDEN

Yesterday morning there stepped into the dock at Ealing Police Court Lionel Rupert Nathan Watson, aged 31, bakelite moulder, employed at a local factory and living at 9, Goring-way, Greenford, who was charged with that he did wilfully, feloniously and of malice aforethought kill and murder Phyllis Elizabeth Crocker, aged 25, and Eileen Crocker, aged 18 months.

The proceedings were the sequel to a visit paid by police officers on Monday evening to a ground floor flat occupied by Watson at 9, Goring-way, Greenford, a road on the recently-built West Ridge Estate, behind Greenford Parish Church.

After the police visit it was stated that the bodies of a woman and a child had been found buried beneath a flag-stoned path in the back garden. Early on Tuesday morning police officers visited a local factory and interviewed Watson.



Below, Mr. Justice Cassels, who agreed wholeheartedly with the jury's verdict in the case of Lionel Watson (above)

examination found the cause of death in both cases to be cyanide poisoning.

A tenant of one of the flats told the police that in May she had seen another resident, **Lionel Rupert Watson**, digging in the garden. He had since left the flats, but was soon traced and arrested.

He was 30 and married, with four children, and the police learned that in



January 1940 his wife had left him because of his affairs with other women. Six months later he had obtained employment as a Bakelite moulder at the Hoover factory in Perivale, where he met Phyllis, subsequently going to live with her at the flat she shared with her mother.

In November 1940 her mother died, leaving Phyllis about £200. In the following January Watson went through a form of marriage with Phyllis, and for the next few months they apparently lived happily together. Neighbours who saw Phyllis on May 19th, 1941, said she

appeared to be in good health and cheerful, and they were surprised the next day when Watson told them she had gone to Scotland with her daughter. He subsequently left the flat and went to live with his parents.

Detectives discovered that in May he had taken some sodium cyanide home from the factory, and within days of Phyllis's supposed move to Scotland he was courting a 17-year-old girl who also worked at Hoover, and to whom he gave some of Phyllis's belongings. He also attempted to withdraw some of Phyllis's money from a savings bank.

She was pregnant at the time of her death, and Watson claimed she was very distressed by the prospect of having another child. On his return from a cinema on May 19th, he said, he found her and her daughter dead, and through fear of his bigamous marriage being discovered he tried to conceal the deaths by burying both bodies.

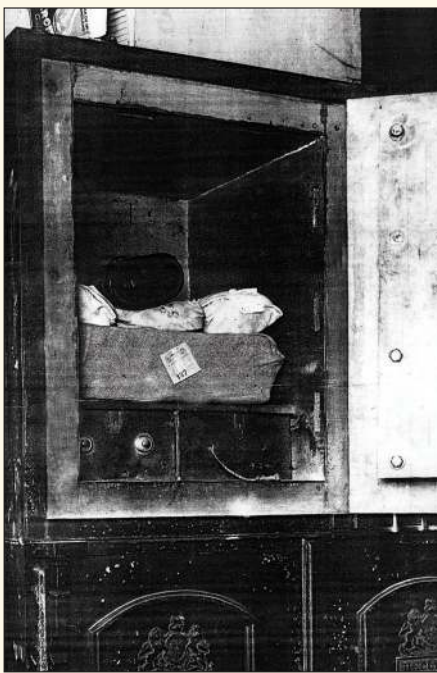
He was charged with murder, and in September he was tried and convicted at the Old Bailey. Sentencing him to death, Mr. Justice Cassels told him, "Upon overwhelming evidence the jury have rightly found you guilty of murder. You planned to poison Phyllis Crocker and you did so."

Watson's appeal was dismissed, and on November 12th, 1941, he was hanged by Thomas Pierrepont, assisted by Henry Critchell.

## 75. & 76.

### PAWNBROKER BEATEN TO DEATH

In the late evening of April 30th, 1942, police attention was drawn to a light showing at a pawnbroker's shop in Hackney Road, Shoreditch. This was a violation of the wartime blackout, and on



Above, pawnbroker Leonard Moules's safe - it was rifled after the attack which left him dying. Above right, top to bottom, his killers George Silverosa and Samuel Dashwood

entering the premises officers found the shop in disarray, its 71-year-old owner Leonard Moules lying on the floor with severe head injuries.

He died nine days later without regaining consciousness, and two suspects, **George William Silverosa**, 23, and **Samuel Sydney Dashwood**, 22, were traced to Pitsea and arrested.

In a statement, Silverosa said that on April 30th he had lunch with Dashwood at a café. "He told me he had a gun and showed me a revolver. He told me he was going to do a job. I asked him where, and he said, 'Anywhere, I don't care as long as it's something.'

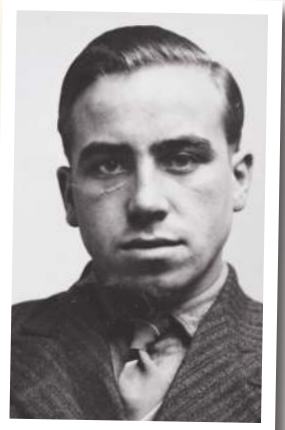
We went along the Hackney Road and he said the gun was only for putting the frightening power in.

"We were going past a pawnbroker's and Sam said, 'We might as well go and do this, if you're coming.' I said, 'All right, only no violence.' Sam said, 'All right.'

"He went in first and I closed the door, and when I turned round I saw the old man falling down. I didn't see Sam strike him, but I surmised what he had done. I said, 'You silly sod, what did you do that for?' He said, 'I had to. He was going to blow a whistle.'

"I wiped some blood off the old man's head with my overcoat, and said to Sam, 'Well, we've done the damage, we had better do what we came here to do: We took some rings from the safe and off the table.'

Dashwood told the police that Silverosa had fought and injured the



### MAN ATTACKED IN HIS SHOP

#### FOUND UNCONSCIOUS— AND HIS DOG DEAD

Police were called when a bright light shone from the fanlight of a shop in Hackney Road. Inside the shop police found Mr. Leonard Moules (71), a pawnbroker, unconscious, with severe head injuries. Near Mr. Moules was the body of his dog.

Mr. Moules is now in Bethnal Green Hospital with a detective waiting to take a statement. Supt. Cherrill, finger-print expert from Scotland Yard, visited the shop to-day.



Moules

pawnbroker. Then when he himself went over to take away the whistle, Mr. Moules grabbed him and to free himself he struck Mr. Moules on the head.

At the pair's trial for murder, Silverosa admitted a common design to rob, but denied any intention of using violence. Dashwood refused to be represented by counsel and neither gave nor called any evidence. Both were found guilty, and their appeals were dismissed.

Pentonville Prison was by now under military control, with a reduced number of inmates and staff. Part of the officers' quarters had suffered bomb damage in an air raid that killed several staff and their families, but civilian executions continued, and on September 10th, 1942, Dashwood and Silverosa were hanged by Albert Pierrepoint, assisted by Steve Wade from Doncaster, Herbert Morris from Blackpool, and Harry Kirk, a publican from Elton, near Peterborough.

## 77.

### WOMAN STRANGLED

**William Henry Turner** was a 19-year-old army deserter with a criminal record, and in January 1943 he was taken into custody for questioning about the theft of clothing from the home of a woman who had given him temporary accommodation. An identity card bearing the name of Ann Elizabeth Wade was found in his possession, and on being asked to account for it he replied, "You will find there is a murder at the end of this."

Mrs. Wade was an 82-year-old widow living alone, and at her home, 19 Audley Road, Colchester, the police found her body concealed under a bed. Turner had knocked on her door, asked for a cup of tea, and then strangled her and ransacked the house.

At his first trial at Chelmsford Assizes the jury failed to reach a verdict, one or more of them being opposed to capital punishment. At his retrial before the same court, he pleaded guilty but then withdrew his plea, his counsel seeking a manslaughter verdict on the ground that Turner wished only to silence Mrs. Wade while he robbed her home. The evidence showed, however, that he had continued his attack after she collapsed, and he was convicted and sentenced to death.

His appeal was dismissed, and on March 24th, 1943, he was hanged by Thomas Pierrepoint, assisted by Henry Critchell.



**Teenager William Turner who was a deserter from the Army when he turned killer in Colchester**

## 78.

### BRILLIANT CHEMIST TURNS KILLER

On the morning of May 17th, 1943, a police constable was patrolling his beat in the London suburb of New Barnet when a worried milk-rounds woman told him she had smelt gas coming from 9 Greenhill Park.

In the gas-filled kitchen, the officer and a neighbour found the body of Mrs. Elsie Elphinstone-Roe, 43. She was lying face-down in blue pyjamas, and the back of her head had been severely battered.

The neighbour who accompanied the constable into the house lived directly opposite, and said that at about 6.50 a.m. he had been awakened by a woman's screams. He

looked out of his

window and saw Mrs. Elphinstone-Roe at the window of her front room. She was clutching the window frame and screaming, and a swarthy, dark man who looked like her husband was pulling her back into the room. The neighbour took no action because he thought the couple were just having a row, and around 9 a.m. he saw Elphinstone-Roe leave his home carrying a suitcase and an attaché case.

### Gerald Elphinstone-Roe,

41, was employed by the Ministry of Supply. Born in England to an English mother and an Indian father, he was said by colleagues to be a brilliant chemist, and he was now nowhere to be found. He was eventually traced to Christchurch, near Bournemouth, where he was arrested on suspicion of his wife's murder. He knew nothing of this, he told the police, claiming she was still in bed when he left the house.

But this was untrue, his counsel told the court when Elphinstone-Roe's trial for murder began at Hertford Assizes in June. Seeking a manslaughter verdict, the defence counsel said Mrs. Elphinstone-Roe had died as a result of a violent quarrel. But her death, the

defence argued, was not caused solely by her wounds. It was also partly due to the gas being turned on, and nobody knew who had done this.

Neither the jury nor Mr. Justice Humphreys were impressed by this argument, the judge saying it did not affect the issue, and Elphinstone-Roe was found guilty as charged and sentenced to death. His appeal was dismissed, and he was hanged by Albert Pierrepoint and Steve Wade on August 3rd, 1943.

## 79.

### A DOUBLE-MURDER IN EALING

At 11 p.m. on Wednesday, September 8th, 1943, screams were heard coming from the gas-lit flat in Grove Place, Ealing, occupied by Mrs. Gladys Brewer, 20, and her two-year-old daughter Shirley. Mrs. Brewer's husband, a Royal Navy petty officer, was away at sea.

"I heard Mrs. Brewer scream, and then I heard Shirley scream and something dropped on the floor which I thought was the baby's bottle," the Brewers' next-door neighbour said later. "I didn't think anything of it at the time as Mrs. Brewer often screamed in fun when her husband was sparring with her, and Shirley always imitated her mother."

The next morning a woman who called to see Mrs. Brewer got no reply, and early that afternoon the neighbours became suspicious when they noticed that the blackout was still up at the flat. One of them opened a window to roll up the blackout, and what she saw sent her hurrying to call the police.

Officers forced an entry, and in the kitchen they found Gladys Brewer slumped dead in an armchair. Her head had been crushed, apparently with a hammer, and an unsigned note addressed to her husband was tied round her neck. "Dear Ernie," it said, "I am sorry to do this to you, and please God forgive me, but I am afraid your wife is very immoral. We

are going the same way soon and I hope just as quickly. We don't know you personally, but we know your heart, and believe me, when you get over the shock you will be better off. God forgive us."

The Brewers' daughter lay dead in her cot, her skull also crushed.



**Above, Elsie Elphinstone-Roe who was battered to death by her husband Gerald Elphinstone-Roe (below) at their home in New Barnet**



**YOUNG SOLDIER ON MURDER CHARGE.**  
Aged Colchester  
Widow Dead on Floor.  
Police Officers' Discovery.

Following the discovery on Saturday night of the body of an 82-year-old widow, Mrs. Ann Elizabeth Wade, on the floor in a downstairs room at her home, 19, Audley Road, Colchester, where she lived alone, a 19-year-old



“Mrs. Brewer had some friends staying with her called Gladys and Charlie and their baby boy,” a neighbour told the police. “They came on Sunday and I last saw them on Wednesday evening about half-past seven. I don’t know their surname, but I understand they are local people.”

Inquiries established that the visitors were **Charles Koopman**, 22, his wife Gladys and their son Ronald. They were from Hanwell, where Koopman had been employed as an instrument-maker until he joined the RAF in August 1943. His enlistment had been deferred for five months, and during that time the couple and their child had lived on the proceeds of the sale of their furniture, ending up with no home of their own and very little money. On joining up, Koopman had learned that he was to be posted to Bridlington, and to avoid being separated he and his wife had run away and gone to stay with Mrs. Brewer, a former girlfriend of Koopman.

On September 10th they were traced to Slough, where they were arrested and charged with the murders of Gladys Brewer and her daughter.

In a statement Koopman said: “I love my wife and baby very much and what I have done was done when I was not in my right state of mind. It has nothing to do with my wife. I did it, and I am prepared to pay for it. Shirley was crying and I thought it was



**Above, murder victim Gladys Brewer. Below, her killer Charles Koopman**



**Old Compton Street in London's Soho. Here Savvas Demetriades was fatally stabbed by a man who later told police: “I can’t think why it happened, he was such a good man to me”**

no good leaving her without her mother.”

He went on to say he had known Gladys Brewer for about five years and considered her a loose woman. When he and his wife decided to run away together, they went to Mrs. Brewer’s home. “I told her I had three days’ leave and she made up a bed for us.”

They did not go out of the flat for two days, Koopman said, and on the Wednesday night he and his wife went to a cinema and then to a number of public houses, returning to the flat at about 10.20. “I am not used to a lot of drink and I began to feel the effects. My wife

***“I’m not used to a lot of drink and I began to feel the effects. My wife was agitated and apparently wanted me to leave. I began to tease Viney by turning the gas up and down while she was trying to read”***

was agitated and apparently wanted me to leave. I began to tease Viney [Mrs. Brewer] by turning the gas up and down while she was trying to read.

“She cried, ‘Stop it!’ I suppose that at that moment I thought of all the bad things against her and how immoral she was. I took a hammer with the intent to frighten her. I know I struck her on the head with a hammer. My wife said, ‘Don’t do it’ and grabbed my arm to stop me.

“Then I heard the baby Shirley crying. I took a torch into the bedroom and struck the child with the hammer repeatedly until she stopped crying. We thought the best thing to do was to clear away. We took a few shillings and coppers from Viney’s purse, and took two rings off Viney’s fingers, and I wrote a note to Viney’s husband.

“What I have done I would not have done in my right state of mind. It must have been the drink I had.”

When the Koopmans appeared before Ealing magistrates on September 28th, the charges against Gladys Koopman were dismissed, and at Koopman’s subsequent trial at the Old Bailey the charge of murdering Shirley Brewer was not proceeded with. The murder of Gladys Brewer was not denied, the defence seeking a verdict of guilty but insane on the grounds that the crime was committed during an epileptic fit triggered by one or other or all of three causes. One was post-vaccinal encephalitis – on joining the RAF Koopman had been vaccinated and inoculated on the same day; another cause was drink, and the third was anxiety about being a deserter.

After hearing medical evidence, the jury rejected the plea of insanity and convicted Koopman of murder, after retiring for only 10 minutes.

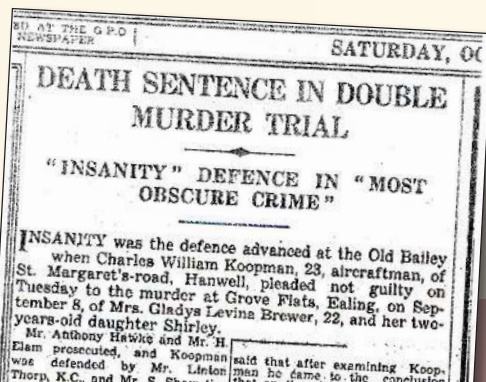
His appeal was dismissed, a medical panel having found no evidence of epilepsy or insanity, and on December 15th, 1943, Koopman was hanged by Thomas Pierrepont and Steve Wade.

## 80.

### A STREET STABBING IN BROAD DAYLIGHT

In the early 1940s two Cypriots, Savvas Demetriades and **Christos Georghiou**, were joint proprietors of a café in Cardiff. They had been friends for many years, but this changed in 1943 when they fell out over £1 10s. (£1.50), Georghiou claiming that his partner had pocketed it instead of ringing it through the till, thereby depriving him of his share. The partnership was dissolved, and Georghiou moved to London where he found employment as a cook in a restaurant.

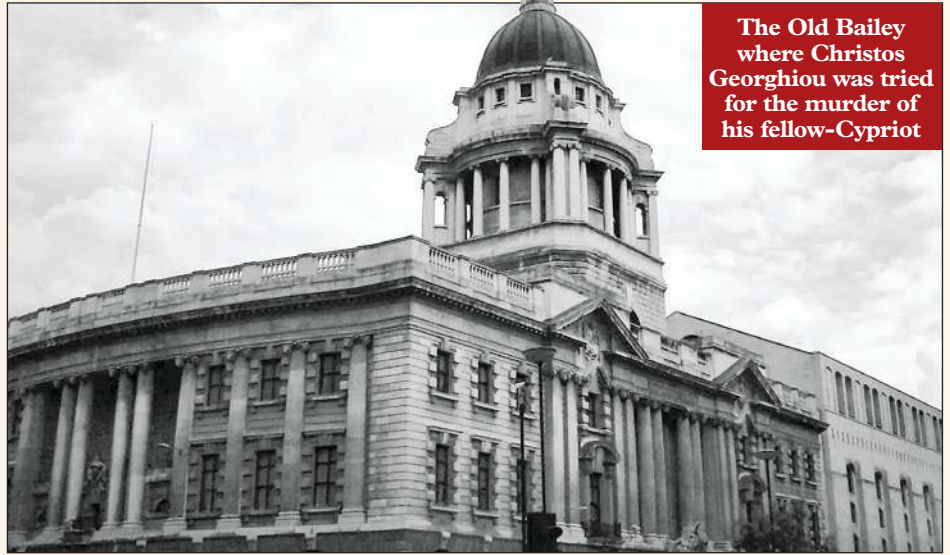
On October 24th, 1943, Demetriades went to London and was twice seen by Georghiou, who glared at him but said nothing. Then on the afternoon of the



**One of the murder's three eye-witnesses, a Swiss tourist, positively identified Georghiou as the killer**

following day Demetriades was stabbed fatally while walking along Soho's Old Compton Street with his friend Christos Costa. The assailant fled the scene, and Georghiou, 37, became the prime suspect when Demetriades's friends told the police of the rift between the two men.

He did not go home that night, but went instead to a friend's house in Wealdstone. He was soon found, arrested and charged with the murder, and at his Old Bailey trial in December



**The Old Bailey where Christos Georghiou was tried for the murder of his fellow-Cypriot**

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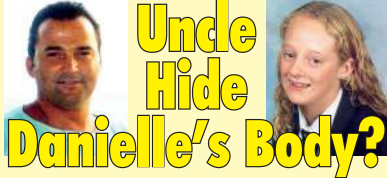
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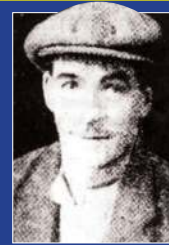
## LIVERPOOL'S MURDEROUS HYPNOTIST



## HANGED AT PENTONVILLE FIVE ON THE GALLOWS IN ONE DAY



## HANGED IN AUSTRALIA A LONG NIGHT OF TERROR IN WEST WUBIN



his defence was simply that he was not the assailant.

In the witness-box, however, Demetriades's girlfriend described Georghiou's enmity towards his former partner over the £1 10s., and also over Demetriades's seduction of one of Georghiou's girlfriends. Then one of the murder's three eye-witnesses, a Swiss tourist, positively identified Georghiou as the killer, and the court heard that he had a graze on his leg which was consistent with the witness's story that Demetriades had kicked the assailant.

Georghiou's claim in the witness-box that he was not in Old Compton Street at the time of the stabbing conflicted with what he had told the police. He had also told them, "I can't think why it happened, he was such a good man to me." In view of the feud between the two men, this remark seemed less than sincere.

The jury found Georghiou guilty, he was sentenced to death, and on February 2nd, 1944, he was hanged by Albert Pierrepoint, assisted by Herbert Morris.

**NEXT MONTH:** Three more spies go to Pentonville's gallows, followed by an American GI and seven German POWs convicted of murdering a fellow-prisoner

Solution to Wordsearch on page 20

N	R	G	N	R	I	N	L	Z	D	A	J	H	O	C	M	
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