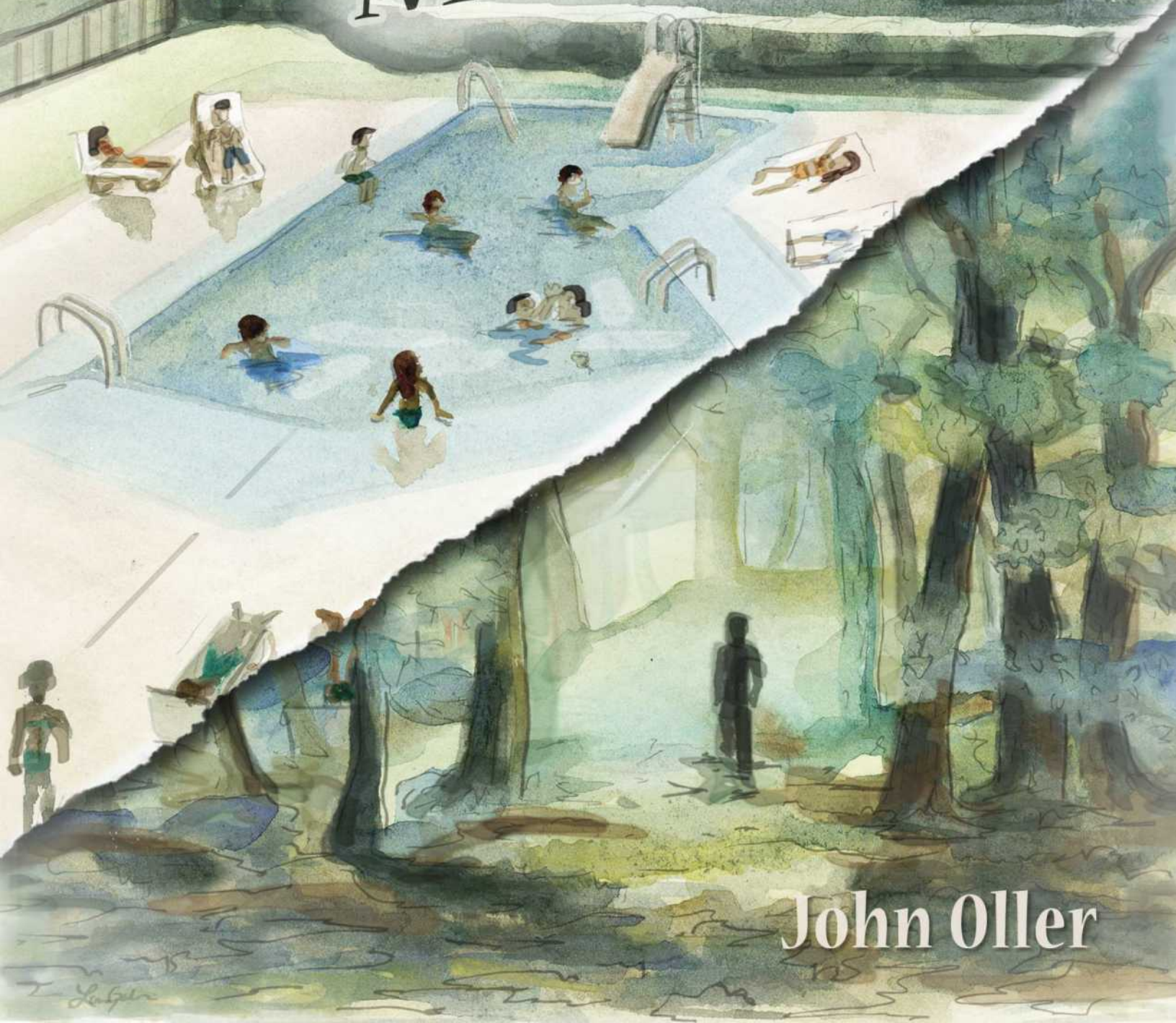


AN ALL-AMERICAN MURDER



John Oller

Praise for *An All-American Murder*

“John Oller has taken up a murder case that Jim Yavorcik and I reported for the Ohio State *Lantern* when we were Ohio State University seniors in 1975-76. The comments that John has elicited on Facebook in this unsolved case show how the emotions and frustrations of the family, friends and classmates of Christie Mullins have been reignited nearly 40 years after the violent death of this 14-year-old girl . . . Exceptionally well written. It’s an insightful look into the angst that people can carry for decades when the criminal justice system is unable/unwilling to provide closure. The case should be re-opened.”

— Rick Kelly, Director of Crisis Communications, Triad Strategies,
LLC, Harrisburg, PA

“Many of our lives were changed forever the day Christie Mullins was killed. John Oller did a great job researching. Please help get the truth out there.”

— Alan North, Columbus, Ohio

“Congrats to you John Oller for your well done report. It certainly brings home that this is still a cold case. I am glad that you put this together so that we could read about the crime with the eyes of adults. I hate that we lost her in the way that we did.”

— Mary Keenan Weidl, Westerville, Ohio

“A tragic, fascinating story well-told.”

— Greg Victor, Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette*

“I teared up through some of it . . . I miss her and time has not and will not change that. I think all of us feel the same. Thank you John.”

— Lisa Siegwald-Baird, Columbus, Ohio

“Well written and really ripe for cold-caser to pick it up. Would be great if it happened and articles like this are how that stuff gets back on the radar.”

— Jenny Murphy, Columbus, Ohio

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*American Queen: The Rise and Fall of Kate Chase Sprague —
Civil War “Belle of the North” and Gilded Age Woman of Scandal*

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For information please contact the author at 100 Riverside Drive, Apt. 16C, New York, NY 10024 or at mrjro33@gmail.com.

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AN ALL-AMERICAN MURDER



BY JOHN OLLER

Gotta get off, gonna get

Out of this merry-go-round

— Theme from “Valley of the Dolls”

PROLOGUE

They are all adults now, in their 50s, with children of their own. But for the teenagers who grew up near Graceland Shopping Center in Columbus, Ohio back then, the terrible day of August 23, 1975 remains a vivid memory, their JFK assassination, only

more personal. “It was definitely a pivotal moment,” says Kathy Marshall, then about to enter her sophomore year at Whetstone High School—“one of those events in our life where everybody knew where they were and what they were doing when they heard the news.” Her classmate Jens Munk, now living in Alaska, echoes the notion. “We’re haunted by this still,” he says. “It’s unfinished.” It marked a loss of innocence, recalls Susannah Justice-Loy, who was 10 at the time: “None of our lives was ever the same after that.” Adds Betsi Huntzinger, a ninth-grader-to-be that summer, it “would be wonderful to solve the mystery all these years later.”

The mystery—the “it” they all remember—was the murder of 14-year-old Christie Lynn Mullins, who was found bludgeoned to death in the woods behind the Woolco department store at Graceland that August afternoon. Her homicide, which remains officially unsolved, led to what *Columbus Monthly* magazine would call “one of the most dramatic and bizarre trials in the city’s history,” a Perry Mason-like affair two years later that resulted in the acquittal of the only person ever charged with the crime. And nearly 40 years later, people are still asking the question posed on perhaps the most famous cover in that magazine’s history: “Who *did* kill Christie Mullins?”

The years have not lessened interest in the answer to that question on the part of those who knew and fondly remember Christie, or on the part of amateur “websleuths” who frequent the Internet cold case sites. Christie’s former friends and neighbors, like most people who have studied the case, are unanimous in their belief that the wrong man was brought to trial. They maintain that despite a swift arrest and confession obtained by police, the accused man—a 25-year-old mental ward of the state with an IQ of 43 to 55—not only did not commit but could not have committed the murder. Instead, these neighbors remain convinced that the real killer was someone who lived in their midst, a street away from Christie.

What follows is a story of a murder that rocked the city of Columbus as few others have, much as the Sam Sheppard case profoundly affected Cleveland two decades earlier. The story is based on a re-investigation conducted over the past several months by this writer, assisted by a coterie of Christie’s former friends and surviving Mullins family members. More than 100 persons were interviewed, including friends, neighbors and classmates of Christie; journalists who covered the story; lawyers who were involved in the case; policemen who investigated the murder; and social workers who formed the accused defendant’s mental health support group. Another 50 persons communicated with the author by email or

Facebook message. Even those with little specific information to offer have been supportive: “This is long overdue! Thank you!” wrote one neighbor. “I’m so glad you are writing about this case,” said another woman who knew Christie. “It has passed through my mind many, many times through the years.”

One group considerably less enthusiastic about the story is the Columbus Division of Police, widely considered to have botched the case at the time. Even its Cold Case unit, which has cultivated a reputation for dogged pursuit of unsolved homicides, has shown no interest in this one and has refused to provide any information about it (citing the fact that although the case is no longer being actively investigated, it remains technically “open” and its investigative files off limits to the public). One detective derisively questioned why this author was showing such “sudden and adamant interest in this 38 year old case.”

Perhaps the following will explain why . . .

PART ONE

The Murder

Saturday, August 23, 1975 was one of those sultry summer days for which Columbus is known. The temperature would reach 93 degrees that afternoon, placing a slight damper on attendance at the Ohio State Fair, which had opened on Thursday. Officials hoped that fairgoers would brave the heat that Saturday, and disregard the sagging national economy, in order to see scheduled performances by country singer Roger Miller and a new hit song duo, the Captain & Tennille. Those preferring air-conditioned comfort and cheap entertainment could instead catch Mel Brooks's "Young Frankenstein," playing at Graceland Cinema that afternoon and evening for \$1.50. At crowded swimming pools across the city, transistor radios blared the reigning Top 40 hits: "Fallin' in Love" by Hamilton, Joe Frank & Reynolds; and The Eagles' "One of These Nights."

Like many of her friends, Christie Mullins would choose to beat the heat that day by walking over to the swimming pool at the Riverlodge Apartments on Broadmeadows Boulevard, just a street up from the Mullinses' house at 413 Rosslyn Avenue. The pool was a

popular gathering spot for kids living in Sharon Heights, a residential section of the Clintonville neighborhood north of downtown Columbus. The part of Sharon Heights where the Mullinses lived consisted of white, blue-collar, lower-middle-class families living in tiny, thousand-square-foot houses, and the pool at the three-year-old apartment complex was a welcome addition to the neighborhood. Though technically for apartment residents only, it was always full of teens who "knew somebody" there or who slipped through the bars to get in. It being the '70s, a fair amount of drinking and marijuana smoking went on around the pool; sometimes kids would sneak off into the nearby woods to smoke a little pot before returning to swim and hang out. The government-subsidized Riverlodge Apartments were heavily populated by single-parent families, especially young divorced women who paid their teenaged babysitters the going rate of 50 cents an hour or, occasionally, in marijuana joints.

The night before, Christie had babysat until late for a woman in one of the apartments, and like most teens she slept in Saturday morning. She was invited to the fair that day by two of her friends but, for reasons that are unclear, did not go with them. Perhaps her best friend, Julie Young, was heading back from vacation out West. Christie's older sister, Melony, was at the fair, so Christie's choices for company that day seemed to be limited to two: her younger

sister, Kim, who was 13, or 14-year-old neighbor Lisa Sprague (not her real name), a girl Christie was not especially friendly with but with whom she had partied earlier that summer. They were almost complete opposites, personality-wise: Christie is universally remembered as having been sweet, shy and quiet around strangers, and naïve for her age. (She was five days short of her 15th birthday.) Always smiling, she could giggle and talk about boys with her girlfriends, and exchange an occasional kiss, but she'd never had a steady boyfriend. By contrast, Lisa, though two grades behind Christie in school, has been described as worldly and flirtatious, attention-seeking, and more on the wild side. Physically they were different too: Christie, at 5-foot-7 and 110 pounds, was thin and coltish, and dreamed of becoming a fashion model. She had dark auburn hair, was pretty, and possessed, as one friend puts it, "kind of an ethereal beauty." Lisa, who was 5-foot-4 and 125 pounds, was curvier, with the look of a girl at least two years older.



Christie Mullins

"You don't even like her, you said you would go to the pool with me," Kim Mullins pleaded with Christie that morning when Lisa telephoned Christie to go somewhere with her. Keeping her promise, Christie went to the pool with Kim shortly after lunchtime but had not yet entered the water when Lisa showed up across the parking lot looking for Christie. After stopping by a white car to talk to four much older boys, none of whom Christie knew, Lisa came over to speak to Christie, and the two of them left the pool together. By now Kim was preoccupied with swimming, and although she was surprised to see Christie leave without telling her, she decided she wasn't going to be a "pesky little sister." It was the last time she saw Christie alive.

As Lisa would tell police, she had been swimming at the Broadmeadows pool that Saturday when her own younger sister came to tell her that an unidentified man who had called her several times earlier that week was again trying to reach her. She said she then ran to her home on West Kanawha Avenue, one street south of the Mullins home, and around 1 p.m. took a call from a man with a “hillbilly” accent and slightly nervous stutter who identified himself as a “disc jockey” for a local radio station, the call letters of which she did not remember. He told her there was going to be a “cheerleading contest” at 1:45 p.m. behind the Woolco store, with a free pass to the state fair as the prize. He asked her if she knew the “shortcut” path through the woods to Woolco, which Lisa said she did; indeed, virtually every kid in the neighborhood knew the path and traveled it many times to get to the shopping center, about a 10-minute walk from Rosslyn Avenue. Although it would have taken only a minute or so, if that, for the “disc jockey” to inform Lisa of the cheerleading contest and how to get there, Lisa would testify that she talked with the stranger for “about 15 minutes.” According to another person who spoke with her shortly after the murder, Lisa said the disc jockey promised her there would be someone at Woolco from the Olan Mills photography studio at Graceland to take pictures, a further indication that the caller was someone local.

Lisa would testify that after the call, she changed her clothes at home, left with her younger sister, and started with her toward the path that led to Graceland. Lisa said she told her sister that “in case this is something it’s not supposed to be, I want you to run.” She admitted to having suspicions that it was “not on the up and up.” Then, she said, when she and her sister ran into Christie Mullins along the way, heading in the same direction, Lisa asked Christie to go with her to the contest instead, and sent her sister back home. That testimony was contradicted by Christie’s sister Kim at trial, who testified that Lisa and Christie left the pool together. Kim’s recollection is supported by another girl, then 17-year-old Barbara Kerns, who recalls that Christie and Lisa were together, outside Barb’s apartment next to the pool, when they asked her to accompany them to Woolco, which she could not.



The pool at Riverlodge

In any event, Lisa said that she and Christie went together to Woolco for the cheerleading contest, and sat to wait on the guardrail on the north side of the building, where the path lets out. When no one showed up for the contest, Lisa said, she went inside Woolco to check on the time, leaving Christie sitting alone, combing her hair, on the guardrail. (No witness was ever found who could recall seeing Lisa inside the store.) Lisa said that five minutes later, after determining it was 1:40, still five minutes before the scheduled contest, she returned to the spot at the guardrail and discovered that Christie was gone. She testified that she waited a few minutes at the guardrail, then headed back down the path, in the direction of her home, and stopped to sit on a big rock in the ravine for about 15 minutes. Hearing and seeing nothing of Christie, Lisa went home and was seen back at the pool around 2:30 p.m. By that time, Christie's body had been found. It was in a remote, densely wooded area well off the main path, near the Olentangy River, about half- to three-quarters of a mile southwest of the spot on the guardrail from which, according to police, she was abducted (see maps pp. 9–10). Her savagely beaten face was so distorted, with one side of it caved in, her eye down to her cheek, that one Woolco employee commented, "I wouldn't have recognized her if it was my own daughter." Coming at a time before gruesome

murders were routinely shown on the nightly news or depicted on television shows such as "CSI" and "NCIS," this one stood out as particularly shocking.

Enter the account of one Henry Hester Newell, Jr. Twenty-five-year-old "Junior," as he was known, lived with his wife, Pam, at 343 Kanawha Ave., across the street from Lisa at 356 Kanawha, and was feared by just about everyone who knew him. Born in Alabama, he had spent much of his youth in and out of jails and juvenile correctional and reformatory institutions, with two escapes to his credit. A year after moving to Ohio in 1968, he was convicted on two separate arson counts, and his record prior to 1975 included convictions and/or arrests for wrongful influence of a minor, disorderly conduct, trespass, and—as recently as April 1974—discharging a weapon. After his marriage to Pam in 1973—her fourth—the two of them ran a small bar-restaurant downtown, but he was unemployed at the time of Christie's murder. He was living off a settlement he'd received as a result of burns he suffered driving a gasoline truck that exploded in a crash. He now spent most of his time—days and nights—patrolling the woods and paths behind Graceland on his dirt bike.

As Junior and Pam would tell police, and later testify at trial, they were at home on Saturday morning with Pam's two children by previous marriages. Junior said that he left the

house for five minutes or so around noon to chase some kids down the street who had thrown firecrackers in their front yard, but that otherwise he was at home until just after 1:30, when the family decided to go to Woolco to buy a puppet for five-year-old Mary, to be preceded by a “nature hike” that 10-year-old Bobby wanted to take in the woods behind the store. (In what would later prove significant, Junior’s original accounts to police omitted any mention of the boy.) They made the approximately three-minute drive from their house to Woolco and parked, coincidentally, at the same spot by the guardrail where Christie and Lisa had been sitting, and at approximately the same time—1:45 (but they did not report having seen either girl).



The alleged abduction point
(Jan. 1976 *Columbus Monthly*)

Around 2:15 to 2:20, Junior and his wife would tell police, the family was walking in the woods when they came upon a man swinging a

long two-by-four in a wood-chopping motion, three or four times. The man looked at Junior and his wife and started running away. Junior ran ahead to discover the body of a girl, her face viciously beaten, blood still frothing from her mouth, the blood-spattered board lying across her head. Her wrists were tied in front of her with telephone cord; her bathing suit top was pulled down over her midriff, exposing her breasts; and the blue jeans covering her bathing suit bottom were unzipped but otherwise in place. She was barefoot, and the hooded, zip-up shirt she’d been wearing when she left the pool was stripped from her. Pam, who had nurses’ training, said she checked for

a pulse and found none. A police officer explained that Junior “got emotional” when he found the body, and picked up the board and threw it into the woods, where police later recovered it. Junior removed the shirt he was wearing and covered the victim’s head. He then took his wife and children to Woolco to report

the crime. The original phone call to police was between 2:20 and 2:25 p.m. All that afternoon, helicopters circled above the heavily wooded area.



Henry and Pam Newell explain the crime scene to reporters (*Columbus Dispatch*)

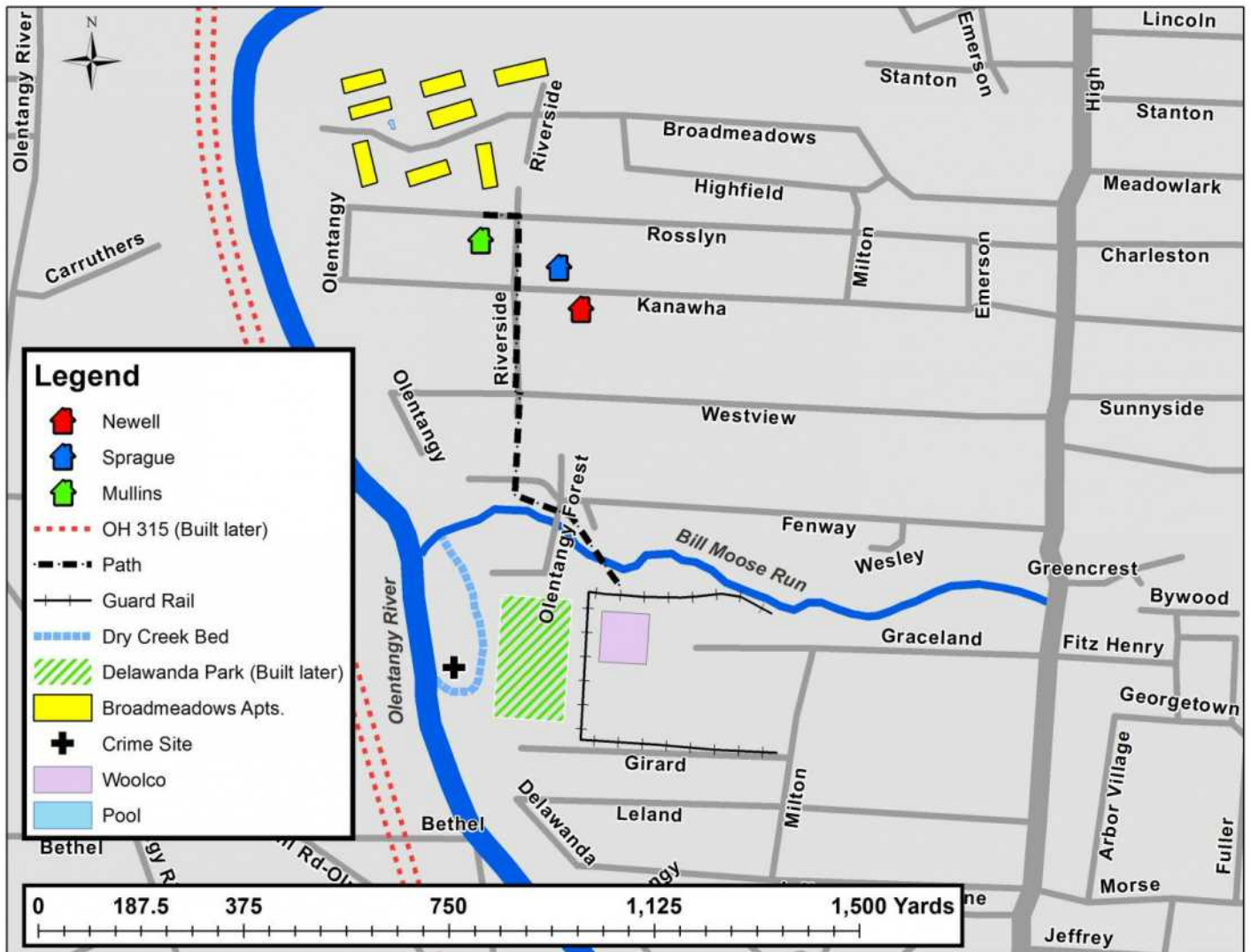
Junior described the assailant as white, in his late teens, about six feet tall and thin, weighing 160 pounds. He was shirtless and wearing cut-off jeans. His hair was long, black and shiny, and he looked as if he had not shaved for several days. Junior and his wife helped police draw a composite sketch, which appeared in the *Columbus Dispatch* on Monday, August 25.

For three days the neighborhood was in terror, as police said it was likely the killer lived in the area. Many long-haired boys fit the general description given by the Newells, and

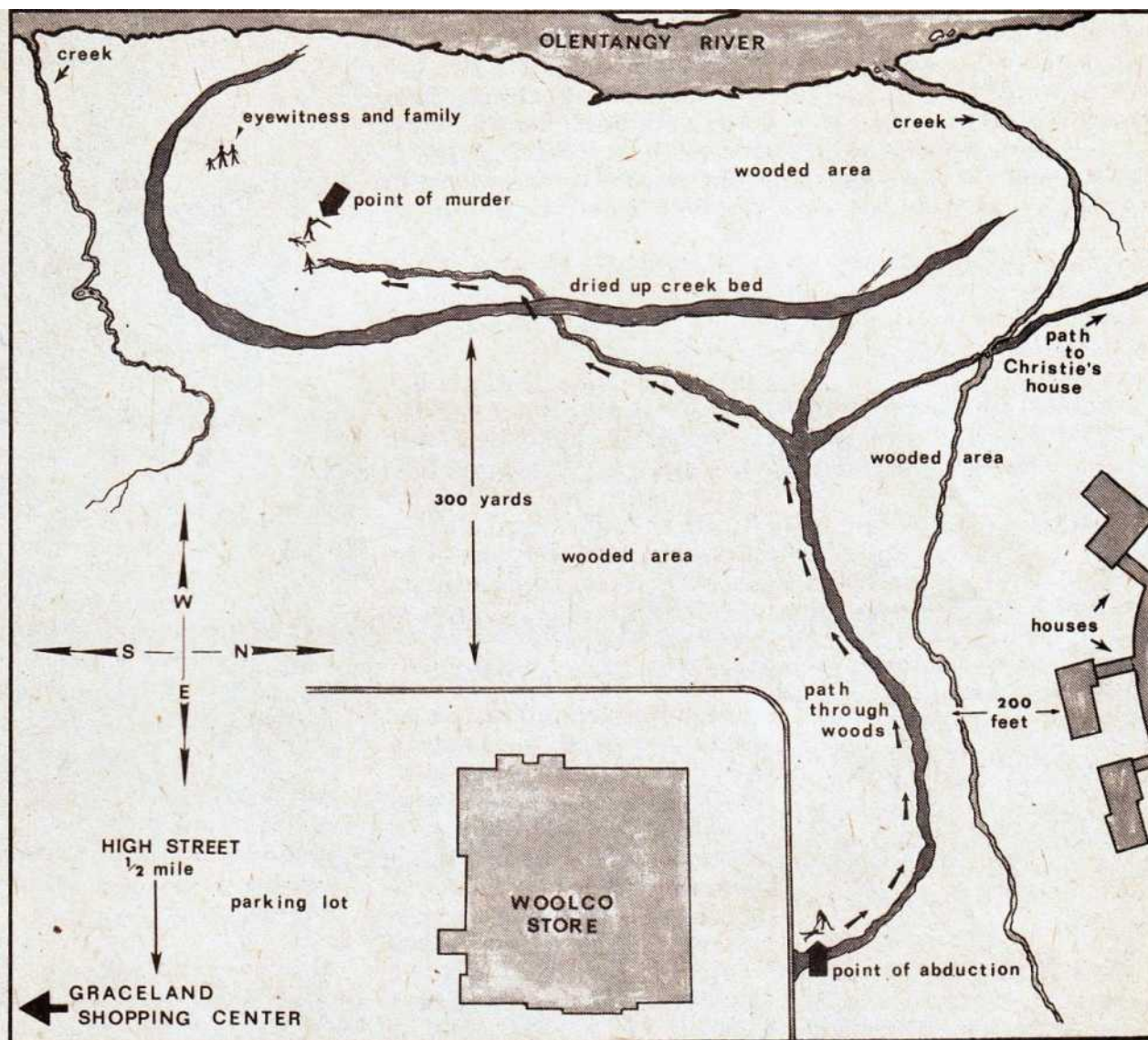
some even suspected the pony-tailed, hippyish ice cream truck man. One thing everyone knew: the murderer had to be someone with intimate knowledge of the many secret paths in the Graceland woods, the type of knowledge evidenced by the mysterious “disc jockey” phone caller. Police said there was an “excellent chance” Christie was killed by the person who called Lisa and that Lisa was the

original assault target. Rumors abounded, and police theorized, that Christie and Lisa had gone to the woods to buy or smoke marijuana, lured by a good-looking young teenager. Because no one reported hearing screams or seeing a struggle, police concluded that Christie must have gone to the murder site willingly with someone she knew.

Next three pages: maps and photos of the Graceland area



The Graceland area in 1975 (map by Nick Gurich)



The above map, which appeared in the Oct. 31, 1975 Ohio State *Lantern*, depicts the crime area according to witness accounts.



Above: an aerial photo of Graceland Shopping Center taken in 1986. Christie Mullins lived four streets to the right (north) of Woolco. The area looked substantially the same in 1975, except that the 315 freeway, running north-south near the top of the photo, was not yet built. In addition, a Burlington Coat Factory and Drug Emporium had taken up residence in the old Woolco store, which closed in 1983. (Columbus Public Library)

And then, on August 26, the day after the sketch was released, having developed no solid leads as to suspects, the police suddenly had their man. As it turned out, he was not from the neighborhood, but from downtown, eight miles away. And as the police would stress, they were certain he was *not* the caller. But he matched the composite sketch almost to a tee. By September 3, eleven days after the murder, the case was wrapped up. A man had confessed, pleaded guilty and been sentenced to life imprisonment. His name was Jack Carmen.



Jack Carmen

Justice for Jack?

Around 5 p.m. on Tuesday the 26th, Jack Carmen was where he often hung out, at the Greyhound bus station at South Third and East Town Streets. When off work from his dishwasher jobs, he would often go to the bus station to get snacks out of the vending machine, and to watch people come and go. But on this occasion, he was noticed by Columbus Police officer Thomas Stroud, who was working traffic duty near the bus station. Stroud saw that Carmen matched the composite sketch and notified his superior officer, who called in homicide detectives. Later that night Carmen, who could neither read nor write, confessed to the killing after six hours of interrogation. He said he took a city bus from his home at the Volunteers of America on West Broad Street downtown, rode it to Graceland to buy a pair of pants and a shirt, and saw the Mullins girl sitting alone at the guardrail around 1:50. He said he grabbed and dragged her to a wooded area behind the store, then raped and murdered her. Then he ran to High Street and caught another city bus back downtown to the VOA.

Stroud was hailed as a hero and given a commendation for what he called a highlight

of his career. Police said the disc jockey phone call that resulted in Christie's being alone at the guardrail was a prank played on Lisa, and that it was an unfortunate fluke that placed Christie at the guardrail when Carmen happened to come along. Homicide detective Robert Litzinger remarked on the coincidence, saying that "it probably won't happen again in a million years."

After his initial apprehension downtown, Carmen was driven up to the Graceland shopping center and, according to police, both on the way and when they got there he provided them with details about the crime—the exact point of abduction on the guardrail, the fact that Christie was combing her hair when he saw her, the approximate murder site, the way the two-by-four broke during the murder—that only the killer could have known. But others suspect his "tutorial" was the result of leading questioning. "He was walked through and essentially taught the story of how the killing occurred," believes James McNamara, a lawyer who briefly worked on the case. Junior and Pam Newell were also driven to the shopping center by police when Carmen was taken there and, while police and the Newells hotly denied it, defense attorneys would later argue that police had allowed the Newells to see Carmen so they would be able to pick him from a police lineup later that night, which they did.

To the police, that Carmen was, as one detective put it, “in very, very poor mental condition” made him more, not less, likely to have committed the crime. As Steve Abbott, a community political activist and co-founder of the *Columbus Free Press* recalls, the police attitude at the time was that “anybody who was mentally slow or ill tended to be a criminal, and was more likely to engage in criminal activity, particularly violence.” But in fact, says Priscilla Evans, who lived in the neighborhood then and later worked for the state department of mental retardation, “generally speaking they [developmentally disabled individuals] are not violent at all.”

Indeed, several aspects of Carmen’s personality made him a particularly unlikely candidate for a killer. An outpatient from the infamous Apple Creek Institute for the developmentally disabled, near Wooster, he had no prior record other than for intoxication and jaywalking. He was meek, passive, and would say just about anything he knew someone wanted to hear—particularly someone he perceived to be in a position of authority. The prospect of the electric chair came up during his interrogation and, as one volunteer social worker who knew him well said at the time, “All Jack had to do is hear ‘electric chair’ and he’d confess to anything.” As Miles Gibson, Carmen’s supervisor for several years before the murder at the Mellet

Group Home on Bryden Road, said recently, “I knew he would plead guilty to the Lindbergh baby kidnapping too if he thought it would please somebody.” Indeed, Carmen once admitted to damaging a boiler at the group home when in fact another resident had done it. Gibson, now a successful Columbus lawyer, has not changed his views about Carmen’s lack of guilt. “I’ll go to my grave believing he was innocent,” he says.

It was known that Carmen had a marked preference, sexually, for men (although he admitted to having visited female prostitutes). He was also reluctant about exposing his own body in public, and almost always wore a shirt and long pants, even when playing basketball. Yet the Newells claimed that the assailant was bare-chested, wearing only a pair of cut-off shorts. In his confession, Carmen said he was wearing the same red shirt and light blue pants that VOA personnel said he always wore, which Sgt. John Tilley called the “only discrepancy” in the identification by the Newells (who also admitted they had not noticed Carmen’s “bad teeth”).

Anyone who visits the spot on the guardrail where Christie was allegedly abducted can readily see that no one person could have dragged the 5-foot-7 Christie down the very steep upgrade running from the railing to the path, then another half mile or more into the woods. Indeed, this writer,

holding only an iPad in one hand, took a serious tumble trying to get down the same incline. People also questioned whether Carmen could have subdued a teenaged girl with telephone cord in order to rape and beat her. “A 4-year-old kid could whup him,” insisted Carmen’s former foster parent, Jesse Smith.



**The guardrail spot and path (Jan. 1976
Columbus Monthly)**

Police also were unable to locate a bus driver, or any passengers, who recalled seeing Carmen or anyone in cutoffs with no shirt

aboard the bus, to or from Graceland, on the murder day.

And then there was Lisa’s “cheerleading” story. Lisa’s story about Christie disappearing while Lisa was inside the Woolco store was critical to the prosecution case against Carmen. He had confessed that he “seen that girl” at the guardrail, then “grabbed her by the wrist . . . took her back there, them trees back there . . . took her Levis off [and] her bra off” and raped her. Take away the cheerleading contest—remove Christie from that spot on the guardrail—and the case against Carmen all but collapses.

The police, and prosecutors, bought Lisa’s cheerleading story wholesale.

The kids knew better.

“We never fell for Lisa’s story because we knew Christie’s character and we knew Lisa’s character,” says Mary Mendicino, a classmate of both of them. Christie was too shy and reserved to become a cheerleader, had zero interest in becoming one and, according to her sister Kim, “couldn’t even do a cartwheel.” Lisa, meanwhile, “disdained cheerleaders, hated them. She thought they were laughable,” said Kim Jones, a sister of Lisa’s later boyfriend. “She totally made that up,” says her former boyfriend, Gregg Jones. “She never in her life had any desire to do anything that had to do with cheerleading.” The

cheerleading story, Kim Mullins says, “was a total joke” and was regarded in the neighborhood as such.

Gregg Jones, who said he and Lisa confided in each other in the way couples normally do, found it strange that “she was hush-mouthed even to me about it,” as if she had something to hide. She never told him, for example, that her story was true and that he needed to believe her. It was just assumed between them that the cheerleading story was “bull,” he said. Indeed, two teenaged girls, neither of whom had any interest in cheerleading, were not going to leave a swimming pool on a 90-degree day to engage in a sweaty contest in a desolate area behind a low-end department store for a chance to win a two-dollar pass to the fair. Most people doubted the girls would have believed for a minute that such a contest was being held there that day. There had to be another reason they went to Woolco—if they ever went there at all.

Compounding doubts about Lisa’s story was her behavior in the aftermath of the killing. Around 7 p.m. she ran into Christie’s mother, Phyllis Mullins, who was over in the Broadmeadows pool area looking for Christie, who hadn’t come home for supper. Although Mrs. Mullins, a strict parent, tried to keep close tabs on her children at all times, it was an era before cell phones, when kids usually

were outside all day in the summer, their precise whereabouts unknown to their parents. When Phyllis Mullins and Lisa met up outside the apartment complex, Lisa said the last time she’d seen Christie was at the pool earlier that day. Lisa mentioned that a body had been found in the woods, but said nothing about Christie’s disappearance from the guardrail. After phoning the police, Mrs. Mullins was taken to the morgue, where she identified her daughter (from a birthmark on her leg). Word quickly spread through the neighborhood, and Barb Kerns, who lived in the Riverlodge Apartments, remembers Lisa running across the parking lot there to tell her that Christie had been murdered. “Her manner really confused me. It was more excitement than slow sorrow . . . she didn’t seem like someone whose friend had gotten killed.” According to a reporter’s notes, Lisa was at the Riverlodge apartment of 24-year-old divorcee Jackie Rozman from about 2:30 to 5 p.m. after the murder, watched a baseball game there (the Reds-Pirates game was on Channel 4 that afternoon), called her mother and boyfriend, and took a nap—all without mentioning Christie’s disappearance. She spent several hours that night talking to detectives at police headquarters downtown.

The day after the murder, Lisa, crying, told Christie’s sister Kim that she knew what happened, but had been instructed by police

not to talk about it. That same day, in the front yard of the Mullins home, a nearly hysterical, incoherent Lisa said to Mrs. Mullins, “I’m sorry, it was never supposed to go this far.” She added that she thought the murder may have been intended for her, not Christie, and that “*two* were involved.”

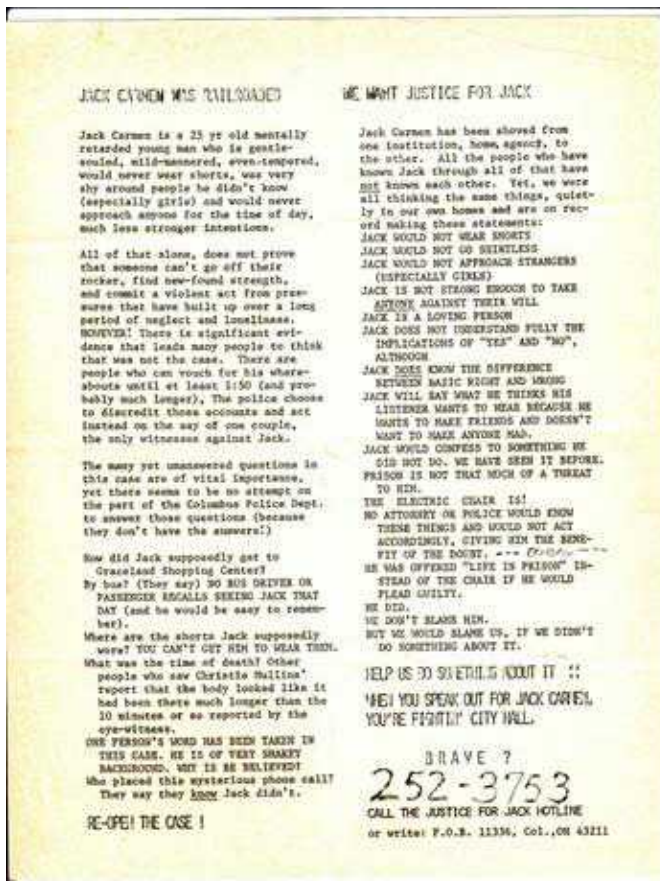
Once Carmen had confessed, though, any police efforts to interview Lisa or any of Christie’s friends and neighbors ceased. Retired police officer Seymour Ludwig, who was at the scene on the murder day as a homicide detective in training, recalls persistently telling his superiors that he didn’t believe Carmen had committed the murder and that he wanted to interview Christie’s classmates to develop possible leads. But they told him no and transferred him to the robbery unit.

On Wednesday, September 3, on advice of counsel, after waiving a preliminary hearing, Jack Carmen pleaded guilty before Common Pleas Judge Frederick T. Williams to one reduced count of aggravated murder. As a result of the plea, he avoided the possibility of the death penalty and was sentenced instead to life in prison. Carmen told his lawyer, Myron Schwartz, that he wanted to get the case over “so my friends won’t be mad at me and God won’t be mad at me.”

Meanwhile, citizens in the Graceland neighborhood began circulating petitions expressing doubt as to Carmen’s guilt and questioning the thoroughness of the police investigation. On the night of September 8, more than 70 angry persons jammed Sharon Township Hall to hear prosecutors explain why they believed Carmen was the murderer. Most of the citizens left the stormy, three-hour session unsatisfied with what they had heard. Junior and Pam Newell got in a shouting match with their neighbors, who openly doubted the pair’s account. During the meeting, prosecutors admitted that Lisa Sprague had “told conflicting stories to the police,” but that a lie detector test indicated she was “truthful on all important parts of her story.” Which parts those were, they did not say. Junior Newell also started to take a polygraph test, but he vomited on the machine and the test was stopped. Police then canceled any further polygraph examinations of Junior and Pam Newell. “We had no reason to question their veracity,” a detective later commented.

Shortly after the town hall meeting, a “Justice for Jack” committee was formed by local poet and book reviewer Jennifer Groce, who had taught Carmen vocational and social skills as part of a Franklin County program. The committee boasted over 2,000 members, a number of whom passed out flyers up and

down High Street demanding a reopening of the case. Groce said she knew that Carmen was too gentle a spirit to commit the murder and that she was convinced he had been railroaded. "I was frequently wanting to solve mysteries," she said. "Jack Carmen just became a horror story." She started receiving threatening phone calls from a man with an Appalachian accent telling her to "get off this case," that she had "gone far enough."



A "Justice for Jack" flyer

There was only so much a vocal citizens' committee could accomplish, though; what Jack Carmen really needed was a new lawyer. The local ACLU got involved in the case on his

behalf, and a fledgling but aggressive law collective with ACLU ties began suing everyone in sight—Carmen's lawyer; the judge on the case; prosecutor O'Grady; the county jailers—in an effort to secure new representation for Carmen and get his guilty plea set aside. Shwartz agreed to withdraw as Carmen's lawyer and the suit was dropped on the understanding that new counsel, other than the pesky ACLU-affiliated firm, would be appointed by the court. "Part of the deal was we wouldn't represent him [Carmen]," recalls civil rights lawyer Fred Gittes, but that his firm would assist the new counsel, Richard Addison, a former president of the Columbus Bar Association, who was to investigate and determine whether to file a motion to have the guilty plea withdrawn. (Addison would file such a motion in November 1975.)

Getting a guilty plea withdrawn in a criminal matter is always an uphill battle. As a grand old man of the Columbus bar, Addison brought a great deal of gravitas and respect to Carmen's position at a critical time. At the same time, Carmen was getting help from another, more unlikely, source.

"Woodstein"

The Ohio State University campus lies only four miles south of Graceland shopping center, but it is a world

apart. There was very little to suggest that the murder of a 14-year-old girl up near Graceland would be of any more than passing interest to anyone at Ohio State. Besides their college courses and social lives, most students would have been more interested that fall of 1975 in the quest of the school's football team, the Buckeyes, for a national championship, and in senior tailback Archie Griffin's prospects for a second consecutive Heisman Trophy. But for the student newspaper, the *Lantern*, and two of its reporters, the Christie Mullins murder/Jack Carmen case would become the story of a lifetime.

"It had nothing to do with Ohio State," recalls Rick Kelly who, together with Jim Yavorcik, formed a sort of "Woodward and Bernstein" team that delved into the case in greater depth than the local daily newspapers. At some point, the *Lantern* student editors and their faculty advisor Paul Williams, a Pulitzer prize-winning investigative journalist, "decided it didn't look like things were adding up and nobody else was doing the story," Kelly recalls.

Yavorcik was assigned to the story first. The product of a working class background from Youngstown, he had entered Ohio State in 1972 intending to become an optometrist. He gravitated toward journalism, however, and began writing stories for the student paper. The summer between his junior and

senior years—the summer of the murder—Yavorcik was driving a beer truck back home, but he came back to campus a couple weeks early, staying at his fraternity house, to get a head start on the core reporting class for journalism students. The course required submission of 20 publishable stories in the 10-week quarter, and Yavorcik, a big sports fan, was hoping to satisfy his quota by getting assigned to the Buckeyes football beat. That slot was taken, however, and Yavorcik was instead given the police beat, about which he knew nothing. He had barely started working the beat, though, before one of the *Lantern* editors approached him with an unusual directive. "Jim, you don't have to write the 20 stories," he was told. "You just have to write one." That was his introduction to the Carmen assignment.

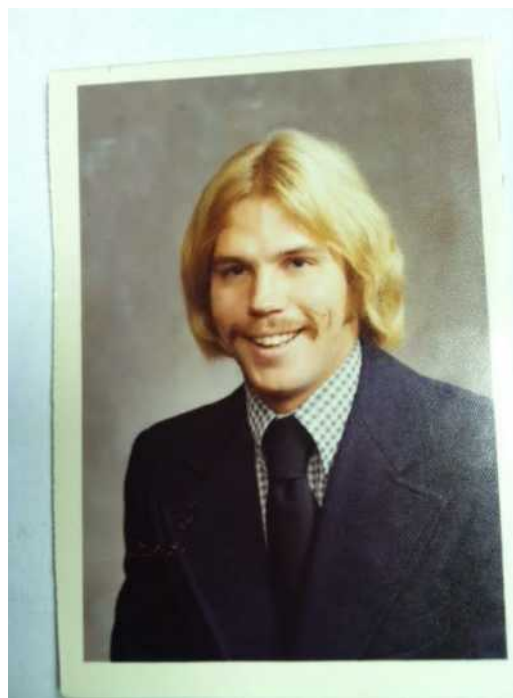
"What would you do if you were 21 and were told to go investigate a murder?" Yavorcik asks, rhetorically, today. After reading a sheaf of clippings about the murder, which had taken place three weeks earlier, Yavorcik hopped in his orange Volkswagen Beetle, accompanied by a teaching assistant, Dan Rowland, who was a few years older, and the two of them drove downtown to Carmen's residence at the VOA on Saturday, September 13, to interview caseworkers and other personnel. They were told by several workers that Carmen was still at the VOA the day of

the murder, hanging around a pay line, at 1:30 or later.

Armed with that information, the two reporters decided to see how long it would take to get to Graceland by city bus, as Carmen (who did not drive) supposedly did. To get from the VOA, at 379 West Broad Street, to High Street, where the bus north toward Graceland ran every half hour on Saturdays, would require a 15-minute walk at a normal pace, unless one happened to catch a Broad Street bus that ran every 10 minutes. But assuming that Carmen somehow made it to High Street in time to catch a 1:30 bus north, Yavorcik and Rowland hopped on that bus and arrived at the Graceland entrance at 2:10, consistent with the bus driver's later testimony that the trip usually took around 40 minutes. (If anything, on August 23, a heavy traffic day due to the state fair, it would have taken longer.) It was then another 5-10 minute walk to the guardrail spot next to Woolco, meaning that Carmen could not have gotten there before 2:15-2:20, at least a half hour after Christie allegedly was abducted. From the guardrail, escorted by a Woolco service manager, it took Yavorcik and Rowland, unencumbered, another good seven minutes to reach the spot where Christie Mullins's body was found. Given this timeline, Carmen could not possibly have gotten to the

guardrail in time to abduct Christie, or gotten her to the murder site in time to kill her.

"Here's a 21-year-old who knows nothing about investigative techniques, really," says Yavorcik today. "And in one afternoon I make this guy's alibi." Yavorcik remembers thinking that if the VOA witnesses could hold up under cross-examination—and he found them credible, after being told by his editors to apply "a healthy dose of skepticism"—then that alone would create reasonable doubt and Carmen, if he ever got a trial, would be a free man.



Jim Yavorcik

"By this time it's very clear I'm no longer on the police beat, I'm on the Jack Carmen file," Yavorcik remembers. It would become a full-time job, even as Yavorcik volunteered to

write other stories that interested him. The following weekend, Yavorcik covered the Ohio State-Penn State football game, sitting in the press box and getting fed like the rest of the reporters. “I thought that was so cool,” he remembers—and he took a day off from covering the Carmen case. The following week he got chewed out by his *Lantern* editor, Lisa Holstein, for getting beat on a story by WCOL radio reporter Bob Singleton. “Did you read ‘All the President’s Men’?” she demanded to know of Yavorcik, who said he had. “Well, read it again,” she retorted. “If the goal of her stern words was to light my fire it worked,” he says, “because I really started working on the case that day.” That same night, he went back alone to Graceland and met, for the first time, Christie’s father, Norman Mullins.

Forty-two-year-old Norman Vincent Mullins was an ex-insurance agent, on disability from a car accident, who had taken to repairing clocks and selling antiques. He had been auctioneering out of town the day of the murder (some even briefly suspected him, a theory that quickly faded away), and he was a man on a mission. “As we talked more,” Yavorcik wrote in a memo at the time, “one thing became obvious—Mullins was out for revenge. He was conducting his own investigation and would kill any man he thought he was sure killed his daughter.” It also became apparent that Norman Mullins

did not believe that man was Jack Carmen, at least not acting alone. He doubted that “a skinny guy like Carmen” would have been able to take his daughter by force and drag her more than half a mile through the woods without scratching Christie’s bare feet, which had no marks. Yavorcik now had the hook for his story, even apart from the alibi: the father of the victim didn’t believe the police had the right guy.

“It was Friday night and I should be partying,” Yavorcik recalled, and “instead I’m dragging around Kanawha Avenue and Graceland.” But he was entranced by the story and was uncovering things. Yavorcik began following Mullins around, and learned that he was upset that the city was in the process of bulldozing the murder site in order to build a park. Recognizing the need to preserve evidence, Yavorcik drew a field sketch of the area that would later illustrate his story. He and Mullins were joined by some concerned neighbors, including Jim Foster, a former Columbus policeman then working for the federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. Foster, an athletically built man with a deep, James Earl Jones-like voice, had moved to Kanawha Avenue with his family in 1969, the first African Americans to live in the neighborhood. They had not been welcomed by Norman Mullins, who (to the embarrassment of his own family) had put up

signs in his yard saying the area was for “whites only.” The two men had never spoken to each other until the day of the murder. After that they became staunch allies in the search for the killer of Christie. In one of the few bright spots to this story, Phyllis Mullins said that Jim Foster’s cooperation and friendship changed her husband’s attitude about race.

Foster, who knew of Junior Newell’s criminal record, made clear his strong suspicions that Newell was somehow involved in the killing. He said Junior was constantly in the woods on his dirt bike and had no trouble navigating through the paths and trees. Foster also told reporter George Condon of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, which ran a major four-part series on the case in December, that Newell particularly shocked Mr. Mullins within a week after the killing by persistently asking, “What was Christie’s bra size? How big was she?” Foster added that Newell tried to ingratiate himself with him by confiding to him that he was affiliated with the CIA and FBI, patting him on the back and calling him “brother.” It did not work: Foster would end up testifying that Newell had told him that shortly before the murder, he had been swimming in the nude with Lisa Sprague at midnight at the Broadmeadows pool. Foster would also testify that he saw Newell

on the evening of the murder and that he had scratches on the backs of his hands.

Within the next week the *Lantern* editors had decided that the story had gotten so big that Yavorcik could use another reporter to work with him on it. Yavorcik, given a choice, immediately said he wanted Rick Kelly, whom he did not know but who had written a well-regarded series on drugs for the *Lantern* a couple weeks earlier. Kelly, who grew up in Ohio coal country, the son of the owner of a steel fabrication operation, shared an interest with Yavorcik in blues band music. The two hit it off immediately, experienced no rivalries or jealousies in their working relationship, and became best friends for life.

Their first trip together was on October 2 to interview Henry and Pam Newell. The Newells were quite a pair. The 6-foot tall, lanky Junior Newell, his hair dyed strawberry blond, sported a greased, 1950s pompadour hairstyle. He drank heavily, liked to fight, and kept guns and a Doberman around for protection. He shot beer bottles in the woods for fun. Pam was jet black-haired (except when wearing a bleached-blond wig), dressed provocatively, and had an almost demonic look in her eyes; some people called her a witch. She had a history of psychological problems and battled depression. Yet unlike Junior, she had a likeable personality and was not considered unkind. At the time of the

murder, Pam was pregnant with the couple's first child, who would be born the following April.



Henry ("Junior") and Pam Newell

When Yavorcik and Kelly arrived, Junior said he and Pam had been instructed not to talk about the case because the police were going to file charges against additional unspecified persons. But they both proceeded to discuss the case openly and at length. Junior said he really didn't know "this Sprague person," although he'd seen her several times in the woods with three or four guys. He said he understood she was a "chronic liar," and both he and Pam agreed that the cheerleading story was an invention. Junior was certain Carmen was the man he'd seen and helped sketch, and stressed that as someone who'd spent time in the penitentiary himself, he wouldn't want to send an innocent man to jail. Junior said he was quite an artist

himself, and Yavorcik and Kelly noticed that the room was filled with hand-drawn pictures of Jesus. Yavorcik would comment to Kelly after they left just how much the Jesus drawings resembled the sketch of Jack Carmen.

Two days later, on October 4, Kelly and Yavorcik were back up in the neighborhood again. They noticed a tree fort about 50 yards from the site, constructed of two-by-fours like the murder weapon, which the fort builders probably obtained from a delayed condominium construction project just north of Woolco. Yavorcik climbed the tree and saw several carvings touting marijuana smoking. They took a stroll to the pool on Broadmeadows, then dropped in on 25-year-old Lynda Keenan of Kanawha Avenue, who gave them a great deal of information about Lisa Sprague and also the sociometrics of the neighborhood kids. Lynda said most kids in the neighborhood smoked pot; she said Christie smoked pot and cigarettes (Marlboro reds).

According to a file memo prepared by Yavorcik of the October 4 visit, Lynda Keenan told them that Barb Kerns, 17, "was getting the confidence of Lisa lately since she's been shunned by girls her own age." Lisa told Barb she had to talk to her; Barb was going to tape the conversation but was advised by an ACLU lawyer not to. Barb was going to call off the

meeting but Lisa insisted they talk. Lisa said, “I don’t want this case reopened.” Lisa then said she “lied about Steve,” an unidentified person she had been seen with quite a bit that summer. On the Monday after the murder, Lynda Keenan’s younger sister, Julie Young, had seen Steve with Lisa and thought he looked a lot like the composite police sketch. As recorded by Yavorcik, “Steve got very defensive, saying ‘It wasn’t me’ when Julie looked at him closely.” As determined by this investigation, “Steve” was a 17-year-old Georgia youth staying with his aunt that summer in the Broadmeadows apartment complex. He did resemble Jack Carmen, except that, at around 6 foot 6, he was considerably taller. In a recent interview, he said he smoked pot in the woods with both Lisa and Christie and spent many hours with them around the Broadmeadows pool. He said he had no idea what Lisa had “lied about” in reference to him, but maintained that she “lied all the time.” Steve’s aunt, a Girl Scout leader who’d heard stories from some of Lisa’s former troop members, told a reporter shortly after the murder that Lisa was “unable to tell truth from fantasy.”

Yavorcik’s October 4 memo closed with a reference to another statement Lisa made to Barb Kerns. It was, and remains, highly cryptic, and neither Kerns nor the *Lantern* reporters had any idea what it meant at the

time. “In discussing the mysterious phone call,” the memo states, “*Lisa stressed the bringing of two maple leaves more than the cheerleading contest*” (emphasis added).

As the *Lantern* reporters gained his confidence, Norman Mullins started feeding them with information he had gathered from talking to people in the area. He had become a familiar figure in the neighborhood, disheveled, puffing on his cigarettes, in a coat a couple sizes too large, knocking on doors to ask for alibis of various individuals and wandering the streets at three or four in the morning looking for clues. As a neighbor recalls, “you could just look in his eyes and see the hurt in them.” He became obsessed, talking about nothing else at the dinner table, to the point where his family told him they could not take it any more. They and others say it virtually drove him crazy. Says Rick Kelly, “I could not have understood it then, but now, having three daughters of my own and looking back, that was a guy who wanted answers and wasn’t getting them. I can see from my perspective now how that must have just eaten away at him.”



Norman Mullins (*Columbus Monthly*)

Mullins became increasingly convinced, as did most of the neighborhood, that Henry Newell was involved in the murder and that Lisa Sprague was not telling the whole truth. Believing that the transcript of Lisa's polygraph test would shed light on the case, Mullins asked police to show it to him, but they refused. Mullins told Yavorcik and Kelly that the detective who questioned Lisa about her cheerleading story, Robert Litzinger, was a long-time friend of Lisa's father. But whenever Norman Mullins tried to tell police that there was more to the case than Jack Carmen, he was greeted with open hostility. Mullins quoted Lt. Richard Hartman of the homicide squad as saying, "What's the matter, don't you trust us?" Hartman told him the case was closed and would stay closed. "I only want to find out about my girl," Mullins said he replied.

When Yavorcik and Kelly asked Hartman about that exchange, he angrily replied that they and Norman Mullins could "go dip their

nut holes" (a phrase the two reporters never heard before or since). "It's already solved," Hartman said of the case. "Why do you think we have a man in jail?" The Chief of Columbus police, Earl Burden, told the *Lantern* that their questions were "specious" and that the case, about a "girl killed by a retarded man," had already received too much publicity. Burden told them that this was the first time he could recall where a defendant's own attorney thought he was guilty (a reference to Myron Schwartz), and that "when you attack the credibility of the case you're attacking the defense attorney, the prosecutors, the director of police, and people who know more about the case" than anyone but the perpetrator.

But Yavorcik and Kelly had quite a bit of information, including some things that Yavorcik today acknowledges that he didn't think "two kids should be able to get." They got them courtesy of their own Watergate-style "Deep Throat," a source in campus law enforcement Kelly had developed through the drug series he had written. The two *Lantern* reporters had Henry Newell's social security number and criminal record, and the report of the autopsy on Christie Mullins performed by deputy coroner Nobuhisa Baba. "Baba told us she was *not* raped. But I didn't tell you that," reads a handwritten note on the autopsy report the reporters obtained. The

report was extremely medically detailed. “Exam of genitalia—No evidence of trauma. Semen: None. Smears: Vaginal, rectal, vestibule, oral: negative for sperm. Original vaginal contents: negative for semen.” The report stated that Christie had not been drinking and that no barbiturates were detected. There was no box to indicate, one way or the other, any testing for cannabis (marijuana).

The pair was now getting calls from Jennifer Groce of the Justice for Jack Committee, and from lawyers working with Richard Addison, asking what they knew. They were also receiving anonymous letters telling them to keep up the good work, that they were performing a great service for the community. The stories detailing their findings (one written by Yavorcik, the other a lengthy sidebar by Kelly) would finally appear in the *Lantern* on October 31, 1975—Halloween—and as the first major investigative pieces published anywhere on the case, they created quite a stir and turned Yavorcik and Kelly into minor celebrities on campus.



Oct. 31, 1975 Ohio State *Lantern*

But to have a wider impact their story needed a broader, citywide outlet. Then they got a call from Max Brown, the editor and publisher of *Columbus Monthly*. Brown, a former communications director for Ohio Governor John J. Gilligan, decided to start a city magazine after Gilligan was defeated for re-election by James Rhodes in 1974. Brown and his wife, Lenore, opened a little office in German Village in March 1975, and in June the first issue of *Columbus Monthly* appeared. As Yavorcik and Kelly recalled, the magazine had small type and not a lot of content at first, running mostly restaurant reviews and specializing in local media coverage. But Brown had envisioned it from the beginning as something with greater potential—a publication that could provide competition to the two local daily newspapers, the evening *Dispatch* and the morning *Citizen-Journal*, by coming in with more in-depth, stylish coverage of the straight news stories those newspapers had already printed.

As Brown recalled, “we had been reading the news accounts in the *Dispatch* and *C-J* and the story just didn’t add up. We were looking for something that we could step out on and demonstrate what our city magazine concept was all about. We saw some stuff being done by these two *Lantern* kids, and it was pretty clear at the time, from the tone of their articles, that they harbored some of the same suspicions that we did.” After the October 31 stories, Brown called Yavorcik and the two student reporters agreed to turn their stories into a major cover piece for *Columbus Monthly*. In January 1976, the magazine came out with a shocking, all-black cover, juxtaposed against a color photo of a girl, with huge white letters that read, “Who *did* Kill Christie Mullins?” (see p. 48). The word “did” was underlined in red. The inside story, written by Yavorcik and Kelly, with a sidebar by Brown, “established what *Columbus Monthly* was going to do and what it went on to do for 32 years,” says Brown, who sold the publishing operations in 2007 to another media group. (The magazine is now owned by the *Dispatch*.)

“I’m fairly certain it [the *Columbus Monthly* story] made a huge difference in the whole review of Jack Carmen’s guilty plea and confession,” says Brown today. Indeed, within days after the story appeared, Judge Williams granted lawyer Addison’s motion to withdraw

Carmen’s plea, on the grounds that he lacked the mental capacity to understand the nature of the charges against him.

Addison’s uphill motion may have been granted eventually anyway, given his credibility and the strong sense that Carmen’s guilt had been established too quickly and without adequate legal counsel. But the *Columbus Monthly* story virtually guaranteed that the guilty plea would not be allowed to stand. The following academic quarter, Yavorcik’s last at Ohio State, he decided to take a political science class on criminal justice. He was sitting in back of the large lecture hall one day when the professor brought up the Carmen case. He had no idea Yavorcik was in the class. The professor told the students that there was no way any judge in the world would not vacate that guilty plea after that story ran in *Columbus Monthly*. “I thought wow,” Yavorcik recalls. “I just kept my mouth shut, didn’t say anything. But that’s a day when you realize that the work that you’re doing here makes a difference in somebody else’s life.”

PART TWO

The Trial

On December 12, 1977, having waited in jail for 28 months—the longest time served before trial by an accused in the history of the State of Ohio—Jack Carmen finally was getting his day in court. In a sweltering ninth-floor courtroom at the Franklin County Hall of Justice, a jury of five women and seven men began hearing the case of *State of Ohio vs. Jack Allen Carmen*, presided over by Judge Fred T. Shoemaker, who had replaced Judge Williams after Williams set aside the guilty plea. For two years the case had been bogged down in legal wrangling over Carmen’s confession and the lineup testimony, both of which ultimately were ruled admissible. Now it was time to hear the evidence. For the six days of trial, neighbors, family, media and spectators filled every inch of the courtroom to standing room capacity to see what promised to be the trial of the century for the city of Columbus. They would not be disappointed.

Carmen now had new court-appointed lawyers, criminal defense specialists Tom Tyack and David Riebel, who had taken over

from Addison, who was mostly a civil litigator. They were up against two worthy adversaries in chief prosecution counsel James O’Grady, who later became a respected judge himself, and assistant prosecutor Ron O’Brien, for many years now the Franklin County Prosecutor, and for whom this was an early case. (O’Grady, I was informed, was unable to speak for publication due to illness, and an email request to O’Brien for an interview did not receive a response.)

Former classmates at Ohio State’s law school—where Riebel barely got by, with Tyack’s tutoring help—Tyack and Riebel had opposite personalities and appearances. But they made a good team. The short, stocky Tyack, son of an Ohio state court judge, was methodical and even-tempered. Riebel, tall and handsome, was more of a gun-slinger who had built a reputation representing motorcycle gangs. “I only ever had three clients who didn’t do it,” he says, Carmen being one of them. “Everybody else was guilty.” But, he adds with a twinkle in his eye, “I had a lot of ‘not guilty’ verdicts.” Unlike Tyack, whom Riebel recently called “a genius partner,” Riebel disdained legal paperwork and law book reading. “I loved the courtroom,” though, he said.



Jurors visit the guardrail. At left is Judge Fred T. Shoemaker. Jack Carmen watches in the background (*Columbus Monthly*).

The defense strategy, Riebel revealed to anyone who would listen, centered on what he called the “three i’s: alibi, dumb-i and soddi.” As he explained, “Alibi means we know Jack wasn’t at the murder site at the time police say. Dumb-i means that Jack isn’t smart enough to have given a detailed confession. And soddi means some other dude did it.” As to the latter, the defense made clear in their opening that although they weren’t required to prove who really killed Christie Mullins, they had “some ideas” the jury was going to hear. Adding a special twist to the drama, Junior Newell was now sitting in jail himself,

following another arson conviction a few months before the trial for burning down his own house on Kanawha Avenue to collect the \$25,000 in insurance money.

After the testimony of police officers as to the basic facts of the murder and Carmen’s apprehension, the prosecution called Pam Newell and Lisa Sprague, who repeated what they had told police two years earlier. Pam was forced to admit on cross-examination that she had lied by omitting mention of her three prior marriages when she obtained a license to marry Henry Newell in 1973, but otherwise she held up well. Lisa Sprague firmly denied knowing Henry Newell or ever babysitting for him. Asked whether she had told Mrs. Mullins after the murder that she was sorry and hadn’t meant for it to go that far, she responded, “I might have said I was sorry. I don’t remember anything else.” Max Brown, covering the trial for *Columbus Monthly*, wrote that Lisa seemed cool and poised but also “amused by it all . . . relaxing in the witness chair and constantly fighting to hold back a grin as she testified.”



“Lisa Sprague” at the trial (*Columbus Dispatch*)

There was precious little forensics evidence introduced—no fingerprints, no blood typing, no hair or fiber analysis. Either it didn’t exist, was never collected, or could not reliably be tested. Dr. Nobuhisa Baba, the deputy coroner, testified that Christie was not raped (she was still a virgin) and that there was no evidence of semen to be found anywhere. A police chemist, however, testified that there appeared to be semen on the bathing suit bottom she was wearing beneath her blue jeans. That seemed inexplicable, given that the jeans, though unzipped, were not pulled down, and her swimsuit bottom was undisturbed. Another possibility is that whatever semen was there came from the boyfriend of some other girl. Christie and

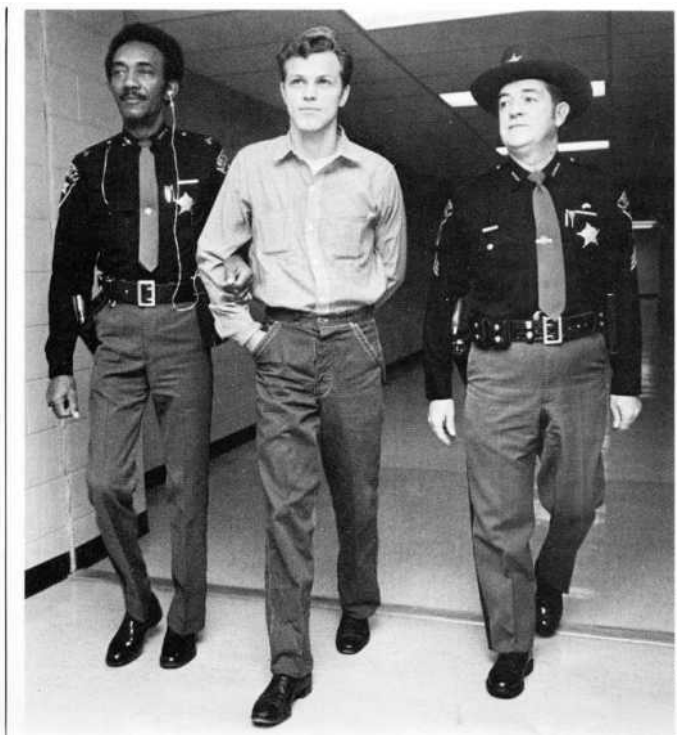
other girls in the neighborhood frequently borrowed bathing suits from one another, and Christie’s sister Melony believes that Christie was wearing a borrowed suit the day she was killed. (A day or so before the murder, Christie had borrowed a suit from an older, sexually active girl, which she never returned.) Christie did not go in the water the day of the murder, and even if the borrowed suit had been recently washed, that would not necessarily have eliminated all traces of semen. According to one scholarly article, washing semen-stained fabrics with detergent fails to remove the stains 25% of the time.

In any event, no semen—or any other physical specimens—were ever tested against Jack Carmen. The defense team never received a request from the prosecution for any physical samples from their client, although Riebel says they would have allowed Carmen to provide such evidence if asked.

On Day Three of the trial, Junior Newell, handcuffed and in prison blue, was led into the courtroom to testify. He re-told the story of his identification of the killer and denied under Tyack’s cross-examination that he knew Christie or that she’d ever been in his house or car. Newell also denied knowing Lisa Sprague or ever swimming with her nude in the Broadmeadows pool, although he admitted he had a key to the pool. “Didn’t you and/or your brother Tommy make phone

calls saying that you were disc jockeys?” Tyack asked. He was referring to Junior’s older brother, who had a thick southern accent and, along with his wife, was living with Junior and Pam at the time of the murder. “No,” Newell replied.

Prosecutor O’Brien told newsmen that although Newell “was no virgin,” he had handled himself well under tough questioning. O’Brien and O’Grady were less pleased by the fact that the defense team had all of the prosecution’s files, copied for them by Addison, who had made it a condition of his earlier court appointment that he be able to review them.



Junior Newell comes to testify
(*Columbus Monthly*)

Then came the highlight of the trial, to that point: the taped confession of Jack Carmen. For 90 excruciating minutes, the portion of the interrogation that was recorded, jurors and spectators heard Detective Ron Price extract Carmen’s story, bit by bit, of what happened the day of the murder. The process was painfully slow, as Carmen, incapable of providing a narrative, gave mostly one-word answers. Often he waited several seconds to answer, sometimes not answering at all. His confession was also riddled with inconsistencies and inaccuracies: he said he got off the bus at Graceland at about “two, two-thirty, one”; that after removing Christie’s Levis he had ravished the girl for about an hour; that after she was raped she said she was “gonna start runnin . . . [and] tell my mamma what you done to me”; and that he told her, “If you start runnin’ I’m gonna pick up something and I’m gonna hit you with it.” At first he said he caught up with her and hit her in the stomach with the two-by-four, causing her to fall down. (The autopsy, done the following morning, found no blows or bruises to the stomach.) Later he said he grabbed her hair and threw her to the ground, hit her with his fist while she was lying down, then hit her across the stomach, and then the head, with the two-by-four. “I seen her mother on the [Woolco parking] lot then I started runnin’ and she started

hollerin' at me and I just kept on runnin," he testified. He said that Christie's mother—whom he identified in court as Pam Newell—cried out, "What'd you do with my girl?" There was, of course, no such encounter.

In a grueling cross-examination, Riebel accused Price of putting words in Carmen's mouth, which Price emphatically denied. "The fact is, and I hate to do this to him," Riebel said as he yanked Carmen by the shoulder, "Jack's a dummy." Indeed, Carmen sat passively throughout the trial, never looking at the jurors or witnesses nor conferring with his lawyers seated beside him.

The confession was tenuous, and Tyack thought that it had backfired on the prosecution. He could see the jurors, and many in the audience, shaking their heads and in some cases laughing as if in disbelief at what they were hearing. But it was a confession nonetheless. A man with an IQ of 50 might be expected to get some of the details mixed up and, besides, he had pleaded guilty in open court, with a lawyer at his side, before a judge. The defense still had their work cut out for them. They put on a string of alibi and character witnesses, as well as psychiatrists who testified that Carmen lacked the mental capacity to make a valid confession. One called his brain like a piece of Swiss cheese, with some solid areas and other

areas with holes where he couldn't function at all.

Mrs. Mullins testified about Lisa Sprague's odd behavior and statements. She added that Lisa had told her she thought the mysterious disc jockey caller was someone named "Randy." Although it did not come out at trial, there is evidence, contained in WCOL reporter Bob Singleton's notes from the time, pointing to his identity. A 30-year-old King Avenue man named Randy, who claimed to be a licensed disc jockey, and had a high-pitched Appalachian accent, was a regular on a popular "phantom" telephone party line to which people from all over Central Ohio, including Lisa and possibly Christie, sometimes listened. The phone line, which people could dial at a pre-scheduled time, functioned as a sort of 1970s pre-Internet, allowing anonymous communication among participants with nicknames. Going by the name "Pizza," Randy had used the phantom line to connect with girls he would later call at home to invite to meet him alone at various places. His pattern of telephone calls to other girls could have enabled Lisa plausibly to claim that she received a similar call from him on the day of the murder, and to use it as the cover explanation for the trip to Woolco. But in all likelihood, the call did not come from Randy or anyone else claiming to be a disc jockey, and the 15-minute conversation did

not concern a cheerleading contest, but rather, plans for meeting up in the woods. The caller and killer almost certainly were either the same person, or in league with one another. Yet no attempt was made by police to trace the alleged phone call or check telephone records. (Randy, who lives today in Columbus in a home for the mildly intellectually disabled, was not made available to talk to me.)

Back at the trial, the defense began to zero in on Junior Newell. Tyack made it clear that Newell's description of the killer as someone who was shirtless and in cutoff shorts in fact described Junior himself. Jim Foster told about the scratches on Newell's hands, and a Woolco employee testified that when Junior ran into the store to report the crime, he had a bright red mark on his face, as if someone had hit him. Another Woolco employee who did not testify, a daughter of Jim Foster, told her father that after entering the store Newell ran back to the men's shirt department where she worked, grabbed a shirt off the rack without paying for it, and exited.

The defense sensed that things were starting to go their way, but they could not be sure how the mostly stone-faced jury would react. "The thing we were mostly worried about was a hung jury," Riebel recalls. They also worried that Norman Mullins was a loose cannon, and to his

frustration, they never called him to testify.



**Phyllis and Norman Mullins at the trial
(*Columbus Dispatch*)**

"Norman wanted us to try to solve the case right there," says Tyack. But "it was not my job to solve the case in that courtroom." Instead, he and Riebel were concentrating on creating reasonable doubt about Jack Carmen's guilt.

And then, on the fifth day of trial, the case was broken wide open. Bobby Saultz, the now 12-year-old natural son of Pam Newell, who had gone into the woods the day of the murder with his mother and Junior Newell, was called as a surprise defense witness.

Bobby lived downtown with his paternal grandmother at the time, but had been visiting the Newells, along with his five-year-old half sister, Mary, the day Christie was murdered.

Contradicting the earlier testimony of his mother and stepfather, Bobby said that he had seen Christie Mullins in the Newell home and in the family car. He even recalled having ridden a minibike and tractor mower with her in the woods. He then said that Junior Newell had been in the woods *twice* that day, and was gone for 30 or 45 minutes at midday, not the five minutes to which the Newells had testified. Bobby said that when Junior left the house he had on cutoff jeans, a tee shirt and sandals. When he returned, he was shirtless, barefoot, and had scratches on his face and body.

Audible gasps could be heard in the courtroom. The stunned audience leaned forward as Bobby quietly continued responding to Tyack's questions. Bobby said his mother and stepfather then went into a room to talk and sent Bobby into another room where he could not overhear their conversation. When they emerged minutes later, they announced that the family was going to the shopping center. They went into the woods behind Woolco, and partway down the path they stopped and "found Junior's shoes"—sandals that had a broken strap. They

continued walking into the woods and Junior said, "It isn't here." They went on and Junior told them to stop again. Junior and Pam went behind a tree and found the body. When they came out Pam was crying. Junior found a comb near the body and threw it "so it wouldn't be found there," Bobby testified. They then ran to Woolco to report the crime to the police.



Bobby Saultz testifies (*Columbus Monthly*; illustration by Roger Curley)

When asked why he had not told this story earlier, Bobby explained that his mother (Pam) had told him after the murder not to talk to anybody about it unless she said to, and that the police had asked him only two or three questions. He said he did tell Mr. Mullins, as well as his father, who brought him in to talk to Tyack and Riebel shortly

before the trial. After the trial, Bobby would reiterate to Mr. Mullins that the whole “nature hike” story was fiction and that he never asked to take a walk in the woods on the murder day.

The fireworks were not over with Bobby Saultz’s testimony. His maternal grandmother, Marian Shaffer (Pam Newell’s mother) testified that she, Pam and Junior Newell went to the funeral home to view Christie’s body and were driving back when Mrs. Shaffer commented on what a tragedy the murder was for the Mullins family. “Out of the clear blue sky,” she said, “Junior answered, ‘That’ll teach her to keep her damn mouth shut.’” She hadn’t told this story before, she testified, because she was afraid of Junior and his brother Tommy. (Like Junior, Tommy Newell had a violent streak; a year after the murder, he was arrested for shooting a man in both feet. He also threatened local television reporter Terry Jessup, who, as one of the first people to arrive at the murder scene, had noticed red marks all over Junior’s shirtless chest. Tommy told Jessup that he’d better be careful about what he said on television about his brother, because they knew where Jessup lived. Jessup, who had a three-year-old child, was afraid enough that he bought a gun for the first time in his life.)

Although Tyack and Riebel didn’t have to prove who killed Christie Mullins, many

believed that with the testimony of Bobby Saultz and Marian Shaffer, they had done just that. Tom Bateson, a friend of Christie’s sitting in the audience that day, said recently that “if [Junior] Newell had been on trial he would have been convicted” then and there.

Were the two surprise witnesses telling the truth? Although Marian Shaffer had a penchant for filing false slip and fall claims, and clearly had little use for her son-in-law Junior Newell, her testimony about the funeral home conversation was not shaken. Nor did the prosecution challenge the substance of Bobby Saultz’s testimony. Both his father and Tyack said Bobby, a shy boy, came forward only out of a sense of duty, and the level of detail he provided does not seem like the kind of story a child would simply make up. Nor could an adult have put him up to giving false testimony without exposing him to cross-examination by experienced prosecutors.

Thirty-six years after his testimony, Bobby Saultz confirmed recently that he told the truth at trial. “It happened the way I stated,” he said. “I was 100% honest to the best of my ability.” His father, a polite, soft-spoken man now in his sixties, said that when Pam Newell got wind that their son was going to show up at trial, she called the night before to try to dissuade him. Robert Saultz, who maintained cordial relations with his ex-wife, asked Pam

whether she believed Bobby's story. "If not," he asked, "then why is he sayin' it?" He told her that if Bobby knew something that was going to help Mr. Mullins, "we'll go and tell the story at trial."

"I wouldn't do that if I was you," Pam told her former husband.

"Well, you're not me," he responded, adding that if Bobby was right, then whoever did it was still out there and could kill again.

On the final day of trial, the defense got in a couple more jabs at Junior Newell. Tyack was allowed to read from a pre-sentencing report on Newell's 1969 arson convictions that described his modus operandi: he would let younger companions start the fires, then he would come out of the house when the fire trucks arrived and tell the firemen he had seen a mysterious person running from the scene moments before the fire. It sounded suspiciously like his testimony about Jack Carmen. The defense also produced another surprise witness, Alvin Caudill, a long-time acquaintance of Newell. Caudill claimed that, a year after the murder, Junior told him over drinks in a bar that he had killed Christie Mullins, albeit unintentionally. But when it was revealed that Caudill had a criminal record and had "snitched" before, including on his own brother—and that Newell had

likewise snitched to the police on Caudill—the testimony lost much of its force.

Closing arguments followed, and the jury recessed for dinner just before 5 p.m. At 9:45 p.m. on December 19, following three and a half hours of deliberations, they handed up their unanimous verdict: "Not Guilty" on all counts. The spectators broke out in applause. Tyack and Riebel were both crying, as were many in the audience. Jack Carmen left the courtroom a free man, carrying his entire personal belongings—in a paper bag. Asked by a sheriff to say "Merry Christmas" to the reporters crowding around him, Carmen obliged and, to no one in particular, said "Merry Christmas."



Dec. 20, 1977 *Columbus Citizen-Journal*



**Jack Carmen leaves the courtroom with
VOA head Graham LeSturgeon
(*Columbus Dispatch*)**



**Carmen's attorneys Dave Riebel (*left*)
and Tom Tyack (*lower right*) speak to
reporters after the verdict. In the
background are Norman Mullins and
Graham LeSturgeon (*Columbus
Dispatch*)**

Aftermath

The losing side did not take it well. O’Grady wrote an angry letter to the *Dispatch* insisting that Carmen was guilty and for years afterward hung a sign in his office window that said “Carmen did it.” After the verdict, the police and prosecution petulantly said that they’d had the right man and that, as far as they were concerned, the case was closed. A public outcry, however, forced Franklin County Prosecutor George Smith (who was preparing to run for state attorney general) and Columbus Police Chief Ralph Drown to announce that the case was officially reactivated and the investigation still open. “I hope something comes of this, but I’m not very optimistic,” said Norman Mullins, citing what he considered the police force’s dismissive treatment of him over the prior two years.

Although many believe the Carmen case never should have been brought, prosecutors O’Grady and O’Brien clearly believed in their case as much as the defense attorneys did in theirs. The prosecutors were also defended recently by an unlikely source—Jim Yavorcik, the *Lantern* reporter who’d co-written the

Columbus Monthly story. After graduating from Toledo Law School, Yavorcik went on to become a prosecutor in Lucas County before entering private practice and serving as president of the Toledo Bar Association. As a prosecutor, he recalled, “we were always taught there were four boxes: an eyewitness case; rolling over (a co-defendant turns); a confession case; and a circumstantial evidence/scientific evidence case. You had to have one of those four to bring a case. Looking back on this, O’Brien and O’Grady had two boxes checked. . . . You’re lucky in some cases to have one weak one. I’m sure these prosecutors were like, ‘Isn’t this what we’re supposed to do? Find the guy who’s guilty, follow the leads, and if they end up confessing, we prosecute them and punish them swiftly.’ But in this case one of the news hooks was that it was too swift. And didn’t make sense.”

Yavorcik remains convinced of Carmen’s innocence, as does Rick Kelly, now a crisis management consultant in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. For Kelly, the “seminal moment” came a month after the *Columbus Monthly* story, when he visited Carmen in jail. “Hi Jack, remember me? We used to play golf together,” Kelly introduced himself. “Yeah. Yeah, I remember,” Carmen responded. Kelly, who had never played golf with Jack Carmen,

said at that point he “could not believe they would put that guy in jail for this.”

Both Yavorcik and Tom Tyack agreed that it would have been difficult to get a conviction of Junior Newell following Carmen’s acquittal. All Newell’s defense attorney would need to do would be to cite Carmen’s confession and the fact that the prosecution, in open court, had said that Carmen, and not Newell, was the killer. “We haven’t got a case against Henry Newell because he didn’t do it,” O’Grady had told the jury in his closing argument. How could they then turn around and arrest him?

As a result, there was no serious effort by police to investigate Henry Newell’s possible guilt following the trial. Tyack recalled being told by Gene Brush, the detective assigned to lead the re-opened investigation, that Newell was asked, but refused, to take a lie detector test while in prison on his arson conviction. But Brush, now retired, does not recall focusing his investigation on Junior Newell.

Tyack described Brush as a “bulldog, a good detective,” and in a recent interview Brush (who was not involved in the original investigation) came across as fair-minded, diligent and sincere. “Dave [Riebel] let me talk to Carmen after the trial was over,” Brush recalled. “I wanted a feel for him, since I’d been told he could be influenced and liked to

please everybody. I found him to be the same way. After working with him a while I could get him to say pretty much what I wanted him to.” As a result, Brush said, “I believed the jury did get it right.”

Working mainly by himself, Brush spent a few months looking into the case, mostly in hopes of finding some sex offender from the North Side who resembled Carmen. At one point he did locate someone he developed suspicions about, and showed his photo to both of the Newells, who agreed the suspect looked a lot like the man they’d seen in the woods, but refused to retract their identification of Carmen. After about six or seven months of investigation, Brush said he was transferred to the sexual abuse squad and the investigation “kind of died.”

Nor was there any renewed interest by police in Henry Newell even as he continued to compile a record of violent crimes in the ensuing years. In 1984, he was arrested on charges of making aggravated menacing threats by saying he would run someone off the road in his car. (The incident, the result of a feud with neighbors, helped precipitate the shooting death of Junior’s father, Henry “Alabama” Newell Sr., a man with a history of violent conduct himself. Three weeks before Christie’s murder, for example, Henry Senior wounded an 18-year-old boy with a shotgun blast to the chest.)

In 1993, Junior was convicted of passing bad checks.

In 1995, he burned an ex-girlfriend's car, pled guilty to an arson charge, and spent time in jail for the offense.

In December 1995, he was charged with raping the same ex-girlfriend, who said he'd been stalking and harassing her since getting out of jail, although the rape charge was eventually dismissed.

In 1998, he pled guilty to a domestic violence offense.

In 2002, a warrant was issued for him on charges of telephone harassment and aggravated menacing.

And Jack Carmen's post-trial record? In 1984, he stole a rum and cola mix from a supermarket. Even retired detective John Tilley, who remains convinced Carmen was the killer and that he was acquitted only as a result of clever lawyering, said he was surprised that Carmen never committed another sex crime in the following years. He admits that Junior Newell, based on his record and the evidence at trial, "should have been a prime suspect." But despite Newell's continued criminal activity, no effort was apparently made to connect him back to the Mullins murder.



Police mug shot of Junior Newell in 1995

There is one other post-trial incident of potential significance. In January 1982, a year after Junior Newell got out of prison for his arson conviction, Pam Newell filed for divorce. A month later she was found dead in bed at 7 a.m. in their apartment on Walford Lane in Columbus, from an overdose of secobarbital (the same barbiturate that killed Judy Garland). The drug is so potentially lethal that it is sometimes used today in physician-aided suicides.

According to the police investigative report, Junior told police that Pam was despondent over her desire to get back together with her younger boyfriend, Robert J. "Joker" Hutton, who had lived with Pam while Junior was in prison, but who was now seeing another woman. A note found under Pam's face said she could not go on living

without him and was going to “take the easy way out.” Another note was left for Pam’s five-year-old daughter, the only child by her marriage to Junior. Although Hutton (who died in 2006) had not seen Pam for six months prior to the night of her death, he told police that earlier that night she threatened suicide after he told her he would not come back to her. Yet he ended up sleeping on a couch in the living room of the Newells’ apartment that night. Both he and Tommy Newell, who was present when police arrived at the scene the next morning, backed up Junior’s story.

Although her death was ruled a suicide, some of Pam’s family have strong suspicions that the notes were not written by her and that she was the victim of a homicide. “I believe she didn’t do it. Somebody else did,” says her first husband, Robert Saultz, Bobby’s father. The Saultzes suspect that Pam was given a drug overdose by Junior, who was home that night, sleeping in a separate bedroom. (The police report does not indicate any handwriting analysis. Asked to comment on the circumstances of Pam’s death, as well as on Junior’s possible involvement in the Christie Mullins murder, several surviving members of his family either said they had no information or declined to respond.)

Finally, there is this curiosity: Although Valium and blood pressure medicine bottles

were found in Pam’s room, investigators could not find any of the secobarbitals, or the empty pill bottle containing them, that Junior said were in her possession.

Both Henry and Pam Newell were heavy pill poppers; in fact, the reason they were excused from taking lie detector tests following the Mullins murder was that both said they were on medication—he for burns to his hands from his gasoline truck accident, and she because of “nerves.” Sometime after her second divorce, Pam had taken drugs to lose a great deal of weight, almost to the point of anorexia, then gained some back and had breast implants. One woman who knew her said she was “always high or drugged up.” Her second husband, Jesse Tasker, divorced her in 1973, after she had begun seeing Junior, because he could see them getting heavily into drugs and alcohol and he wanted no part of that world.

Henry and Pam Newell’s drug habits provide further indication that the search for the killer of Christie Mullins was not properly directed at finding some random sex offender, resembling Jack Carmen, who happened to be in the woods that day. Rather, to understand the murder of Christie Mullins, it is necessary to go back to the neighborhood she grew up in.

“Get Stoned High”

Whetstone High School, where Christie was to have been a 10th-grader in the fall of 1975, was *the* college prep high school in the Columbus public school system at that time. A sprawling structure in a residential area off Henderson Road, nestled along the Olentangy River, it featured large class sizes—upwards of 500—and was known for providing an excellent education to its many students. “I was honored to go there,” says Mary Mendicino, a 1979 graduate.



About 98% white, until court-ordered busing for desegregation began in 1979, it drew most of its students from the wealthier areas, and politically connected families, that surrounded the poorer neighborhood where Christie grew up. Many of its graduates went “down the Olentangy” to attend Ohio State,

although few from the streets of Rosslyn or Kanawha would end up there or at any other major university. Whetstone had a moderately successful athletics program, punctuated by moments of greatness, but the real pride of the “Braves” was its marching band, known for its signature “Script Whs,” derived from the Ohio State band’s famous “Script Ohio.”

Whetstone in the 1970s was known for something else. Nicknamed “Get Stoned High,” it was a haven for drugs—a place where, as one student recalls, “you could literally look out the window from the English wing on the first floor out onto the Olentangy River and see kids in the field at lunch time” smoking pot.

Besides marijuana, Whetstone and its environs were rife with pharmaceutical drugs popular in the day. Many kids were hooked on “downers” (methaqualone, commonly known as Quaaludes or “sopors,” especially so-called “Rorer 714’s,” named for their manufacturer), which were designed to calm anxieties and reduce sexual inhibitions. (“714 [Feelin Fine]” would become a popular song by an Ohio band, The Godz.) Other kids were into “uppers” (amphetamines or “speed,” particularly in the form of capsules called “black beauties”), which provided energy bursts as well as weight control. Virtually all of these drugs were legal at the time with a

doctor's prescription, although years later they would be taken off the market or criminalized under new, stricter narcotics laws.

"Those were all pills happening at that time" in and around Whetstone, says Kristy Roumeliote, who was a few years ahead of Christie's class. Indeed, in 1973, an NBC news television documentary program labeled Columbus "the sopor capital of the world." Says another contemporary of Christie's: "Trust me it was rampant. The whole culture was all about it." Barb Kerns adds that although some people after Christie's murder "wanted to make it seem like we were all angels . . . the area at the time was pretty conducive to drug experimenting."

As one former Sharon Heights man, now 55, recalls, every little group of users in the area had its own group of suppliers. And one of the suppliers was Junior Newell. The unemployed Newell, who was always in his yard or garage or in the woods, turned local drug dealing into his only income-earning occupation. Neighbors recalled the area around his house on Kanawha as being a hotbed of shady activity where teenaged boys hung out and got supplied with their drugs and booze. Because they wouldn't want to be seen transacting business on the front doorstep, kids would walk by, exchanging signals and furtive glances, before they would

be followed into the woods by Junior or his brother Tommy. According to Bobby Saultz, Junior and Tommy were "like twins," and "were never far behind one another." Junior did most of the talking, while Tommy was the quiet guardian who blended into the background.

The two brothers also had a reputation in the neighborhood for leering at the younger girls. Junior used to gawk at Lisa Sprague, sunbathing in her yard across the street where the Spragues had an above-ground pool, until Lisa's mother had a privacy fence installed. Junior and Tommy were also seen ogling the girls at the Broadmeadows pool.

Drugs and young girls, and a combination of the two, were what attracted the interest of Junior Newell. At some point before the murder, he asked one of his friends from the neighborhood, who was also involved with narcotics, "Do you give drugs to girls?" Junior told the friend, "You give drugs to girls and they'll do stuff." In a signed statement provided to Norman Mullins after the murder, teenager Ethel McCoy said that Junior told her and another girl that he could get them "any kind of downers that we needed for a certain amount of money." She recently said that Junior sold "everything" in term of drugs, including 714's, the drug that 43-year-old Roman Polanski allegedly gave a 13-year-old girl before he had sex with her in 1977.

Lisa had confided to Barb Kerns that the mysterious phone call had little to do with cheerleading and instead was about “the bringing of two maple leaves.” In notes recently found in the late Norman Mullins’ briefcase, Lisa’s younger sister (who died in 1989) was quoted after the murder as saying “something concerning Lisa collecting leaves for the contest.” The references to leaves seemed nonsensical at the time, particularly since late August was hardly maple leaf season. But they may have been a clue: a maple leaf closely resembles, in size and shape, marijuana. Maple leaf indica, a marijuana strain, is also known to act as an aphrodisiac. Perhaps more to the point, a woman who described herself as having been part of the “drug crowd” in Grove City in the early 1970s (an area that Junior frequented) said that sopors such as Rorer 714’s were sometimes referred to locally as “maple Leafs” because they were manufactured in and imported from Canada, where it was easier to obtain a doctor’s prescription.



Did Junior Newell plan to loosen up the two girls with drugs so that they would “do stuff” for him? Did he, with help from a telephone call from Tommy, or someone else with a southern accent, somehow persuade Lisa to bring Christie deep into the woods on the murder day? Did Lisa, not knowing it would ever “go that far,” in fact escort Christie to her eventual doom? Lisa had said to Phyllis Mullins that “*two* were involved.” To Barb Kerns, Lisa had “stressed the bringing of *two* maple leaves.” Lisa was obviously speaking in code, but how to decipher it? Cracking that code may be the key to solving the case.

The girls could have gone directly from the pool back into the woods (skipping the trip to Woolco), thinking they would be partying with a couple of cute teenaged boys, only to discover that it was the eerie, 25-year-old Henry Newell, and/or some other predator, who awaited them. Then, when Christie did not grant the sexual favors to which someone felt entitled, he flew off the handle, the situation escalated out of control, and he ended up killing her.

Sometimes the simplest explanations are the best ones, and the theory that Christie Mullins was killed after refusing to engage in sex has much to commend it. But it also leaves much to be desired. There was no

evidence of rape, and it seems likely that if her killer had intended to rape Christie he would have succeeded—especially because her hands were tied with telephone cord. The murder, moreover, bore all the earmarks of a rage or revenge killing, so savagely and repeatedly was she beaten, far beyond what was necessary to subdue her. It does not seem like a simple case of rape, although it does appear that the killer wanted it to *look* like a rape.

The Mullins family, for one, believes there was more to her murder than sexual procurement gone awry. “Chris was afraid of something,” her mother, Phyllis, says. “She knew something and was trying to get out.”

Mrs. Mullins was and is devoutly Christian, as were her five children. Christie had grown up in the Baptist church, sang in the choir, regularly attended Sunday and vacation Bible school, and had been baptized three years before her murder. But around the summer of 1975 she began “delving into other things,” her mother said, and one of those things was drugs. She was not a hard-core drug addict, but rather a social user who smoked pot with friends. On July 10, 1975, for example, six weeks before the murder, Christie, Lisa and four other youths (a girl and three boys) were caught smoking pot at the Ohio School for the Blind off of East Kanawha, but no arrests were made; only the parents were called. Norman and Phyllis

Mullins spoke about the incident, after the murder, to *Columbus Monthly*’s Max Brown, and they wondered openly whether Christie and Lisa might have gone to the woods to smoke or buy marijuana. After Brown contacted the highway patrol in November 1975 to confirm the details of the pot bust, the patrol advised Columbus police about it, but by that time Jack Carmen was in jail and the police had no interest in pursuing alternative theories or suspects.

Over that summer of 1975, “Chris,” as her family called her, was undergoing a rapid change. Her younger sister, Kim, knew that Christie was smoking pot and would yell at her for it; as a result, Christie sought to keep her little sister in the dark about that side of her life. “She didn’t want me near any of that,” Kim explains.

The Mullins family was a tight-knit bunch, and there is no doubt that Christie was dearly loved by her mother and four siblings (all of whom still live today in Central Ohio), as well as by her father, who passed away in 2006. Christie enjoyed a typical childhood—joining the girl scouts, playing tag or pretending to be blown away on a windy day as in “The Wizard of Oz,” catching fireflies or playing Ghost in the Graveyard on warm summer nights. She played violin in the junior high orchestra. But unlike her brothers and sisters, Christie eventually gravitated to the local drug scene,

seemingly in search of something. “With Christie I could totally see there was something lacking in her; maybe she felt a need to try to fit in, to gain acceptance,” says one woman, now a high school teacher in Columbus, who had been friends with Christie at Homedale Elementary School and then Dominion Junior High until they began drifting apart. It was at Dominion, which ran through ninth grade, that the whole drug culture started, says this woman, and she could tell that Christie was becoming part of it. “The way that my neighborhood fell out, some of us went into that drug culture and some of us didn’t,” she says. “And we were all good kids. I don’t know what the difference is. Even in my own family, my brother got involved and I didn’t.” Others echo her comments, saying that Christie was a good girl who got mixed up with the wrong crowd. Particularly that summer, when she was preparing to enter high school for the first time, “she wanted to fit in with the ‘in’ crowd like everyone wants to,” says Susannah Justice-Loy, a neighbor from across the street. “I think she got sucked into something that may not have been meant for her.”

Some of her friends believe that, despite the loving atmosphere, Christie also may have been seeking an escape from her living circumstances. The family was frugal to the point of living well beneath its means. The

house was cluttered with antiques that Norman Mullins was so afraid of someone breaking that he disallowed regular housecleaning. Christie rarely invited anyone but her closest friends inside her house; she usually would meet people somewhere and, when they parted, would leave them off a few houses away from hers. Phyllis Mullins didn’t allow her children out after dark unless they were babysitting or at a friend’s house with her approval. As a result, Christie “used to tell her mom she was babysitting so she could get out of the house” at night, her friend Lynn (Turley) Dean recalls. Lynn and another friend would then give Christie a buck and a half, she said, so that Christie could show her mother the “take” from her supposed three hours of babysitting.

On the Friday night the week before she was murdered, Christie was at a party at her friend Lynn Turley’s apartment in the Broadmeadows complex when something happened, or Christie saw or heard something, that scared her, Phyllis Mullins recalls. The following Wednesday, three days before the murder, Christie and her family were visiting the Garabrandts—Rosslyn Avenue neighbors who had moved away earlier that summer—and Christie “kept wanting to tell me something” about what had happened at Lynn Turley’s party that concerned her, recalls Betsi (Garabrandt)

Huntzinger, one of Christie's closest friends at the time. "But Kimmy [Christie's younger sister] would not leave us alone, just wouldn't leave us alone," Betsi recalls, and Christie wasn't able to tell her friend what so bothered her. Then on Friday, the day before the murder, Christie called Betsi at home, but was told by her mother that Betsi couldn't talk because she was busy with chores that, because she was a Seventh Day Adventist, she had to finish by sundown. After Betsi finished her chores she called Christie at home, only to learn that Christie was babysitting in the neighborhood.

Either that same Friday evening, before she left to babysit, or perhaps the night before, Christie went across the street to the home of a neighbor woman Phyllis Mullins was visiting. Christie found her mother on the porch and "she said something like she was trying to turn her life around," Mrs. Mullins recalls. Phyllis Mullins, a soft-spoken woman, repeats for emphasis: "She knew something and was trying to get out."

To this day no one knows exactly what was apparently worrying Christie in the days preceding her murder, or what she meant when she said she was trying to turn her life around. But the inference that it related to drugs, and was somehow connected to her murder, seems inescapable. And that

supposition leads back again, inevitably, to Henry Newell.

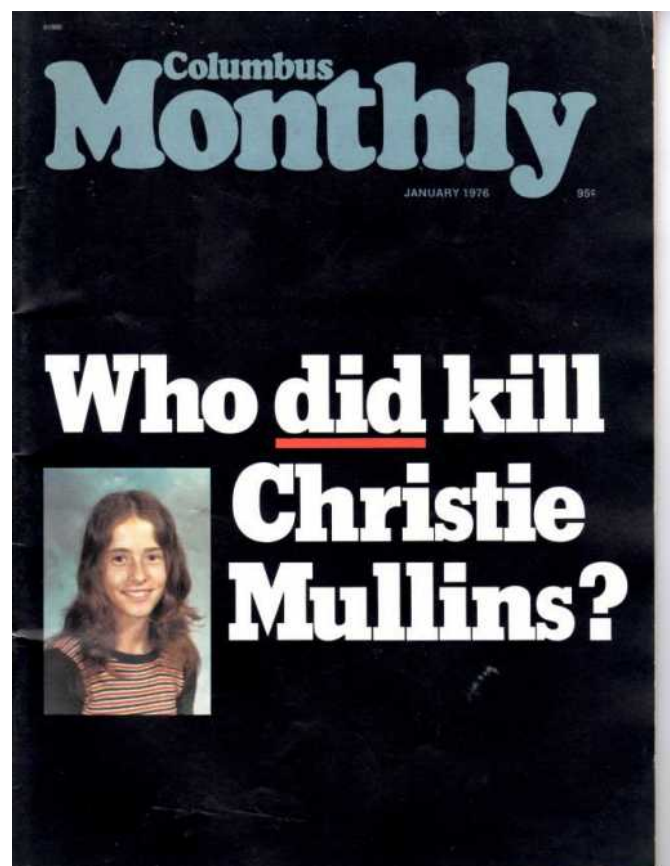
In August 1975, Junior Newell would have reacted fiercely to anyone who threatened to send him back to jail, where he had last spent time in 1971. There was good reason for drug dealers, even small-time ones such as Newell, to be concerned about the law that summer. As evidenced in the *Dispatch's* headlines from the time, practically every other day brought a new story of a drug raid or arrest by Columbus police, and of dealers receiving sentences of up to 20 to 50 years for various narcotics offenses.

If all Christie had was hearsay rumor that Newell was a drug dealer, that wouldn't have made her a risk to him any more than the many other neighbors who'd heard the same thing. But if she had specific, first-hand information that implicated him in serious narcotics dealing—and Bobby Saultz testified that Christie was in Junior's presence on more than one occasion—any threat by her to squeal on him to the police would have given him a motive to kill her.

Christie's classmate Kathy Marshall relates another anecdote that may shed light on what happened. Kathy had a best friend Christie's age who lived on Rosslyn Avenue, the same street as Christie, and who was heavily into drugs while attending Dominion.

Kathy's friend confided in her that she "kind of wanted to get out of it," to which Kathy responded, "then you need to get out of it and you need to tell 'em you're not going to do this anymore. . . . You're not gonna buy any more drugs." Her friend responded, "No, you don't understand, I can't do that." She was afraid of what would happen to her if she refused to continue buying the drugs, Kathy said. "Whoever was selling the drugs was very scary," she said. "There was fear there." Although Kathy's now 50-something-year-old friend could not be reached for comment, her father, who still lives in the same neighborhood, affirmed his belief that the killer was "somebody in the drug business." As Kathy Marshall says, after Christie's murder, "When people told me that maybe it had to do with this Newell guy who was a drug dealer, I believed that."

If Christie was indeed heading in the wrong direction that summer, she eventually decided that she'd had enough, and was looking for a way out. In short, Christie may have been murdered because, as in the beautiful but haunting Dionne Warwick song from "Valley of the Dolls," she decided it was time to "get off of this merry-go-round."



Who *Did* Kill Christie Mullins?

While it is impossible to answer that question with certainty, the most coherent, consistent theory is that Junior Newell, with or without an accomplice, killed Christie Mullins. If Jack Carmen was not the killer, then Junior lied about witnessing him attacking Christie. And the only reason for Junior to have made up that story is that Junior himself was involved.

The murder was probably done to silence or punish Christie, just as Marian Shaffer's testimony suggested. It may or may not have been premeditated; the telephone cord

implies that it was. No one thinks Lisa willed Christie's murder, although plenty of Christie's friends believe Lisa "set her up" with Junior Newell, not knowing it would ever "go that far." Did Lisa tell Junior that Christie was going to snitch on him about something, prompting him to ask Lisa to get Christie with him back in the woods so he could reason with her? It is possible that Junior merely intended to scare Christie, or rough her up a bit, before she said something at the murder site that caused him spontaneously to explode in rage. Junior Newell was someone who prided himself on his ability to control any situation, and it would not have taken much push-back to set him off. One way or another, Christie had come to threaten Junior's livelihood, or freedom, or both, and she paid for it with her life.

The timeline would have been somewhat tight for Henry Newell to have killed Christie—but then, it would have been tight for anyone. Whoever committed the crime did so within the roughly 45 minutes between 1:30 and 2:15 p.m. Most of all the timing was tight for Jack Carmen, who, according to police, came from eight miles downtown and killed Christie barely 15 minutes after snatching her from the guardrail. There is much more latitude in the timeline for Henry Newell, who lived a couple streets away and unquestionably was in the woods that

afternoon. The tightness of the timeline is not a good argument for his innocence.

According to Lisa Sprague, she and Christie reached the guardrail about 1:35, because they waited about five minutes before Lisa went inside Woolco to find out it was 1:40. That means the girls would have left the Broadmeadows pool around 1:20, given the 10-15 minutes it would have taken, through the path, to get to Woolco. A couple of witnesses recalled it was as late as 1:30 when the girls left the pool together, but it may have been earlier; no one was carefully tracking the time of the girls' movements that day. And it is only Lisa's word that the two of them went to Woolco. If they did not, and instead went straight to the murder site, they could have gotten there by 1:30 or even earlier. That would have given Junior Newell ample time to have committed the murder and race home (a five-minute run on foot, even less on his ubiquitous dirt bike) before returning by car with his family in time to "discover" the body around 2:20 p.m.

One can envision the following scenario: Newell commits the murder sometime between 1:30 and 1:45, and is home by 1:40 or 1:50. Either on the way home, or back at his house, he begins to worry that he has left too much incriminating evidence at the scene. He confers momentarily with wife Pam and decides that to create an alibi he will take his

family on a “nature walk” that coincidentally ends at the very spot the body lies, in an area few people ever go to. The kids are piled into the car and a few minutes later, the Newells are parked behind Woolco. They walk quickly into the woods, where Junior has trouble at first locating the body (“It’s not here”), but finds it and spreads his fingers all over the body, Christie’s clothing, and the two-by-four so that if any physical evidence from him is found, he can explain why. He then gets the bright idea to report the crime—surely no one will suspect the man who found the body!—and the family runs back to Woolco to report the crime.

One other question remains: How did the Newells so accurately describe Jack Carmen to police, and then pick him out of a lineup? Several possibilities exist. One is that Junior simply described a generic, long-haired hippy type, of which there were thousands in Columbus at the time. (“Hell, that described me at that point,” says radio reporter Bob Singleton.) Another theory, which Jim Yavorcik advocates, is that Newell “described to police the face that he had drawn the most”—that is, the face of Jesus Christ. Carmen also resembled Junior’s brother Tommy; could Junior have deliberately described his brother as a way of throwing off the police? A further possibility is that Junior had seen Carmen in public before—walking

the streets or frequenting the bars downtown, as Carmen was known to do, or even at Graceland on a prior occasion—and decided he would be an easy person to pin the crime on. Junior had also worked at the Stop ’N Go convenience store at Kanawha and High Street where Carmen reputedly had gone on occasion, so he could have seen him there. A final possibility is that Newell *did* see Jack Carmen that day up at Graceland, but not in the woods killing Christie Mullins. Carmen told Jennifer Groce, head of the Justice for Jack Committee, that he went to Woolco that Saturday to buy a shirt and pants and was there around 2 p.m. That could explain how Newell happened to see him and how Carmen, given his “Swiss cheese” brain, could be led to believe, or at least to say, that he had killed a girl while he was at Graceland that afternoon.

One person, if she were willing, could very well clear up the mystery of what happened on August 23, 1975. To that end, in November 2013, a letter signed by 20 of Christie’s friends and family members “dedicated to preserving her memory” was sent to Lisa Sprague, who lives in Columbus, imploring her to talk about the events of that day. “We are still seeking closure for ourselves, our friends and neighbors at the time, and most of all the Mullins family,” the letter explained, adding that “although most of us, like you,

were only teenagers at the time, many of us have children (and even grandchildren) of our own now, so we can especially understand the never-ending desire of a parent, or sibling, to learn the truth about the loss of a loved one. We hope you will join us in that effort.” If there is one thing almost everyone from the old neighborhood agrees on, it is that “Lisa knows.” From her cryptic statements about not intending that “it” go that far; about the gathering and bringing of “two maple leaves;” and that “*two* were involved,” it is obvious that she knows much more than she has ever revealed. As one of the signers of the letter explained recently, “Lisa holds the key to what happened. I don’t know how somebody could keep that to themselves all these years.”

As of this writing, Lisa did not respond to that letter or other efforts to contact her, even though she was advised that both Junior and Tommy Newell had recently passed away and therefore could no longer harm her. (They both died of cancer in 2013.) That she has chosen to remain silent only fuels the suspicions of Christie’s friends and family that it was not fear of the Newells that caused her to make up her cheerleading story, but rather, concern for her reputation.

If it is fear of legal repercussions that keeps Lisa from talking, one way of dealing with it would be for prosecutors to offer her immunity in exchange for cooperation.

Indeed, if police or prosecutors could get Lisa to talk, the case might well be solved in no time. But there appears to be no interest on the part of law enforcement to look further into the Christie Mullins murder. In December 2013, the Columbus police denied this writer’s request for the homicide investigative file under Ohio’s open records law, on the grounds that all of it, other than the original routine incident report, constitutes “confidential” police “work product.” (How it can still be considered “confidential” after prosecutors turned over all their files to Carmen’s defense lawyer four decades ago is unclear.) The approximately 100 specific records requested included the full transcript of Jack Carmen’s taped confession (claimed to be “confidential” despite its having been read in open court); the transcript of Lisa Sprague’s polygraph test; witness statements by people who are deceased (such as the Newells, Norman Mullins, Jim Foster and others); and basic factual information discussed at the trial, such as physical evidence from the crime scene and the police chemist’s report. (According to one source, police did locate Christie’s clothing in a property room at some point in recent years and tested her bathing suit bottom for DNA but found none. It is not clear whether that, or any other physical evidence, still exists.)

In addition, because the case remains technically “open,” the Cold Case unit of the Division of Police refuses to discuss it. While the Division claims its policy is not to discuss open investigations, a number of examples can be found on the Internet in which detectives have revealed not just common knowledge about cold cases, but their theories about the case and ideas for additional investigative steps. The Cold Case unit says that, upon request by local media, it will allow the detectives assigned to an old case to be interviewed (without providing any paper files). But when asked in writing whether anyone in Cold Case is currently assigned to the Mullins case and whether they would be willing to talk to this writer about it, the unit did not respond. And I was informed by the *Dispatch* that it has never been denied access to the complete file for cold cases it chooses to write about. Homicide detective Russell Redman, who worked on the Mullins case while in the Cold Case unit between 2007 and 2012, wrote that he would not provide any information about it today “due to the possibility that someday science and information developed will allow the Division of Police to solve the case.”

Whether or not the Columbus Police are legally *required* to provide any information about the Mullins case (a question that may need to be settled in court), they clearly are

permitted to do so but have chosen not to. In fact, while the case is officially classified as unsolved, no non-retired law enforcement official has ever publicly stated a belief that the murderer was anyone other than Jack Carmen.

For almost 40 years, Christie’s friends and family have had to live without knowing what happened to Christie that awful day. Because there was no grief counseling back then, people were left to cope with the tragedy on their own, as best they could. As an immediate consequence of the murder, kids who had freely roamed the streets of the neighborhood until all hours were no longer allowed by their parents to do so, and the woods and paths behind Graceland became much less frequented. In the longer run, the murder turned many carefree teenagers into cautious, concerned adults. “It has changed the way I’ve raised my children,” says one woman. “I need to know where they’re going, who they’re hanging with.” Says Betsi Huntzinger, who considered Christie her best friend (and named her first daughter after her), “By losing her, it made me more aware of what can happen to you in life.”

It may be too late to bring Christie’s killer, or killers, to justice in their lifetime. But that does not mean that the search should end. Even if the killer is dead, one or more accomplices may still be alive. The Columbus

police insist that it is still an open case; indeed, that is their supposed reason for not turning over any files. As a result, they cannot cite the death of Henry Newell as justification for doing nothing to investigate further. True, there are hundreds of unsolved murders on the books, and only so many detectives available to work on them. But given the unique place the Christie Mullins murder occupies in the city's history, its continuing hold on the imagination of so many citizens, and the way the case was mishandled originally, the police might consider that they have a special obligation to fix this one at last.

Neither Christie's friends nor her family have given up hope that the murder will someday be solved. The family would even be willing to exhume Christie's body for DNA testing if they thought it could lead to a solution. As Christie's sister Melony says, "The body is nothing; her soul still exists." Melony explains that she and Christie's other family members, other than her father, who until his dying day never stopped looking for the killer, "hid from it for so long by putting everything in a box so we could survive." Now, she says, "we just want to know the truth."

Her sister Kim sums up their feelings succinctly: "I'm glad there was justice for Jack," she says. "But what about justice for Christie?"

* * * * *

Epilogue

After 20 years in operation, the Woolco store at Graceland shopping center closed in 1983 due to financial problems and was later demolished; today a fitness club stands on the same site.



All the other establishments, including the popular bowling alley and cinema, are gone too, replaced by the likes of Starbucks, Target, OfficeMax and GNC. The field behind Woolco has been turned into a sports activity park, variously known as Kenney or Delawanda Park, although the woods look much like they did in 1975. Most of the houses on West Kanawha and Rosslyn Avenues are essentially unchanged from then, and the Broadmeadows apartments and swimming pool are still there. Neighborhood crime watch signs encourage the reporting of suspicious activity.

Author's Note and Acknowledgments

For those wondering about my interest in this case, I was a journalism student at Ohio State in 1975, working for the *Lantern*, when the murder took place. I've lived in New York for many years now, where I went on to become a lawyer, and now a writer, but I've never forgotten the incident.

A revised edition of this ebook may be in order if, as a result of its publication, significant new information comes to light. For anyone who feels they have something useful to offer, the best way to contact me is at the following special email address: mullinscase@gmail.com.

I am trying to locate, among others, Jack Carmen (at last report still living somewhere in Central Ohio); Karen Sue Stainer, Pam Newell's sister, of Chillicothe; Bill Winniestaffer of Buckeye Lake, Pam Newell's second husband; Penny Curry, formerly of 465 Broadmeadows Blvd. Apt. 212, for whom Lisa is said to have babysat later in the day after the murder; and Judy Scott, formerly of 440 Broadmeadows Blvd. Apt. 103, for whom Lisa was a regular babysitter.

One can hope that police and prosecutors will enlist in the effort to finally solve the crime. In particular, popular Franklin County

Prosecutor Ron O'Brien could decide that the case merits renewed attention. ("A good guy," said Dave Riebel of his former adversary recently. "And I don't say that about many prosecutors.") In addition, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, whose website lists the Christie Mullins murder as an "unsolved homicide," could put the power of his office and its BCI Special Investigations Unit behind an effort to resolve the case—at least if local law enforcement officials were to request BCI's help.

My gratitude goes to the Mullins family and to all of Christie's friends and neighbors who provided key information and helped me understand the neighborhood, the people, the schools, and the social climate around Sharon Heights in the 1970s. To Julie, Kelly, Mary, Lynn, Barb, Lynda, Juli, Kristin, Ethel and the rest, I can only say thank you for your friendship and dedication to the effort.

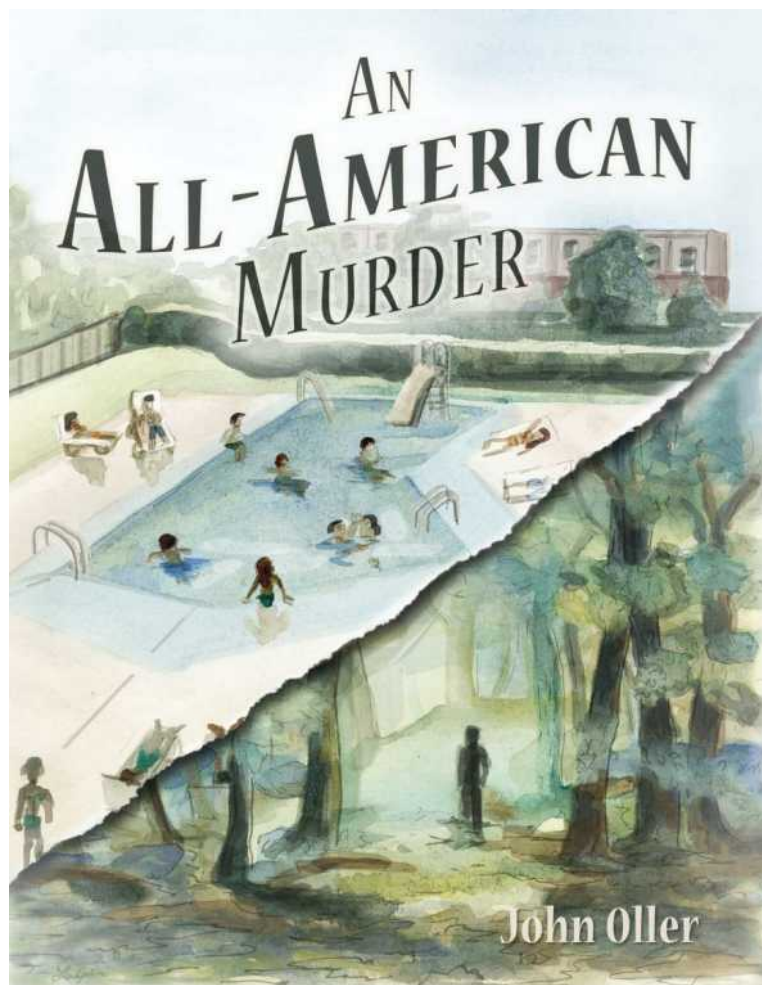
A special shout-out goes to "Nerosleuth" on Websleuths.com. He knows who he is and how helpful he has been. I am also grateful to Bob Singleton for his valuable assistance, to Nick Gurich for his map-making prowess, and to Laura Galvin for her cover illustration. Also: Columbus Public Library; *Columbus Dispatch* (Linda Deitch); *Clintonville Booster/This Week Community News* (Kevin Parks); Max Brown (ex-*Columbus Monthly* publisher); Tom Tyack and Dave Riebel.

My final thanks go to Jim Yavorcik and Rick Kelly, whose reporting did make a difference in peoples' lives, and to the Ohio State *Lantern*, still going strong in its 134th year, to which this piece is dedicated.

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Addendum to “An All-American Murder”



Since the first appearance of this ebook six weeks ago on Facebook and elsewhere (http://books.google.com/books/about/An_All_American_Murder.html?id=HrQLAwAAQBAJ), and <http://www.scribd.com/doc/212910173/An-All-American-Murder>), there have been several significant developments worth compiling into an Addendum:

SOCIAL MEDIA REACTION

Here is a sampling of comments on Facebook and social media:

Alan I hope that as a result of this article, the police will reopen their investigation and people with information will come forward.

Andy I agree Alan. It seems like they did not do her justice.

Brenda I agree it needs to be reopened, and given another look. A fresh set of eyes.

Pete . . . It is a great accounting of the happenings around the case, they should definitely open the investigation up! One big truth to the story, if Lisa will come forward I am sure a lot of the facts will be made clear.

Brent Christie never got justice, sadly. I didn't know her (Ridgeview dude). But I knew about her murder. I still get chills when I remember orientation the month before we all started 10th grade, when a teacher noted she would have been one of our classmates.

Anne Cold Case needs on this or one of those shows.

Alan Many of our lives were changed forever the day Christie Mullins was killed. . . Please help get the truth out there.

Jenny Thanks. Read it last night. Really interesting. I was away that year at boarding school (long story) so I missed a lot of this. Well written and really ripe for cold-caser to pick it up. Would be great if it happened and articles like this are how that stuff gets back on the radar.

Cathy I was working that day at Ben Franklin's hamburgers when they came in to ask if we knew Christie. I was in her sister Melony's class and had just graduated in June. It

was very disturbing to us in the neighborhood. I never thought Carmen did it. I think Newell did.

James Newell did it, Everyone knows that.

Tamra Has America's Most Wanted ever done this story? The person that committed this crime may be old, sick or dead, but they need to be held accountable. Christie deserves that-

Lisa B It would be grand if an investigator would take this up and an open root cause action or an internal investigation . . . Something is very off here.

Lisa S My husband worked maintenance at Graceland for many years and his shop sat at that guardrail. . . the path she walked sits right behind the shop. Many a time I sat there thinking of her. One day the truth will come out then someone, somewhere is going to take the fall ! I truly miss her.

Mary W Congrats to you John Oller for your well done report. It certainly brings home that this is still a cold case. I am glad that you put this together so that we could read about the crime with the eyes of adults. I hate that we lost her in the way that we did.

EJ: Lisa Sprague needs to spill her guts. Who knows about a murder and likely who did it contributing to the misery of an entire family, allowing parents to die without closure? She's not wrapped too tight. I think that horrible Junior person got away with two murders.

Mary W

Forever our Angel. Christie Mullins..



Mary W Look how sweetly beautiful she was at 15...She could have been Julia Roberts for what any of us know. Robbed of her life. This picture looks so “Can’t you see I am with God?” And all is well.

Lisa B This is a burden they have carried since we were FIFTEEN....now almost mid 50's...I don't know parents DO that thankfully. I must admit this girl has stayed with me in fleeting moments over the years but the relentlessness of the loss for the family astounds me....how can we (her peers) along with John’s story impact??? Ideas?

Pete I still think Lisa could clear up a lot of speculation, COME FORWARD LISA!!

Janice We all lost a friend and our innocence the day that Christie was killed.

Mary M Hey, you guys!! Sad we are all coming together over this tragedy. Chris was a great kid. Very gentle and kind. She was a friend of mine. I'm glad I had the opportunity to meet with John and show him the trails we blazed in the woods. It was surreal. I found myself crying a lot. . . .

Deborah Just finished reading the whole story! I Pray that someday soon that there is justice for sweet Christie!!!

Kim B Christie always smiled, and had great dimples. I hung out with her a few times at Graceland . . . I think it is a good idea for us to share the link to John's story, and ask our Facebook friends to share it too. Maybe the Columbus Police or District Attorney could be influenced to open the files, or give it another look.

Sonya I will never forget the day my Dad gathered us to tell us this news. Such a tragic event that forever changed any of our childhoods that knew her. I hope for her family and friends that all knew and loved her that someone in authority will take notice and at last finally pursue this as it should have been and give the much overdue attention and closure needed and deserved. Thanks for such a wonderfully well written and informative article even as painful as it was to go back to those memories. The importance is to find the person(s) responsible for this heinous crime.

Renée I agree with all you: it is time for Christie's case to be re-examined.

Holly Thanks for the story. I haven't thought of that for years. Still sends chills up my spine.

Carol I hope The Columbus Police Detectives will change their minds about researching this murder.

Andy The Newell's killed Christy...Columbus Police fouled the entire investigation...Huge black mark on their history.

Sandi Know we would ALL agree there's been NO JUSTICE! Until the remaining individual who has knowledge steps forward, confesses and asks God Almighty Himself for forgiveness, truth will remain hidden in the darkness of evil.

Lynn Such a beautiful young lady that was robbed of her life .We were all a mess for a long time. Still think of you so much. RIP my friend.

Diana Fascinating reading. Case should definitely be opened back up.

Mary W I think we need to move forward and ask that the case be reopened.

Tammy They are reopening the case? That would be amazing! Justice is way overdue.

Barbara The police should admit they rushed to judgment and got the wrong guy (after all, he was acquitted!). They should at least appoint a Cold Case Unit, as done in the Suzanne Jovin case. Is the evidence still available, is one major question. Witnesses can be re-interviewed. The family and community deserve answers.

Lisa S I went to school with Christie. Grew up in the same neighborhood and she was my friend. Not a day has gone by in all these years that I have not thought of her. This case was a total screw up from day one! All of us whom knew her know who should have been charged. Just because a case is an older case does not mean that a family has stopped grieving and that the truth is not out there somewhere. We want closure for Christie's family and for all of us whom knew her. The truth is out there somewhere and we do know that there is one certain person that could step forward and bring the truth to light. I have faith that it will happen. RIP Christie. We will all keep up the fight for you!

Heather The man who did this is probably dead but my family deserves answers to why such a young, sweet beautiful little girl was taken from their lives! So many people were affected by her murder and it still affects them to this day! Cold justice or shows like that will not help as this case is intertwined in misjustice and corruption! One woman knows the truth! We pray she will finally give the answers to all the questions! I pray she will let the secrets out and finally speak on what happened!

Mara The girl, now a mother/grandmother herself . . . [Lisa] needs to speak the truth... She knows something and what she knows will bring this to closure.... She did not go into the store “to check the time”... There was no way on earth Jack Carmen committed this crime... He was railroaded by the fake composite the real suspect gave to throw everyone off.... The composite looked like a million different guys... He was found innocent because he was... Glad there was a justice for jack committee but isn't it time for Justice for Christie committee??

Mitch The unnamed suspect was Jack Carmen who was railroaded. If not for the intervention of the community and the Justice for Jack committee, the outcome would most likely have been different - with an innocent man convicted and nobody ever looking for the real killer.

Mary M You know, when I think about this whole case, I believe anger is directed somewhat at the wrong situation. What I would like to know is how did this case get such poor attention? Why are the police still stonewalling? Do they even know where the evidence is at this point? Why didn't they go after Junior more aggressively? Why was [Lisa's] lie-detector results not made available to Mr. Mullins? Maybe because [Lisa] was a minor they couldn't discuss the results? I don't want to believe that our wonderful Columbus Police would willingly cover or mishandle the truth. Many of them are dads to daughters and sisters. This is what has me scratching my head.

Karen Pray for closure....I'd sure want to know what happened to my baby, no matter how long it took. Some sick person/people is/are still out there!!!

Marie E Justice for a family whose child was murdered is NOT a waste of taxpayer's money! I hope they get the answers they deserve! So sad!

Sheri I remember how shocked and scared we all were when this happened, I was 11 and lived very near this area. Her family deserves closure and the person /people responsible deserves punishment.

Peggy Pray they find the person!

Isis Wow... That's awful... I couldn't even imagine the pain that family is been in for years... Just not having answers like that. Prayers for that family. We have a lot of new science to finds out things about old cases never give up...

Richard . . . I pray that someone will come forward and give us and the family of Christie closure. My prayers for the family and friends!

CLINTONVILLE AREA COMMISSION

In part due to the overwhelming reaction by the community, and the efforts of 1977 Whetstone graduate Bill Huber and 1996 Whetstone graduate Dana Bagwell, now a member of the Clintonville Area Commission (CAC), the case was brought before the CAC at a meeting on the evening of April 3, 2014. Nearly 30 people connected with the "Justice for Christie" movement attended the meeting at the Whetstone Library to show their support.

After a brief discussion, the CAC voted unanimously, 7–0, to send a letter to public officials asking for a re-examination of the case. The vote produced applause and tears in the audience. Here is the letter:



Daniel B. Miller
Chairperson

Clintonville Area Commission
c/o 3909 N. High Street
Columbus, OH 43214

Office: 614-227-2101
Cell: 613-314-9854

Email: daniel.miller.614@gmail.com

April 9, 2014

VIA U.S. MAIL

Mike DeWine
Ohio Attorney General
30 E. Broad St., 14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Ron O'Brien
Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney
373 S. High St., 14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Chief Kim Jacobs
City of Columbus
Division of Police
120 Marconi Blvd.
Columbus, OH 43215

Andrew Ginther
President
Columbus City Council
90 W. Broad St.
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Christie Lynn Mullins

Dear Sirs and Madam:

A recent article posted on Facebook entitled "An All-American Murder" served as a painful reminder to the Clintonville community of a tragic, senseless, and still-unsolved murder of a teenage girl, Christie Lynn Mullins, at Graceland Shopping Center. This article raises troubling questions about the case that should merit attention by public officials. Because of advances in murder investigation techniques in the last 40 years, there may be potential avenues for pursuing a solution to this crime that may have been overlooked in prior research.

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Page 2

The Clintonville Area Commission asks that you return to this case and double check every avenue and piece of evidence, using the most up-to-date forensic techniques, to try to bring closure to Christie's family, the Clintonville community, and the city at large.

The article is available at
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/212910173/An-All-American-Murder>. We hope that you will give serious consideration to this matter.

Sincerely yours,



Daniel B. Miller

cc: Rob Wood (via e-mail only)
Nancy Kuhel (via e-mail only)
Libby Wetherholt (via e-mail only)
Dan Bagwell (via e-mail only)
Randy Ketchum (via e-mail only)
Jason Meek (via e-mail only)
Kristopher Keller (via e-mail only)
D Searcy (via e-mail only)

As of this writing, there has been no formal response to the letter. The CAC is scheduled to meet again on May 1, 2014, at which time a report of any response might be made.

CASE STATUS: CLOSED OR OPEN?

In a televised report on the CAC meeting on April 3, WBNS-10TV reporter Shelby Croft reported that Columbus Police had told her that they considered the case "closed" and that they still believe Jack Carmen was the killer. The televised story can be found here: [http://www.10tv.com/content/stories/2014/04/03/clintonville-new-effort-to-
revive-cold-case.html](http://www.10tv.com/content/stories/2014/04/03/clintonville-new-effort-to-revive-cold-case.html). A few days later, the *Columbus Dispatch*, in a story that can be found here (<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2014/04/12/e-book->

[sparks-interest-in-75-killing.html](#)), reported that Franklin County Prosecutor Ron O'Brien, in an email, said that the case is still considered open and that tips with new information should be directed to the police division.

As of this writing, no one from the police division has publicly commented on the discrepancy or confirmed that the case, which is listed as an unsolved “cold case” on the division’s website, remains open. As stated in the ebook, in denying my request for the investigative file on the case, police cited the fact that the case was still “open.” Perhaps the way to reconcile the conflict is the following: the case is technically open, but inactive. The essence of the Channel 10 report was not wrong, in that police *do* regard the case, for all practical purposes, as closed because of their continued belief that an acquitted man committed the crime. As for the other main suspect, Henry Newell Jr., law enforcement authorities appear to be of the view that because he is deceased, there is no way (or no point) to investigate whether he did it. It is not clear whether they ever spoke to any of his family to ask whether they know anything. I did. As reported in the ebook, members of Junior’s family previously told me that they had no information, or declined to respond. That has now changed.

JUNIOR’S CONFESSION(S)?

On April 15, 2014, shortly after 5 p.m., I received an email from someone I had contacted last December, but who had not responded to my message. She is a niece of the late Junior Newell, and a daughter of Junior’s late brother, Tommy. She offered to speak to me about “what was confessed to me by my uncle Henry Newell Jr.” and we spoke later that evening. As I later learned, she first contacted Central Ohio Crime Stoppers with the information just before calling me, and posted on her Facebook page that although she was hesitant and nervous about making the call, she considered it “the right thing to do.”

The information she provided was as follows: She was less than a year old at the time of the murder, but during her youth she heard stories about the case and was curious to know more. She had very loving relationship with both her father and her uncle, Henry Newell. A few months after her 16th birthday, in the early 1990s, her uncle Henry bought her a 1987 Olds Cutlass Ciera (maroon color), and the two of them went for a drive in it. When they reached Westgate Park on the west side of Columbus, he pulled over, stopped the car, and told her there was something he wanted to tell her about a case he knew that she had heard about. They sat down on a park bench. He then proceeded to tell her what he had done to Christie Mullins.

According to Junior's "confession," he had been out walking in the Graceland area on August 23, 1975 when he happened to spot Christie sitting on the metal railing at the back side of the shopping center. He said he struck up a conversation with Christie, whom he had seen in the neighborhood but did not know, and after a couple minutes of small talk convinced her to accompany him to the woods. Back in the woods, he started trying to kiss her and she resisted, pounding on his chest and telling him to stop. He bound her hands behind her back with some rope or cord he had with him, then raped her. She was crying and wouldn't stop. He picked up a two-by-four that was lying around and hit her with it, on the right side of her head where her eyeball was. He "watched her take her last breath," then pulled the two-by-four from her eyes, getting blood on himself. He took off and ran home, losing a sandal in the process; jumped in the shower to get the blood off; and changed clothing. He grabbed his wife Pam and told her that if anyone were to ask, she was to say that they were together the entire day. They went back to the woods and found the body. He took a shirt that he had brought with him from home and placed it over Christie's face. He was now wearing either a light blue tee shirt and placed a white shirt over her face, or vice versa. They then left to report the crime. He said he pinned the crime on Jack Carmen, a "drinking buddy" of his, whom he knew was mentally challenged and an easy target.

After hearing this confession, Junior's niece told her mother, who advised her not to repeat the story to anyone, saying that they had no way of knowing whether Junior was telling the truth. Junior was a boaster and heavy drinker and often exaggerated his "accomplishments." Perhaps he had claimed credit for the killing out of some bizarre desire to impress. Yet his niece found him sober on the day of the confession and believed he was telling her the truth. Over the years the story "ate at" her, and she began thinking about coming forward, especially after the death of her father, Tommy Newell, in August 2013, whom she had not wanted to cross by turning in his brother. Then Junior died a month later. Apart from an incident in 2002, when she pressed charges against him for telephone threats related to a domestic dispute, she said she got along "perfect" with him, and was long since reconciled with him at the time of his death. She posted heartfelt tributes to him on his online obituary guestbook and on her Facebook page.

But Henry Newell's death also made her think more and more about revealing to the authorities what he had once confessed to her. She was deeply affected by the appearance on Junior's online obituary page, on March 31 of this year (three days before the CAC meeting), of a photo of Christie Mullins and the caption, "Rest in Peace, Christie, now you can have peace!" She confided in some friends, who told her she needed to tell somebody what she knew. She was told about, but did not see, the Channel 10 report on April 3, but did see the April 12 *Dispatch* story about the case that mentioned her uncle. She decided she could help bring closure to the family. She said she did not see, nor was she told anything about, the ebook "An All-American Murder" before deciding to come forward. After speaking with me, she commented on her Facebook page, "I feel better now."

It is difficult to know what to make of this story. Some aspects of it ring true; others do not. That is not a commentary on the credibility of Junior Newell's niece, but rather on the veracity of Junior's confession to her, which may have combined elements

of truth and falsity or embellishment. Often too clever by half, and overly confident of his ability to sell a story, he may well have altered some of the details about the crime in the telling of it. Some of what she recalls him telling her almost 25 years ago could also be based, unintentionally, on facts about the case that have appeared in the press over the years.

Indeed, many of the details of his story correspond precisely with the public accounts of events as reported in the news media or testified to at the trial: Christie alone on the guardrail; the loss of Junior's sandal; the particulars of the crime scene. Some things are off: Christie's hands were tied in front of her, not behind her, and she was fatally struck on the left side of her head, not the right (that discrepancy could be explained, though, depending on whether Junior referred to "left" and "right" from his perspective or from Christie's). A more serious flaw in the story is that, per the official autopsy, Christie was not raped, although there was some ambiguous, questionable evidence of attempted sexual assault presented at trial.

Calling Jack Carmen a "drinking buddy" may have been an exaggeration, but Carmen was known to frequent the seedy bars downtown, as did Junior Newell. Junior also ran a low-end bar downtown a year or two before the murder, so it is entirely plausible that Junior was familiar with Jack Carmen from this bar scene.

Conspicuous by its absence from Junior's account is any mention of the "disc jockey" telephone call, the "cheerleading contest," or the girl who said she accompanied Christie to Woolco that day ("Lisa Sprague" in the ebook). Lisa had told Christie's mother that "*two* were involved," that "it was never supposed to have gone this far," and that the visit to Woolco was less about cheerleading than about the gathering of "two maple leaves" (likely a drug-related reference). None of this was mentioned in Junior's confession. Nor did Junior tell his niece, to her recollection, that his stepchildren (10-year-old Bobby and 5-year-old Mary) were with him and their mother, Pam Newell,

during their “nature hike” in the woods that day. Finally, Christie’s family and friends are certain that she would not have gone to the woods alone with an older man she did not know, and certainly not after a minute or two of conversation.

And yet, the core fact remains that a niece who loved and mourned him has now come forward to say that Henry Newell—the man many have believed all along was the killer—in fact confessed to the murder. She has no obvious motive to fabricate such a story. It may also be significant that Junior’s niece, in addition to relating the story of his confession, provided me with details of other incidents—the arson he committed in 1976; the alleged suicide death of his then wife, Pamela Newell, in 1982; the shooting death of Junior’s father by a neighbor in 1984; and other events in Junior’s criminal history—that accord with the public record, both generally and in most of the particulars.

I attempted to obtain some corroboration for the confession story, and received a message from one of Junior Newell’s daughters he fathered by an Alabama woman he did not marry. The message reads, in part: “My mom said that he never admitted to it, but he told her many times that he had killed someone before but she never knew who it was. She said that he talked about this case a lot. . . . My mom thinks that he did it.” (As of this writing I have not been able to speak with this individual’s mother).

In some ways these stories of Junior’s “confessions” raise as many questions as they answer. But I have chosen to make them public so that others with similar knowledge might choose to come forward. The close relationship and proximity of Junior Newell’s niece to him makes her information potentially more relevant than other rumors and hearsay about the case.

By this Addendum, which I am sending to the Columbus Police, I am informing them of these developments. I have been informed that Columbus Police would actively investigate further only if new information emerges pointing to a new suspect, *i.e.*,

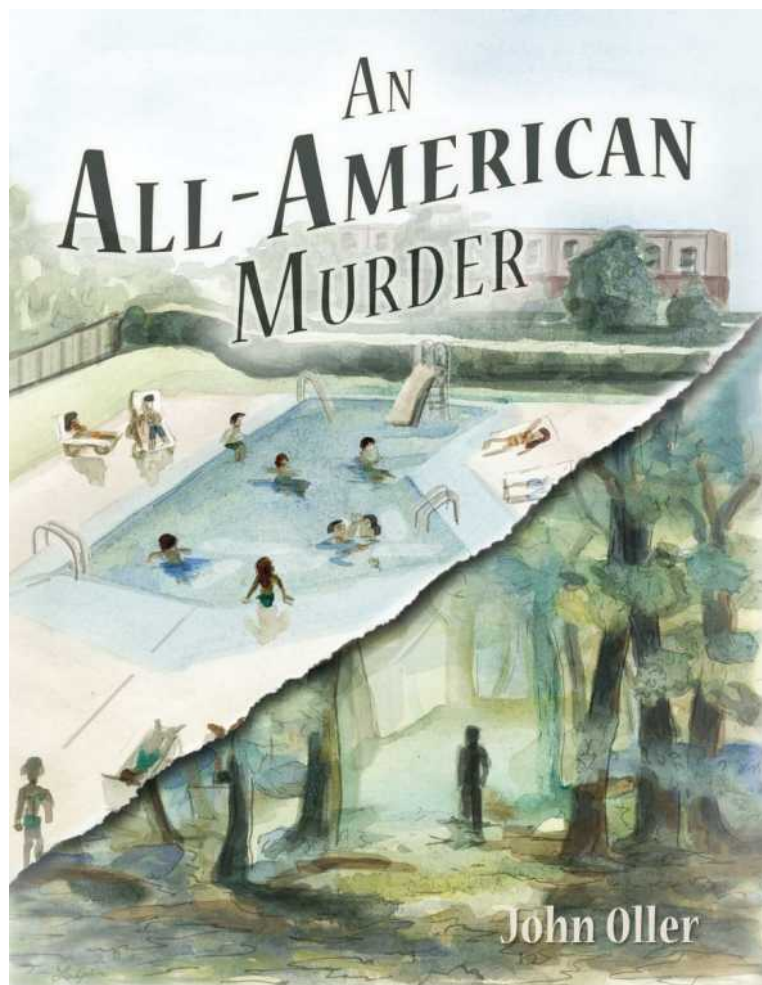
someone other than Jack Carmen or Junior Newell. This information does not fall into that category. Nevertheless, I offer it up to law enforcement authorities in the event they wish to look into it. They are free to contact me, as is anyone with pertinent information, at mullinscase@gmail.com. As I learn other significant new information, there may be further addenda to the ebook.

DATED: New York, New York, April 17, 2014

* * *

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Addendum # 2 to “An All-American Murder”



This is the second Addendum to the ebook that can be found here:

http://books.google.com/books/about/An_All_American_Murder.html?id=HrQlAwAAQBAJ, and here: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/212910173/An-All-American-Murder>.

The first Addendum can be found here:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/218905173/Addendum-to-An-All-American-Murder>.

CLINTONVILLE AREA COMMISSION AND CPD UPDATE

As previously reported, on April 3, 2014, the Clintonville Area Commission (CAC) voted unanimously to send a letter to public officials asking for a re-examination of the case. (The letter may be found at pp. 9–10 of the first Addendum.) The recipients included Columbus Police Division Chief Kim Jacobs, Franklin County Prosecutor Ron O'Brien, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, and Columbus City Council President Andrew Ginther. As of May 1, 2014, the date of the next regularly scheduled CAC meeting, the CAC had received no response to its letter. At the May 1 meeting, a spokeswoman for the Justice for Christie group thanked the CAC for its prior effort but expressed disappointment in the lack of response from public officials. She and other members of the group then spoke privately outside the meeting with the CPD's new Community Liaison Officer for Clintonville, who was introduced earlier at the meeting that night. He advised members of the group to contact CPD Chief Kim Jacobs with their concerns, and accordingly the group's spokeswoman sent a letter to Chief Jacobs on Monday, May 5 asking her to look into the matter and requesting a meeting. On May 7, 2014, CPD issued a press release stating that "due to a renewed interest in the Christie Mullins investigation, a Detective from the Homicide Cold Case Unit has been assigned to 'assess' the case." At a media session on May 7, according to the *Columbus Dispatch*, Sgt. Eric Pilya, head of the Cold Case Unit, announced that police have responded by assigning Detective Steve Eppert to evaluate the case file for "points of solvability." Eppert will assess whether any evidence can be tested for DNA; try to find witnesses, if any are still around; and review any information about any suspects who may have been considered. Pilya mentioned a tip that police had received in the last month, via Crime Stoppers, from a niece of Henry Newell Jr. ("Junior") who said he had told her he had killed Christie Mullins.

The niece's account of her uncle's "confession" was contained in the first Addendum, which I sent to CPD's Cold Case Unit on April 17. Since then I have been speaking to other members of the Newell family about the case. Although I had planned on waiting until I had completed further interviews, the fast-moving developments dictate that I release now, for the benefit of the public and police, and in light of the new review, additional information I have learned that bears upon the potential solution to the case.

DUELING NEWELLS

In the first Addendum, I recounted a conversation I had with Junior Newell's niece, in which she said that he had confessed to her around 1991 that he had killed Christie Mullins. I also quoted from a message from one of Junior Newell's daughters (born around 1990 to an Alabama woman he did not marry) to the effect that he had told her mother many times that he had killed someone before, without identifying the victim.

Although I have been unable to make contact with the Alabama woman, I did manage to speak or correspond with several other members of the families of Junior and his brother, Tommy. Most of them (with one major exception, Junior's wife at the time of his death) expressed their belief that Junior had committed the murder. At least three of them said they had heard that he had confessed the crime to others, although these three did not claim to have heard him confess to the crime directly to them. The most potentially relevant of the accounts I received came from two people. The first is Tommy Newell's second wife, Nellie, who was married to him at the time of the murder in 1975. She and Tommy were living in the same house at 343 Kanawha Avenue in which her brother-in-law, Junior Newell, and his wife, Pam, lived. Nellie is also the mother of the niece who told me that Junior had confessed the crime to her.

The second is Judonna Newell. She was the daughter of Junior Newell and Pamela Newell. Here is what they told me:

Nellie Newell

Nellie is originally from Ohio. She met Tommy Newell in March 1973 and married him in Ohio in September 1973. Tommy, who was from Alabama, was divorced and had three children from his prior marriage. Nellie was not previously married. She remained married to Tommy for 40 years, until his death in 2013. He was “the love of her life.”

After living briefly with Nellie’s mother, she and Tommy moved into the house on Kanawha, where Junior and Pam Newell lived. This was after the birth of Nellie’s first child in December 1973. Their second child (the niece who told of Junior’s “confession”) was born in December 1974, in the house on Kanawha.

The house on Kanawha was a small three-bedroom. Nellie, Tommy, and their two babies (8 and 20 months in August 1975) had one bedroom to themselves; Junior and Pam had another; and the third had twin beds for Pam’s two children by prior marriages (Bobby Saultz and Mary Winniestaffer). Pam Newell had joint custody and Bobby and Mary generally visited every weekend or every other weekend. They were visiting the weekend Christie Mullins was killed.

Tommy was off work that Saturday (he was a welder). Early that morning, while Nellie and Tommy were sleeping, Junior ran into their bedroom and woke them up. He said “he had done found a girl dead.” (I later pointed out to Nellie that this had to be afternoon, but she was certain that they were in bed at the time.). She said Junior was wearing a yellow silk muscle shirt and cutoff shorts. The shirt was splattered with lots of blood. She doesn’t remember if he had on shoes or not. He went down to the basement,

where the washing machine was, and came back up. She presumes he threw the yellow shirt into the washer.

He changed into a light blue silk dress shirt with a white collar. (Junior could not wear cotton shirts because his skin was partially engrafted “pigskin” from surgery for an injury he suffered while driving a gasoline truck that exploded). He had also changed from cutoffs into long blue jeans. Nellie believes that Pam Newell was in the “front room” and that Bobby and Mary were in their guest bedroom. Tommy got up and went out with Junior somewhere (she presumes the crime scene). Bobby and Mary also went to the woods with Junior and Pam after they were “rehearsed” to say that if anyone asked, they were to say they were on a nature hike, which wasn’t true. Nellie never spoke to Bobby or Mary about this.

Junior never directly told Nellie (or to her knowledge, Tommy) that he had killed Christie Mullins, although she believes he did. Junior never spoke to Nellie about the case, but she does recall being told by her daughter, Junior’s niece, that Junior had confessed the crime to her. Nellie disliked Junior but her daughter was very close to him. When her daughter told Nellie about the confession, Nellie told her that she didn’t need to tell anyone about it. Nellie thought that as long as Junior was alive, he posed a threat to anyone who turned him into the authorities.

As with the niece’s account, there are many elements of Nellie’s story that seem to match up with other reported facts, and others that do not. The most crucial discrepancy relates to the time: Junior’s statement that he had found a dead girl had to be in the early afternoon, not morning. But that might be the sort of detail that one forgets after 40 years. Furthermore, Tommy Newell was a heavy drinker at the time, and perhaps he was sleeping in on Saturday after a late Friday night out. Nellie had two babies and probably stuck close to their bedroom in general. Maybe for them that day, 1:30 p.m. or so was their “morning.”

One might also question why, if Junior had just murdered someone, he would wake up his brother and sister-in-law to say he had found a body and present himself wearing a blood-splattered shirt. A more rational person would first wash or discard the shirt. But Junior had a habit of brazenly, even recklessly, exposing his criminal exploits or incriminating himself to friends and family, while simultaneously intimidating them into staying quiet. He surely knew that, bloody shirt or not, his brother and sister-in-law were not going to turn him into the police. And they did not. He might also have figured that by tainting them with guilty knowledge, he was binding them to a conspiracy of silence and coverup. Nellie said Junior was “a very evil man” and “sneaky.”

Over the years, other members of the Newell clan heard of the story that Junior had murdered Christie Mullins. Tommy Newell’s first wife said she “heard he [Junior] had something to do with a girl he killed, took her off of somewhere and dumped it [the body].” She is not sure where she heard this, maybe from Nellie or Tommy or just through the grapevine. This woman’s sister (Tommy’s one-time sister-in-law) said she had heard another family member tell of Junior having killed a 14-year-old girl. These statements are hearsay, of course, but they are consistent with what Nellie has said.

Nellie’s story is certainly worthy of serious consideration. She is the first person to corroborate Bobby Saultz’s trial testimony that Junior was in the woods and came back home before taking the “nature walk” with his family. Indeed, apart from Bobby Saultz and Mary Winniestaffer (who was 5 at the time of the murder, and declined to speak to me about it), Nellie is the only living person known to be capable of speaking to Junior Newell’s movements on the fateful day. That is, unless there are living accomplices, or unless “Lisa Sprague,” the girl who claims to have accompanied Christie to a “cheerleading” contest next to Woolco that day, has information that she at long last is willing to share. Although DNA evidence is certainly important and should be looked at closely, it may well be that talking to witnesses is a more likely avenue to finally solving this crime.

One thing most everyone who knew him well agree on: Junior was capable of violence. The original ebook listed his criminal record, both before and after the Christie Mullins murder, but it turns out that this was likely an understatement. Based on my recent discussions with the Newell family, he committed or attempted other violent crimes, not previously associated with him, that may be worthy of investigation. They include alleged murders, attempted murders, and other instances of arson, both in Ohio and Alabama. Those incidents may be the subject of a subsequent Addendum. Some are discussed below.

Judonna Newell

I received a call on May 7 from Judonna Newell, who was the natural daughter of Junior and Pamela. (She is a different daughter from the one in Alabama mentioned above.) Judonna was born in 1976, after the murder of Christie Mullins. She lives in Columbus. Her first words to me were, “you know he did it, don’t you?”

She said that Junior told her, when she was around 16 or 17, that he had killed Christie Mullins. She recalls that they were at home in Columbus, sitting on a couch, talking about other things, and she believes she raised the issue, because she had heard stories that he had committed the murder (this would have been around the same time Junior allegedly confessed to his niece). Judonna asked Junior point blank if he had killed Christie, and he said that he did. He did not go into details into how and why and she did not press for any because she didn’t want to know. “There was no remorse in his eyes,” Judonna said. “It was like asking somebody if they wanted a drink of water.” Junior, Judonna said, was “a very very evil man. Heartless. Satan.”

Judonna said that she believes her father killed as many as five people: two in prison; Christie Mullins; a black woman in Alabama; and a prostitute. The only detailed account she gave me was of the incident involving the African American woman. It took place in Alabama, when Judonna was seven years old. She was picked up from school in

a truck by Junior, and the woman was with him. Judonna had never seen the woman before. They drove to a wooded area. Junior stopped the truck and got out, leaving Judonna alone in the truck while he went into the woods with the woman. He emerged maybe half an hour later, with blood on him, and appeared in a different mood, shaken and scared, “like he messed up.” They drove home and he got a shovel and some other items and returned to the woods. She saw him go into the woods with the shovel.

Judonna said she would like to travel to Alabama and talk to authorities and show them where she thinks the body was buried.

Junior’s Last Wife

One person who strongly disputes Junior’s guilt is his wife at the time of his death. She said that Junior’s niece never mentioned his alleged confession until just recently. She never heard anyone else in the family say he was guilty of the crime, either. She said that before she married Junior in 1997, he took her to the Columbus Public Library to show her articles about the case suggesting that he was the killer, and said they were not true. She said he explained that he wanted to let her know about this past incident before they were married because he didn’t want her to find out about it later and be surprised. She added that Junior was often drunk and told her about unsavory things in his past, like burning things down, and his rape charge in 1995, and she believes that in one of his drunken states he would have told her about killing Christie Mullins if he had done it. She said that before he died of lung cancer in 2013, Junior was “saved” and that he will receive his appropriate punishment by God if he did commit the crime, but “I do not believe in the bottom of my heart that he did.”

“IT WAS NOT JACK CARMEN”

Just as this Addendum # 2 was going to press, my attention was directed to a posting on the Columbus Division of Police Facebook page by Robert Litzinger, a retired

CPD detective who worked on the original case. I had received an email from Mr. Litzinger's wife back in October 2013, saying he had information about the case and that I should email him if I wanted to talk to him. I did (twice) but received no response. Then today came the following comment on Facebook, in response to CPD's posting about today's media session with Sgt. Pilya:

- [RobertandKathy Litzinger](#) Interesting, we received a e-mail from him.(a person wanting info was a gentleman wanting to write a book). If cold case wants my husband to help with this, let me know. He was part of the investigation and believes he knows who killed her. . . .it was not Jack Carmen.

NEXT STEPS

This Addendum # 2 is being sent to CPD's Cold Case unit for any followup they wish to conduct.

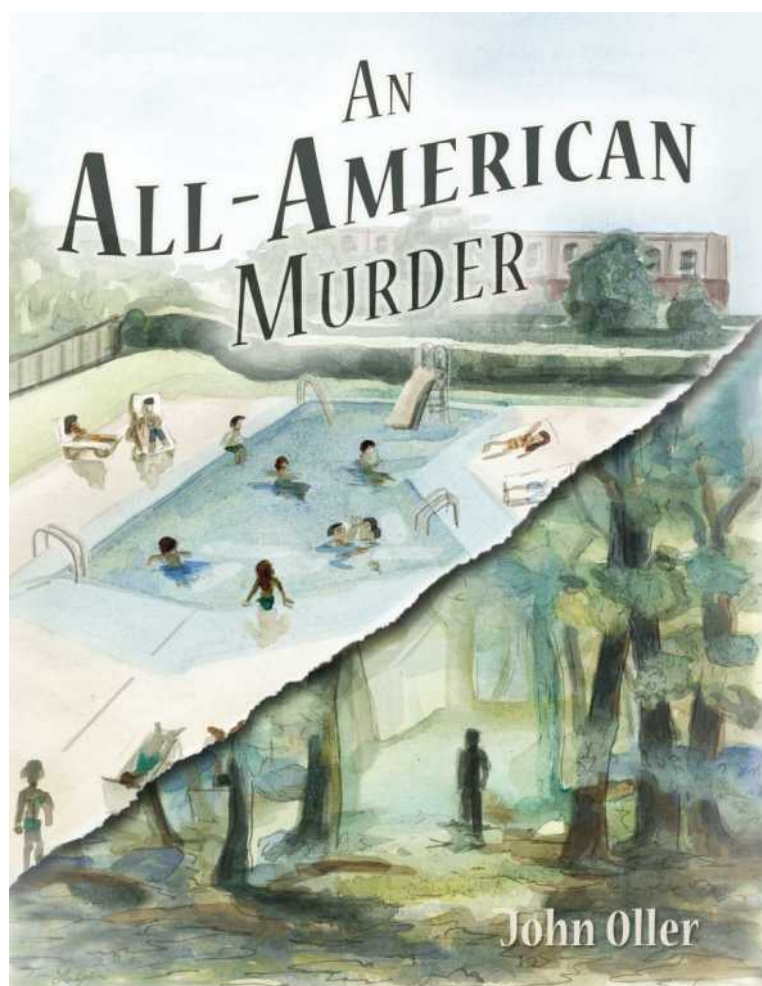
As always, anyone is free to contact me with pertinent information, at mullinscase@gmail.com.

DATED: New York, New York, May 7, 2014

* * *

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Addendum # 3 to “An All-American Murder”



This is the third Addendum to the ebook that can be found here:

http://books.google.com/books/about/An_All_American_Murder.html?id=HrQlAwAAQBAJ, and here: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/212910173/An-All-American-Murder>.

The first Addendum can be found here:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/218905173/Addendum-to-An-All-American-Murder>.

The second Addendum can be found here:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/222872377/Addendum-2-to-An-All-American-Murder>.

“THERE’S NO END TO IT”

— *Bobby (Ned Beatty) in “Deliverance”*

In yesterday’s Addendum # 2 I reported that Junior Newell’s criminal past apparently extended well beyond the incidents for which he was arrested or formally charged or convicted. Those incidents were listed in the original ebook. To briefly recap, they included the following prior to 1975: convictions and/or arrests for arson, wrongful influence of a minor, disorderly conduct, trespass, and discharging a weapon.

His post-1975 record included convictions or guilty pleas for arson and domestic violence, and arrests for aggravated menacing and rape (the rape charge, in 1995, was dismissed).

In the sections below I recount what I have learned or been told about these and other alleged incidents involving Junior Newell. In some cases the information is fairly detailed, in others it is sketchy. But even the softer information could conceivably help law enforcement authorities in Columbus or the Bessemer-Birmingham, Alabama area solve old crimes that remain on the books or in cold case databases. The information may also reveal a pattern of behavior bearing upon the renewed assessment by CPD of Junior’s potential involvement in the Christie Mullins murder.

Early 1970s—Columbus—Attempted Arson

The first wife of Junior’s brother, Tommy Newell, related an incident from approximately 1972 in Columbus, not long before she and Tommy divorced. Junior was staying with them and was supposed to sleeping in the living room. Tommy’s wife, Helen, was awakened by some lights and police car sirens. She went into the living room and didn’t find Junior where he was supposed to be. Junior came running into the house and told her that if anyone asked, she should say he was sleeping in the house the whole time. It turned out he had burned the porch of a house in a nearby alleyway. The

fire was put out in time and no one died. The police never questioned Helen and Junior was never caught.

The 1976 Arson on Kanawha

In 1977 Junior was found guilty by a Franklin County jury of having set fire to his house at 343 Kanawha Avenue so he could collect some \$25,000 in insurance money on the dwelling. The fire occurred on October 3, 1976.

The chief prosecution witness was a woman who was rooming in the house at the time. Junior tried to enlist her in the scheme to burn the house down. He offered to split the insurance proceeds with her to give her money with which to bribe prison officials to spring her boyfriend, Sylvester “Sly” Edwards, from the penitentiary. She declined. Junior also tried to enlist a neighbor man in the plan but he, too, declined. The woman who roomed there said that Junior burned the house himself. He used gasoline and she saw where all the flares were set up. She testified that Junior told her to move out of the residence the day before the fire. Junior was sentenced to serve two to five years in the Ohio Penitentiary.

After Junior went to jail, the house on Kanawha (which was not completely destroyed in the fire) was sold in a sheriff’s auction to a young married couple. The wife told me that they received a call from Junior while he was in prison. He told them it was “my house” and he threatened them with harm for having bought it.

1982 Death of Pamela Newell

Junior was released from prison on the arson conviction in 1981. In January 1982 his wife, Pam, filed for divorce, and a month later was found dead in bed in their apartment in Columbus off Morse Road. The coroner determined that she died of a lethal overdose of secobarbital (a high-powered barbiturate sleeping pill). Her death was ruled a suicide, although some in her family have long suspected foul play. The incident is discussed at greater length in the original ebook.

One mystery about the case was that investigators could not find any of the secobarbitals, or the empty pill bottle containing them, that Junior said were in Pam's possession. I recently learned why. According to Junior's then sister-in-law, Pamela Newell's sister, Karen Sue Stainer, was over at the apartment just after Pam's death. She asked Junior about the secobarbitals. He showed her that he had been hiding them in the back of a zip up Teddy Bear. It is not clear whether he was hiding them from his wife, or the police, or both.

I have tried, without success, to locate Karen Sue Stainer, last known to be living in Central Ohio.

According to Tommy Newell's wife, Junior was jealous of Bob "Joker" Hutton, the man Pam had been seeing while Junior was in prison on the arson charge. Hutton also was present, and slept on the couch, the night of Pam Newell's death. She was supposedly distraught that he was planning to marry someone else at the time. Hutton backed up Junior's story about Pam being suicidal that night.

Tommy's wife told me that Junior once tried to shoot Hutton, and that if it hadn't been for Tommy, Junior would have killed Hutton. Junior was mad at Tommy for preventing him from killing Hutton. Tommy's wife thinks that this incident was after Pam Newell's death, although if the motive was jealousy then it is more logical that it took place before. Hutton died in 2006 at age 52, in a Columbus hospital, apparently from a work-related injury.

The 1984 Shooting Death of "Alabama" Newell

In September 1984, Junior's father, Henry "Alabama" Newell Sr., was shot to death by a neighbor, Frank Elias Jr., as a result of what the newspapers reported was a "feud" between two West Second Avenue families. Alabama Senior was shot once at close range with a 12-gauge shotgun after he confronted Elias with a .32-caliber handgun. Alabama apparently confronted Elias after Junior was arrested on a charge of making aggravated menacing threats against Elias, saying he would run him off the road in a car. Junior was briefly jailed and released on bond on the aggravated menacing charge. He and his father then overheard a shouting match between Elias and Junior's common law wife, Linda, and her sister, Ronna Johnson, during which the two women

claimed that Elias clubbed them with a baseball bat. As Alabama confronted Elias with the handgun, Elias reached for a nearby shotgun and blew a hole through Alabama's chest. According to Elias's daughter, Junior then grabbed the handgun from his father's dead, clenched fist and hid it in his home so as to make it appear that Alabama was unarmed at the time. Elias was never indicted for the shooting, evidently on the grounds that he acted in self-defense.

Not long after Alabama's death, Junior left his common law wife (Linda Harper, a 23-year-old stripper) and moved back to Alabama. He met another woman there and fathered a daughter by her (they did not marry). According to this daughter, Junior told her mother that the feud precipitating the Elias shooting of Alabama Senior was the result of "a drug deal gone bad."

Efforts to locate Linda Harper or Ronna Johnson have been unsuccessful. Frank Elias died in 2011.

Approximately 1995—Columbus—Attempted Arson

In approximately 1995, according to Tommy Newell's second wife, Junior tried to burn down the house of a young couple and their invalid child. Tommy and his wife were living at the time at 1445 Irene Place in Columbus. Junior, unmarried at the time, was living with them. For some unknown reason, Junior wanted to burn the house of a man named Ralph, his wife (Diane or Diana Rock), and their young invalid son, who was nicknamed "Pooh." The family lived a couple of doors away. However, Junior mistakenly set fire to the house next to this family. It burned to the ground. No one was injured. Junior was not caught.

1995 Rape Charge

Police records indicate that in 1995, Junior burned an ex-girlfriend's car, pled guilty to an arson charge, and spent time in jail for the offense. In December 1995, he was charged with raping the same ex-girlfriend, who said he'd been stalking and

harassing her since getting out of jail, although the rape charge was eventually dismissed. Junior admitted to having sex with the woman but said it was consensual.

The incident is potentially relevant to the question of DNA testing. The alleged victim was medically examined for any evidence of trauma arising from sexual assault, and none was found. However, the crime lab report indicates that slides/swabs of her underwear were tested for semen and “spermatozoa were observed.” I do not know whether any of this evidence has been preserved.

2002 Aggravated Menacing

In October 2002, a warrant was issued in Columbus for the arrest of Junior Newell on charges of telephone harassment and aggravated menacing. The complainant was Junior’s niece—the same one who has said that Junior confessed to her that he killed Christie Mullins. She explained to me the circumstances of the incident: she had been trying to obtain custody of Junior’s grandson and away from his daughter, Judonna. The niece obtained custody and would not allow Junior to see his grandson. Junior called his niece and said he was “gonna blow my house up,” she said. She pressed charges. It is not clear how the situation was resolved, but it caused an estrangement between Junior and his niece that lasted until he was diagnosed with cancer about a decade later. After that he and his niece reconciled and she mourned his passing in 2013.

Other Incidents

As reported in Addendum # 2, Junior’s daughter Judonna told me that she believes her father killed as many as five people: two in prison; Christie Mullins; a black woman in Alabama; and a prostitute. Her account of his alleged confession to her about Christie Mullins, and the incident involving the African American woman, are included in Addendum # 2.

This Addendum # 3 is being sent to CPD's Cold Case unit for any followup they wish to conduct.

As always, anyone is free to contact me with pertinent information, at mullinscase@gmail.com.

DATED: New York, New York, May 8, 2014

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