

**REAL** "THEY NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO RUN"  
THE 1986 EDMOND POST OFFICE SHOOTING, BLOW BY BLOW

# CRIME™

KILLER CASE FILES

**SHE COVERED FOR A KILLER**

## DEADLY ALIBI

But was Maxine Carr just another victim of the Soham murderer?



"GET RID OF  
THE EVIDENCE"



**INSIDE THE  
DEATH  
HOUSE**



**MONSTER OF  
FLORENCE**



**GANGSTERS'  
PARADISE**



**NARCOS  
KILL TEAM**

**\$500 MILLION HEIST**

HOW DID THIEVES SIMPLY WALK AWAY WITH THIS FORTUNE IN ART?

- DNA BUSTS RAPIST
- KILLER'S PHONE SECRETS
- CORPSE JOYRIDE – AND MORE



# JAILED FOR A CRIME THEY DIDN'T COMMIT? INJUSTICE: WRONGLY CONVICTED HAS IT ALL

You know about Steven Avery's unclear-cut case and overturned conviction. But did you know about the hoardes of others, doing time for crimes they didn't do? Real Crime's *Wrongly Convicted* tells the story of some mind-boggling, fascinating cases.



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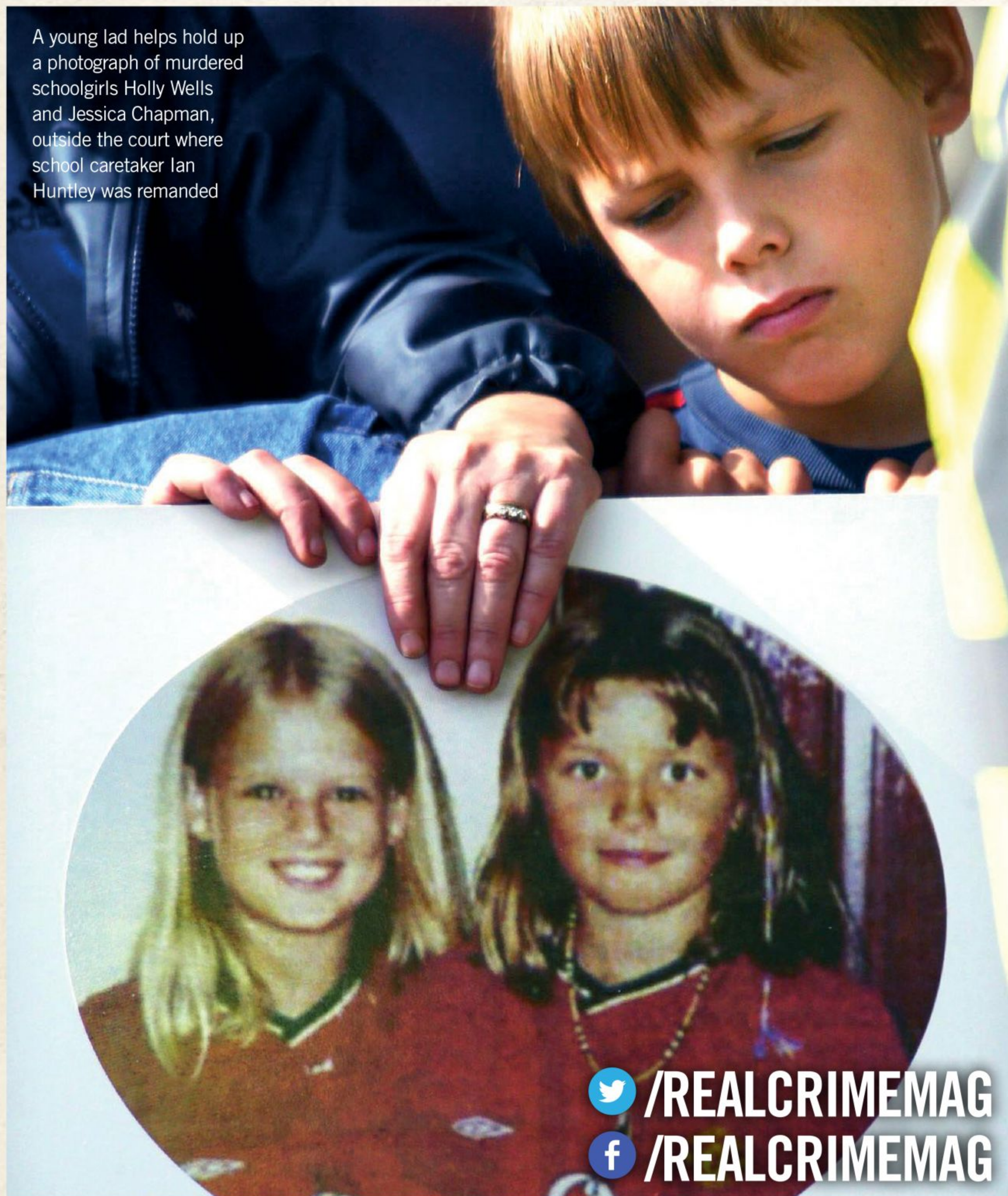


# REAL CRIME™

## KILLER CASEFILES

Journalist Jeremy Thompson interviewed school caretaker Ian Huntley outside his home, just prior to his arrest for the murder of schoolgirls Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in Soham, England, in 2002. Reflecting on that now-infamous interview ten years later in a Crime and Investigation channel documentary, he doesn't remember being suspicious of Huntley, though he did think he was "slightly odd". Even criminologist Mark Williams stated that he seemed like a normal guy, that there was "nothing to suggest he was lying". But Huntley was an accomplished manipulator who had pulled the wool over the eyes of journalists and the police. And his young girlfriend, Maxine Carr, had similarly fallen under his spell, lying for him even after she discovered what he had done to her two students. What she did was wrong, but did she deserve the subsequent public crucifixion?

A young lad helps hold up a photograph of murdered schoolgirls Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman, outside the court where school caretaker Ian Huntley was remanded



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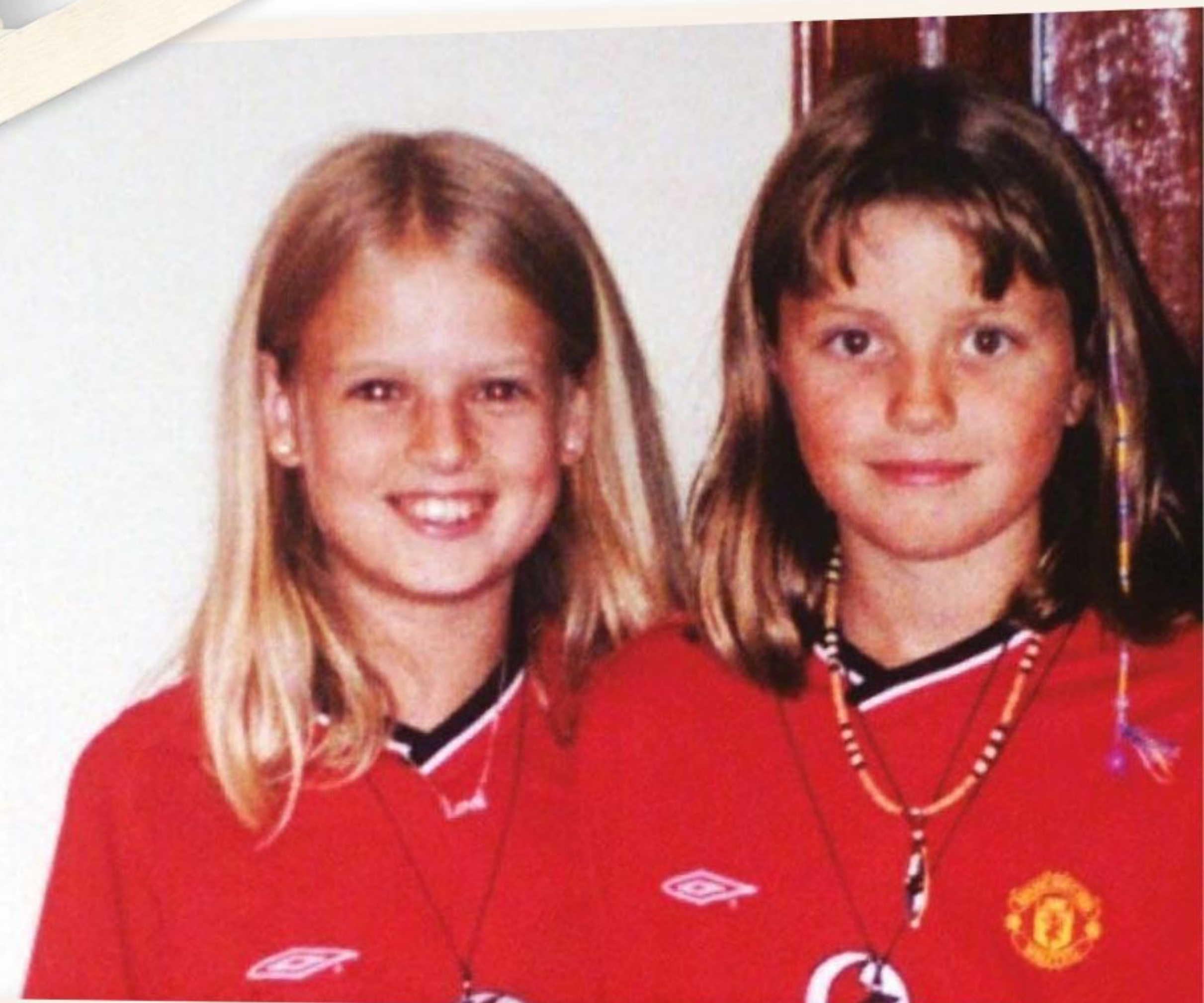
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Where he went, he didn't need money



A VERY BAD DAY  
AT THE OFFICE

# DAILY NEWS

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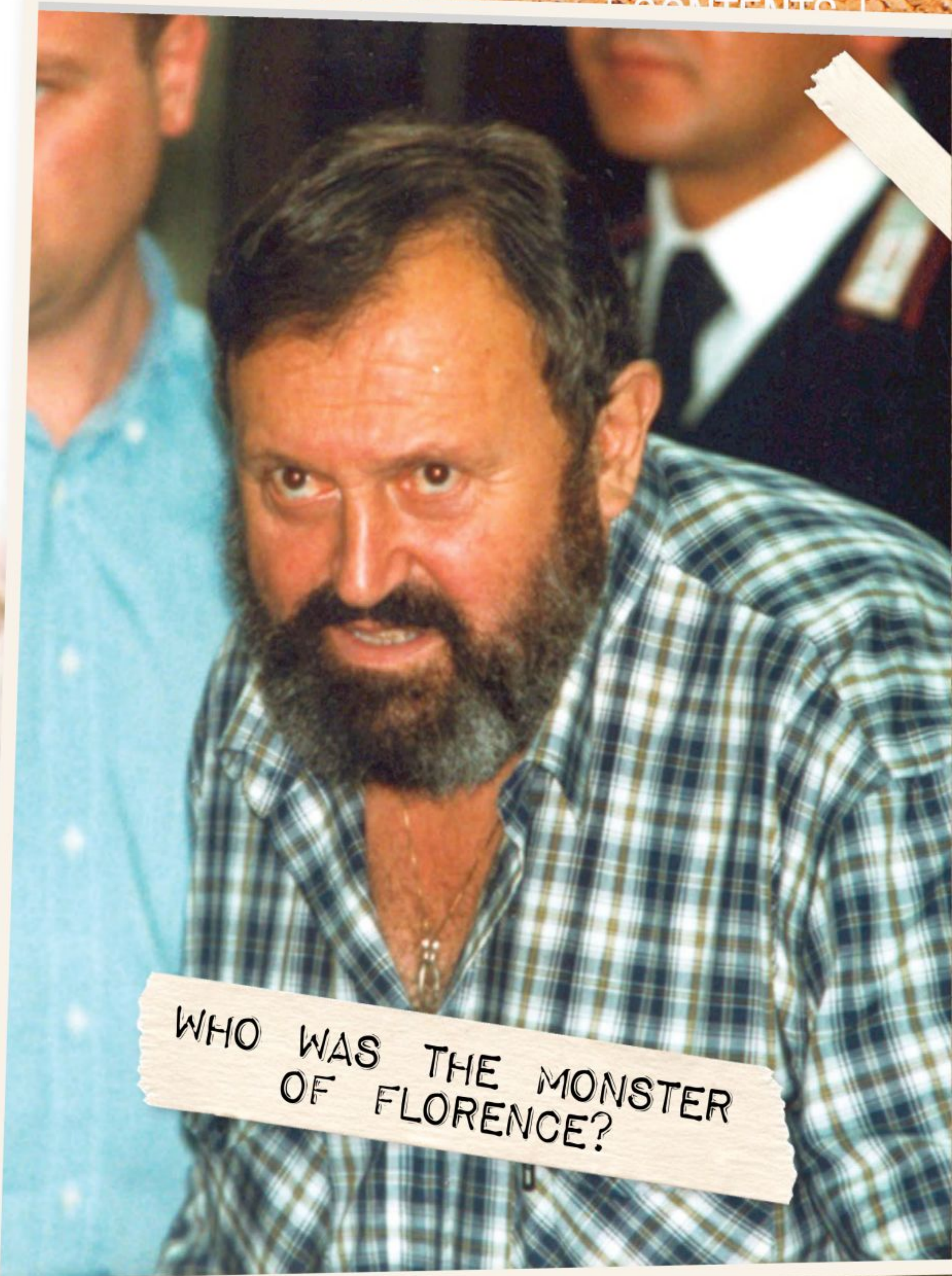
NEW YORK'S PICTURE NEWSPAPER®

Thursday, August 21, 1986

## CRAZED POSTMAN KILLS 14 SLAUGHTER



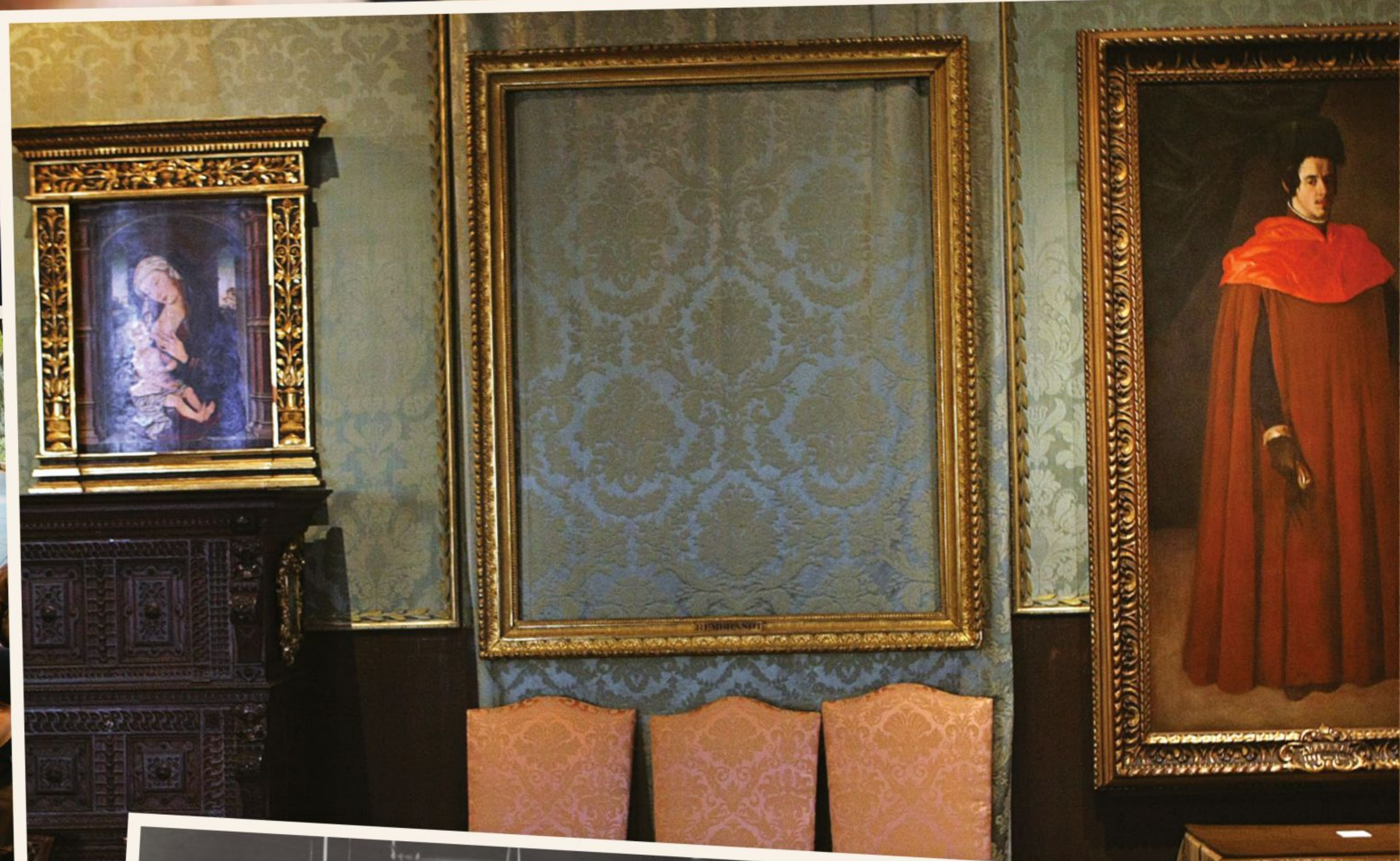




WHO WAS THE MONSTER  
OF FLORENCE?



ROUGH  
JUSTICE



A DATE WITH  
OLD SPARKY







PERUGIA, ITALY, 1 NOVEMBER 2007

# MEREDITH KERCHER: WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

Muddled by a mishandled court case and branded a miscarriage of justice, the truth of the British student's murder in Italy may now never be known

**W**hen a friend of Meredith Kercher's flatmate broke down her door to discover her semi-naked body lying in a pool of blood on the bedroom floor, it was clear she had been murdered. But the court case that followed has shone very little light on what exactly happened on the night the 21-year-old was killed. Three people were implicated in her death: US student and Kercher's flatmate, Amanda Knox, her boyfriend Raffaele Sollecito and another acquaintance, local Rudy Guede. Over the course of the original trial, numerous theories of her murder were put forward, including one that incriminated all three and involved Guede, Knox and Sollecito holding Kercher down before slashing her throat. Guede was eventually found guilty of murder and sentenced to 16 years in prison, while the Italian courts surprised everyone by completely clearing Knox and Sollecito of all charges. Today the defendants' case for innocence, however, is about as compelling as the prosecution's case for a drug-induced ritual resulting in extreme sexual violence.







INDIANA, USA, 22 JULY 1934

# JOHN DILLINGER IS SHOT DEAD

The most infamous outlaw of Depression-era United States sucks up three FBI bullets and ends toes-up in a meat wagon

**J**. Edgar Hoover had been shaking up the relatively new Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) since being appointed as its sixth director in 1924. By the 1930s, he was on the case of a string of bank robberies and their high-profile perpetrators like Baby Face Nelson and Bonnie and Clyde, who wouldn't hesitate to kill civilians who got in the way. At the top of his list was John Herbert Dillinger, a desperado who became the anti-hero of his own legend among the majority of the US population. He was a daring Midwest rogue to those whose lives

he hadn't wrecked, despite having killed ten, wounded seven and led his gang in a string of stick-ups and jail breaks. Hoover wanted to make an example of Dillinger, sending his best agents to apprehend the villain, dead or alive. After a tip-off that he was staying in a brothel in Gary, Indiana, the net closed. At 10.30pm, Dillinger was leaving a local theatre when the FBI sprung its trap. The fugitive instinctively went for his gun as he fled and Hoover's agents reacted, firing four shots, three of which found their mark. At 10.50pm, Dillinger was pronounced dead.



MISSOURI, USA, 12 OCTOBER 2014

# FERGUSON LOCALS PROTEST KILLING

In the aftermath of the killing of an African-American teenager by a Ferguson Police officer, civil unrest boils over

It's a face-off with riot police – just one of a series of demonstrations by the Ferguson community, Missouri (USA). What began as peaceful protests quickly escalated into violent encounters with the police as racial tensions came to a head. By mid-October the situation was far from settled as early witness reports (that have since been

discounted) suggested Michael Brown was in the process of surrendering when he was shot dead by officer Darren Wilson.

Brown was killed after resisting arrest on 9 August 2014. He had stolen several packets of cigarillos from a convenience store; when officer Wilson stopped his patrol car to speak to him, the men struggled for Wilson's

sidearm, which was discharged. Brown fled and later witness reports state that he turned and charged, before officer Wilson shot him seven times.

The case went before a grand jury, which found insufficient evidence to charge officer Wilson with unlawful killing and that he likely fired out of fear for his own safety.







ESCUINTLA, GUATEMALA, 10 FEBRUARY 1998

# 18 MINUTES TO DIE

**A convicted killer becomes Guatemala's first execution by lethal injection and is broadcast live on national television**

A body of a 33-year-old man lies prone as a representative from the Catholic church looks over him. This is Manuel Martinez Coronado, a farmer who had been convicted of the murder of a family of seven in 1995, after a land dispute turned ugly. Guatemala had adopted lethal injection as a means of capital punishment in October 1996, making Coronado's execution a debut for the country. Despite repeated claims by Guatemalan authorities that lethal injection was more humane than any other form of execution, with death occurring in just 30 seconds, Coronado took at least 18 minutes to die and was formally pronounced dead by the forensic surgeon after 24 minutes.

Amnesty International had involved itself in the case, opposing not only Guatemala's death penalty as inhumane but the presence of medical personnel at the execution as being contrary to the ethics of the World Medical Association. It also questioned the validity of Coronado's conviction, stating that there was evidence that his stepfather could have been the real killer.











INITIALS

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CARR

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THE MURDER OF HOLLY WELLS & JESSICA CHAPMAN

# SHE COVERED FOR A KILLER

MAXINE CARR'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE MURDER OF TWO LITTLE GIRLS LED THE BRITISH PRESS TO DUB HER THE 'NEW MYRA HINDLEY'. BUT WAS SHE JUST ANOTHER VICTIM OF IAN HUNTLEY?

WORDS MARTYN CONTERIO





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Jeremy Thompson, the Sky News reporter, likes to say how he tipped off the cops about Maxine Carr's use of the past tense in their now-famous television interview. Yet he began his line of questioning in the past tense. "What were they like?" he asked Carr in a broadcast during the search for the missing ten-year-old girls, Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman. She simply followed his lead. Other journalists too, such as Nathan Yates in his book *Beyond Evil* (2005), noted the use of past tense without seeming to realise Thompson had started off in such a vein. Yet for some, this usage proved beyond a doubt that she knew the girls to be dead and is crucial evidence of her guilt. The cynical British press sought to aggrandise her role to justify continued venomous attacks, which have lasted to this day. Carr (not unlike Myra Hindley) disturbed the moral order and patriarchal views of feminine attributes: that all women are caring, nurturing, and somehow programmed to never hurt a child. Carr told a lie and it destroyed her life. Whatever else she knew about the murders is a minefield of supposition.

Charged and convicted with perverting the course of justice, Maxine Carr was not in Soham the evening her boyfriend, Ian Huntley, killed two ten-year-old girls in what police believe was a fit of rage after a phone call with Carr, whom he suspected of cheating on him. Why did she lie? Did she not cotton on to the fact he'd killed the girls? She knew of his disturbing past as a man serially accused of rape and he'd admitted to 'Max' that Holly and Jessica had been in the house on the night they'd disappeared. Carr effectively battened down the hatches and stood by Huntley through thick and thin, until locked up and forced to confront a truth she possibly knew from the start and may have repressed or genuinely couldn't believe possible.

During the television interview, after talking in general about the girls, who she knew via her job as a teacher's assistant, a position she held from February 2002 to the end of the summer term that year, Carr showed the nation a card Holly had made for her. "She was very, very upset because I didn't get my job and she just gave me this with a poem on the inside saying to a special teaching assistant – really we'll miss her a lot and we'll see her in the future. And that's the kind of girl she was, she was just lovely, really lovely."

Asked for a final line, essentially a plea to the girls or their captor, Carr said: "Just get on the phone and just come home. Or if somebody's got them, just let them go. It doesn't matter where you let them go as long as you just let them go and let them come home."

More so than the brazen murderer Ian Huntley giving interviews, Maxine Carr became the true demonised figure of the Soham murders because of public displays like this. How could she be so cold, so stupid, so intent on maintaining a fiction? It's what she didn't do that ultimately caused the lasting infamy. For Carr provided a false alibi and acted in front of the entire world like she was as mystified as the next person as to what had happened to Holly and Jessica.

## A QUIET PLACE IN THE COUNTRY

Hope is a curious thing. We cling to it desperately in times of great pressure and adversity, but hope can also be cruel. In cases of child abduction, those sick with worry face the storm of press conferences and 24/7 media attention. Pleading for information or the safe return of their child, they await any scrap of news about their son or daughter. The mental and physical toll is gigantic. It can last a lifetime and change a

person irrevocably. Then there is the unspoken prospect of a kidnapping turning into a murder investigation. If possible, such black thoughts are warded off by the shining light of hope. It's what keeps parents and relatives from total collapse and despair. That is why hope can be cruel.

The first few hours of any potential abduction are crucial to how the rest of the drama will unfold. Detectives will also begin to twig whether it bears the hallmarks of abduction plus killing. Of course, they cannot tell the parents and media straight out that new factors have come into play, that it's now a potential murder investigation. Reasons for this are ample. Any leaked info, for example, could potentially work in the favour of the killer. If, as Cambridgeshire police suspected, the fiend was among them – even taking part in the search – they couldn't give the game away. It's like playing your hand before the other cards have been dealt. It's best to maintain a poker face, to deploy secretive methods.

As hours turned to days, the disappearance of Holly and Jessica, until the April Jones murder in 2012, sparked the biggest nation-wide search the country had ever seen. Cambridgeshire police were overwhelmed with information from the public. Police were logging 1,800 phone calls a day, at one point. Almost two weeks into the investigation, things kicked into gear proper. Public angst and media coverage, too, threatened to turn against the police. How can two girls just vanish into thin air? Were the police telling townsfolk everything? The sense of frustration across the board was palpable. What had happened to Jessica and Holly?

Soham, Cambridgeshire, is home to 8,000 people, and before that late summer of 2002, many had never heard of the place. Why would they? It's a small, village-like little corner of the provinces dotted with military bases and not much in between. An idyllic nook of the country to raise a family, live an entirely ordinary life and where the community spirit and feeling was high. For two girls to vanish without a trace was unthinkable. Bad things didn't happen in Soham, until one day they did.

## THE KILLER IN PLAIN SIGHT

"Beggars belief" the young man liked to say to officers, the media and fellow residents. "Beggars belief" almost became this guy's catchphrase. 28-year-old Soham Village College residential caretaker Ian Huntley looked concerned for the safety and return of Holly and Jessica as much as the next worried soul asked for a line to feed the media beast.

Like an actor who'd received the best training in the world, Huntley supplied the trembling lip and misty-eyed waterworks each time he recounted the moment he saw Holly and Jessica pass his house at 5 College Close. As Huntley brushed Sadie, his dog, the two girls approached and inquired about 'Miss Carr', away visiting her mother up north. The reason the cops failed to zero in on Huntley from the off comes down not just to his plausible shtick, but in those early days he was among a plethora of potential witnesses (police estimated at least 30). While in hindsight we can point the finger and say, "There's something not quite right about that guy," during those frantic days in Soham, he was just a local, a face among the crowd, another citizen

**“FOR TWO GIRLS TO VANISH WITHOUT A TRACE WAS UNTHINKABLE. BAD THINGS DIDN'T HAPPEN IN SOHAM, UNTIL ONE DAY THEY DID”**



**ABOVE** Huntley told reporters he must have been the last person to see them alive. Carr, also a face on television, described how lovely the girls were. There was genuine shock when the pair were arrested

**RIGHT** The girls were captured on CCTV in the car park of Soham's Ross Peers sports centre, where they'd been to buy sweets. This is the last sighting of them alive

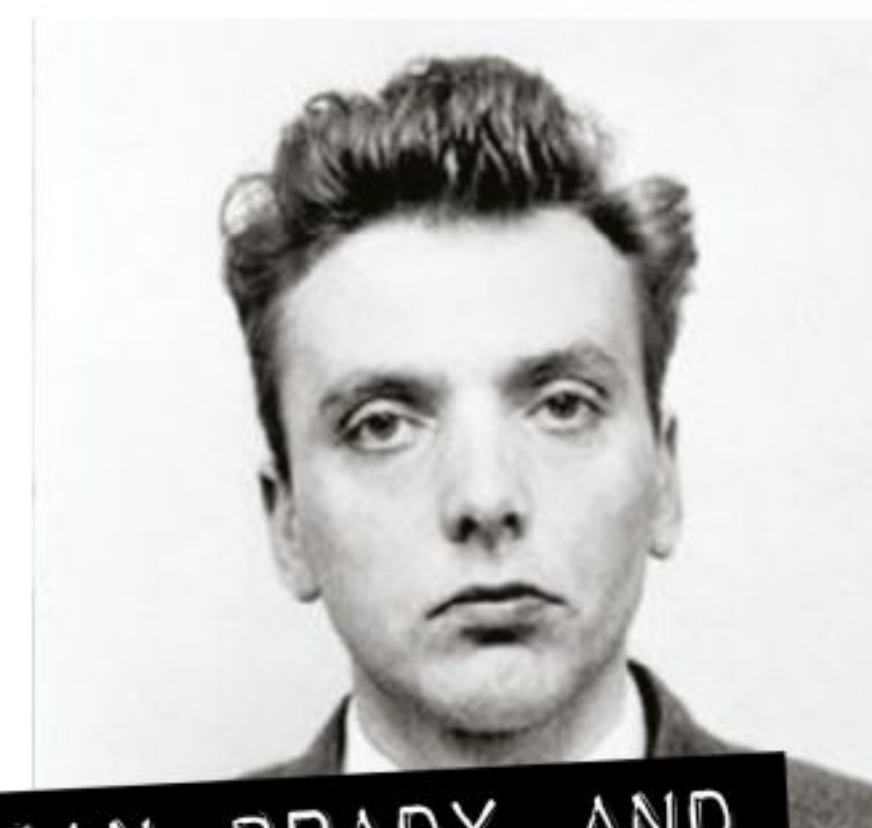




SHE COVERED FOR A KILLER

## COUPLES THAT KILL

THE FOLIE À DEUX ARCHETYPE IS NOTHING NEW. HOW DO HUNTLEY AND CARR COMPARE TO OTHER INFAMOUS COUPLES IN REAL CRIME HISTORY?



IAN BRADY AND MYRA HINDLEY

1963-65

Brady was the instigator, Hindley the devout follower. Brady, the dominant force in their relationship, did the killing and Hindley attempted to portray herself as a victim. Yet her twisted actions made her an integral part of the murders.

FRED AND ROSE WEST

1967-87

The depraved sadists and killers fed off each other's perverse manias and energies. They were truly a match made in hell, killing not only strangers and Fred's ex-partners, but their own child too.



CHARLES STARKWEATHER AND CARIL ANN FUGATE

DEC 1957 TO JAN 1958

The inspiration for many 'lovers on the run' movies, Charles Starkweather was an idiot with a violent temper who believed the whole world was against him. Killing 11 people, Starkweather had a sit down with Old Sparky in 1958. Caril Ann did a 17-year stint in prison.



SARAH BULLOCK AND DARREN STEWART

2006

Said to be under the deviant influence of partner Darren Stewart, teenager Sarah Bullock took part in the torture of a man with severe learning difficulties and made him jump to his death from a 30-metre viaduct near Truro, Cornwall.



dismayed by what was happening. Only when he started showing his face regularly on television did folk in his hometown start to call in and tell them all about the man's disturbing and violent past.

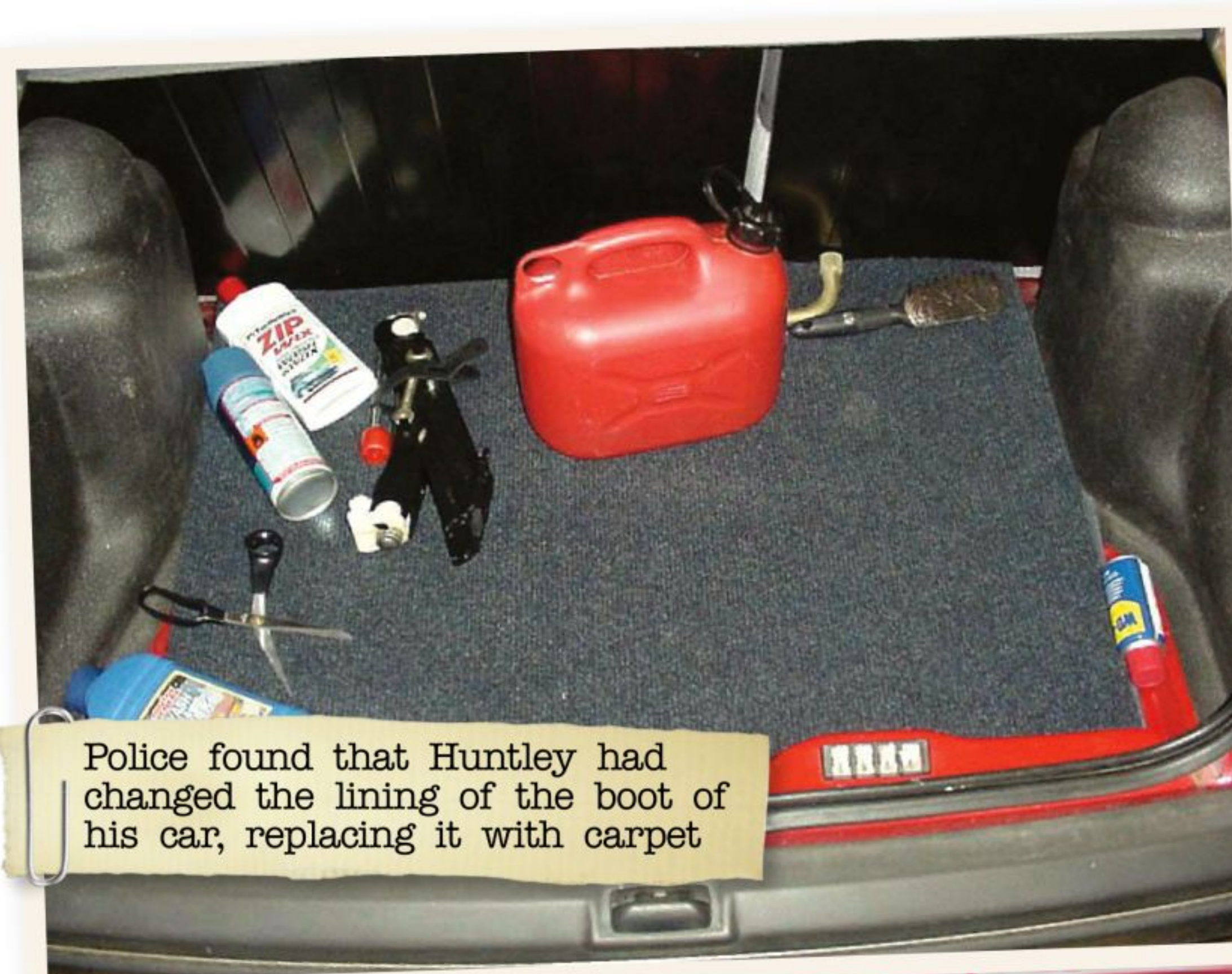
Huntley's accent wasn't the only thing that stood out in this placid part of middle England. The couple living at 5 College Close were friendly enough, but somewhat aloof from the wider community. They'd been in town 11 months, rarely socialised, kept themselves to themselves and generally had little more to say than a passing "hello". Nothing at all out of the ordinary, for some folk are just that way inclined. A desire for privacy is not in any way sinister, after all.

During the search, Huntley came across as a pillar of the community who barely slept. He'd organised searches, let residents and the police search college grounds and spoke on television about the ordeal. It's well known that serial killers will insert themselves into the investigation, usually writing taunting letters or returning to the scene of the crime, reliving their deeds in secret, getting off on the fact everybody around them is standing right next to the very person responsible. Huntley wasn't a serial killer, but he was a serial rapist with an interest in children. And here he was on British television talking about his encounter with the girls, looking ashen and crestfallen, haunted, he said, by the fact he may have been the last one to see them alive.

Many were taken in hook, line and sinker. Reporters largely saw Ian Huntley and his 25-year-old girlfriend, Maxine Carr, also from Lincolnshire, as utterly ordinary individuals, the kind of people you'd least expect to be involved in child murder in a million years. Digging a little deeper, however, revealed warning signs that this couple were not only dysfunctional and in an abusive relationship, but Huntley was a time-bomb waiting to go off. Several times reporters felt uneasy about the pair and reported their misgivings to the police. But it was just another tip or call to log, another avenue to investigate in an operation that threatened to swamp all involved.

It was little things, too. Huntley told conflicting stories about whether he'd seen the girls on the night they'd disappeared. He constantly pestered coppers and journalists for info, or when interviewed at his home, the place reeked of lemon-scented cleaning products, and the dining room – where police believed the murders occurred – was stripped bare and dishevelled. Huntley told anybody who peered in at the room it was being redecorated and given everything that was going on it'd come to a standstill.

Huntley, though increasingly paranoid as the days went by, convinced he was about to be pinched, also thought he'd presented himself as a caring person above reproach. This was a guy with the audacity to approach Holly's dad, Kevin Wells, on several occasions, a man sick with agony and worry, to say how sorry he was for the horror his family and the Chapmans were enduring. There was a point, too, when Huntley thought his act was having the required effect on the police. They'd regularly come by for a chat, always friendly, asking him to go over precisely, again and again, his meeting with the girls at around 6.30pm on Sunday 4 August. Huntley was completely unaware officers had specifically targeted him around Day 10 as a TIE (Trace, Interview, Eliminate) suspect and conducted a forensic search of his home, soon realising the place was spotless. This was strange, but maybe they were obsessive cleaners? A clean home wasn't incontrovertible proof of guilt. But they did find a suspicious dent on the side of the bathtub and they had eyewitness statements – from numerous people – that Carr was in



Police found that Huntley had changed the lining of the boot of his car, replacing it with carpet



**ABOVE** Huntley used his car to drive the bodies into neighbouring Suffolk, finding a discreet bit of land near a nature reserve and RAF base in which to leave them

Grimsby on the weekend the girls disappeared. Officers were playing nice in attempt to catch a killer. Waiting for a vital clue to turn up or for Huntley to make a wrong move at last, or have enough evidence to swoop in and make the arrest.

## THE BODIES DISCOVERED

It's grim business being the one to inform an emotionally exhausted and distraught father and mother their child's body has been found. The glimmer of hope that has so energised them, the speck of faith that the ordeal's end will be happy, with plenty of joyful tears spiked with thunderous anger their child made them so sick with worry, it closes definitively. There is no delicate way of putting it, so the truth is announced with a heavy heart and much professionalism.

On 21 August, two child-sized bodies that had been found on Saturday 17 August, just over the border into Suffolk, near a military base used by the USA, RAF Lakenheath, were identified as the remains of Holly and Jessica. By this time, though, the net around Huntley and Carr was closing in fast. First questioned formally on 16 August, for a total of seven hours, by this time officers were starting to publicly admit to the press and a gripped country awaiting fresh developments this was now – as they'd suspected – a murder case.

**“ALONG WITH A VOLATILE TEMPER, WHICH FLARED UP UNDER THE LEAST PROVOCATION, HUNTLEY ENJOYED TORTURING ANIMALS”**





Keith Pryer, a gamekeeper who worked on the nearby Wangford Estate, had noticed a pungent stench around a local area known as Common Drove, close to an area where he kept and looked after pheasant pens. The foul, acrid aroma could only be one thing: a dead animal. One morning, determined to locate the source of the stink that had bothered him now for several days, he took along Helen Sawyer and Adrian Lawrence and as they traipsed along a drainage ditch – covering both sides – Mr Lawrence called out, “Do not come any further, Helen, go back to the van.”

What Pryer saw will no doubt haunt him for the rest of his days. Laying in maggot-filled water side by side, neatly, almost respectfully placed, with their hands folded, were the bare, skeletal remains of what appeared to be two dead children. The degradation was severe. Pathologists ultimately identified the girls using DNA. Pieces of the girls’ clothing were found nearby, which Huntley had cut off with scissors in what looked a hurried fashion at the scene, and a path through nettles down to the drainage ditch could be traced. In a final act of savage indignity, Ian Huntley, in a further attempt at removing all traces of his involvement, had returned on 7 August and attempted to set fire to the bodies.

## BEFORE SOHAM

What signs are there in Huntley’s childhood that the boy would one day grow up to be a child murderer? Born in 1974 in Grimsby, Lincolnshire, Ian Huntley was like millions of others: a working-class lad from a solidly working-class town in the east of England. But a tough upbringing nor chaotic

**INSET** The burned remains of Man United FC replica shirts were discovered on Soham College grounds, and hairs belonging to Huntley were found on the shirts

**ABOVE** The net began to close on Huntley and Carr two weeks after the disappearances. They were questioned by police and later both arrested on suspicion of murder

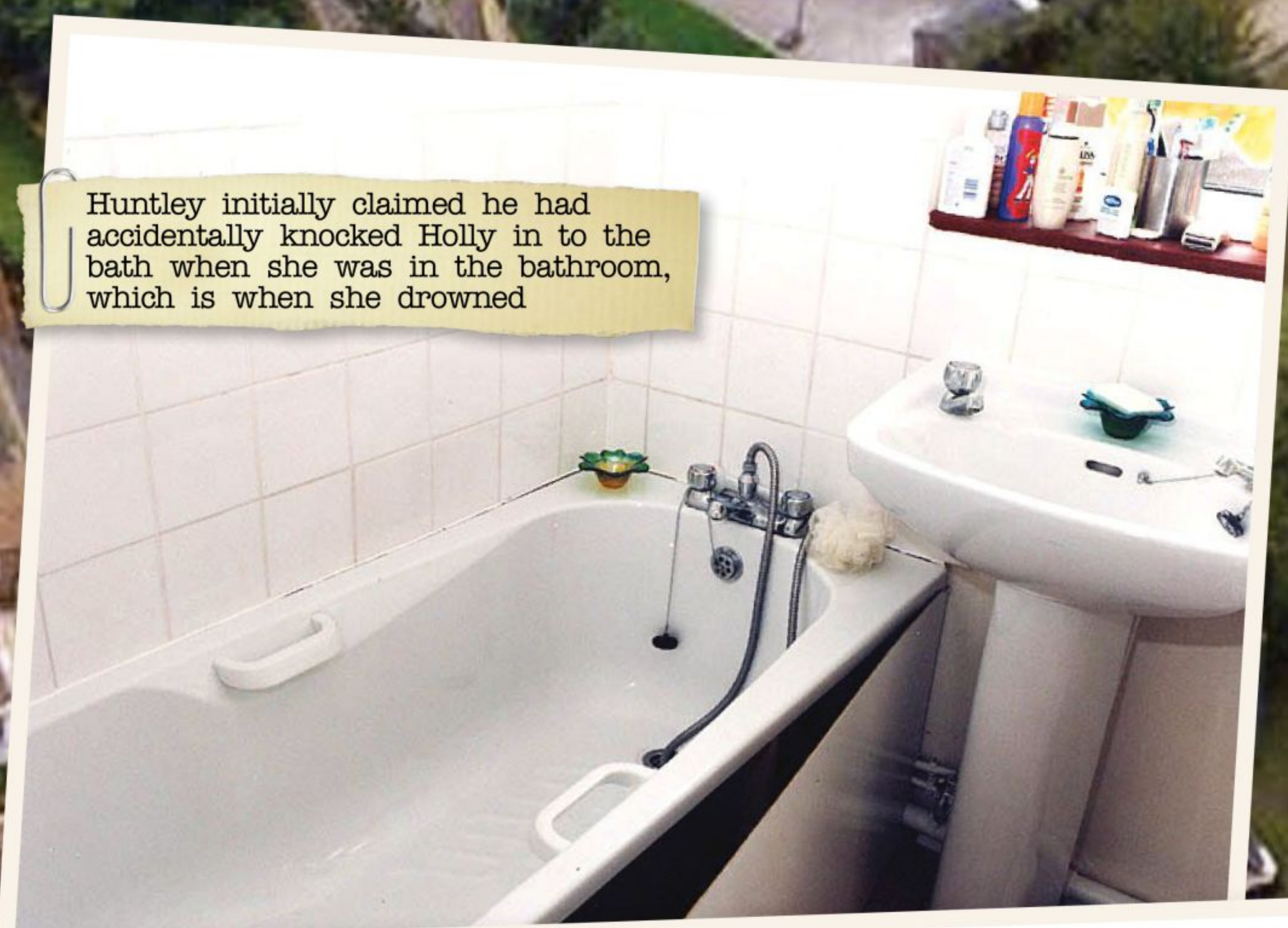
family dynamics explain fully his future actions. Plenty of kids are dragged up in the school of hard knocks by parents striving to get by. But there are signs.

Huntley was bullied at school and something of a mummy’s boy with a borderline hatred for his father. This loathing would cool in later years (it was Ian’s father who told him about the job in Soham) but there was a great deal of resentment for a very long time. Ian grew up also having it in for his younger brother, Wayne, not least when Huntley’s first wife, a teenage bride, left him for Wayne and later married. This bad blood between siblings never properly healed and Ian, in a suicide note found while he languished in HMP Woodhill, in June 2003, awaiting trial, forbade Wayne from attending the potential funeral.

In his mid-teens, Huntley decided to turn the tables on those who’d wronged him – the kids who’d nicknamed him ‘Spacehead’ (because of his large forehead) and began to target kids younger than him. This desire to avenge and humiliate led to unhealthy places. Along with a volatile temper, which flared up under the least provocation, Huntley enjoyed torturing animals too – a theme so common in nearly all cases of serial murder and crime that the FBI, when developing their pioneering techniques of profiling, included it along with pyromania and bedwetting past the point it was socially acceptable as what they called the ‘homicide triad’. Ian’s temper is believed by police to have led directly to the murders of Holly and Jessica, which occurred only minutes after a massive row over the phone with his girlfriend.

Those who went to school with Huntley recall a chronic attention-seeker and pathological liar. This lying became a





Huntley initially claimed he had accidentally knocked Holly in to the bath when she was in the bathroom, which is when she drowned



The house where Huntley and Carr lived, and where Holly and Jessica were killed, was provided as part of Ian's job with the school

## HOW IT HAPPENED

HUNTLEY'S VERSION OF EVENTS THAT EVENING IS A PACK OF LIES, BUT POLICE ALSO BELIEVED THERE TO BE A KERNEL OF TRUTH TO SOME PARTS OF IT. HUNTLEY, AFTER HIS CONVICTION, BEGAN TO INSIST IN PHONE CALLS TO HIS MOTHER THAT MAXINE CARR KNEW ALL ABOUT THE MURDERS EARLY ON

### HUNTLEY STRIKES

Huntley sees the girls walking towards the house and entices them in, perhaps using Carr as bait. She is away visiting family, but Chapman and Wells don't know this.


### GIRLS MISLED

Huntley leads them into the dining room, and police speculated that he may have told them Carr was upstairs feeling unwell.

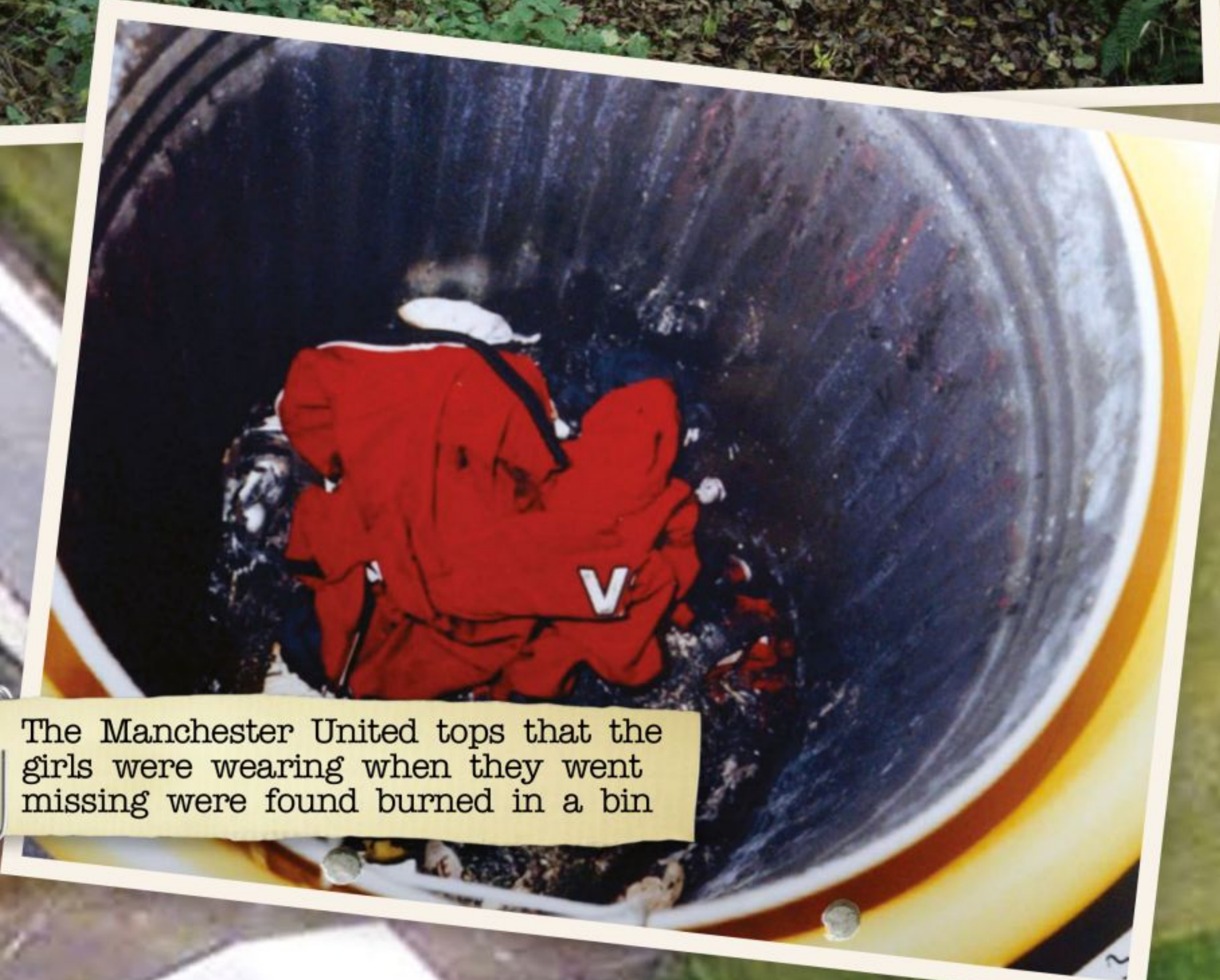
### HOLLY DROWNED

Their killer is not a big guy, but the ten-year-olds would have stood little chance when he decided to attack them. He claimed in court Holly drowned in the bath and Jessica was smothered.





The bodies of Chapman and Wells were transported to their dumping site in the boot of Huntley's car. They were stripped and set on fire

The Manchester United tops that the girls were wearing when they went missing were found burned in a bin

Huntley and Carr's house (bottom right) was fenced off so children didn't have to look at it as they went to Soham Village College (centre)

### JESSICA STRANGLED

Huntley told his mother he'd murdered Jessica by strangulation when she discovered Holly had been killed in the bathroom. She had tried to telephone her mum, in a panic.

### A KILLER'S REASONING

Huntley explained: "I was telling her to stop shouting so I could think. She kept saying, 'You pushed her. You pushed her.' It was only when I put my hand on her shoulder as she went for the door that I realised I couldn't let her leave the house."

### BODIES DUMPED

The killer wraps the bodies in bin bags and drives 27 kilometres to a secluded spot close to RAF Lakenheath. Huntley, an avid plane spotter, knows the area well as his grandmother also lives in the village of Lakenheath.

### CONFESSION TO CARR

Huntley telephones Carr on Monday 3 August and tells her that he's killed Holly and Jessica and he needs her help. Carr was later adamant that she knew nothing about the murders. He drives up to Grimsby and brings her home to Soham.

### CARR'S INVOLVEMENT

In Huntley's new scenario: Carr not only learned of the killings early on, she actually took an active part in the covering up of the crime, not just providing an alibi for Ian. Did she dictate the bodies should be burned and help clean the house?



“THE COVERAGE AND PUBLIC FEELING WAS SO INTENSE, THE MEDIA-STOKED VENOM SO UNRELENTING, THAT JUDGES ORDERED SHE RECEIVE LIFE-LONG ANONYMITY”

**ABOVE** Maxine Carr in Holloway prison, North London. In the eyes of the press and public, she became a hated figure. The cheap Myra Hindley comparison, however, bears zero weight or scrutiny

**RIGHT** The crowd baying for blood outside court. During the trial, Carr referred to her former boyfriend as “that thing”





common thread through his life. He liked to tell anybody that would listen how he was forced to leave the RAF because he suffered from asthma, or that he'd won the lottery and was moving abroad. On two occasions, he attempted suicide in his youth. But most striking of all was an interest in young girls.

Huntley became known to Lincolnshire police as a man accused of rape on four separate occasions during 1998, but the charges never stuck, even after he was officially charged with one of them, which occurred on waste ground near a nightclub, where Huntley had effectively stalked his victim all night. Part of the reason he was successful in getting the job at Soham Village College was that his record had been wiped due to lack of convictions. But the allegations were so frequent that they would be a major cause of embarrassment after events in Soham. Not only that, the documenting of sex offenders and the sharing of information between police forces country-wide altered significantly. That it came at such a devastating cost is but one part of this case's tragedy.

By the late 1990s, Huntley had his brand of vicious domination and control down to an art. He'd come across as a nice guy until he'd slept with a girl. After this, girlfriends became his emotional and physical punching bags. He'd run their lives or harass them until, for reasons only known to him, he'd give up and latch on to the next vulnerable target. A sordid life bedding vulnerable teenagers and drifting from menial factory job to menial factory job, Huntley developed a self-pitying persona – the whole world was against him – and all he wanted was to be loved and settled down, he'd gripe to his mum. That's when Maxine Carr walked into his life.

## THE WOMAN WHO LIED

Raised in a single-parent family almost as if an only child, for her older sister was ten years ahead in age, Maxine Carr was a shy and body-conscious girl who fluctuated in weight dramatically. A chubby kid, she suffered from anorexia as a teenager. Believed by many to be supremely introverted unless she'd been tickling booze, she came across as nervous and perhaps overly ambitious. It was her dream to become a teacher and she loved spending time with kids.

Hailing from the same part of the world as Huntley, there is an incredible irony to their relationship. While often violent, abusive and domineering, their union represented a kind of stability. Meeting one night in the Hollywood Bar nightclub in Grimsby, a tacky drinking establishment, the pair hooked up and moved around the area frequently, living in one-bedroom flats and bedsits, Huntley telling his new girlfriend a sob story about how he constantly felt persecuted by everybody for all the claims made against him. Carr, for reasons known only to her, fell for the sob story; she actively took part in protecting them both come hell or high water.

The move to Soham looked like a fresh start with excellent prospects. But even as early as this move down south, they were lying. Carr faked exam results on her CV to get a teacher's assistant position at St Andrew's Primary School, attended by Holly and Jessica. Huntley – a serial rapist with a penchant for teenage girls – was employed under a three-month trial period initially, as the new caretaker at Soham Village College, despite having no experience of the role. Yet in those first months, with accommodation provided, Huntley was viewed by the school as a diligent and trustworthy worker, who worked hard and not once stepped out of line or drew suspicion. It's telling, however, that pupils interviewed by the media in the aftermath of the murders told conflicting stories. The boys

hated him and thought he acted creepy around the girls, while the female pupils seem to have engaged with him in a totally different way. Huntley technically had no criminal record because Humberside police had deleted his file due to lack of convictions. The school did their background checks, but nothing was flagged.

## THE NEW MYRA HINDLEY?

As Maxine Carr walked along the corridor to her cell at Holloway Prison, shouts rang out. 'Myra Hindley mark two!' While all united as felons, miscreants and law-breakers, in the hermetically sealed kingdom of the jailhouse, with all its unique rules and rituals, doing porridge for crimes related to child murder makes said person the lowest of the low and the target for revenge and attacks.

The press had a field day with anything relating to Carr. Even in 2016, it sought to whip up indignation and frenzy with updates on her life post-release, acting with cynically primed outrage at the fact she'd settled down, married, bought a nice wedding dress for the big day, had a child and tried to get on with life as best she can. The coverage and public feeling was so intense, the media-stoked venom so unrelenting, that judges ordered she receive life-long anonymity, police protection and a ban on newspapers reporting her exact location and whereabouts. Yet the howling headlines refused to let the world move on. The whipping up of mob fury has led to innocent women who bear a slight resemblance to Carr being hounded and assaulted. Was she living in Northern Ireland, Scotland or somewhere on the English coast? Tabloids portrayed Carr's life since as a cake walk, not one of constantly living in fear.

On the other side of the debate, columnists with their own agenda presented Carr as a total and utter victim of Huntley's. They softened her role to that of a complete dupe, a patsy, making out her involvement was a minor thing, as if she was living in fear of her partner's moods and didn't quite grasp the seriousness of the situation. She had ample chances to shop him and didn't. Carr should have twigged – and maybe she did – when arriving home to discover Huntley, a man who hadn't cleaned his home or ever done the dishes in all the time she'd known him – had scrubbed the house top to bottom, the carpet in the dining room was wet through and the place looked spick and span. Not just that, but the conversations they'd had over the phone, on the drive back. Then came the claim she was an obsessive cleaner, which might well be true. But Huntley most certainly was not. He told her the girls had been in the house and how he was scared because his past would make the cops think he'd done something, or would pin it on him. These are strange words and ideas – certainly enough for anybody's alarm bells to start ringing. Because this is out of the ordinary, not routine, there is a distinct lack of logic. It was as if he was attempting to confess but in the most roundabout way imaginable.

"Stand by your man," as Tammy Wynette sang. A worthy concept, for sure, when it doesn't involve murder. But Carr did just that and doomed herself. It couldn't be proven in a court of law that she had knowledge of the murders before their joint arrest and charges (Carr's alibi initially meant she too was charged with murder). But that doesn't solve the matter, or give us a definitive answer. Maxine Carr's limited – but crucial – involvement certainly does not warrant the 'Myra Hindley II' or 'the vilest woman in Britain' tags, but only she knows deep down what she knew and what she didn't. Her burden, her shame, will remain a private hell.



# GOING POSTAL

OVER 30 YEARS AGO, PATRICK HENRY SHERRILL WENT ON A BLOODY WORKPLACE RAMPAGE, LEAVING 14 DEAD AND A LEGACY TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

WORDS EMILY WEBB

The phrase “going postal” has become established in the English language as a term for a disgruntled employee who expresses rage and extreme frustration in bloody acts of violence in the workplace. The incident widely believed to have spawned the term took place on 20 August 1986, when Patrick Henry Sherrill, 44, was on the verge of being fired from his job as a postman. He had worked at the post office in Edmond, Oklahoma, as a mail carrier since April 1985. The day prior, supervisors had met with Sherrill in what was the first step of a disciplinary process.

His work performance was not satisfactory and supervisors had told him so. Later, a union representative, Gene Bradshaw from the Oklahoma City branch of the postal workers’ union, revealed Sherrill had called the organisation after his meeting and requested a transfer to another post office. “He was very, very mad. He was cussing and he said he wanted that transfer,” Mr Bradshaw said. However, *this morning* – the day after he was told to pick up his performance – no one had an inkling of what would unfold.

Armed with three guns concealed in his mailbag, including a .45-calibre revolver, Sherrill walked calmly into the post office via the back door. There were already about 80 of his colleagues sorting mail for their morning delivery routes.

Without warning, he started shooting in the main mail-sorting room. Sherrill was proficient in the use of firearms from his training in the Marine Corps during the early 1960s and as a member of the Oklahoma Air National Guard.

Ron Blackwell, a letter carrier, was one of those getting ready for his morning deliveries. He survived. He said at first the shots sounded like someone had dropped a postal tray on the ground. “Then somebody said ‘he’s got a gun’ and everyone started running out,” Mr Blackwell told the media.

No one had ever encountered a scene like it. Bodies were scattered across the floor. Most of the people killed were







**ABOVE** A still from video footage, taken from the scene of the crime in one of the adjoining offices to Edmond Post Office



close to their workstations, indicating they never had a chance to run. Sherrill coldly executed them. Then he killed himself. The reason why he committed such a shocking and desperate act would die with him.

Newspaper reports in the aftermath of the mass killing described people in Oklahoma as “hungry for information” about what happened at the post office. The news made national and international headlines. An Associated Press report detailed the fact that people were snapping up copies of the *Daily Oklahoman* from paper boys shouting “extra, extra” on street corners in Edmond – the first special edition the newspaper had done in more than 20 years.

The town’s acting mayor Randel Shadid told the media: “This kind of insanity, you read about this kind of thing happening elsewhere, but there are nuts running around everywhere. We’re just sorry it happened here.”

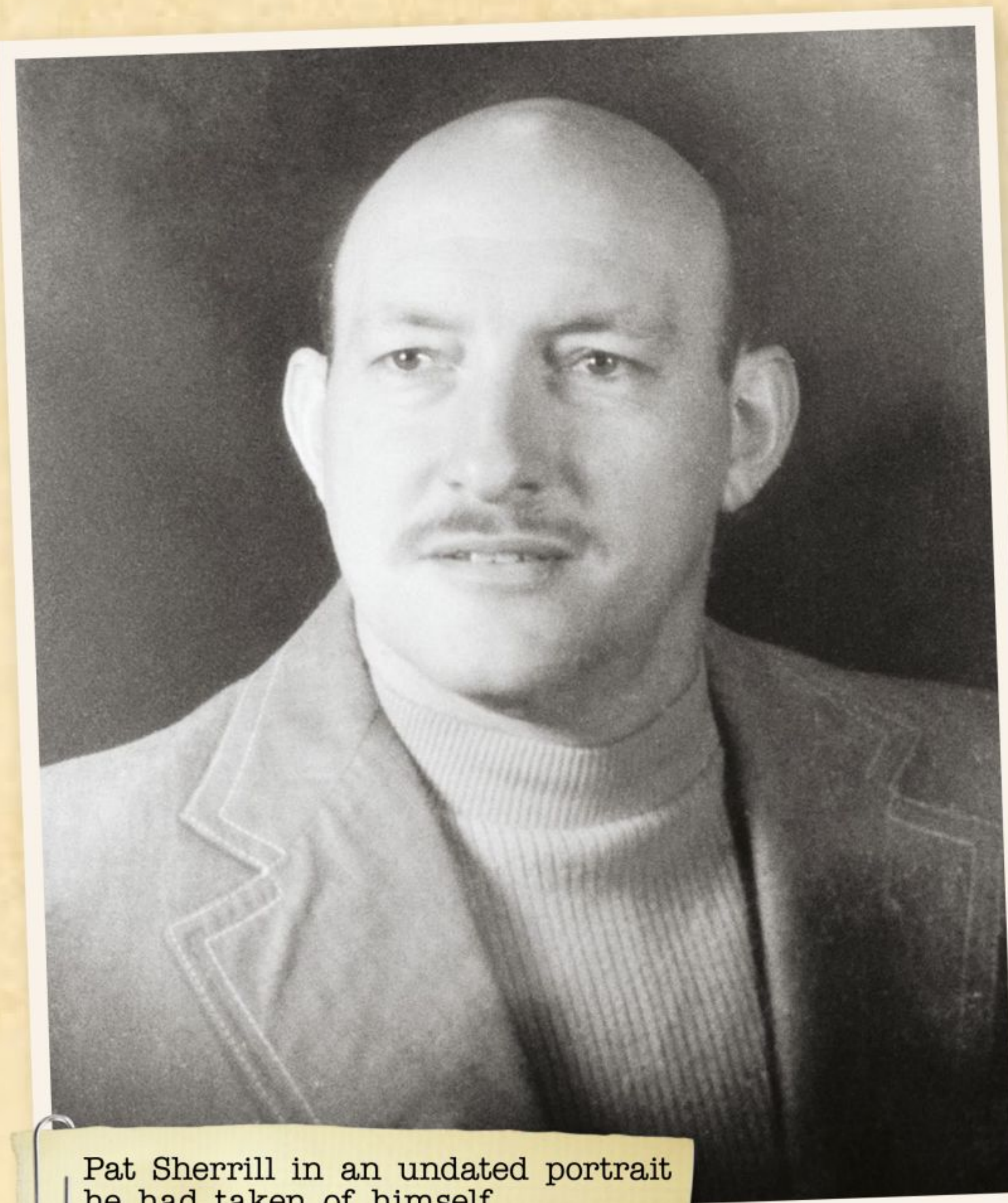
Survivor and fellow postal worker Diane Mason told Associated Press that after she heard the first few shots she crouched down on the floor and made her body into the “littlest ball” she could manage. “He kept getting closer and closer... he stopped then the footsteps started moving away,” Ms Mason said. “It’s just a miracle he didn’t get me.” Ms Mason said that between the shots the post office was “absolutely quiet” and the air smelt of gunpowder.

Just 24 hours after the massacre, the post office reopened. Mail had to be delivered and employees wanted to pay tribute to their slain and injured colleagues by carrying on their duties. A regional director of the USPS, Earl Artis, said while workers from the Edmond Post Office were told they could take some time off, all but one of them stayed at their posts. Another worker, Ron Blackwell, said returning to work was “pretty scary.” “There were empty chairs... a lonely feeling,” he said. “The whole day was real long and awful quiet... none of the chatter that we usually have around here.”

It was reported too that people stopped in to the post office to check on the men and women who delivered their mail. Many residents of Edmond tied yellow ribbons around their letterboxes in remembrance of the slain workers. In the days after the bloodshed, the nation and the world began to find out about the gunman who coldly blasted away 14 lives.

His neighbours dubbed Patrick Sherrill ‘crazy Pat’. He was a strong, sturdy man and some of the taunts included “fat Pat” from the neighbourhood children. He went about the area dressed in camouflage gear and riding alone on a tandem bicycle. Sherrill had lived in a modest house with his elderly mother for 20 years, and when she died in 1978, his world became even more insular. When he was in high school, Sherrill played American football and old team-mates and coaches remembered him as a hard-working athlete who was quiet and shy. Don Roberts, who played with Sherrill on the football team at Harding High School, told *The New York Times* he was shocked by what Sherrill had done.

A local lawyer, Janet Cox, who first met Sherrill when she handled his mother’s will in the 1970s, told the *The New York Times* he would drop by her office to see how she was doing. Ms Cox told reporter William Robbins she thought Sherrill was emotionally damaged. “I do a lot of work with juveniles and he had that look in his eyes, the kind I have seen in a lonely, abandoned child who has been left by its parents.”



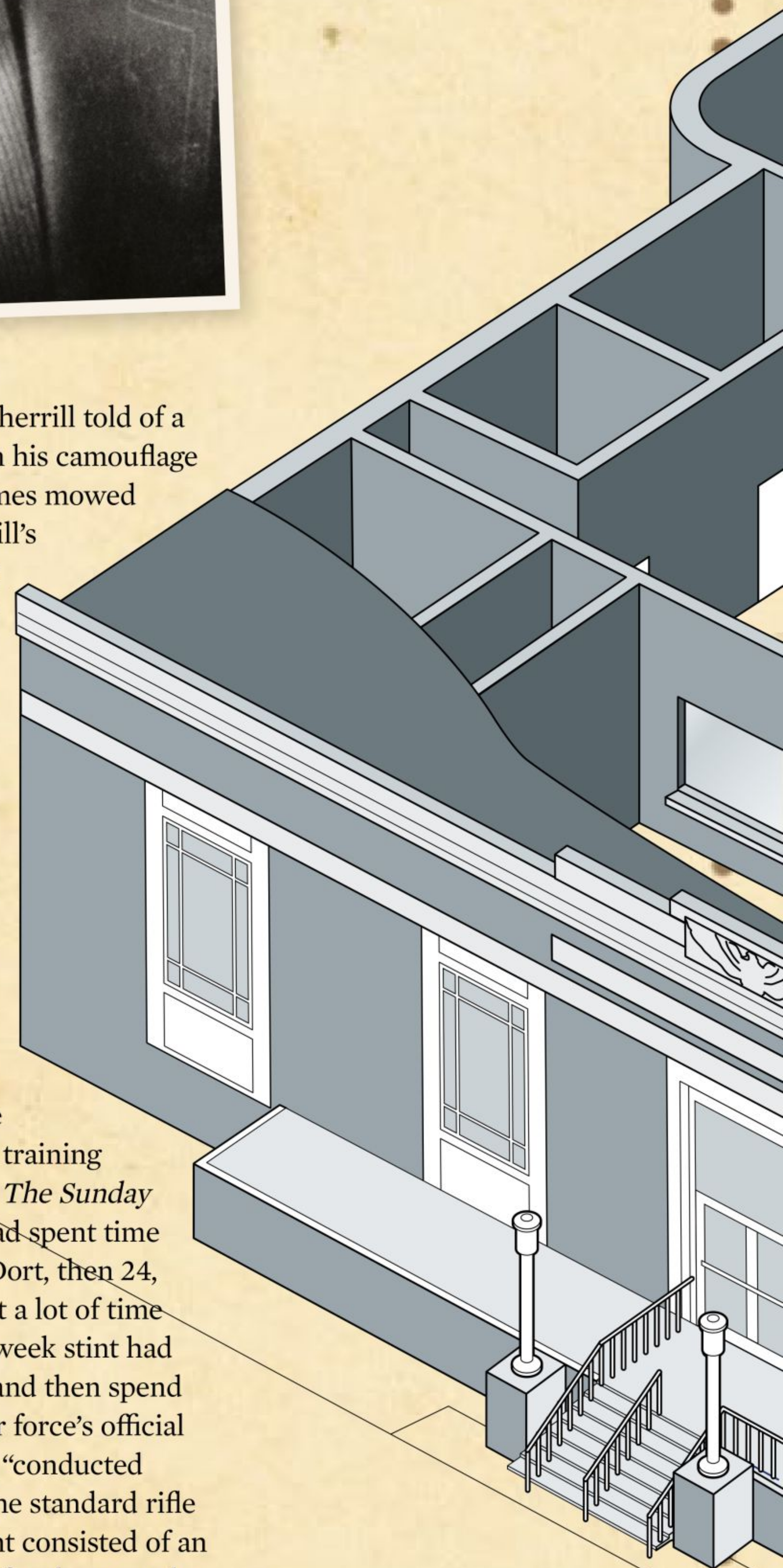
Pat Sherrill in an undated portrait he had taken of himself

However, others who had dealings with Sherrill told of a man who would prowls the streets at night in his camouflage clothing and peer into windows. He sometimes mowed his lawns at midnight. There was also Sherrill’s alleged cruelty to animals, with some saying he would steal pets and use them as bait for his Dalmatian, Freckles, to rip apart.

Vince Furlong, a mail clerk who survived the shooting, said Sherrill was a poor worker. “He’d screw up and then make the same mistake again,” Mr Furlong told the *Los Angeles Times*. “He carried my route once. He didn’t know how to be a mailman. He was discourteous to people on the street. I had people mad at me the next day because he carried the mail.”

Britain’s *The Sunday Times* then revealed Sherrill had served two weeks at RAF Mildenhall, Bury St Edmunds, with the Oklahoma Air National Guard for its annual training course the month before the mass shooting. *The Sunday Times* spoke to people at Mildenhall who had spent time with Sherrill, including Sergeant Christine Dort, then 24, who was a firearms instructor and had spent a lot of time with Sherrill. Sherrill’s role during the two-week stint had been to conduct classroom demonstrations and then spend time on the firing range. According to the air force’s official statement in response to the article, Sherrill “conducted weapons training, principally on the M-16, the standard rifle of the US armed forces. The course he taught consisted of an hour of classroom instruction plus about half an hour on the firing range, firing about 50 rounds of ammunition.” Sergeant Dort said Sherrill was “a very nice and happy man who was always joking around with the other instructors.”

**6** Some workers have hidden in a broom cupboard while another finds refuge in the vault where the stamps are kept. One less fortunate victim is flushed out from their hiding place and killed on the spot.



**5** It’s only minutes into the shooting when police arrive and try to communicate with Sherrill, but to no avail. Another postal worker dies as the shooter moves to the other side of the office.

**“BODIES WERE SCATTERED ACROSS THE FLOOR. MOST OF THE PEOPLE KILLED WERE CLOSE TO THEIR WORKSTATIONS, INDICATING THEY NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO RUN”**



# BAD DAY AT THE OFFICE

SOME HID, SOME FLED BUT MANY DIED: PAT SHERRILL MOVED THROUGH HIS WORKPLACE WITH MURDEROUS EFFECTIVENESS

**7** At this point, most of Sherrill's co-workers have fled, are dead or hiding. Having stalked the four corners of the post office floor, Sherrill picks off another and makes his way back to the centre of the room.

**2** Panic grips the post office and a number of employees flee via a side entrance. Sherrill gives chase and all but one of the group escape. Jerry Pyle dies just metres from his car, outside in the parking lot.

**1** At about 7am, Sherrill strides into work and shoots dead one of the men at the top of his hit list: supervisor Richard Esser. Postman Mike Rockne is next, who falls alongside Esser.

**4** The shooter then back tracks and kills a further five who are hiding under their work stations. A post office clerk, Debbie Smith, in the booth next to the five is somehow overlooked and survives to tell the tale.

**3** Sherrill is dead-set on taking down as many of his colleagues and co-workers as possible. He bolts an exit and then walks to a workstation where several are cowering. Showing no mercy, another three are shot dead.

**8** Less than five minutes after entering the building, Sherrill has clinically and effectively killed 14 while wounding six others. His deed done, he raises his powerful Colt .45 to his temple and squeezes off one final round.



## “THE EDMOND POST OFFICE SHOOTINGS MARKED A CHANGE IN THE PERCEPTION THAT AN AMERICAN WORKPLACE WAS SAFE FOR ITS WORKERS”

Another person who met Sherrill was a maid at the hotel where he stayed during his time in England. She told *The Sunday Times* that Sherrill was “a quiet man who didn’t really say a lot but who certainly didn’t seem neurotic.”

The Oklahoma Air National Guard were quick to respond to the tragedy amid questions about whether they had any inkling of Sherrill’s frame of mind. Major General Bob Morgan, adjutant general of the Oklahoma National Guard, told a news conference two days after the tragedy there had been no red flags to indicate Sherrill was unfit in his duties. “He had performed his military service with the Oklahoma Air National Guard well,” Major Gen Morgan said. “He had been awarded the Oklahoma good conduct ribbon and the Oklahoma National Guard 100 per cent drill attendance badge. There had been no reports, including medical, that would have precluded him from serving in the guard or from being a member of the marksmanship program.” Two of the pistols Sherrill used to kill his colleagues were issued to him by the National Guard for use in a target competition.

So what type of person commits such a crime? In the days after, journalists scrambled to piece together stories that could try to make sense of why the tragedy occurred. *The Dallas Times Herald* spoke to Psychiatrist Dr Harley Stock, who was a professor at the forensic psychiatry centre in a large state hospital in Ypsilanti, Ohio. Dr Stock theorised that Sherrill would have been a loner, had poor interactions with people and a bad work history not staying in jobs for long.

“He was out of control. These types of people are often helpless and hopeless,” Dr Stock told the newspaper. “They are trying to get control of their own life by exerting control over others. Obviously if you have a weapon, you can control other people.” Dr Stock was also spot on about Sherrill having a military background, which has proved to be a common marker of mass killers. Sherrill’s final act – his suicide – was also a hallmark of mass killers. “I think this guy is going out in a blaze of glory,” Dr Stock said. “If you look at his life, he didn’t amount to much. He was going to get even with people and it didn’t matter much to him (whether he lived).”

### A MACABRE LEGACY

#### DAMAGE LIMITATION FOR A POSTAL PUBLIC-RELATIONS NIGHTMARE

The *St Petersburg Times* first used the term “going postal” in mainstream media in 1993. The Florida newspaper reported that the term was used within the United States Postal Service as shorthand for workplace stress. The term has now been absorbed into popular-culture language. However, a study commissioned by the USPS released in 2000 found that of 6,719 workplace homicides committed in the USA between 1992–99, 16 of those killed were postal workers. Nine of these victims were killed by their current or former postal service co-workers. The study aimed to debunk the term “going postal” and the perception that postal service workers were at more risk of violence than at other companies.

When police searched Sherrill’s home, they found things that helped to build the picture of the man and his mind in the lead up to the terrible crime. Officers found guns and ammunition, as well as literature about the Soviet Union, weapons and technology for amateur radio – one of his hobbies. The piles of magazines and newspapers were stacked to the ceiling. The investigators had no idea the exact motives of Pat Sherrill, but they set about to interview many people who had known him or involved with him, no matter how loosely. The authorities needed to build a posthumous profile of Sherrill, not that it would have been any comfort to his victims, but rather serve as a way to identify future people who could be a risk to commit extreme violence at their workplaces.

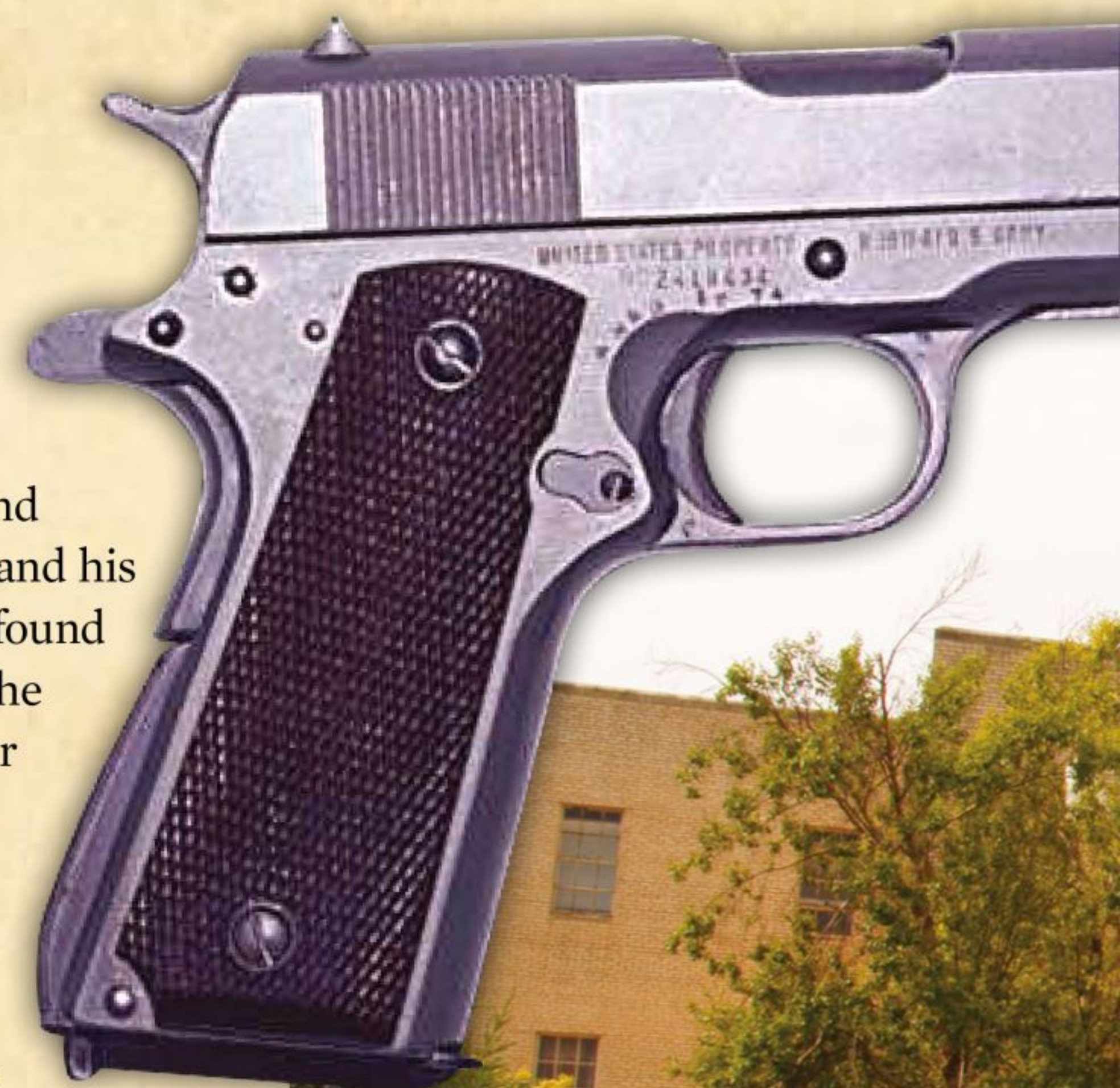
No workplace, let alone the USPS, could have been adequately equipped to deal with such a tragedy, which exposed the glaring deficiencies in the way the organisation handled its employees who survived the horror. In 1987, it was reported that the General Accounting Office had launched a nationwide investigation into the postal service, and that allegations had been made that the organisation’s top management were insensitive to the traumatised survivors of the Edmond Post Office massacre.

A government house panel, tasked with investigating the response to the massacre’s victims, heard stories of bungled death and funeral payments. Associated Press reported on 19 March 1987 stories from survivors, families of the slain victims and the American Postal Workers Union about the abysmal personnel management of the US Postal Service.

Sadly, the bloodshed in Edmond has not been a historically rare occurrence. There were mass shooters before Pat Sherrill, and since him there have been hundreds more. The perpetrators all share similar psychological make-ups. In a 2012 interview for National Public Radio (NPR), Jack Levin, sociologist and criminologist at Northeastern University, Boston, spoke about the link between mass killers and depression. “Most mass killers have suffered some kind of chronic depression and frustration,” Levin told host Audie Cornish in the immediate aftermath of the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. “Over a long period of time, they externalise responsibility, blaming everybody but themselves for their failings. They have some kind of an acute strain, a catastrophic loss – the loss of a job, the loss of a relationship at home, maybe even a terminal illness.”

On 14 December 2012, 20-year-old Adam Lanza murdered 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook. Lanza had easy access to firearms kept in the family home. After executing the innocents, he shot himself. The USA was no stranger to mass shootings, especially at schools and workplaces, but the Newtown massacre gave the nation particular pause as most of the victims were aged between five and six years old.

Lanza was a reclusive young man who was intelligent and had once built a computer from scratch. He had been diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome when he was 13. Before that, his father described him as a “normal little weird kid.” There were other physical and mental factors involved that were too complex to narrow down an exact cause for Lanza’s







**LEFT** The Colt .45 handgun used by Sherrill was obtained from Oklahoma National Guard Armory. Pat was a keen and skilled marksman

shocking act. It was reported in *The New Yorker*, as part of an exclusive interview with Lanza's father, that scientists were sequencing the dead mass killer's DNA to try and find out if biology may have been a cause for the carnage.

The Edmond Post Office shootings marked a change in the perception that an American workplace was safe for its workers, from their fellow workers. What became clear to the United States Postal Service and thousands of other workplaces was that they were unprepared for threats of violence from within their ranks. The Edmond Post Office massacre represented the first of several devastating incidents for the United States Postal Service.

In 1991, another postal employee made reference to Sherrill when he murdered four people in Ridgewood, New Jersey, as revenge for being dismissed from his job as a mail sorter. Joseph Harris, dressed in black military fatigues, combat boots and a Ninja-style hood, went to the home of his former supervisor Carol Ott. Harris stabbed Ms Ott to death with a samurai sword and shot her boyfriend in the head from behind as he sat watching TV in the couple's basement. Then Harris went to his former workplace and shot and killed two mail handlers. Ms Ott had gone to the police a few months before Harris's dismissal to make a report about his conduct towards her, but she hadn't made a formal criminal complaint. Expecting to be killed during his standoff with police, Harris left a note at his apartment prior to going on his murderous spree. The exact contents of the note were not released, but it was revealed that Harris made specific mention of Patrick Sherrill and his workplace massacre.

Harris didn't just wake up in a murderous rage one morning; he had a history of deadly attacks. Police linked him to another shocking crime in 1988, in a New Jersey town. This time, a man wearing ninja-style clothing killed

## DEADLY WORKDAYS

THE EDMOND MASSACRE WASN'T THE FIRST OR THE LAST MASS WORKPLACE SHOOTING IN THE UNITED STATES.



**18 JULY 1984**

### SAN YSIDRO, CALIFORNIA

Out-of-work security guard James Oliver Huberty, 41, killed 21 employees and customers, including children, in an enraged attack on a local McDonald's restaurant. Huberty was shot dead by a police sniper who was positioned on the roof of a nearby post office.

**2 NOVEMBER 1999**  
**HONOLULU, HAWAII**

40-year-old photocopier repairman Byran Uyesugi entered his Xerox workplace and killed seven with a Glock pistol. In the months leading up to the shootings, the company was phasing out the brand of photocopier that Uyesugi was accustomed to servicing.



**8 JULY 2003**

### MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics worker Doug Williams, 48, went on a rampage at the Mississippi assembly plant, fatally shooting five people and wounding another nine before taking his own life with a shotgun. Four of the dead were black - Williams was an outspoken racist.



**12 FEBRUARY 2010**  
**HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA**

University of Alabama neurobiologist and assistant professor Amy Bishop shot and killed three of her colleagues at a biology faculty meeting. Bishop, 45, was angry because she had been overlooked for tenure and her job was going to end. Bishop was sentenced to life in prison.



a businessman, raped his wife and assaulted his young daughters. The offender was Joseph Harris.

Nowadays, North American companies and government authorities sometimes instruct its employees on how to survive a workplace mass-shooting. A 2012 public safety video made by the City of Houston showed a man opening fire in an office and a narrator explaining how to manage the situation. "If you find yourself in the middle of an active shooter event, your survival may depend on whether or not you have a plan... if you can get out, do... Encourage others to leave with you but don't let them slow you down..." If escape is not an option "you need to find a place to hide."



# DOUBLE KILLER COLIN PITCHFORK IS NAILED BY DNA

WHAT	RAPE, MURDER
WHERE	LEICESTERSHIRE, UK
WHEN	1983-6

HOW DNA PROFILING WAS USED TO EXONERATE AN INNOCENT MAN AND CONVICT A MURDERER

WORDS PHIL WATTS

## BACKGROUND

In November 1983, a teenager named Lynda Mann was attacked on her way to visit her friend. Her body was found the following morning on a footpath locals referred to as 'the Black Pad', and it was clear that she had been raped and strangled.

At this time, limited forensic techniques were available to the investigators, although they did manage to obtain and analyse a semen sample from the body, which they confirmed to belong to a male with type A blood. Furthermore, they were able to identify an unusual enzyme profile within the semen, which only about 10 per cent of males exhibit. Unfortunately, at this point there were no further leads for investigators to pursue, so the case was left unsolved.

Almost three years later in July 1986, another girl of the same age, Dawn Ashworth, took an alternative route home and was similarly raped and strangled. She was found two days later near a walkway among woodland, less than a mile from the first murder. Police immediately recognised the similarities between this murder and the murder of Lynda Mann in 1983. Their worst fears were confirmed when semen recovered from the body was analysed, and was found

to not only belong to a man with a similar blood type, but also contained the same unusual enzyme profile found previously.

This sparked the media's interest, and the case was immediately thrust into the spotlight. Richard Buckland, a local 17-year-old who suffered from learning difficulties and worked near to where the second victim was found, was identified as the prime suspect as he had detailed knowledge of the second victim's injuries.

He eventually confessed to Dawn Ashworth's murder but not to Lynda Mann's, and would have likely been convicted of at least one of the murders if it had not been for Alec Jeffreys' intervention.

## TURNING POINT

With the help of Peter Gill and Dave Werrett from the Forensic Science Service (FSS), Alec Jeffreys had recently been developing new DNA-profiling techniques. In a 1985 scientific paper, he had proven that it was possible to extract DNA profiles from old stains, which had previously been considered impossible. Many consider his greatest achievement in this study to be the ability to separate sperm from vaginal cells, which



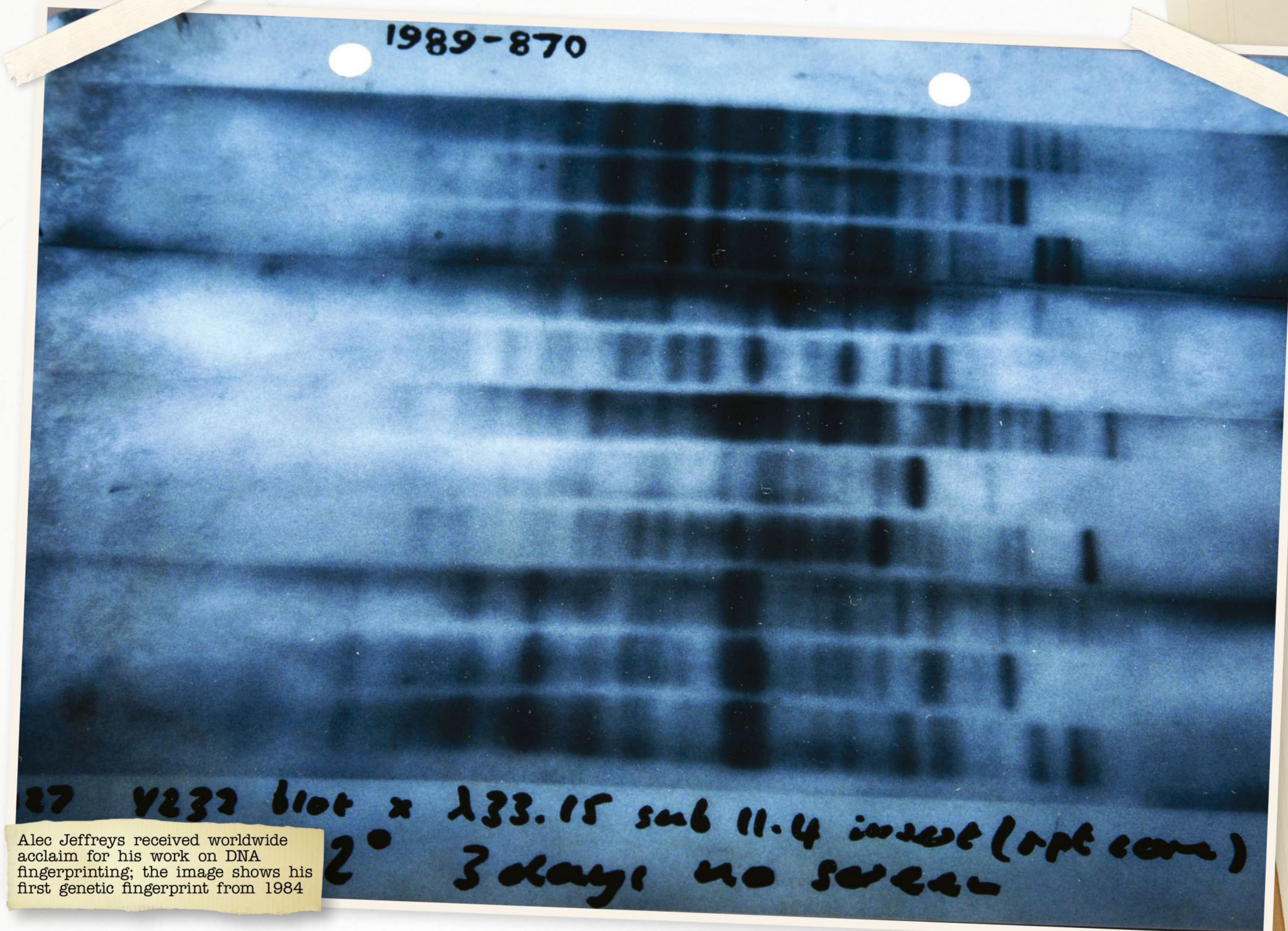
Colin Pitchfork (pictured) became the first man to be convicted of murder using DNA fingerprinting

was and remains key in analysing DNA when investigating a rape case.

Using his new technique, Jeffreys compared samples from the two murders with a fresh sample from Buckland, and was able to prove that both girls were killed by the same man, but this man was not Richard Buckland, who became the first man to be exonerated by DNA fingerprinting. Impressed with Jeffreys' work, Leicestershire police and the FSS employed him to help with a project they had devised to find the killer. 5,000 local men were asked to come forward voluntarily to give blood

"5,000 local men were asked to come forward voluntarily to give blood and saliva samples, so that they could be ruled out of the investigation"





Alec Jeffreys received worldwide acclaim for his work on DNA fingerprinting; the image shows his first genetic fingerprint from 1984

and saliva samples, so that they could be ruled out from the investigation. The attendance was better than any of the police had hoped for: 98 per cent of the men who did not have an alibi for the crimes came forward and gave samples.

The police widened their search to include men that had alibis, but after six months of sampling, the investigation was no closer to solving the case. However, it was about to turn on its head. A local man named Ian Kelly was overheard bragging that he had provided a sample while masquerading as his friend, Colin Pitchfork, who had told Kelly that he had submitted a sample for another man who had not wanted his existing conviction to be flashed up by the police. Pitchfork, a local baker, had paid Kelly £200 to do this for him.

## AFTERMATH

As soon as the police heard this story from a witness, they immediately arrested

“During the subsequent police questioning, Pitchfork revealed that he had flashed more than 1,000 different women”

Colin Pitchfork at his house in the nearby village of Littlethorpe, and obtained a blood and saliva sample from him. Jeffreys set to work, and was soon able to show that Pitchfork was without doubt the murderer, matching his samples to those obtained from the two victims and showing that he had the unusual enzyme profile.

During the subsequent police questioning, Pitchfork revealed that he had flashed more than 1,000 different women, something he had started to do during his teenage years. This eventually escalated to sexually assaulting the two girls, who he then murdered to keep his identity hidden. When charged with the murders of Lynda Mann and Dawn Ashworth, he

pleaded guilty, and also pleaded guilty to an unrelated sexual assault he had mentioned during police questioning. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, with the judge describing him as “a danger to young women”.

In 2009, Pitchfork’s appeal was finally heard, and he managed to win his appeal against his original sentence of a minimum of 30 years imprisonment, cutting it by two years to 28. He was twice denied parole in 2016 and 2018, and was recently cleared for unescorted days out of prison. He is eligible for parole again this year, though the Lord Chief Justice stated at the appeal that the public’s safety would have to be assured before Colin Pitchfork is ever released.





Hotel Nacional was the location for the meeting of the mafia elite to decide on the Boss of Bosses



# Gangsters' Paradise

IN THE SWELTERING HEAT OF HAVANA, CUBA, THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL UNDERWORLD ELITE MET TO DISCUSS THE CREATION OF THE LARGEST NARCOTICS RING ON EARTH, THE EXECUTION OF A TYRANT HOTELIER AND THE ELECTION OF THE BOSS OF BOSSES

WORDS **ROB JONES**

**I**t is 22 December 1946, and the glamorous Hotel Nacional in Havana is bristling with life. The decadent lobby is manned by a series of smart and attentive staff, who are helping check in guests, carrying their luggage, offering guided tours and relating the array of services that they offer. Outside, down the hotel's palm-laden approach, the beautiful winter sun is shining, its light reflecting off the bonnets of a series of luxury marques. Beyond, the crystal-clear ocean waters of the Gulf of Mexico glimmer with a tantalising coolness. Simply put, it is paradise.

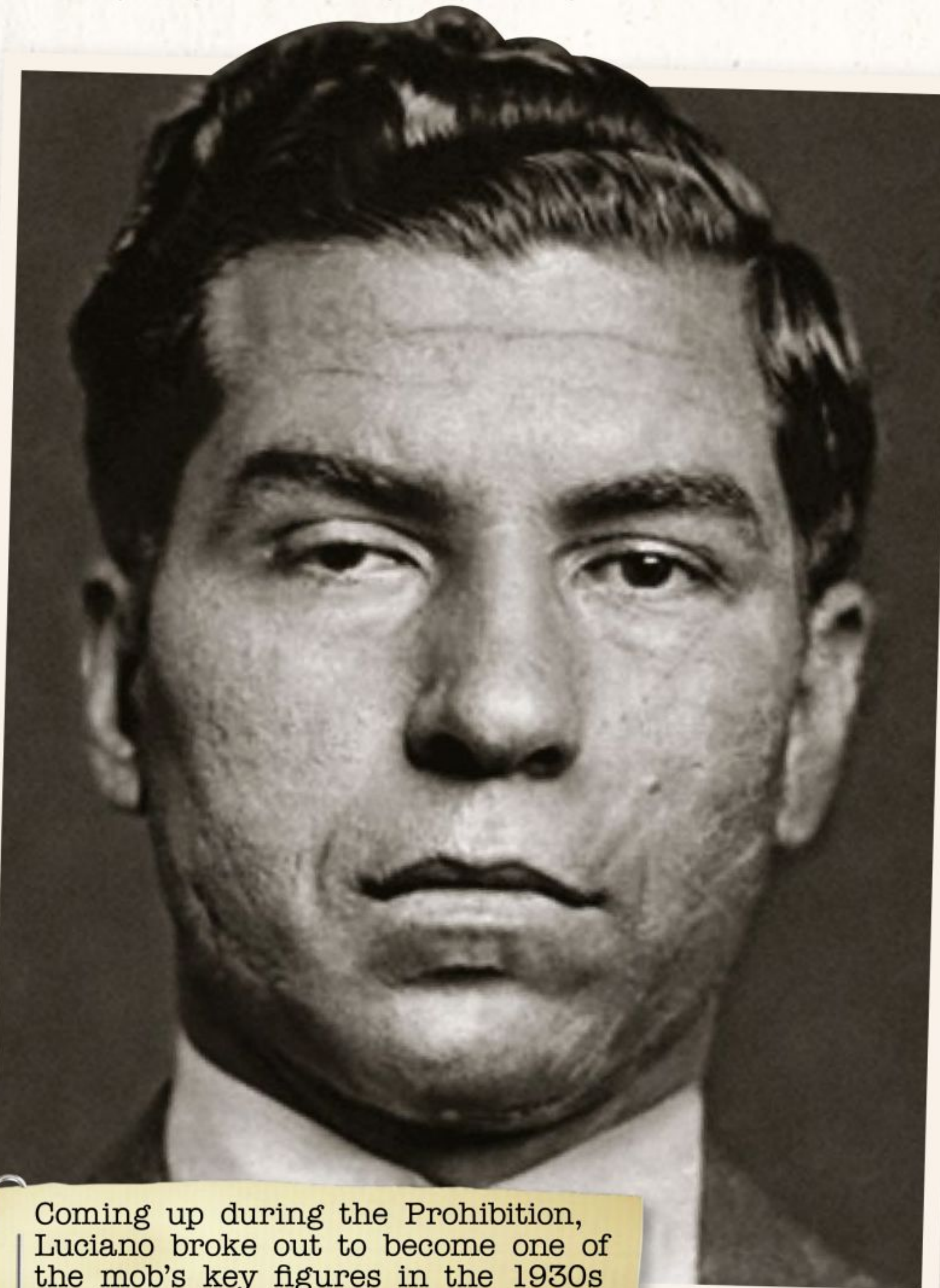
However, all is not as it seems. If one stands back and carefully surveys the idyllic scene, its pleasant facade begins to fracture. At the check-in desk, a pair of suits carefully watch another group of men who, now studied, gather to loosely guard a bespectacled man. That man is shaking hands with yet another who, despite wearing a thin smile, is clearly on edge. Sat in a series of leather chairs opposite the check-in desks is another posse of suited gentlemen. Laughing raucously at the punch line of a joke, their rowdy atmosphere is driving off a middle-aged tourist couple who had been reading quietly nearby. And through the heavy wooden doors of the hotel another pack of suits are greeted by a pair of hosts. Despite their dress, they stand out within the lobby.

Crucially though, what breaks the Arcadian front more than anything else is the cold, hard fact that almost all of the men appear to be armed.

These men aren't just any old guests, they are the bosses and retinue of the most influential families of the American, Jewish and Italian mafias. And they are meeting at the Hotel Nacional to determine not only their new kingpin – their Boss of Bosses – but also to lay down the foundations of an illegal enterprise that would have repercussions throughout the remainder of the 20th century.

## AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

The premise of this meeting, which would go down in history as the 1946 Havana Conference, was born out of one man's exile. Charles 'Lucky' Luciano, a man who had risen through the criminal underworld in the early decades of the 20th century only to be finally taken in by the authorities over



Coming up during the Prohibition, Luciano broke out to become one of the mob's key figures in the 1930s





Luciano holds court at the Excelsior Hotel in Rome, during his exile. Despite being kicked out of the US, he remained influential

a pandering charge, had been exiled from his native New York City in a deal with the US military during World War II. The US military were concerned that the docks in Lower Manhattan could be sabotaged by the Nazis and, considering that he and his close associates Joseph 'Socks' Lanza and Meyer Lansky effectively controlled the region, they agreed to spare Luciano any jail time in return for protection of the docks. Luciano agreed and was pardoned under the condition that he would never be allowed back onto US soil. The deal struck, Luciano settled in Naples, Italy in February 1946.

The problem was that despite his exile, Luciano remained one of the most powerful and important men in the American Mafia. Wanting to consolidate his position, he needed to find a way to not only meet with other members of the American Mafia, but also quash any attempts made to move in on his territory and interests in his absence. After some planning on both sides of the Atlantic, a plan was finally formulated by Meyer Lansky.

Lansky, who was known as the "Mob's Accountant", made his money through part-ownership of hotels and casinos, one of which was the Hotel Nacional in Havana, Cuba. Lansky

shared ownership of the hotel with the corrupt dictator of the island nation, Fulgencio Batista, and considering its close proximity to the United States and anti-American sentiment, it was decided to be the perfect venue for a large Mafia summit that Luciano would be able to attend.

In the Autumn of 1946 Lansky sent Luciano a letter that simply read "December-Hotel Nacional."

### THIS THING OF OURS

At the Hotel Nacional the meeting was about to begin. Looking around the conference room as the men filtered in, the creme-de-la-creme of mob bosses could be spotted. There were delegations from all over America, including New York, Chicago, Buffalo, New Orleans and Tampa, each headed by their own boss. Figures such as Frank 'The Prime Minister' Costello, Giuseppe 'Joe' Profaci and Stefano 'The Undertaker' Magaddino were all in attendance, as was Vito 'Don Vito' Genovese, a caporegime in Luciano's own family who, so Luciano had been told, had been making plays to take over as boss.

Luciano realised this, and he and Lansky knew that no resolution could be brought to the other items on the conference's agenda until it was dealt with. The problem for Luciano was that Genovese had gained popularity in his absence and had a legitimate case to take over Luciano's position. The last thing the American Mafia needed was one

**“ DESPITE HIS EXILE, LUCIANO REMAINED ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL AND IMPORTANT MEN IN THE AMERICAN MAFIA ”**



## “ HE'D CEMENTED HIS POSITION AS BOSS OF BOSSES, ESTABLISHED AN INCREDIBLY LUCRATIVE NEW REVENUE STREAM AND QUASHED THE DON VITO POWER PLAY ”

of its core strongholds to be weakened due to a distant family head, so some other families were already throwing their weight behind Genovese.

To combat this, Luciano knew he had only one real card to play – and it would be a wild one. He was going to attempt to resurrect the position of Boss of Bosses, which had been dormant since the last Boss of Bosses, Giuseppe ‘Joe the Boss’ Masseria, had been murdered in 1931 (Luciano had been brought in for questioning, interestingly enough). This was the first item on the agenda. Once the other families were all seated, he proposed the motion that he, Charles ‘Lucky’ Luciano, should be made the Boss of Bosses and First Amongst Equals within La Cosa Nostra (meaning “This Thing of Ours”), an evocative euphemism used by members of the Mafia to talk about their underworld business, operations and culture.

At first, the proposal seemed to have fallen on deaf ears. Luciano feared that Frank Costello – who had been managing the Luciano family business in his absence – was his only surviving ally. However, after a moment of unease, Albert ‘Mad Hatter’ Anastasia seconded the motion. Anastasia was the head of Murder, Inc, the feared Mafia execution squad, and boss of the Mangano family. He voted for Luciano to become Boss of Bosses as Genovese and his associates had recently tried to expand into his territory back in New York City.

The balance of power had suddenly and dramatically shifted. Luciano, now backed by two of the most powerful bosses in the Mafia, would require one hell of an opposition vote from the rest of the assembled Mafioso. So, through a mixture of lingering respect for Luciano and his close ties to Meyer, the proposal was passed.

Now officially Boss of Bosses, Luciano proceeded to encourage Genovese and Anastasia to settle their differences, coercing Don Vito to publicly shake hands with Anastasia before the rest of the attendees. Genovese resented this, however. Seeing which way the tide was flowing, he realised his attempt to out-manoeuvre Luciano had failed, and he reluctantly agreed.

### THE CUBAN CONNECTION

With Luciano as their head, the real meat of the conference could be ripped into. First up for discussion was the important decision regarding the Mafia’s involvement in the narcotics trade. Since the early 1920s the Mafia had been consistently importing heroin, cocaine and marijuana into the United States, with Luciano himself a key player in the operations. The drugs trade was highly profitable, but over the decade prior to the conference the heat it had attracted from the authorities had soared. As such, not all members of the mob delegation were in favour of continuing or expanding operations and risk all-out war with the authorities. Despite his loyalty to Luciano, Costello was dead set against their involvement, believing that they could remain profitable and, more importantly, out of jail by merely dealing in illegal gambling and racketeering, which were long-established Mafia revenue streams.

However, thanks to his exile to Italy, Luciano was now incredibly well connected with a host of Italian Mafia families, most of whom specialised in importing narcotics from North Africa. And he had other ideas. For months he had been planning a new and improved narcotics operation that would see drugs come from Africa, through Cuba and into the American ports that the mob controlled, which were New York City, New Orleans and Tampa. The Luciano and Mangano families would then distribute the New York City shipment, the Marcello family would oversee New Orleans product, while the Tampa drugs would be handled by the Trafficante family.

The new narcotics route was proposed to the delegation and, after but a little debate, it was passed, with the vast majority of delegates voting in favour. Luciano was now on a roll. He’d cemented his position as the undisputed Boss of Bosses, established an incredibly lucrative new line of income and quashed the Don Vito power play. All that was left now was to handle the Siegel situation.

## THE ITINERARY

### HAVANA CONFERENCE, 1946

#### THE RUMOURED POINTS OF DISCUSSION AT THE INFAMOUS MOB SUMMIT

##### 1. DECIDE THE BOSS OF BOSSES

The first item on the itinerary was to decide who would reclaim the title of the Mafia Boss of Bosses – the first among equals within organised crime. Charles ‘Lucky’ Luciano fought off a challenge from Vito Genovese to be crowned.

##### 2. SETTLE THE GENOVESE-ANASTASIA DISPUTE

Following Luciano’s nomination as Boss of Bosses, the next item on the itinerary was to settle the festering relationship between the Genovese and Mangano families. Both family bosses end up shaking hands, shelving any potential for immediate violence.

##### 3. THE ULTIMATE NARCOTICS RING

Second up was Mafia’s involvement in the burgeoning narcotics trade. Some members believed there was too much heat involved, while others thought it was a lucrative endeavour that couldn’t be passed up. The result was the establishment of the largest drug ring on Earth.

##### 4. THE SIEGEL SITUATION

Next the assembly needed to decide whether or not to whack Benjamin ‘Bugsy’ Siegel, who was believed to be skimming money off the top of the Mafia-controlled Flamingo Hotel project. The delegation voted to execute Siegel and, despite the hit being delayed for some months, he was gunned down on 20 June the following year.

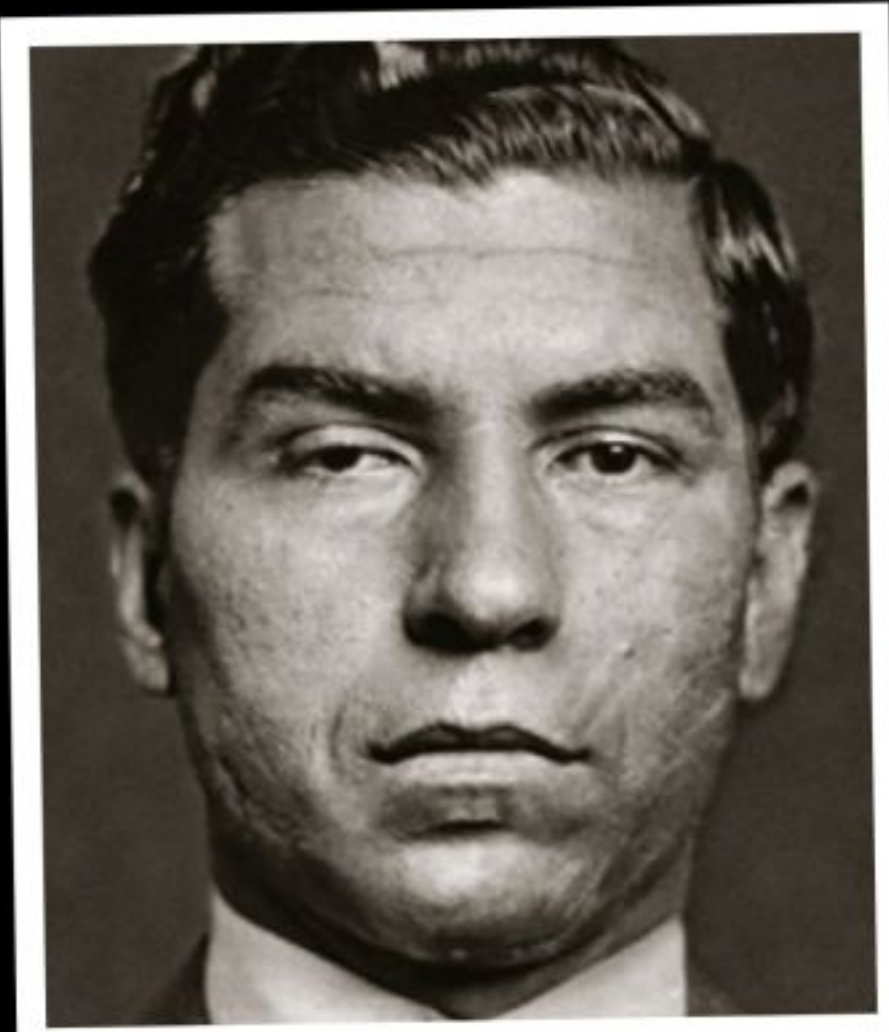
##### 5. ALMOST BEAT GENOVESE TO DEATH

Following the conference, Luciano and Genovese met in the former’s hotel room. Due to his power play being quashed, a furious Genovese challenged Luciano. The result was Luciano breaking three of Genovese’s ribs and leaving him on the verge of death.



# THE USUAL SUSPECTS

MEET THE TOP MEN WHO CHECKED INTO THE HOTEL NACIONAL



## CHARLES LUCIANO

**NICKNAME:** LUCKY

**AGE:** 49

**POSITION:** BOSS OF BOSSES

**FAMILY:** LUCIANO

Luciano - born Salvatore Lucania - started his life of crime in petty protection rackets in New York City. From 1916 to 1936 he was arrested 25 times for various charges, however he avoided serving any prison time. He also survived a throat slashing incident, which is believed to be where he earned his famous nickname.

## VITO GENOVESE

**NICKNAME:** DON VITO

**AGE:** 46

**POSITION:** BOSS

**FAMILY:** GENOVESE

Hailing from Risigliano, near Naples, Italy, Genovese earned fame during the Castellammarese War, a 14-month dispute for control of the Mafia that resulted in a high number of bloody hostilities. He was Luciano's key competitor for the title of Boss of Bosses and ended up clashing with him at the 1946 Havana Conference.



## ALBERT ANASTASIA

**NICKNAME:** THE MAD HATTER

**AGE:** 44

**POSITION:** BOSS

**FAMILY:** MANGANO

A founder of the American Mafia and Murder, Inc, the enforcement arm of the feared mob Syndicate, Anastasia was an ally of Luciano and seconded the motion to make him the Boss of Bosses at the Havana Conference. He oversaw more than 400 hits during his lifetime, only being finally gunned down himself in 1957.

## MEYER LANSKY

**NICKNAME:** MOB'S ACCOUNTANT

**AGE:** 44

**POSITION:** ACCOUNTANT FOR THE AMERICAN MAFIA

**FAMILY:** JEWISH MOB

Born in Grodno, Russian Empire, in 1902, Lansky was the second host of the Havana Conference. Known as the "Mob's Accountant", Lansky was a key player in the establishment of the American Crime Syndicate and a key middle man with the Italian Mafia. He reportedly part-owned casinos in Las Vegas, Cuba and London, making millions.



## STEFANO MAGADDINO

**NICKNAME:** THE UNDERTAKER

**AGE:** 55

**POSITION:** BOSS

**FAMILY:** BUFFALO

Head of the Buffalo crime family controlling upstate and western New York, Magaddino was one of the biggest players in the American Mafia, becoming the longest tenured mob boss ever by the time of his death. He was born in Sicily however and, as such, was a key figure at the Havana Conference. He was part of Luciano's Mafia Commission.

Cuba had been the mob's island paradise since Al Capone (centre) first set up shop there in the 1920s



## MURDER, INCORPORATED

Benjamin 'Bugsy' Siegel, a newly established top dog within the Italian-Jewish National Crime Syndicate, had been making waves in Hollywood and the Las Vegas Strip. He was handsome, charismatic and a well-known celebrity, with the press often portraying him as the epitome of a gangster. The problem was that, through his management of the construction of the Flamingo Hotel on the Vegas Strip, he had been skimming money off the top; his girlfriend, Virginia Hill was making frequent trips to Zurich, Switzerland, and depositing large sums of money in a foreign bank account. In addition, the Flamingo itself was a project that Bugsy had himself convinced the Mafia to get involved with – and it was now massively over-budget.

Simply put, it was time to clip Siegel's wings. The third and final item to be decided at the Havana Conference was whether or not Bugsy was to be executed. A heated discussion ensued, with Luciano relating their findings regarding Hill's trips abroad, the spiralling financials of the Flamingo (which had an initial budget of under \$2 million but at the time of the conference had risen to almost \$6 million) and Siegel's glamorous celebrity lifestyle. By the end, the delegation were in little doubt that Bugsy had to be executed. Legend has it that the conference elected a member from the Chicago delegation, Charles 'Trigger Happy' Fischetti, to oversee the contract hit.

With the Mafia's business attended to, the various families filtered off into the Hotel and Havana at large for fun and entertainment, while Luciano and Meyer retired to their rooms at the Nacional. For one man however, there was still one piece of business that remained unresolved.

That man was Vito Genovese. As you would expect from a man who had risen to power during the bloody





## “ HE HAD SOON BROKEN THREE OF GENOVESE’S RIBS WITH A SERIES OF BARBARIC BLOWS. GENOVESE WAS LEFT FOR DEAD IN A POOL OF HIS OWN BLOOD ”

Castellammarese War, Don Vito had one last card up his sleeve. Incensed that Luciano had so effortlessly squashed his plans to become head of the Luciano family, he stormed into Luciano’s room and played his hand. Genovese told Luciano that the US Government was aware of his presence in Cuba and was leaning on the Cuban regime to extradite him. This, apparently, was only a matter of time and, as he was about to get a one-way ticket back to Italy, Genovese stated that Luciano should retire and leave his family and Boss of Bosses title to him.

Luciano, who had long known about Genovese’s thirst for power, immediately believed that Genovese himself had tipped off the American authorities and, finally losing his calm, launched into a sustained physical assault on him. He had soon broken three of Genovese’s ribs with a series of barbaric blows. When Luciano was finished, Genovese was left nearly dead in a pool of his own blood. As his associates were called to carry him away, Luciano swore that if Genovese ever told anyone about the incident that had just unfolded he would hunt him down and kill him.

Closing his hotel room door, Luciano proceeded to look out over the wind-swept palms that flanked the Nacional. That is how a top mafioso took care of business.

### END GAMES

The consequences of the 1946 Havana Conference reverberated through the criminal underworld for decades.

In the months that followed the conference, Luciano was indeed deported from Cuba, with the US Government halting medical supply shipments into Cuba to get Batista’s cooperation on the issue. Luciano was arrested when he returned to Italy too, however he was soon released and continued to oversee the Mafia’s affairs as Boss of Bosses. He would live on until 1962, when he succumbed to a heart attack outside Naples International Airport.

As for Luciano’s new narcotics plan, it grew from strength to strength over multiple decades, with associates who had attended the conference – such as Joseph ‘The Old Man’ Profaci – smuggling masses of drugs into the US. The ring proved so stable that other members of the conference delegation, such as Magaddino, were capable of expanding operations even further than planned, into Canada, with branch families operating out of Montreal and Toronto. Indeed, the plan was so successful, that many of the distribution networks established by Luciano and his associates are still in use today.

And then, of course, there was Benjamin ‘Bugsy’ Siegel. Siegel was gunned down at his girlfriend’s mansion in Los Angeles on 20 June 1947. He was sat in an armchair by a living room window, reading the daily newspaper, when an unidentified gunman used a military-grade carbine rifle to fire four shots into him: two in the chest and two in the skull. Unfortunately for Siegel, the Flamingo Hotel had been a flop after its grand opening and, as ever in the “business” world, he had paid the ultimate price.

**ABOVE LEFT** The mob-run Hotel Nacional (left) dominates the skyline. To its right is the 40-storey FOCSA Building - still the tallest structure in Cuba - which was allegedly built with Mafia money

**ABOVE** A flower vendor tends her stall on the street of Havana, unaware that beyond this riot of colour the heaviest hitters in the underworld were settling their debts and making their plays



The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston houses an immensely important art collection

## MINUTE BY MINUTE

# CRIMINAL MASTERPIECE THE ART OF A \$500 MILLION HEIST

IN MARCH 1990, 13 ARTWORKS WERE STOLEN FROM A BOSTON MUSEUM BY TWO MEN POSING AS POLICE OFFICERS. NONE OF THE PAINTINGS HAVE EVER BEEN SEEN AGAIN

WORDS TONY THOMPSON

For Rick Abath, it was, without doubt, the most boring job in the world, but one that, for a while at least, fitted in well with his plans. By day, the 23-year-old college drop-out pursued his dream of rock stardom with his band called Ukiah. At night, he earned the money he desperately needed to support himself by working as a security guard at the a in Boston.

Although the job made him responsible for the security of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of artworks, it wasn't something Abath took too seriously. More often than not, he was either drunk, stoned or both at the start of his shift. One time he had treated a few friends to a 'private viewing', sneaking them so they could all sit around drinking wine and admiring the paintings.

By mid-March 1990, Abath was fed up of the late nights and low pay – he earned just \$7.35 per hour – so decided to quit his job. On the evening of 17 March, he was a few days into his two-week notice period and found it hard to work up any enthusiasm.

Even before he set off for his shift, Abath knew exactly how the night was going to play out. The two guards would take it in turns to either walk through the four-

storey building or man the main security desk, keeping an eye on the four video monitors that fed back live pictures from strategically placed cameras inside the museum. The galleries and corridors were also fitted with motion detectors that tripped a silent alarm in a computer room just behind the main security desk.

However, the motion detectors were not hugely effective and could easily be fooled, and occasionally, in an attempt to stave off boredom during the night shift, the guards used to make a game of seeing whether they could complete an entire round of the building without setting off a single one of the detectors.

There was rarely anything for Abath to do. Earlier that month, a man had tried to enter the museum in the early hours of the morning claiming that he was being assaulted. The guards called the police, but by the time they arrived, he had vanished.

As he left for work that night, Abath was unusually clear headed, having neither drunk any alcohol or smoked any weed for a change. He was certain this shift would be as dull as any other. He had no idea that he was about to become witness to the biggest art robbery in history.

“EARLIER THAT MONTH, A MAN HAD TRIED TO ENTER THE MUSEUM IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THE MORNING CLAIMING THAT HE WAS BEING ASSAULTED”



17 MARCH 1990

23.45

Richard Abath arrives at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston ready to work the midnight to 7am shift. His usual partner is off sick so he is working alongside a 25-year-old horn player who usually works the day shift and has no night-time experience. The pair have never worked together before.





**LEFT** The guards' mouths were covered with duct tape and both were handcuffed to a pipe and workbench in the basement. The men remained in this position for more than seven hours



## 18 MARCH 1990

**00.27**

Abath sets off on his first patrol of the museum's galleries. He passes through the Blue Room on the first floor, setting off the motion detectors as he does so. A little later, the fire alarm sounds indicating a blaze on the third floor. Abath, who is midway through his rounds, checks the room and finds no fire.

**00.45**

A group of youths emerging from a St Patrick's Day party at an apartment in Palace Road spot two men in police uniforms sitting in the front seats of an innocuous red hatchback, possibly a Dodge Daytona, parked approximately 30 metres away from the employees' entrance of the museum.

**00.53**

Abath continues his rounds, once more passing through the Blue Room where *Chez Tortoni* by Edouard Manet is on display. Once again, Abath sets off the motion detectors in the room.

**01.04**

Abath checks that the door to the Palace Road entrance of the museum is securely locked. He does this by opening and then shutting it, despite this not being of standard operating procedures for the guards. He returns to his post. A little later, his colleague heads off on his patrol.

**01.24**

Two men dressed as police officers – most likely the same pair seen waiting in the car earlier – ring the doorbell of the museum's Palace Road entrance, claiming they are investigating reports of disturbance. Abath buzzes them inside, through the double security doors.



## 5 SHORT GALLERY

The eagle finial perched on the pole of a silk Napoleonic flag, purchased by Isabella Gardner herself in 1880, was the least valuable object stolen during the heist. The thieves had attempted to unscrew the whole thing but settled for just the top when this failed. The museum has offered a reward of \$100,000 for this single item. The thieves may have mistakenly believed it was made of gold.



## 2 BLUE ROOM

At some point during the 81 minutes that the thieves are inside the museum, Manet's *Chez Tortoni* is removed from the wall. Exactly when this happens is unknown as, strangely, the motion detectors are last activated at 12.53 when Abath does his rounds. The frame for the painting is later found on a chair in the security supervisor's office.

# CURATING THEIR COLLECTION

THE THIEVES WERE IN NO HURRY TO MAKE A QUICK GETAWAY, AND TOOK TIME TO CAREFULLY SELECT THEIR PIECES



01.25

Abath is asked to call down to his colleague. One of the officers tells Abath he looks like someone wanted on a warrant and asks him to show some identification. The 'cop' proceeds to handcuff Abath.

01.26

Abath's colleague arrives. He too is immediately handcuffed. When he asks why he is being arrested, one of the intruders announces: "Gentlemen, this is a robbery," and proceeds to take them down to the basement.

01.48

After duct-taping the guards' faces and handcuffing them to a pipe, they inform them that, if they keep quiet and tell the police nothing for a year, they will be sent a reward. The thieves then climb the main staircase and walk down the second-floor corridor overlooking the courtyard, and into the Dutch Room.

01.54

An alarm is tripped in the Dutch Room. The thieves go about their work with brutal efficiency, cutting three paintings by Rembrandt out of their frames. They also help themselves to a Chinese bronze beaker and a landscape by Flinck. A painting by Vermeer called *The Concert* is also cut out of its frame.

01.56

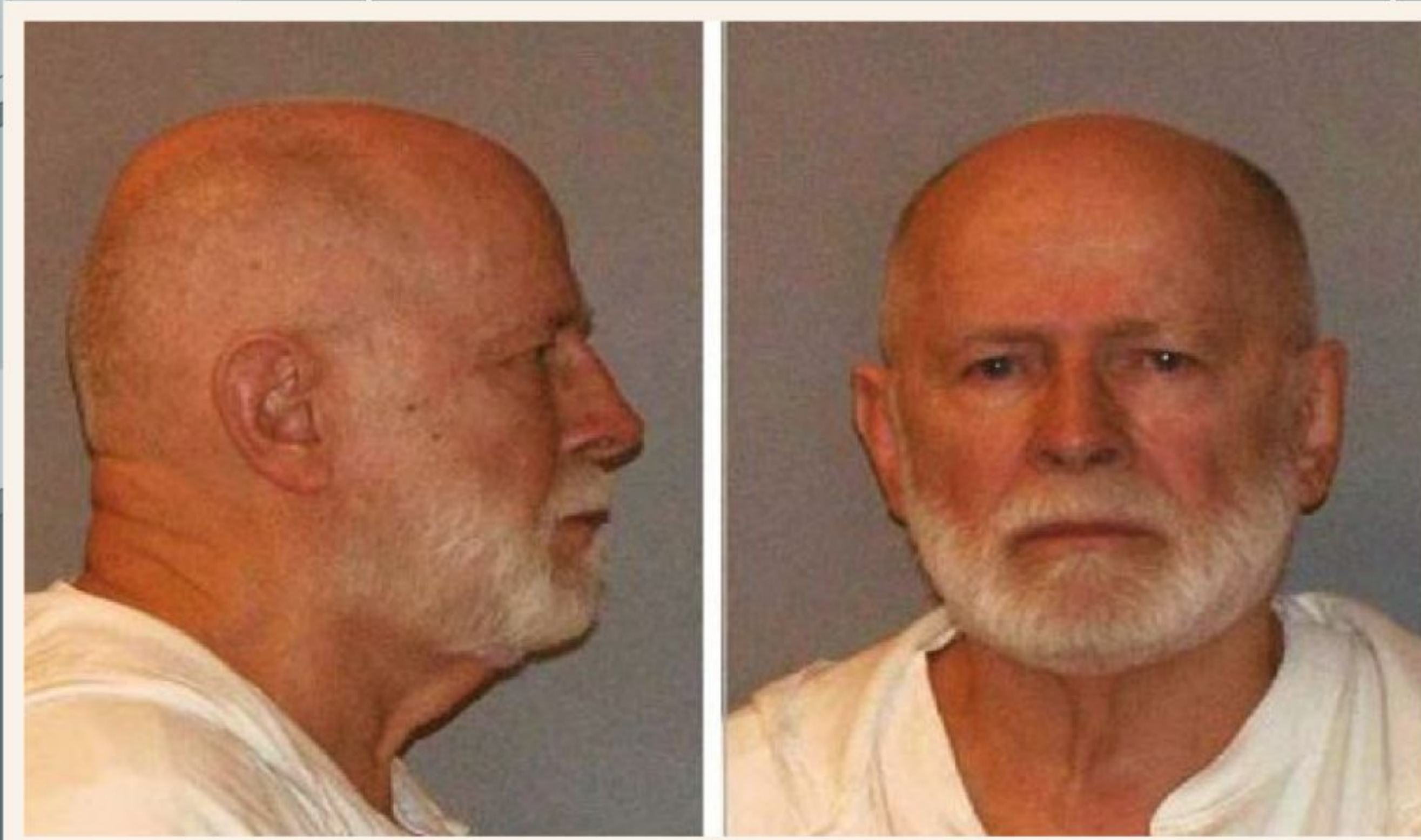
Motion detector records show that at least one of the men enters the Tapestry Room, the largest in the museum, though nothing is taken from here. At some point, one or both men return to the basement to check the guards are still secure. Abath passes the time by singing a Bob Dylan's song *I Shall Be Released* to himself.



# MOB BOSS LINKS

LEADING ORGANISED CRIME FIGURES IN BOSTON HAVE LONG BEEN SUSPECTED OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE HEIST OR DISPOSAL OF THE PAINTINGS

The city of Boston is home to some of the world's most notorious organised crime figures, many of whom have been repeatedly linked to the museum heist. Chief among them is James 'Whitey' Bulger, a former mob boss convicted of involvement in 11 separate murders. Bulger spent 16 years on the run before being captured in 2011 at the age of 81. Although he was always deeply involved in criminality, Bulger also worked as an informant for the FBI. His handler was eventually convicted of feeding Bulger information to help keep him one step ahead of the authorities. Although Bulger was not thought to have had direct involvement in the Gardner heist, he was likely to have known about it, may have been paid a cut of the profits and was suspected of having tried to obtain the paintings for himself in order to use as a bargaining chip to get a lighter sentence. He died in 2018.



ABOVE Bulger was incarcerated in Sumterville, Florida

## 4 DUTCH ROOM

*The Storm On The Sea Of Galilee* hung on a secret door, disguised as a wall panel, which opened out into a stairwell. The door was left open after the raid, another sign that the thieves had insider knowledge.

## 3 DUTCH ROOM

The thieves didn't just restrict themselves to paintings. In the Dutch Room, they also took a bronze beaker, known as a ku, made in China during the Shang dynasty that dated back to between 1200 BCE and 1100 BCE. It was one of the oldest objects in the entire museum.

## 1 ENTRANCE

One sign that the thieves had inside information was that they were careful to ensure the security guard stepped away from his desk – where the silent alarm button was located – before he became aware a robbery was taking place.

## 6 STAIRWELL

Despite spending nearly an hour and a half in the museum and knowing no alarms had been sounded, they did not walk up to the third floor to take Titian's *The Rape Of Europa*, a far more valuable work. Elsewhere, they also passed by two important Raphaels and a Botticelli.

02.01

As the two men lift the heavy frame of *The Storm On The Sea Of Galilee* from the wall, a high-pitched proximity alarm begins to sound from the skirting board. The men locate the device, designed to stop members of the public from getting too close to the painting, smash it silent and then get back to work.

02.08

Both thieves set to work in the Short Gallery. Six sketches by Degas are ripped from their frames. The men attempt to remove a Napoleonic banner hanging above the entry to the Tapestry Room but are frustrated by the many tiny screws that hold it in place. Instead, they take the gilded eagle finial from the top of the frame.

02.28

The thieves spend the next 12 minutes bundling up the items they have stolen. They remove the videotape from the recorder that captured footage of them entering the museum, and take the printout of the records of the motion detector equipment, not realising their movements have also been stored on the hard drive of the computer.

02.40

The inside security door opens and closes and within seconds the outside door opens and closes as one of the thieves transfers some of the stolen goods to the vehicle that has been parked on Palace Road.

02.45

The inside door opens again, followed by the outside door as the second thief takes the remaining stolen items out to the waiting vehicle. A total of 13 artworks are taken, with an estimated value of \$500 million.





**ABOVE** Museum founder Isabella Stewart Gardner was very particular about how she wanted the art displayed. In honour of this, all the empty frames from the stolen paintings remain in their original positions on the walls, partly as a permanent reminder of the event but also in anticipation of the day the artwork is finally returned

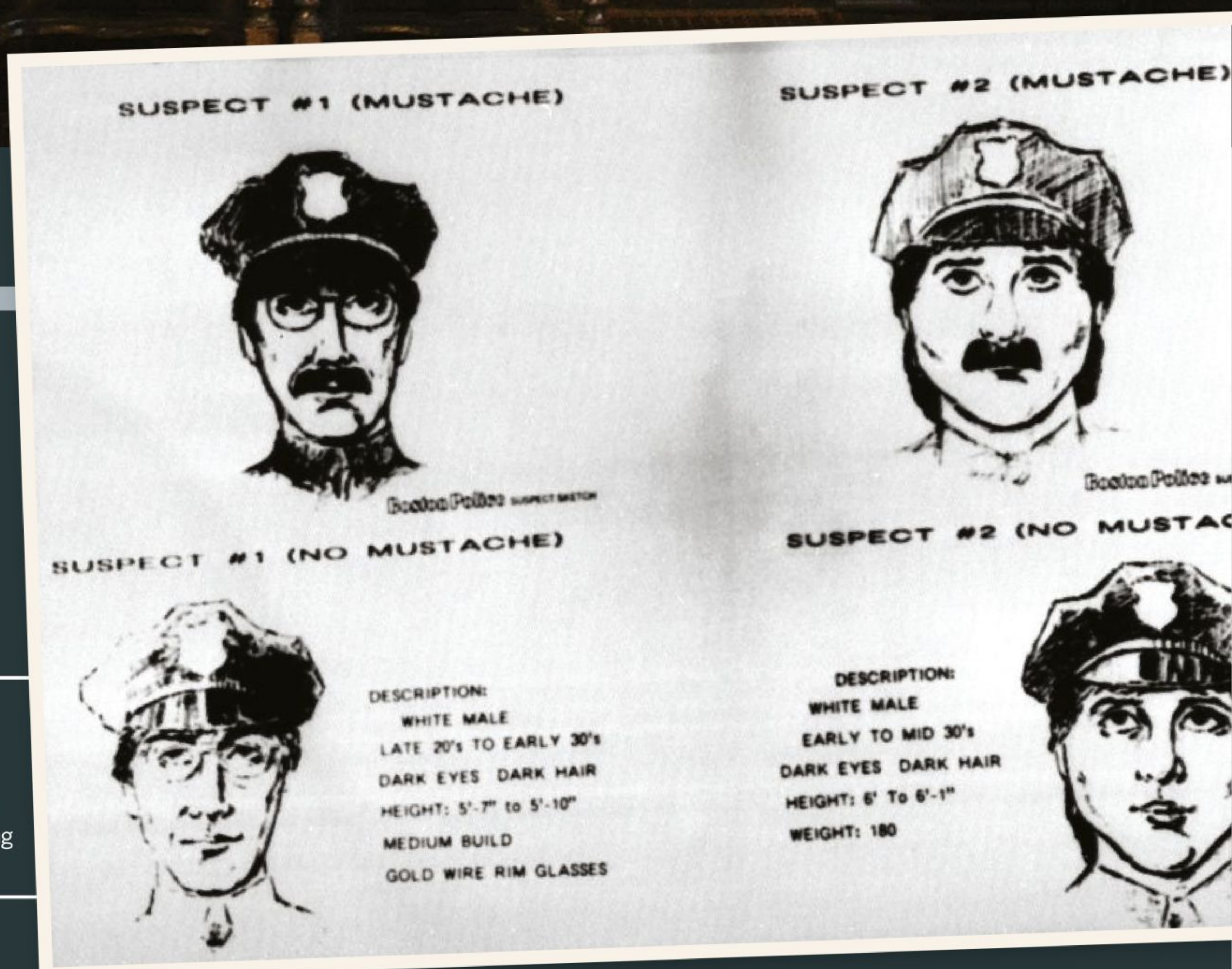
**06.45**

Two guards arrive for the morning shift but are unable to gain entry to the museum. They eventually call Larry O'Brien, the museum's deputy security director, who makes his way to the museum from his home, bringing a key to the rear door.

**08.15**

Larry O'Brien makes his way inside the museum and searches through the building. He discovers the theft and the two bound guards. He calls the police.

**RIGHT** Boston Police created sketches of the suspects both with and without moustaches. This is because security guard Richard Abath told investigators that at least one of the men was wearing a fake moustache during the raid





# GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

WITH A \$5 MILLION REWARD ON OFFER FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE RECOVERY OF THE PAINTINGS, THERE'S LITTLE WONDER THAT THOUSANDS OF LEADS HAVE HAD TO BE FOLLOWED UP SINCE THE ROBBERY TOOK PLACE

The theft may have taken place over 30 years ago but it has rarely been out of the headlines and remains one of the most baffling mysteries in criminal history.

Despite thousands of leads pursued and complex sting operations, stretching from Miami to Marseille, from London to Los Angeles and everywhere in between, along with a tip that *The Storm On The Sea Of Galilee* was being offered for sale in Philadelphia in 2003, none of the missing artwork has ever been recovered.

In 2015, the FBI announced that the main suspects in the crime were dead, but refused to name them. One is believed to be George Reissfelder who was implicated by an informant and died of a cocaine overdose in 1991. In 2010, Reissfelder's brother claimed to have seen the *Chez Tortoni* hanging over the bed in his brother's apartment. Investigators later learned that Reissfelder drove a red Dodge Daytona.

Reissfelder worked closely with mobster and businessman Carmello Merlino who, in 1997, told friends that he planned to give back the artwork in order to claim the reward money. However, before he could do so, he was caught trying to rob an armoured car depot. He died in prison in 2005.

In 2009, attention turned to a mob associate of Merlino, Robert Guarente, whose wife told investigators that, before he died in 2004, he had given several of the paintings to his mobster friend Robert Gentile. When Gentile's home was searched, agents found a list of the stolen paintings, along with handcuffs, police hats and a copy of the *Boston Herald* from the day after the robbery.

According to Gentile's lawyer: "He doesn't know anything about art, he's never been to an art gallery in his life, couldn't tell a Rembrandt from an Elvis painting."

Gentile, who has prior convictions for drug and gun offences, took a polygraph test in a bid to prove he was not involved in the museum theft. The results came back with a 99.9 per cent certainty that he was lying about his role.

News of the death of the main suspects came as the FBI released previously unseen surveillance footage from the museum taken almost exactly 24 hours before the robbery. The clip shows a security guard – believed to be Richard Abath – hitting an intercom button to allow access to a man who then enters the reception area.

The mystery man passes in and out of the same rear entrance that is used by the thieves the following day. He is also seen getting in and out of a car that matches the general description of the one seen shortly before the robbery began. The leading theory is that the man was carrying out a dry run of the raid.

The release of the new footage has put the spotlight back on Richard Abath. He has been repeatedly questioned by the FBI and had his bank accounts monitored for signs of sudden wealth. He denies any involvement in the crime.



LEFT Anne Hawley, curator of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, answers questions at a news conference in the museum's garden area about the robbery of the 13 pieces



ABOVE The Connecticut home of mobster Robert Gentile was searched by forensics teams in 2012 in connection with the Boston art heist

## SEEKING INFORMATION BY THE FBI

The FBI is seeking information in the theft of thirteen works of art from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in 1990.



*The Concert*  
VERMEER, 1658 - 1660  
Oil on canvas, 72.5 x 64.7 cm

### \$5 Million Reward

The FBI encourages anyone who may have information on the whereabouts of the artwork to contact the FBI at 1-800-CALL-FBI or submit online at Tips.FBI.Gov.

RIGHT the FBI offered a \$5 million reward for any information regarding the theft or the location of the artworks, but none have ever been recovered



## UNSOLVED CASE

# ROMANCE IS DEAD

WHY COULDN'T POLICE STOP THE 'MONSTER OF FLORENCE', WHO PROWLED THE TUSCAN HILLS FOR ALMOST TWO DECADES, PREYING ON INNOCENT COUPLES AS THEY MADE LOVE IN THEIR CARS?

WORDS TANITA MATTHEWS

In 19th century London the undetectable Jack the Ripper, a blade-wielding maniac, stalked the streets of Whitechapel, preying on the city's prostitutes. In pre-Nazi Germany it was Peter Kürten, known as The Vampire of Düsseldorf, who savaged more than a dozen men, women and children in a series of sexually charged slaughters spanning 16 years. The Boston Strangler was the one to incite terror in the US state of Massachusetts during the 1960s, asphyxiating 13 female victims with their own clothes. For Italy, the 'Monster of Florence' is the Achilles heel of its criminal justice system. Throughout a period of almost two decades, seven sets of lovers were slaughtered while making love in the hills surrounding Florence, with many of the female victims suffering sickening mutilations to their sexual organs. The investigation into the culprit (or culprits) became a tangled and intricate web. Yet despite one of the longest and most expensive manhunts in history, police have failed to peel back the mask on Italy's darkest and most brutal phantom.

### FLORENCE'S SEEDY UNDERBELLY

The morning of 7 June 1981 was a quiet one in the unsuspecting town of Scandicci. Residents shuffled between their morning visits to church and their homes for lunch.

But in the fields just outside town, the sweltering heat of the summer was unrelenting and stifling for a group of Carabinieri marshals, police officers and forensic examiners who attempted to make sense of the scene before them. Sat inside a copper-coloured car was a young man. The hole in his left temple and the spider-webbed glass window to his right, which was tinted red with blood, were only the beginning of the horrors of this crime scene.

Behind the car lay the sprawled, nude body of a woman. She too had been shot but, between her parted legs her pubic region had been cut away, leaving a bloody and gaping wound. The victims were 21-year-old Carmela De Nuccio and her fiancé, 30-year-old Giovanni Foggi. The pair, who had been seen at a local hangout for young people the previous evening, had slipped away from their friends before midnight. As they nestled into the hills to make love they were ambushed and killed.

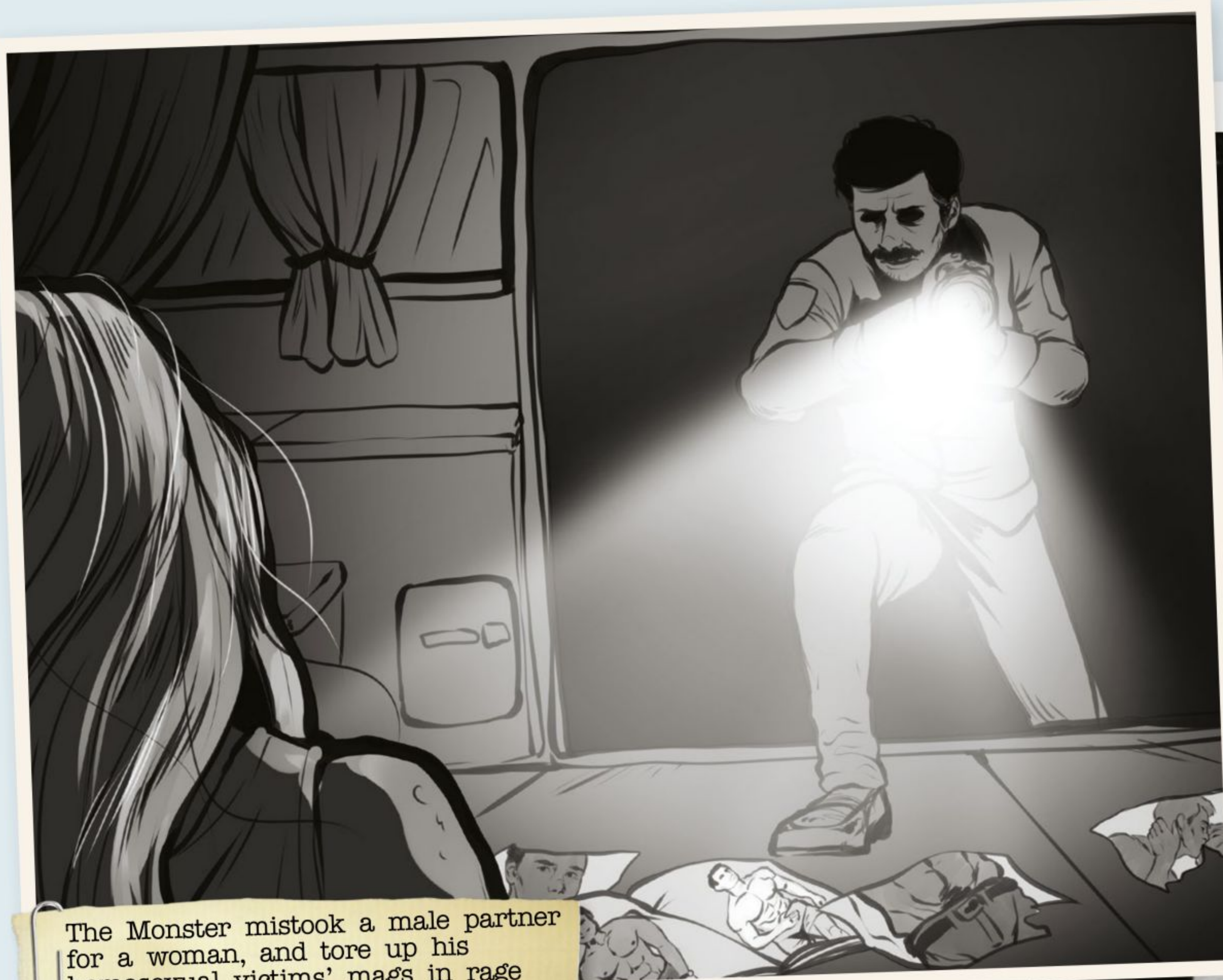
Bullet casings found at the crime scene showed that their killer had used a pistol loaded with .22-calibre Winchester series 'H' bullets. Having inspected the bodies, the medical examiner determined that the knife used to carve out De Nuccio's vagina resembled that of a scuba knife. The local paper was awash with details of the murders the following day. Next to it a recollection of a similar unsolved crime that had occurred in 1974.











The Monster mistook a male partner for a woman, and tore up his homosexual victims' mags in rage

Two young adults, Pasquale Gentilcore and his fiancée Stefania Pettini had been shot as they made love in Gentilcore's Fiat 127 near Borgo San Lorenzo just outside of Florence. The bride-to-be was found a distance from the car. She had been attacked post-mortem, stabbed 97 times and a grapevine branch had been inserted into her vagina. Found at the scene were .22-calibre Winchester series 'H' bullets. In light of the murders in Scandicci police took another look at the two killings and compared the scenes. Ballistic tests proved that the same gun had been used to shoot both couples – a small mark on the rim of the cartridges showed that the weapon had a distinct defect on the firing pin.

Police questioned Enzo Spalletti, an ambulance driver about the slayings. Before the victims had been front-page news, Spalletti already knew too much. He confessed that he was in fact a Peeping Tom and had seen the pair in their car, but that they were very much alive. Police, believing Spalletti knew more than he was letting on, arrested him.

### THE MANY-FACED MONSTER

On 23 October, news of a new couple having been slaughtered in the Bartoline Fields forced police to release Spalletti without charge. Witnesses who had driven past the scene outside of Calenzano, told police they had seen a nervous-looking man in a red Alfa Romeo. The forensic identification team drew up the suspect described but the e-fit was not released to the public, for fear that it would incite a witch hunt in a community that was already pointing fingers at family members. Some believed the killer was a doctor or a surgeon – after all, who else would have the stomach to mutilate the women? Others believed that the vine branch lodged into Pettini had been inspired by a Biblical reference: "The vines that bareth not fruit he taketh away." Was a local clergyman targeting unmarried lovers for their illicit desires? Local journalist Mario Spezi had a new identity for the killer: 'The Monster of Florence'.

The police couldn't pursue the case for the remainder of the year thanks to the contamination of every crime scene to that date, after the investigating officers had failed to cordon off the areas. The beast struck again the following summer.



Paolo Mainardi and Antonella Migliorini were discovered in a ditch in Montespertoli on 20 June 1982. Migliorini had died at the scene, fear of being caught out in the open meant that the Monster hadn't mutilated her. Mainardi, still alive was rushed to hospital but he couldn't be saved. Police believed that the pair had seen the Monster in the flesh before their deaths. Journalists were instructed to report that the male victim had revealed a telling detail to the police while in hospital, hoping to scare the Monster into making a mistake.

The ambulance driver who had attempted to save Mainardi was harassed with phone calls by a man claiming to be the Monster. His safety and the safety of his family was threatened, but the calls were never traced. The e-fit was also released but the results were fruitless and the Monster remained at large.

### THE SARDINIAN TRAIL

The case spun on its axis when police received a clipping from a newspaper report on a 1968 murder. Married woman Barbara Locci and her lover Antonio Lo Bianco were shot as they made love inside Lo Bianco's car in Signa – her son was asleep in the back seat. The pair had been mid-clinch when they were shot at point-blank range with a Beretta, loaded with none other than .22-calibre Winchester series 'H' bullets. Locci's husband Stefano Mele confessed to the murders, bitter over his wife's infidelity and was jailed. However, the gun was never recovered. Mele said he had

**“ SHE TOO HAD BEEN SHOT BUT, BETWEEN HER PARTED LEGS, HER PUBIC REGION HAD BEEN CUT AWAY LEAVING A BLOODY GAPING WOUND ”**





tossed it into the nearby river after the shootings but despite an exhaustive search, it remained lost.

While residing at a halfway house for convicts, Mele was interviewed by Spezi who was surprised when Mele told him: "They need to figure out where that pistol is otherwise there will be more murders. They will continue to kill." Who was this 'they' Mele referred to? Had he had accomplices the night he killed his wife? Had he taken the fall for others? Where were they now? And where was the gun?

Brothers, thugs and Sardinian immigrants Giovanni, Francesco and Salvatore Vinci had moved to Florence in the early 1960s. Salvatore had lived with Mele and his wife for a brief period and the brothers became her lovers before she moved onto Lo Bianco. Locci's son, who had witnessed the shooting recalled to police that he had seen three men at the scene but he was later discarded as a reliable witness. Had

**ABOVE** Pasquale Gentilcore and his fiancée Stefania Pettini were murdered in 1974. Pettini was stabbed 97 times and a grapevine branch used to penetrate her

**ABOVE LEFT** Officers and forensic examiners attending the crime scenes had not worn shoe covers, overalls or gloves while collecting the sparse evidence from almost any of the scenes, making the later investigations tasking

the Vinci brothers been Mele's accomplices? Did they now have the gun? Evidence suggested that one of the brothers potentially had a Beretta pistol that they had brought over from Sardinia but there was no definitive proof the gun was still in their possession.

Police were able to place Francesco within the areas where the recent murders had occurred. An abandoned car found days after the Montespertoli killings near the scene was traced back to Francesco. He was arrested in August 1982, a move that seemed to quiet the beast preying on the Florentine hills. But the real Monster struck again on 9 September 1983. However, in an unusual fashion for the Monster, the pair attacked were German students Wilhelm Meyer and Jens Rüschi, two men who had travelled to Italy to celebrate Meyer getting a scholarship that summer. They had been in the back of a camper van when they were shot through the windows. Police believed that the monster had mistaken Rüschi for a woman because of his long blond hair.

Prosecutors working on the case were sceptical about Francesco being the Monster, but they suspected he knew who the Monster was. Their next move was to arrest his nephew Antonio. While in custody, police attempted to play both Vincis off against each other in the hope that one would start talking. They also arrested Piero Mucciarini, Mele's brother-in-law, and Giovanni Mele, his brother.

With the clan behind bars the games between the accused and the police continued, until the morning of 30 July 1984,

## PROFILING THE MONSTER

THE FBI HELPED THE ITALIAN POLICE PRODUCE A DETAILED PROFILE OF THE TYPE OF MAN THEY BELIEVED THE KILLER TO BE

- DESCRIPTION**
- Male
  - About 45 years old
  - At least 1.8m in height
  - Manual labourer
  - Average intelligence
  - Bachelor, lives alone or with an elderly person
  - Lives near place of first killing
  - Has no relations with women and likely has a sexual dysfunction
  - May use alcohol or drugs to pump himself up
  - He is not a rapist or someone convicted of sexual crimes but rather petty crimes

- MODUS OPERANDI**
- The killer does not choose the victims but rather chooses the place and the night
  - He kills the male victim first to neutralise the threat to him before attacking the woman
  - The motive of the crime is the possession of the female victim, the male is considered a mere obstacle
  - The mutilation represents either sexual inadequacy or a resentment of women
  - The surveillance of his victims shows that he has doubt about his ability to control his victims if confronted with them face-to-face
  - The use of many bullets is to ensure the victims will not survive and thus talk



Was the Monster looking for something and had he been interrupted before he could mutilate Migliorini's body?



# SLAIN IN LOVER'S LANE

WHEN LOVERS PARKED THEIR CARS IN INTIMATE SIDE ROADS, THE MONSTER STRUCK, OFTEN ON A SATURDAY NIGHT AND WHEN THERE WAS NO MOON

## CLUE THE GUN

The weapon is thought to belong to the 70 series, possibly a 74-inch or a 76-by-10-stroke .22-calibre Long Rifle and is thought to have been used for shooting sports. The defect on the firing pin is key to the investigation



## VICTIMS ANTONIO LO BIANCO AND BARBARA LOCCI

Locci and her lover Lo Bianco were shot in Lo Bianco's car as her son slept. Her husband, Stefano Mele, confessed but he'd allegedly taken the fall for Locci's former lover Salvatore Vinci, who threatened to expose Mele as a homosexual

## CLUE THE KNIFE

The knife is considered to be a unique weapon with a small notch on one side, similar to that of a scuba knife. It has never been found



## VICTIMS GIOVANNI FOGGI AND CARMELA DE NUCCIO

De Nuccio had been lifted from the car as opposed to dragged. Although she was discovered naked, only the gold chain around her neck remained. The killer had used three cuts to remove her vagina



## WITNESS THE FARMER

A local man told investigators that he saw the copper Fiat belonging to Foggi. At around midnight he had heard John Lennon's *Imagine* playing in the car when it suddenly stopped. He heard no gunshots though



## VICTIMS PAOLO MAINARDI AND ANTONELLA MIGLIORINI

Police believed that as Migliorini was getting dressed, Mainardi spotted the monster and reversed the car out of the clearing to get away but the car ended up in a ditch. The Monster had shot out the front lights to plunge the couple into darkness before shooting them



## VICTIMS JEAN-MICHEL KRAVEICHVILI AND NADINE MAURIOT

The killer drew the French campers out of their tent before shooting them. Kraveichvili ran but the killer caught him and slit his throat. He removed Mauriot's vagina and left breast before zipping her inside the tent

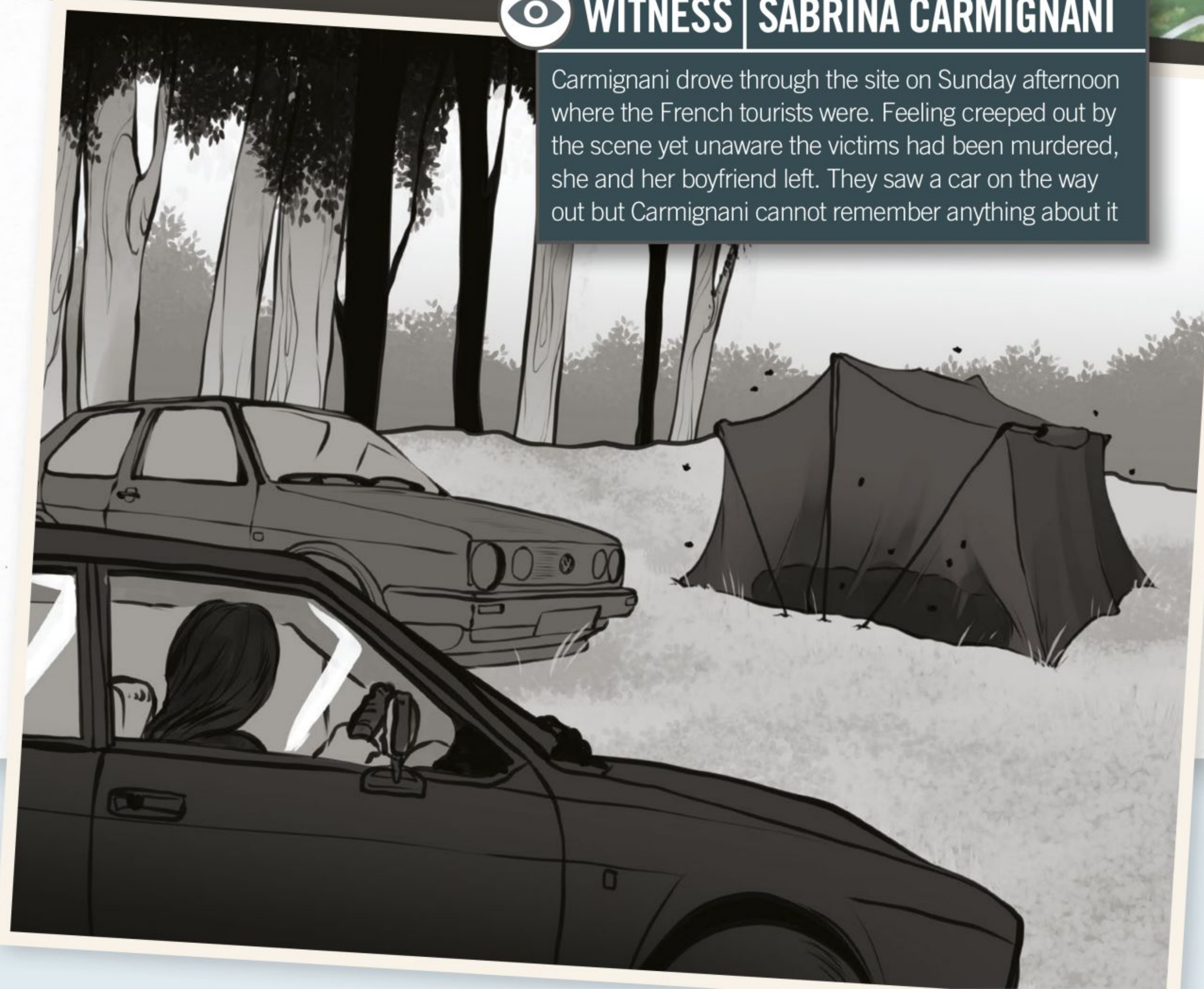


## WITNESS SABRINA CARMIGNANI

Carmignani drove through the site on Sunday afternoon where the French tourists were. Feeling creeped out by the scene yet unaware the victims had been murdered, she and her boyfriend left. They saw a car on the way out but Carmignani cannot remember anything about it

## THE KILLER'S CLIMAX

During the final weeks of the following summer, on 9 September another couple were discovered. This time the Monster had made an effort to hide the bodies, zipping the female victim, 36-year-old Nadine Mauriot inside a tent and attempting to camouflage the male's body, 25-year-old Jean-Michel Kraveichvili, with branches and leaves. However, mushroom foragers stumbled across the scene near San Casciano. Mauriot's vagina and left breast had been removed. The heat of her tomb had devastating effects on her body.







**EVENT A PRINCE DIES**

Prince Roberto Corsini was shot dead by a poacher in 1984 in Florence. Shortly after, the castle was broken into but nothing was taken. The town gossiped that the prince had been the Monster, had been murdered in a blackmail bid gone wrong, and that the break-in had resulted in important information being stolen to prove it



**VICTIMS**

**PASQUALE GENTILCORE AND STEFANIA PETTINI**

Gentilcore was shot first followed by Pettini who was then stabbed 97 times. The vine inserted into her vagina gave investigators the impression that the killer was impotent and therefore unable to rape his victims



**VICTIMS**

**CLAUDIO STEFANACCI AND PIA RONTINI**

Discovered by their friends after they split off from the rest of the group. Rontini's sexual organs had been mutilated. The pair were killed on a Sunday while the Sardinian clan were in custody



**WITNESS**

**UNIDENTIFIED WITNESS**

It was reported anonymously to the police that gunshots had sounded off at around 9.40pm the same evening Rontini and Stefanacci had been killed



**CLUE**

**A HANDPRINT**

A left hand print found on the top of the car at the scene of the Rontini and Stefanacci murders led investigators to believe that the killer was right handed – he'd held the gun in his right and steadied himself with his left



**VICTIMS**

**WILHELM MEYER AND JENS RÜSCH**

Police thought the killer was over 180cm tall as he'd shot through the high camper van windows. Police were also concerned that the murders happened on a Friday not a Saturday. They had also happened when Francesco Vinci was incarcerated



**CLUE**

**THE BULLETS**

Winchester casings marked with the letter H were found at the scene. The ammo is thought to have come from the same two boxes containing 50 cartridges but this was very common at the time of the killings

5km

The following day, prosecutor Silvia Della Monica received a letter at her office. Inside the envelope, she found a piece of Mauriot's left breast. She immediately resigned from the case and sought out protection from bodyguards. The San Casciano murders were the last of the monster's reign but the Carabinieri and the police refused to rest, offering a reward of half a billion Italian lire (around £200,000 at the time) for information that would lead to the arrest of the monster.

A letter pointed the finger at Pietro Pacciani, a farmer from Vicchio, who had served time for killing a man who had tried to seduce his girlfriend in 1951. Once he had bludgeoned him to death, Pacciani raped his cheating girlfriend next to the corpse. But Pacciani, now 60, was riddled with ailments.

It was hard to imagine him being capable of chasing down victims or lumbering toward cars undetected. The investigating judge, Mario Rotella, was sure Salvatore was the Monster and that the gun used in the murders hadn't left the Sardinian clan he believed to be involved in the 1968 slayings. He served Salvatore a notice informing him of his suspect status and at the end of 1985, the Sardinian native was extradited back to the island. He faced trial two years later, accused of murdering his wife in 1961, who had supposedly committed suicide. But Salvatore was acquitted and was never seen again after he walked out of the court a free man.



# THE INVESTIGATION

MORE THAN 100,000 MEN WERE INVESTIGATED BY POLICE BUT VIA MODERN TECHNOLOGY, THIS HUGE NUMBER WAS WHITTLED DOWN TO JUST ONE. COULD THIS BE THE KILLER?

After Salvatore disappeared, Rotella was forced to remove himself from the investigation and hand it over to the Polizia di Stato Chief Inspector and head of the Anti-Monster Crime Squad Ruggero Perugini, who started the investigation from scratch. The problem was that no evidence or samples from the crime scene had been preserved. Instead Perugini, who favoured methods used by the FBI, turned to the use of computer crime databases. He eliminated suspects one by one until one name caught his attention repeatedly: Pacciani.

Perugini reasoned that as per Pacciani's own statement from his trial, when he saw his girlfriend bare her left breast to the travelling salesman with whom she had snuck away with into a field, it triggered a murderous rage. Had this become a repeated pattern with Florence's young couples? Items taken from Pacciani's home in 1992 during an 11-day search were only circumstantial as evidence of him being the Monster, but when a Winchester series H bullet was discovered in the earth outside Pacciani's home, the investigators closed in on him. Although the evidence was flimsy at best, seeing as the bullets were hardly rare in Italy, it was enough to tie him to the murder weapon used in all seven killings.

His trial, which began in April 1994, was televised. Pacciani pleaded his innocence but it fell on deaf ears as he was convicted for six of the seven double homicides. With Pacciani behind bars for life, Florence began to breathe easy. But before long rumours started to

## “ PACCIANI PLEADED HIS INNOCENCE BUT IT FELL ON DEAF EARS AS HE WAS CONVICTED FOR SIX OF THE SEVEN DOUBLE HOMICIDES ”

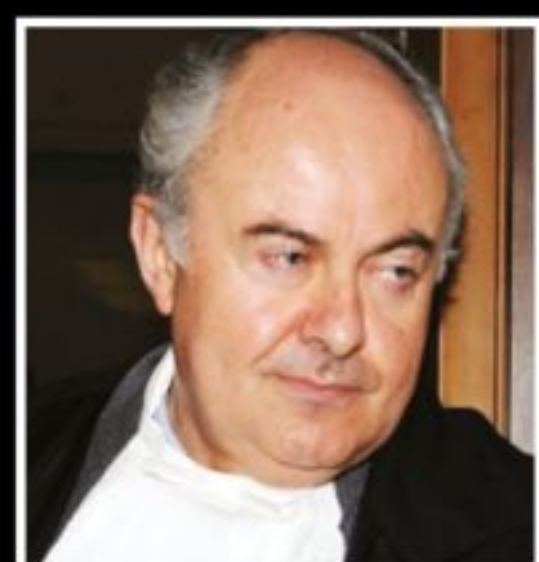
circulate that the bullet was planted. According to Spezi's book, *The Monster Of Florence: A True Story*, co-authored by Douglas Preston, a Carabinieri officer expressed his doubt to Spezi about the authenticity of the discovery of the bullet and other items found in Pacciani's home. Pacciani also claimed that the bullet, found by the ambitious Perugini, was planted.

There was much doubt over the time of death of the French tourists, with camps divided between the Saturday and Sunday evening. On the Saturday, typically the favoured night by the Monster, Pacciani had a strong alibi for his whereabouts. The fact that one of the victims had sprinted away from the killer in a bid to escape also troubled many as Pacciani had received multiple bypass surgeries on his heart – he was hardly capable of sprinting after the young male victim.

The Supreme Court of Cassation quashed the verdict in 1996. However the police received confessions from four of Pacciani's 'friends' tying him to the killings. A prostitute, Gabriella Ghiribelli, her pimp Norberto Galli, former postman Mario Vanni and village drunkard Giancarlo Lotti confessed that they helped Pacciani commit the murders. Vanni and Lotti were both given jail sentences of life and 24

years respectively for being the monster's accomplices. Pacciani died in 1998 from a suspected heart attack before he could be brought in for a second trial. Some believe the farmer was poisoned, after the autopsy showed a heightened level of his heart medication.

Ghiribelli had confessed that they were all part of a secret cult 'The School Of The Red Rose', and had been ordered to kill and sacrifice the local youths by high ranking figures in the city in a black magic ritual. Police pursued this believing it may lead them to answers about the Monster's identity. Spezi continued to investigate the case through his journalism, not convinced of the theory that a Satanic cult was behind the killings. Michele Giuttari was the chief police investigator on the Monster case from 1995 to 2003 and wrote his own book indicating that the murders were the work of a Satanic cult, a theory Spezi and Preston ridiculed. Instead Spezi's mind settled on the Vincis' nephew Antonio as the killer but the Sardinian has denied this theory. When Spezi and Preston met in 2000 while writing their book, they found themselves under the scrutiny of the police who accused them each of being the Monster and tampering with evidence in the case, but neither was ever charged.



## A FAMILIAR FACE

BEFORE PROSECUTOR GIULIANO MIGNINI TACKLED AMANDA KNOX ABOUT HER ALLEGED 'SATANIC' KILLING OF MEREDITH KERCHER, HE WEIGHED IN HEAVILY ON THE MONSTER CASE

A central figure in the Amanda Knox murder trial in 2007 was prosecutor Giuliano Mignini, who erroneously believed Knox to have murdered her roommate Meredith Kercher while studying in Italy in a demonically motivated attack. Knox was eventually cleared of the murder charges despite Mignini's best efforts. But prior to becoming a central figure of one of the most notorious trials in history, Mignini was part of the Monster case. In 2001, he claimed that a doctor who had committed suicide just weeks after the final murders conducted by the Monster had been a member of a Satanic cult. Not only that, but he accused the man, Dr Francesco

Narducci of being the keeper of those body parts that had been stolen from the victims. Mignini, who had been convicted of abuse of office while pursuing the case, alleged that the doctor was killed to keep him quiet. His theory was an elaborate conspiracy made up of 20 people, including government officials and law enforcement officers, who he alleged were a secret group behind the Monster killings. Mignini indicted the 20 people and charged them with the concealment of Narducci's murder. His theory included body doubles and the doctor's body being swapped twice. The accused were all cleared of charges.





**LEFT** Mario Vanni a former postman had given a damning testimony while on the stand during Pacciani's 1994 trial, answering that the pair were simply "picnicking friends" to almost every question

**BELOW** The FBI profile depicted the Monster as sexually impotent, which Pacciani was not. In fact he was overly sexual, imprisoned in the mid 1980s for raping his own daughters



For one Peeping Tom, the night of the new moon gave him opportunity to kill under the cover of darkness



# THE AFTERMATH

## PACCIANI IS DEAD, THE KILLINGS HAVE CEASED, BUT THE MYSTERY PREVAILS

Although the four witnesses were imprisoned for their alleged part in the killings of the seven couples, in June 2005, pharmacist Francesco Calamandrei fell suspect to the investigators. His wife had repeatedly reported the strange behaviour of her husband, particularly the night that the French campers were killed. Police suspected Calamandrei was the leader of a Satanic cult that had commissioned Pacciani and his friends to carry out the killings. The body parts severed from the victims were supposedly taken because female sex organs in the height of an orgasm are thought to be the most powerful kind of sacrifice that can be offered to the devil.

During an 11-hour search of Calamandrei's home in 2004, police seized ten boxes of pornographic material and paperwork. As well as Calamandrei, 13 others were also investigated. Officials claimed they had "concrete proof to unmask" those behind the murders. But Calamandrei was acquitted and killed himself in 2012.

In 2015, it was believed that the gun used in the killings had been located in a closet at the Potenza Carabinieri office. But it was ruled out as the weapon following investigations.

As of 2017, former legionary Giampiero Vigilanti, 86, has been entered into the list of suspects. But Vigilanti denies any involvement in the killings, telling investigators: "Look elsewhere I am not the Monster". He also refutes the theory that Pacciani was involved in the killings. It was also recently announced that the discovery of DNA, not attributable to the victims was discovered on a forgotten relic of the last murder. The bloody handkerchief was found a few days after the murders in a bush along with surgeon's gloves.

Professor Riccardo of Cagliesi Institute of Legal Medicine of Florence, had in 1985 drawn up a 13-page report, indicating that the material was of human blood group B. A brown human hair follicle was also found on the bodies of Cambi and Baldi. Professor Riccardo's findings were forgotten until late July 2017 when the prosecutor of Florence performed DNA testing, in order to compare it with that of the suspects and convicted criminals. Examiners have said that reliable genetic findings have also been extracted from the envelopes sent to the judges by the killer.

Each participant in the investigation has their own theory. Some believe Pacciani was the killer and that his merry band of accomplices have been sufficiently detained. For others, the Sardinian native who was never seen again after his trial for murder is still a condemned man. There remain many unanswered questions about the case. However the most popular theory, given to the Italian police's inability to successfully conduct a murder investigation, is that the real killer never has and never will be caught.



# KILL TEAM

BRAZIL'S ELITE SWAT UNIT IS TRAINED AND EQUIPPED TO WAGE WAR ON THE TRAFICANTES, BUT THEIR RECORD IS TAINTED BY CORRUPTION AND BRUTALITY

WORDS **LEIGH NEVILLE**

In the pre-dawn light, black-clad men wearing body armour and helmets dash from cover to cover, their rifles up and covering their arcs. Overhead, snipers search for targets from a military helicopter. Armoured vehicles rumble into position. But this isn't Iraq or Afghanistan. It's the urban slums of Rio de Janeiro, host to the 2016 Olympic Games.

The first of these slums, known as favelas (named after a particularly hardy Brazilian plant found in the country's northeast), was born from the mass migration of poor rural Brazilians, many former slaves, following the promise of employment to the then-capital, Rio de Janeiro. Finding themselves unable to afford urban housing, people began building illegally on the hillsides surrounding Rio. The slums expanded in 1960 when the capital of Brazil was changed to Brasilia and an economic downturn saw the exponential increase in urban poor.

Denied basic utilities like sewerage and running water, the favelas soon became a breeding ground for violence and crime. Successive governments attempted to alleviate the pressure with forced evictions and relocation to public housing projects that, without the necessary basic infrastructure, became favelas themselves.

During the 1980s rise of the cocaine trade, the favelas were controlled and fought over by criminal gangs, known as









# DRESSED TO KILL?

## BOPE OFFICERS HIT THE STREETS WITH MILITARY-GRADE KIT

The operator wears a US-style MICH helmet that will defeat all common handgun calibres and provide some protection against rifles and shotguns. As an example of the overt machismo within the unit, black berets adorned with the skull logo are often preferred over the far more sensible helmet. His eyes are protected by goggles and the face mask obscures the operator's identity to lower the risk of any repercussions against his family.

The .40 PT24/7 fires a heavier bullet from a 15-round magazine. BOPE versions, carried here in an SAS style drop holster, feature an accessory rail allowing a weapon light to be fitted.

The weapon of choice for the US military, the M4 can fire either single shots or three round bursts from a 30-round magazine. Its compact size and telescoping stock make it ideal for urban combat. It can also be equipped with a range of weapon lights, grips and optics, like the EOTech 'red dot' sight seen here, allowing each BOPE operator to customise his weapon.

The operator wears a Kevlar vest that incorporates a heavy ceramic trauma plate in front and back to protect the vital organs from heavy calibre bullets. It features attachment points to allow the operator to mount his magazine and stun grenade pouches directly to the vest.

Each operator carries an issue Wotan combat knife made specifically for BOPE. Many further customise their knives by adding the units' skull and pistols insignia to the pommel.

BOPE wear intimidating black military battle-dress-utilities in the manner of many police tactical units. The operator also wears kneepads and gloves as added protection against broken glass.

traficantes and milicias, who enforced law in the absence of authority. They became no-go areas for the civilian police.

Of the city's 6.3 million people, some 1.4 million now live in Rio's 1,000 favelas. During the last decade, Brazil has maintained one of the highest murder rates in the world, with an average of over 50,000 homicides annually (of which under 10 per cent are solved). The cities of Brazil are consistently rated among the most violent places on Earth. Last year, 114 policemen in Rio alone were killed while on duty. To counter this, each Brazilian state has two police forces: the military police conduct patrols and effect arrests while the civil police conduct investigations.

Against this murderous backdrop, the Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais (Special Police Operations Battalion) or BOPE was formed. Initially developed in 1978 as a hostage rescue unit for the Polícia Militar do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (Rio military police), the unit was firstly known as the Núcleo da Companhia de Operações Especiais (Special Operations Company Nucleus) or NuCOE. It soon expanded and was finally re-christened BOPE in 1991.

Hostage rescue remained one of their responsibilities (now handled by a BOPE sub-unit), but with its increased size, BOPE took responsibility for the majority of tactical policing tasks within the Rio district. With over 470 officers, including six female officers, BOPE is the face of paramilitary policing in Brazil.

The unit uses a range of resources more commonly seen in war zones, including aerial sniper teams who can fast-rope from helicopters; huge armoured trucks known as 'Caveirão' or 'Big Skull'; and an impressive range of military small arms and equipment including AR10 Super SASS marksman rifles, HK21 light machine guns and both fragmentation and stun grenades. Their dress and demeanour is one of a military Special Forces unit. Their tactics too are closer to those once seen on the streets of Fallujah or Baghdad. The unit is extensively drilled in Close Quarter Battle technique.

When faced by roadblocks, BOPE use military demolitions to clear pathways (in 2010 even tracked armoured personnel carriers were deployed). Their approach to their targets are covered by designated marksmen carrying scoped rifles. Like British troops in Afghanistan, they even monitor gang 'walkie talkies' using ICom scanners. But the major drug gangs they target – and there are an estimated 200,000 traficantes in Rio alone – are equally well-armed with assault rifles, grenade launchers and .50 sniper rifles. Several years ago, a police helicopter was even shot down by a heavy machine gun.

The traficantes sell the drugs but the milicias or militias – corrupt police and government officials – control much of the organised crime in the favelas, including loan sharking and protection rackets. They also supply the traficantes with their military-grade hardware. Another weapon in their arsenal is the street kids used by both gangs as lookouts. The children use fireworks as an early warning system before pelting the officers with stones to slow their approach. Not surprisingly, BOPE operations regularly end in gunfire.

The unit's fame has been bolstered by a best-selling book, by two then-serving BOPE officers, that went on to become wildly popular films, *Tropa de Elite* (or *Elite Squad*) and its sequel, *Elite Squad: The Enemy Within*. Meanwhile, pop songs about the unit have topped the local charts ("BOPE are coming to get you" cries the chorus).

Along with the infamous skull emblem worn by unit members, the black berets, the custom combat knives and their "Skull!" war cry, the unit encourages a culture of brute





force in arrests. They are quick to shoot and continue until the target is immobile – a far cry from usual police practices. Those tactics result in high casualty numbers; in the decade to 2014, a staggering 8,466 Rio citizens were killed by police. Most were young black males between the ages of 15 and 24.

Along with high-risk operations to capture armed suspects, the unit is regularly called upon to conduct so-called ‘pacification’ of the favelas. Spurred on by security concerns prior to the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Rio, these operations began in 2008 and were designed to deny the favelas to the drug gangs and militias. Before pacification, BOPE would conduct individual raids to capture or kill targeted traficantes – now the tactic was to win back territory from the gangs.

A typical pacification operation begins with a ‘cordon and search’ with BOPE operators establishing an outer perimeter to capture any escaping gang members before forcing entry to the targeted locations. The operation will be supported by the ‘Big Skull’ trucks that BOPE operators use as mobile cover and by their snipers in helicopters overhead. Once any gang members are arrested, the operation is handed over to the community police or Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora (UPP).

The UPP or Pacifying Police Unit are intended to become the local police authority, fostering relationships with the favela residents. Along with the UPP come representatives from the Department of Labour, who aim to find employment for those formally employed by the drug gangs. Garbage is collected, schools are opened and any gang tags and graffiti

are erased, all of which are intended as signs of the benefits of working with the government (amusingly, salesmen hawking satellite television packages are also soon in evidence, making the most of previously untapped markets).

Widespread corruption within Brazil’s police is commonly acknowledged by even its own members. Conversely, part of the mythology surrounding BOPE credits them as incorruptible, at least in terms of receiving ‘arregos’ or pay-offs by criminals. Many allege however that BOPE participates in darker activities, including torture and extra-judicial killings.

Allegations against the Brazilian special units of extra-judicial killings are nothing new, but BOPE has attracted more than its fair share, particularly in relation to killings officially reported as “resistance followed by death”. BOPE has also been implicated in the use of the so-called ‘Troy’ tactic that sees a police operation conducted into the favelas, complete with armoured vehicles and helicopters. During the commotion, a small team of operators stay behind, hidden and awaiting the return of a targeted criminal. Once the police leave, and gang members return, the covert team ambushes and kills them.

**BOTTOM** A unit trains for an arrest, although officers don’t hesitate to go for the kill

**“ THE MAJOR DRUG GANGS THEY TARGET – AND THERE ARE AN ESTIMATED 200,000 IN RIO ALONE – ARE EQUALLY WELL ARMED ”**



# DEATH TALLY

BOPE'S QUESTIONABLE DRUG WAR STRATEGY HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL ON BRAZIL'S PEOPLE

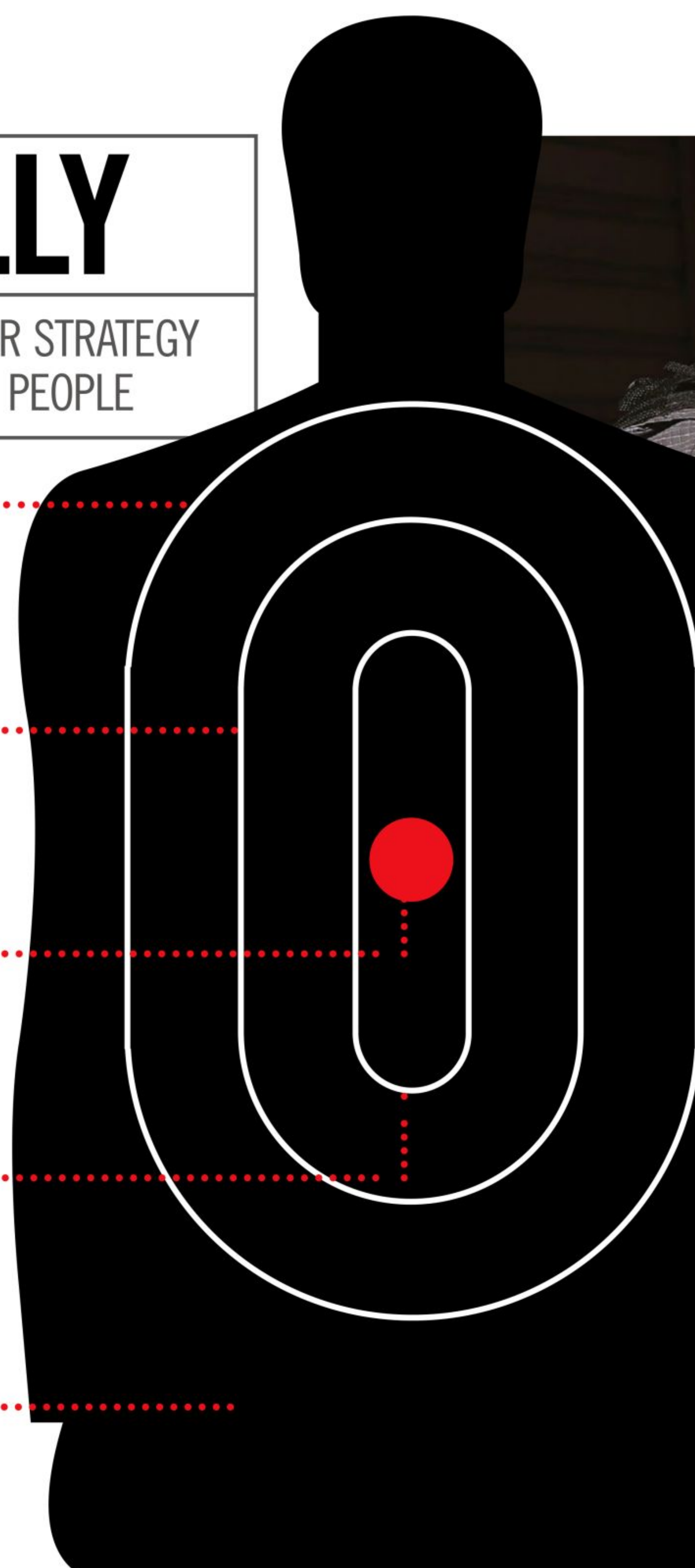
Civilians are often caught in indiscriminate BOPE shooting. Ten-year-old Eduardo de Jesus Ferreira was shot in the head during a favela raid. When his mother tried to run to him, a BOPE officer told her "he would kill me too".

'Rescues' are the removal of BOPE victims to hospital, ostensibly in an effort to save their lives. Human Rights Watch notes many have a "gunshot wound to the brain" and argue this is more about destroying evidence.

Father-of-six Amarildo de Souza was tasered, suffocated and water-boarded before he was 'disappeared'. Reports state that a bundle "not incompatible with that of a corpse" was seen on CCTV being loaded into a BOPE truck.

Extra-judicial killings aren't rare. A victim of a 2005 BOPE shooting arrived at the morgue after being shot between the eyes "naked, washed and with ink for fingerprints on the tips of his digits" according to the coroner.

A former member acknowledged that "no BOPE soldier ever leaves headquarters without his plastic bag" used to suffocate prisoners. Another admitted torture was "part of the daily life of the Brazilian police".



## “THE HEAVY-CALIBRE RIFLE ROUNDS USED BY BOPE CAN EASILY PENETRATE SHANTIES, LEADING TO INNOCENTS BEING STRUCK”

BOPE shootings are rarely adequately investigated, allowing crime scenes to be tampered with and any inconvenient forensic details to be destroyed. Public fear of police retribution, particularly in the favelas, means that few witnesses are willing to come forward. Bodies are often disposed of by the officers involved – the victims of such shootings become a statistic known as ‘the disappeared’. Their numbers do not feature in the official homicide tallies.

Along with the shooting of wounded or captured suspects, BOPE has been accused of the torture and abuse of suspects. This ranges from excessive force used during arrest to interrogation techniques that involve physical harm to the suspect. Some are simply beaten to death.

Remarkably, many inhabitants of Rio and of the favelas themselves, agree with the employment of such tactics. According to the UN's Human Rights Commission, residents “fear high crime rates and [...] perceive that the criminal justice system is too slow to prosecute criminals effectively.” BOPE's heavy-handed actions are therefore widely supported by the city's residents.

However, civilians within the favelas are also at risk during BOPE operations. The heavy-calibre rifle rounds

used by BOPE and the gangs can easily penetrate through any number of the poorly constructed shanties, leading to innocents being struck by stray gunfire from both sides. In July 2012, during an ambush in the Quitanda Costa Barros favela, a ten-year-old girl was hit and killed by a BOPE or traficantes bullet.

In the chaotic close confines of the favelas, mistaken identity shootings are also a common occurrence, with young males the typical victims. It's been alleged that BOPE cover up such shootings by claiming the victims were gang members or by using ‘drop guns’ to give the appearance of an armed criminal. Indeed, some argue that inhabitants of the favelas have more to fear from BOPE than from the traficantes or milicias.

One example is a case investigated by Amnesty International in 2005 of a 17-year-old shot in the head by a marksman on a ‘Big Skull’ truck. The boy's body was recovered by BOPE, hung from a hook on the vehicle and driven through the favela with BOPE officers demanding a monetary ransom to return the body to the family. During the same operation, a 46-year-old grandmother was fatally shot outside her store by someone within the ‘Big Skull’. In another case, a BOPE sergeant was shot and killed by armed robbers. His colleagues avenged his death by shooting dead eight people – some traficantes, some innocent civilians.

The United Nations Human Rights Commission in 2009 explained the problem as one of “extra-judicial executions [...] committed by police who murder rather than arrest criminal





**ABOVE** Just one of thousands of traficantes caught with a fortune in cocaine. It's common practice for suspected dealers to be tortured

suspects, and also during large-scale confrontational 'war'-style policing, in which excessive use of force results in the deaths of suspected criminals and bystanders."

In the latest figures available (2013), according to Human Rights Watch, police units in Rio including BOPE were responsible for the killing of 362 of its citizens in the first six months of the year alone. Concerns about police shootings eventually resulted in the Sao Paulo state government ordering their military police not to remove bodies from the scenes of shootings involving their officers. Incredibly, police shootings immediately dropped by a third.

Despite their brutality, many claim the BOPE pacification operations have been successful in reducing both the violence in the favelas and the power and influence of the gangs. Indeed, even BOPE has modified its tactics in an attempt to lower the risk of civilians being caught in the crossfire, with a process known as 'war with prior warning', giving the gangs notice that an operation is about to commence and providing the opportunity to surrender or leave the area.

BOPE's excessive use of force is both a result of the incredible levels of violent crime in Rio and a self-affirming aspect of their own cultural identity. That Brazilian society largely condones and in many cases supports BOPE's tactics can only be viewed as a reaction to statistics that state one in five murder victims globally is Brazilian. As Robert Kennedy once said, "Every society gets the kind of criminal it deserves. What is equally true is that every community gets the kind of law enforcement it insists on."



## DEADLY SYMBOLISM

BOPE'S FEARED SKULL INSIGNIA IS SYMBOLIC OF BOTH THE EXTREMES OF POLICE VIOLENCE AND PART OF THE POPULAR BOPE MYTHOLOGY

Featuring a dagger-pierced skull superimposed on top of a crossed pair of flintlock pistols, the emblem more resembles something worn by an outlaw biker gang than by a police unit. BOPE stress instead that the dagger signifies victory over death and the pistols simply show their lineage as they are the official insignia of the military police, BOPE's parent organisation.

Critics argue that the insignia and the unit's war cry of "Caveira!" ("Skull!") are part of the problem, and see the symbolism as a direct reflection of the tattoos and tags of gangs like Red Command, the Third Command and Friends of Friends. These are major criminal syndicates operating within Brazil's favelas with a left-wing political background, dealing in drugs and the arms trade. It reinforces the view that BOPE are simply the most heavily-armed gang in the favelas, albeit a government-sanctioned one.

The violence inherent in the logo also helps to normalise the use of often excessive violence against suspects, including questionable shootings and extra-judicial killings. BOPE openly admit they see themselves as fighting a war and that different tactics are required against the traficantes.



# KILLER BUSTED BY HIS MOBILE PHONE

15 YEARS LATER, DEVELOPMENTS IN MOBILE PHONE FORENSICS LEAD INVESTIGATORS TO THE CASE-DEFINING DISCOVERY OF WHAT HAPPENED TO A MARRIED MAN'S MISSING LOVER

WORDS TANITA MATTHEWS



## BACKGROUND

32-year-old Jane Harrison was a loving mother of two children – one-year-old Taylor and 14-year-old Ryan. She and Taylor's father, Kevin Doherty had been together, on and off, for three years, and their relationship was turbulent. Doherty's rage often left Harrison with bruises that she tried but failed to hide from her family, including her two sisters, Claire and Maxine. Ryan often witnessed the violence his mother was subjected to at the hands of her boyfriend. The police were called to the couple's Highbury home to defuse the situation many times.

Doherty was leading a double life: he had another family in Woodford – a wife and two children – as well as a job. He had told Harrison that he had split up with his wife. Although home life was particularly difficult, on the day that Harrison went missing she had told her family she was going on a 'make-or-break' holiday with Doherty, who had purchased a trip to Florida, and they were leaving in two days. Afterwards, Harrison left her packing to go shopping in Wood Green with Doherty. The pair were spotted arguing in the street but it was the shopping centre's CCTV that captured the final sighting of the pair in north London before her disappearance.

When Ryan returned home later that day, he found Doherty pacing the apartment. When he asked where his mother was, he was told that she was at his grandmother's house. Doherty persuaded Ryan to go out for a few hours. Later that evening a neighbour came round to drop off Taylor, who she had been watching, when the house phone rang. Doherty answered and, after hanging up, told the neighbour it was Harrison calling to say she was on her way home. When Ryan came

back later that evening, the phone rang again and Doherty explained to the young boy that it had been his mother on the phone calling to say she would be home soon.

Doherty rang Harrison's sister Maxine's partner at around 11pm to say that Harrison had not returned home for the evening, and he asked if she was with them. Maxine knew in that moment that she would never see her sister again.



A £10,000 reward has been offered to the public for information leading to the recovery of Jane Harrison's body

## BREAKTHROUGH

Immediately Harrison's family suspected something terrible had happened, they were insistent that she would not willingly leave her two children for a prolonged period of time. Doherty claimed that his partner had run off with another man and abandoned her family, but her relatives pushed him to go to the police to report her as missing. From the offset Doherty was considered suspicious, particularly due to his violent nature. When filing a missing persons report he gave an inept description of the woman he had been with for three years. He reported her as 'pale' even though Harrison's family agreed that the missing girl had more of an 'olive' skin tone. Doherty also listed her eye colour as blue when they were more of a green colour.

As police attempted to piece together Harrison's last known hours, they noticed that Doherty's statement contained inconsistencies with CCTV and other reported sightings from eye witnesses. Another strange factor that set alarm bells ringing was that the holiday to Florida had been a fake. Doherty hadn't purchased such a trip. The police arrested Doherty on suspicion of abduction but he was released without charge as there was a lack of evidence that would allow a successful trial. Doherty returned to his second family and Harrison's two children remained in the care of her family.

A search for Harrison continued for the next 15 years as the family strived to get answers from the police, but without a body there was no evidence to suggest any foul play. But the family suspected Doherty to be lying after he claimed that Harrison had gone drinking after he dropped her at their mother's house. At the time, Harrison's



mother had been away and her property vacant. Maxine even turned to help from psychics to locate her sister.

In 2010, police re-examined the case and used cell-site analysis (mobile phone tracking) to trace Doherty's movements in the hours after Harrison disappeared. The evidence he had given in his statement to say that he had been searching for Harrison in a nearby town was false, he had instead been close to a set of lock up garages he was responsible for. Police were able to prove that the two phone calls from Harrison the evening she went missing were made from Doherty's mobile phone inside the flat.

This time Doherty was charged in relation to Harrison's disappearance. Police speculated that after the shopping spree in Wood Green, an argument erupted during which Doherty had killed his partner, hiding her body in a lock up to dispose of later that night, forging the phone calls to lead police away from him as a suspect.

## AFTERMATH

During his trial at the Old Bailey in January 2013, 57-year-old Doherty denied killing his lover. The prosecutor said Doherty had falsified an alibi by making fake phone calls and claiming to be the already-deceased mother. But defendants argued that Doherty was "besotted" with his lover and had not killed her. Without a body, the jury were unable to convict Doherty of murder and instead agreed to a manslaughter conviction. Judge Christopher Moss sentenced Doherty to 12 years in prison. In sentencing, Moss said Doherty had kept a "dreadful secret" as to where Harrison's remains were, a detail he still has not shared with the family.

Her youngest son, who was just a year old when his mother went missing, is now 22. Harrison's mother and father passed away without knowing the truth about what had happened to their daughter. Her surviving sisters Maxine and Claire have written to Doherty in prison and asked that he tell them where their sister is: "If you can't do it for us please do it for the sake of your son Taylor, who you haven't seen or spoke to since he was 15 months old." But still the family's request for peace for themselves and Harrison remains unanswered.

"Police were able to prove that the two phone calls from Harrison the evening she went missing were made from Doherty's mobile phone inside the flat"

The prosecution admitted that the evidence against Doherty was 'circumstantial' as there was no confession and no body to prove he had murdered Harrison




Police believe that, after the last sighting of Harrison, there are two hours unaccounted for in which Doherty could have disposed of her body





**RIGHT** At Sing Sing, a man is strapped into Old Sparky moments before he is executed





# INSIDE THE DEATH HOUSE

BETWEEN 1890 AND 1963 NEW YORK'S SING SING PRISON SERVED MORE DEATH SENTENCES THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE UNITED STATES THANKS TO ITS PURPOSE-BUILT FACTORY OF EXECUTION: THE DEATH HOUSE

WORDS ROBERT WALSH

**S**ing Sing. The name alone implies violence, hard labour, harder punishments, misery and death. Even the very words are foreboding, coming from the Native American phrase 'Sinck Sinck' meaning 'stone upon stone'. Nowadays known by the more anodyne name of the Ossining Correctional Institution, Sing Sing is one of the world's most notorious prisons, and there's one part that earned more notoriety than any other: The 'Death House'.

New York State abolished capital punishment in 1969. Its last execution was of murderer Eddie Lee Mays on 15 August 1963. Before abolition, New York hanged, shot and burned criminals at different times until, in 1889, the state adopted something new: the electric chair. Between 1890 and 1963, 614 inmates walked their 'Last Mile' between their cell and the death chamber. Once strapped into 'Old Sparky', they would 'ride the lightning'.

First used on William Kemmler at Auburn Prison on 6 August 1890, New York originally had three chairs at Auburn, Dannemora and Sing Sing. Authorities felt three chairs were needed to manage the constant influx of condemned inmates delivered by New York's mandatory death sentence for murder. By 1915, demand proving lower than expected, only Sing Sing's chair remained.

## LIVING WITH DEATH

Sing Sing had two buildings reserved exclusively for the condemned. The original Death House opened in 1890

comprising cells, a guardroom, doctor's room, an office for meetings and sanity hearings, kitchen and, of course, the execution chamber. Its design caused significant problems.

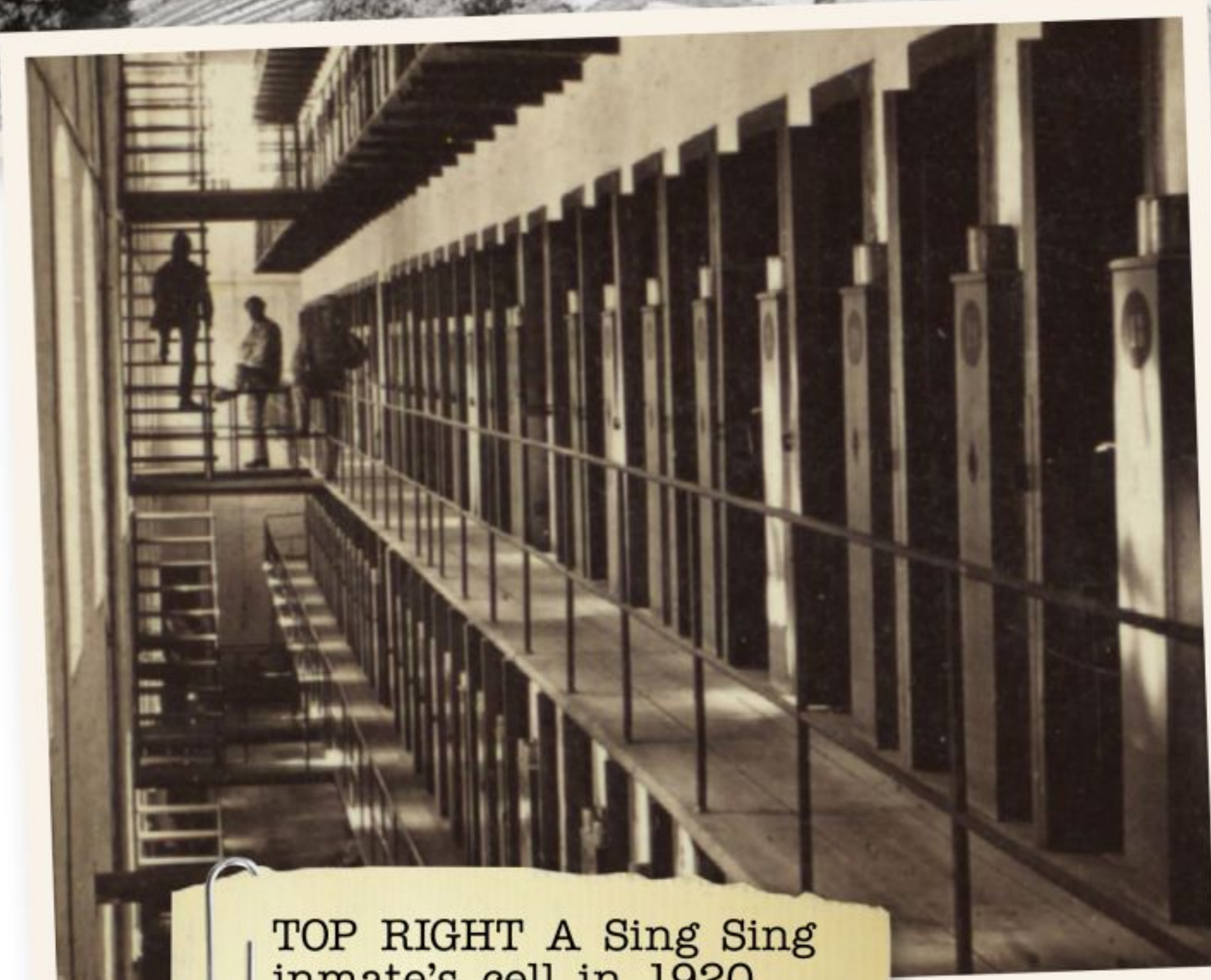
The death chamber was so close to the cells that inmates heard executions being performed. The generator and humming electricity cables were clearly audible to them. They even heard the inmate's last words, if they said any. Worse, New York state law required an autopsy immediately after execution. The autopsy room being next to the death chamber, inmates clearly heard that too.

Another serious problem was security. Condemned inmates are often regarded as the most dangerous because they have nothing to lose by attacking staff and other inmates, inciting riots and attempting escape. The best that most condemned inmates can expect is their sentence to be commuted to life imprisonment so, either way, they'll die behind bars. They have no reason to co-operate and every reason to cause trouble.

In 1916, murderer Oresto Shillitoni used a smuggled gun to escape the original Death House. Shillitoni was later

**“ THE CONCEPT WAS SIMPLE. ONCE YOU WENT IN, YOU WERE UNLIKELY TO COME OUT ALIVE ”**





TOP RIGHT A Sing Sing inmate's cell in 1920

TOP The prison is on the east bank of the Hudson River

ABOVE The Death House had 24 cells

recaptured and executed for four murders. A brand-new, custom-built Death House was called for. State Architect Lewis Pilcher designed the new facility, which opened in 1922. It was unique.

## HOUSE WARMING

The new building had 24 cells for men and six for women. It had its own guardroom, two tiny exercise yards, kitchen, Chaplain's room, doctor's office, dentist's room, an office for the State Lunacy Commission

to decide whether inmates were sane enough to die and a padded cell for those who went insane. Six pre-execution cells, nicknamed 'The Dancehall', were where prisoners spent execution day and, of course, the execution chamber with adjoining autopsy room and mortuary. Pilcher's design meant that cells and execution chamber were far enough apart that prisoners heard nothing.

Security was as strict as humanly possible. Guards were hand picked and, sometimes, reassigned when the stress became too much. Former guard Samuel Seager later became one of Elliott Ness's 'Untouchables' after leaving Sing Sing. All visitors underwent an FBI background check and were searched on arrival. Complaints or refusals meant they were refused admission. A wire screen separated inmates and visitors during visits, which were supervised by Death House guards. For their final visit before execution, prisoners could spend longer than usual with their guests, albeit under the same strict rules. When the guards decided it was time to end a visit, they stepped in and visitors were politely told to leave.

Cells were searched at random. Prisoners were forbidden their own matches or lighters so, if they wanted to smoke, they had to ask a guard for a light. Food was served with crockery and cutlery made from thin aluminium so that prisoners couldn't steal them and make weapons. All mail, incoming and outgoing, was routinely opened, read, copied and censored. Anything considered potentially suspect wasn't delivered. Even a prisoner's last letters, a Death Row tradition, received the standard checks. None were delivered in time for the inmate to receive a reply.

The concept was simple. Once you went in, you were unlikely to come out alive. Occasionally prisoners left for court hearings or hospital visits, assuming they were deemed too ill for the prison infirmary. Other than that, they ate, slept, exercised, wrote letters, filed appeals, consulted lawyers and counted days until their execution all within the building. Those hoping for courts or the state governor to save them were frequently disappointed. Only one-third of Death House inmates secured reprieves or commutations. Some, like Edward Kelly, were fortunate enough to win an appeal for a new trial only to be re-convicted, re-sentenced and returned for execution.

## LIGHTS OUT

Many people today think of the USA's death penalty as the preserve of Southern states like Virginia, Florida and Texas. During the 1920s and 1930s, when business was most brisk, Sing Sing routinely performed more executions than any other American prison. Single executions were standard, doubles not unusual, triples happened sometimes and multiples, though rare, also featured. For multiple executions, four or five inmates would die consecutively in one night. Sing Sing's largest multiple execution was in 1912. It saw seven inmates dying one after another.

Images of inmates being dragged to their deaths are largely myth. The vast majority of Sing Sing's condemned went quietly. They simply walked their 'Last Mile' from the Dancehall to the death chamber, said their last words

**“ IT WAS OFTEN DURING THE SHOWER AND SHAVE THAT THEIR FATE FINALLY SANK IN IF IT HADN'T ALREADY ”**





**TOP** In the first photo ever taken of an execution, Ruth Snyder can be seen in the Old Sparky. She was executed on 12 January 1928 for the murder of her husband

if they had any, sat down, were strapped in, the switch was thrown and they were certified dead. Some, like tuberculosis patient Leo Jankowski, actually welcomed death. Jankowski, executed in 1920, suffered so badly from his illness that he cried with joy and kissed the chair, declaring that he'd never been so happy to see anything.

Another popular myth was of lights dimming during executions. The chair had its own generator separate from the main prison power supply so, barring a serious malfunction or a lightning strike, nothing disturbed the prison's main electrical system.

Nor did most of them die with a roomful of reporters watching. New York required all executions to be witnessed by journalists. Like all visitors, they underwent the FBI check and were only admitted with a written invitation from the Warden. No invitation, no entry.

Media attention depended on the notoriety (or lack thereof) of the inmates. Many, especially from ethnic minorities, died with only a local reporter or two in attendance, receiving only a line or two in local newspapers. At the other end of the scale, cannibal Albert Fish, racketeer Louis 'Lepke' Buchalter, 'Lonely Hearts Killers' Raymond Fernandez and Martha Beck, and atom bomb spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg attracted so many reporters that the Warden refused more journalists than he admitted.

This is in total contrast to British executions, where only prison staff, executioners, occasional invited observers and the condemned were allowed. New York's newspaper readers had detailed (if not always entirely accurate) reports of executions. British readers were denied most details other than an official notice posted on prison gates after a hanging. British executions were shrouded in official secrecy. New York's were openly reported so that justice could be seen to be served.

## BLACK THURSDAY

Executions were traditionally performed on Thursdays, known as 'Black Thursday'. New York's death warrants didn't

# INFAMOUS LAST WORDS

INMATES WERE ALWAYS ASKED FOR LAST WORDS. MANY HAD NONE; OTHERS PLENTY

**“WELL FOLKS, YOU'RE SHORTLY ABOUT TO SEE A BAKED APPEL”**

GEORGE APPEL, 1928

**“FATHER FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO!”**

RUTH SNYDER, 1928

**“I'M HERE ON A FRAMED-UP CASE”**

EMMANUEL 'MENDY' WEISS, 1944

**“IS THIS ALL THERE IS TO IT?”**

ARTHUR WAITE, 1917

**“GENTLEMEN, YOU'RE ABOUT TO WITNESS THE EFFECT ELECTRICITY HAS ON WOOD”**

FREDERICK WOOD, 1963

specify a particular date, only a particular week. When courts granted stays of execution, then executions were postponed. If the appeal failed, the prisoner was brought into court and re-sentenced by their trial judge. Court hearings were one of the very few reasons condemned inmates left the Death House. For most, it was a brief view of the outside world under armed escort to have their appeals denied and their sentences reaffirmed.

The Death House held some of the USA's most notable criminals. In 1899, Martha Place, condemned for murdering her step-daughter, made criminal history as the first woman to be electrocuted.

Cannibal Albert Fish (executed in 1936) looked forward to his execution, stating openly that: “The electric chair will be the supreme thrill, and the only one I haven't tried.”

Ruth Snyder, executed in 1928, attracted huge media coverage. Condemned with lover Judd Gray for murdering her husband Albert, her case was immortalised in classic movie *Double Indemnity* and the play *Machinal*. 'Lepke' Buchalter, executed in 1944 with two accomplices, remains the only top-level American gangster to be legally executed.

Raymond Fernandez and Martha Beck died in 1951 for a string of murders. Fernandez lured wealthy women via lonely hearts adverts. They then murdered and robbed them before concealing their bodies.

Illustrating the media hierarchy among New York's condemned, Beck and Fernandez were only two of four inmates executed that night. John King and Richard Powers, convicted of murdering a detective, barely rated mentions in



## CALLING THE ELECTRICIAN

Sing Sing had five executioners between 1890 and 1963, officially titled State Electricians. Edwin Davis, John Hurlburt, Robert Elliott, Joseph Francel and Dow Hover executed 614 inmates in New York alone. State Electricians had to be qualified electricians with no criminal record and good character references.

They earned \$150 for single executions. Multiples paid \$50 per additional inmate. A private contractor, New York's executioner could also work for other states and usually did.

Elliott, credited with 387 executions during his career, was employed by New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Vermont and Connecticut. On 6 January 1927, Elliott performed a triple electrocution in Massachusetts, then visited Sing Sing for another triple execution the same day.

accounts grimly describing Fernandez being helped into the chair having almost collapsed in terror. New York's scribes further excelled themselves with detailed descriptions of how Martha, who was morbidly obese, had to be squeezed into the chair before she could be strapped down.

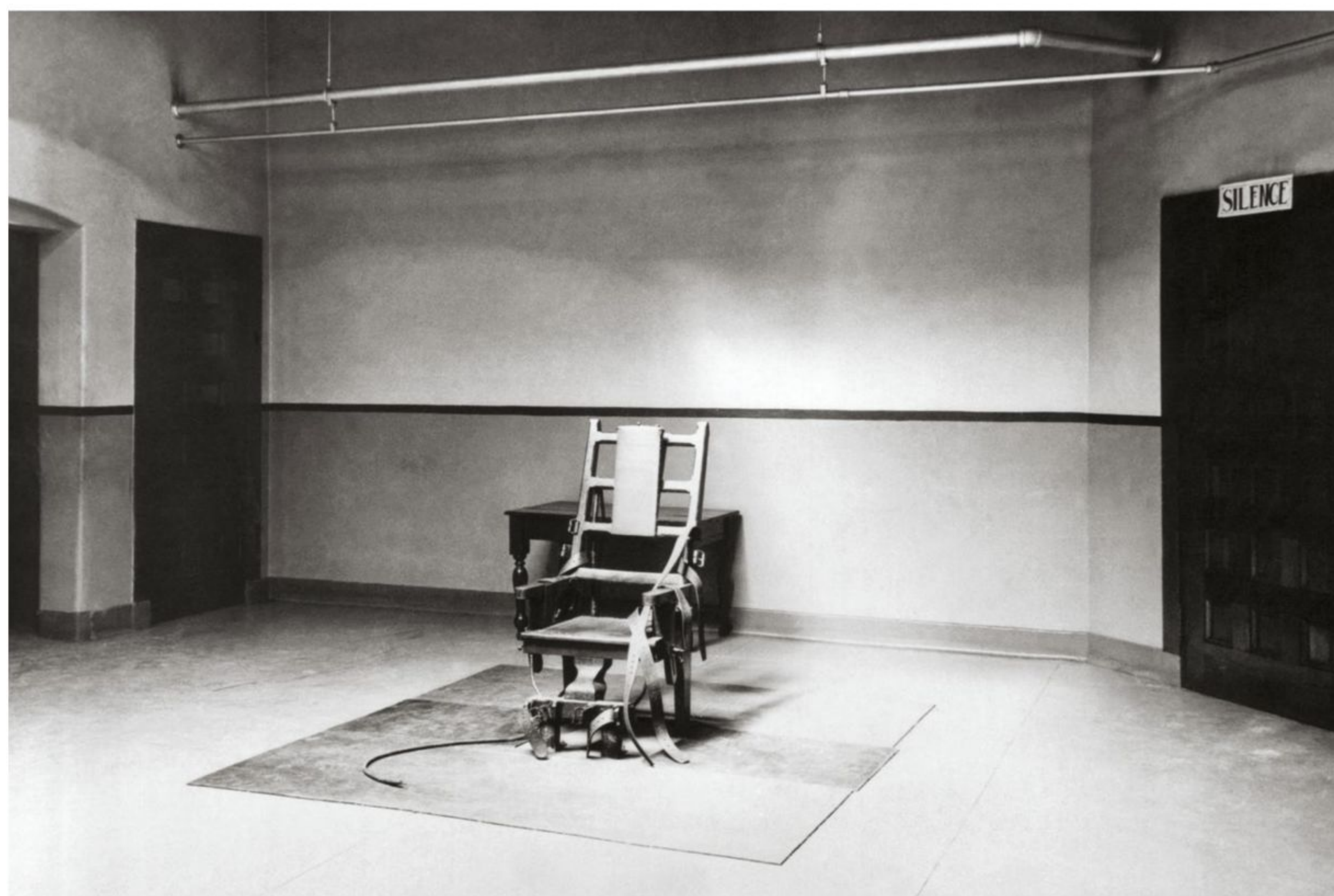
Black Thursday was as strictly regulated as every other day. In the morning, the inmate was moved from their regular cell to the Dancehall. They waited for a commutation or stay, neither of which was likely by that point. Their lawyers visited, usually to commiserate and say goodbye. Sing Sing had a generous policy on the traditional last meal, so they could order both a last dinner and last supper. Aside from alcohol, they could have anything within reason and ate in their cell. Guards sat outside the cell on permanent watch for suicide attempts. If the prisoner wanted religious support, Sing Sing had Protestant and Catholic chaplains and a rabbi for Jewish inmates. Subject to security, they could receive their last visitors, who were permitted to stay longer than usual on the final day.

### THEIR FINAL HOURS

There were other, grimmer, parts of the ritual. Inmates had to take a hot shower or bath as dirt might cause a fire hazard when the switch was thrown. Their hair was cropped by the Death House barber for the same reason. It was often during the shower and shave that their fate finally sank in if it hadn't already. Very occasionally inmates panicked, mistaking the barber's chair for Old Sparky and the barber for the executioner. To avoid distressing their final visitors, the shower and shave happened after they had already left.

Perhaps the hardest part, after their last visit, was their last letter. They didn't always send one, but many did. Like their last words, their last letters varied from apologetic to philosophical to bitter, angry and defiant. Some claimed innocence. Some blamed incompetent lawyers, corrupt police, biased judges or perjured witnesses. They varied from eloquent to barely literate, but all told something about their writers. With time short and their end near, many inmates dropped whatever front they'd hidden behind beforehand.

Some wardens, like Wilfred Denno, avoided visiting condemned inmates on execution day, not wanting to offer false hope of a last-minute stay or commutation. In 1928, Ruth Snyder was told of a stay of execution, only to be



**ABOVE** At Sing Sing, 614 inmates were executed when they sat in Old Sparky

informed later that she would die that night. She did. Others, like Lewis Lawes, always visited inmates on their final day. On one memorable occasion in 1925, Patrick Murphy broke the rules by asking Lawes for a final drink. Lawes, who loathed executions, brought Murphy two ounces of whiskey. Murphy, knowing Lawes's feelings, handed back the bottle saying: "Warden, you look like you need this more than I do."

While the inmates had their final meal, visit, shower and haircut, the execution team rehearsed. The executioner tested the chair, electrodes, generator, wires and switches to ensure all was well. The warden assembled the witnesses in his office, briefing them on how to behave and what to expect. Hand-picked guards would be assigned their roles in escorting the inmate between the Dancehall and death chamber. They were also briefed on securing the prisoner with heavy leather straps and applying an electrode to their shaven right leg. The head electrode was inside a specially made helmet placed by the executioner.

At 10.55pm, the ritual began. The warden, four guards and a chaplain or rabbi opened the inmate's cell and escorted them into the death chamber. Once inside, things happened quickly. The warden asked them for their final words, usually there weren't any. The inmate was quickly seated, heavy leather straps securing their limbs and torso. A guard fixed the leg electrode while the executioner placed the helmet, containing a natural sponge soaked in brine to aid conduction, over the inmate's head. A leather mask was strapped tightly across their face and around the back of the chair. It held their head steady to avoid breaking electrical contact when the current flowed.

With the prisoner fully secured, guards stepped away for their own safety and to afford witnesses a clear view. The executioner stood by his switchboard awaiting a silent signal from the Warden. Then the signal came.

**“ THE INMATE’S BODY THRUST AGAINST THE STRAPS, THEIR SHOULDERS HITTING THE CHAIR’S BACKREST WITH AN AUDIBLE SLAP AS THEIR HANDS CLENCHED ”**



# THIS IS HOW BAD MEN DIE

THE EFFECT OF THE ELECTRIC CHAIR... IN STOMACH-CHURNING DETAIL



## 1 LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The first high-voltage shock is designed to almost instantly destroy the brain and central nervous system functions. The inmate is thought to be rendered unconscious in 1/240th of a second, which is less time than in which they can feel the pain.

## 2 MUSCLE PARALYSIS

Electrocution causes complete paralysis due to every muscle contracting and staying contracted while the current is flowing. This makes heartbeat and respiration impossible. The second shock cycle is administered to ensure heartbeat does not resume.

## 3 BLOOD, SWEAT AND WORSE

Physical reactions include burning of the scalp and calf, heaving chest, gurgles, foaming at the mouth, bloody sweat, burning skin, shattering of the eye lens and release of urine and/or faeces. After electrocution, the body typically turns a bright red colour.

## 4 FEEL THEM FRY

There's debate about what electrocuted inmates experience before death. Some believe they feel being burned to death and suffocation, as the shock causes respiratory paralysis and cardiac arrest, while others believe the shock 'scrambles' the brain and nerve functions.

## 5 COOKING THE INSIDES

Due to the body's electrical resistance, its temperature rises to 138 degrees Fahrenheit and is too hot to touch. This 'bakes' the organs. According to Robert H Kirschner, deputy chief medical examiner of Cook County, Illinois: "The brain appears cooked in most cases."

## JUSTICE STRIKES

The executioner threw the switch, carefully watching the prisoner's body. An increasingly loud, sputtering drone began. Tendrils of smoke rose from the electrodes and a burning odour filled the room. The inmate's body thrust against the straps, their shoulders hitting the chair's backrest with an audible slap as their hands clenched against the chair's arms. New York's executioners evolved a cycle of shocks to kill without causing unnecessary burning. During a two-minute 'jolt', inmates received 2,000 volts for three seconds, 500 volts for 57 seconds, 2,000 volts for three seconds, 500 volts for 54 seconds and 2,000 volts for the last three seconds. Then the power was shut off.

The prison doctor waited for the body to cool enough for examination. While the inmate slumped in the chair, reporters took notes, although photography was entirely forbidden. This didn't stop Ruth Snyder's execution being photographed with a hidden camera, almost costing Lewis Lawes his job and causing compulsory body searches for all witnesses at subsequent executions.

A stethoscope check confirmed either death or that a second 'jolt' was needed. A dead prisoner was unstrapped, put on a stretcher and wheeled into the adjoining autopsy room while witnesses were escorted from the prison.

If the inmate was still alive (which happened frequently) the doctor signalled for another jolt before checking again. The executioner delivered as many jolts as necessary.

Sooner or later (Ethel Rosenberg was shocked five times before she finally died) the inmate was certified dead. The Warden directed witnesses to leave after signing forms certifying they'd witnessed the execution.

The prison doctor began the autopsy while guards switched off the lights and locked the doors. In the Death House, guards removed the inmate's nametag from their cell, packaged up their personal effects to send back to family or friends, remade their bed and then left. After the autopsy, the inmate's family claimed their body, or it was sent to a funeral home for burial or cremation.

And then? Another death sentence. Another inmate admitted to pass whatever time they had left. The ritual simply began again.



# STRANGE CASE!

WHERE COLORADO, USA WHEN 27 AUGUST 2011

## CORPSE PASSENGER PICKS UP THE TAB FOR FRIENDS' JOY RIDE SPENDING SPREE

IN SCENES THAT RESEMBLED THE EVENTS OF THE 1980S CULT COMEDY WEEKEND AT BERNIE'S, TWO MEN BUNDLED THEIR BUDDY'S BODY INTO THEIR CAR FOR A JOY RIDE BEFORE USING HIS CREDIT CARD TO PAY FOR THEIR WILD NIGHT OUT

In 2011, 43-year-old Robert Jeffrey Young was living with an old friend, Jeffrey Jarrett, in Denver. One evening in August, Young returned to the home the two shared to find his friend unconscious and unresponsive. Young hurried to the nearby restaurant where he worked and sought out 25-year-old Mark Robinson, bringing him back to the address. Claiming to think their friend was only passed out, not in fact dead, the pair tossed Jarrett's body into the back of Robinson's Lincoln Navigator SUV and went for a drive, instead of calling for help. On their jaunt, they made a number of stops around the area, including at Teddy T's Bar and Grill and Sam's No. 3 for some breakfast.

While Young and Robinson partied, Jarrett's corpse was left in the car. However, his wallet accompanied the two friends on their jaunt as they racked up the expenses on Jarrett's credit card. The pair then said they realised that Jarrett was in fact dead and returned home to tuck him into bed, but instead of calling the police, the pair continued to drive around town. They stopped for gas and at a burrito bar all courtesy of their deceased friend, before their final destination, strip club Shotgun Willie's. Here, they took a tab out on the deceased's card and withdrew \$400 from an ATM.

As they left the club, one of the men told a valet and a Glendale police officer that, "They were driving around with a dead guy and they didn't know what to do with it and they were just going to go home really fast." The police officer, hearing the quirky story, alerted officers who found Jarrett's body at his home. Despite Robinson's claims that he thought Jarrett had passed out from drinking, the police said that Young had admitted to them that he knew he was dead from the first stop they had made that night.



The pair were arrested, and although they were not charged with Jarrett's death, they were charged with abducting a corpse and fraudulently using his credit card. Police say they did not have the consent of their friend to do so in his absence. Young posted a bond of \$2,500 while Robinson posted a \$3,500 bond. Both men were brought back to Denver County Court in September and October respectively for a preliminary hearing. A local Denver news channel compared the incident to the 1980s comedy



*Weekend At Bernie's*, where two friends arrive at their boss's luxury pad only to find him dead, but carry on the party anyway.

Prior to sentencing, both pled guilty to abducting a corpse while Young admitted to identity theft. The pair appeared back in court on 8 March 2012 for sentencing, where Robinson received two years of probation and Young faced one year of probation. They were also ordered to partake in community service and undergo mental health and substance abuse evaluations.



# THOSE WHO LAY TOGETHER, SLAY TOGETHER...

Meet some of the sickest partners in crime and find out how these killer couples have corrupted, ruined and devastated the lives of those around them



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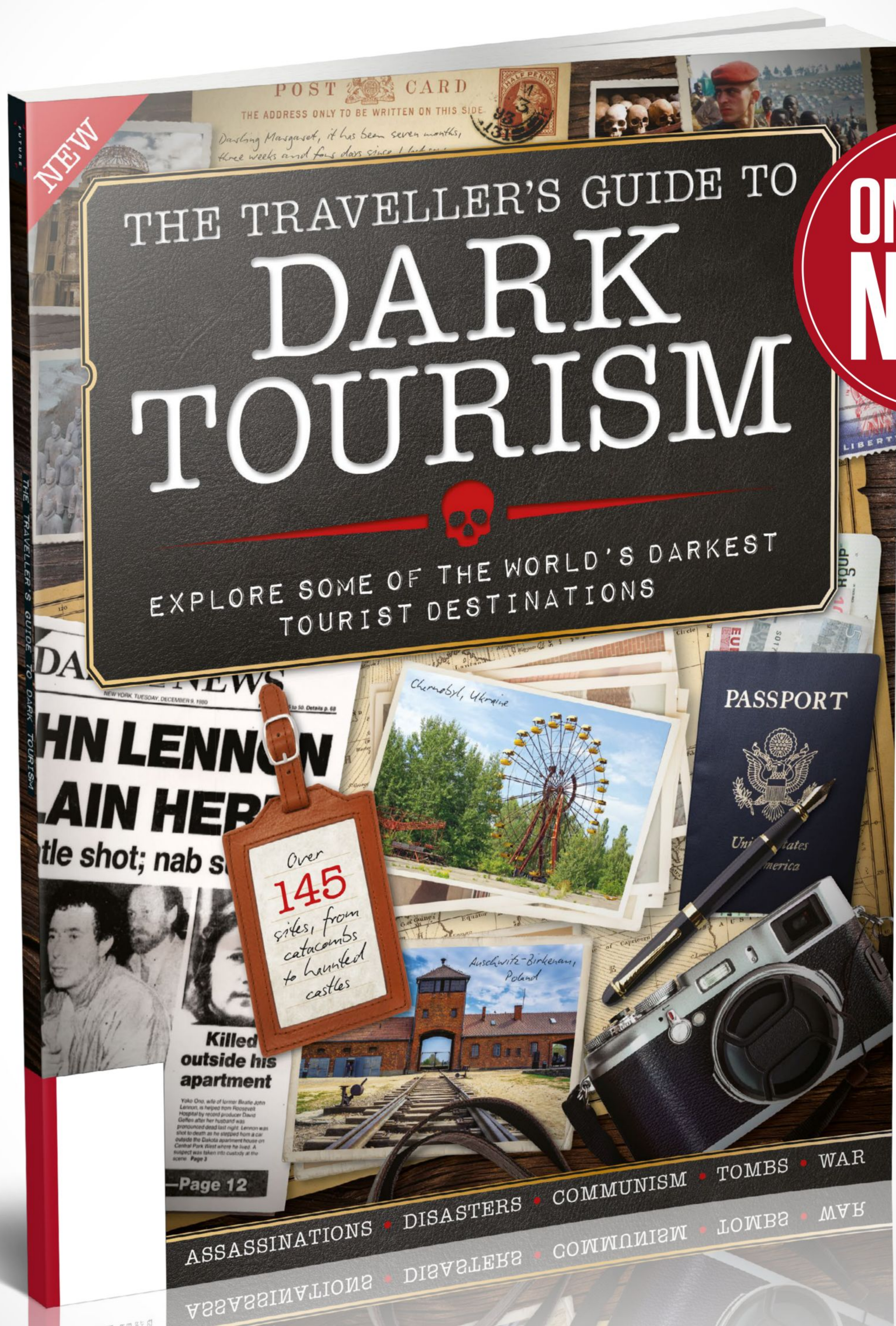
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