

Murder

Black Shadow Book One

By Linda Guyan

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Prologue

Shadylake, California, Saturday, December 30, 1978

Northern California Today—Crime Beat

By Clara Hooper

Serial killers seemed to spawn in the late sixties and throughout the seventies. America's fascination with these

killers grew as fast as they appeared. Here is a brief list of some of the more infamous during this time span.

Zodiac Killer is the nickname given to an unidentified serial killer who operated in northern California in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He is known to have killed five, but possibly between twenty and twenty-eight. The Zodiac took credit for thirty-seven murders. He is known for sending cryptograms/ciphers to the press. There are four unconfirmed victims of the Zodiac, one of which was Cheri Jo Bates in Riverside, California. She was eighteen years old. The case remains open and unsolved. The Zodiac Killer has never been identified.

Theodore “Ted” Robert Bundy is an American serial killer, kidnapper, rapist, and necrophile who confessed to thirty homicides (although the total is thought to be more) in seven states between February 1974 and February 1978. He decapitated at least twelve of his victims. It is said that he began killing as early as 1961. Ted was handsome and charismatic, making it easy to win his victims’ trust and lure them to their deaths. Ted Bundy was captured and is incarcerated in Florida State Prison.

Ian Brady and Myra Hindley killed five children (ranging from age ten to seventeen years old) between 1963 and 1965 in Greater Manchester, England. Together, they are known as the Moors Murderer. Myra Hindley became known as the Most Evil Woman in Britain. Brady and Hindley were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Charles Milles Manson is an American criminal who led what became known as the Manson Family. Manson’s followers in the California desert committed a series of nine

murders – at Manson’s bidding – at four locations over a period of five weeks in the summer of 1969 in Los Angeles County – notably, the Tate and LaBianca murders. During the early morning hours of August 9, 1969, the killers entered the Tate house at 10050 Cielo Drive and brutally murdered five people – actress and very pregnant Sharon Tate (wife of Roman Polanski), Abigail Folger, Voytek Frykowski, Jay Sebring, and Steven Parent. The next night, August 10, 1969, Manson sent killers to the Los Angeles home of Leno and Rosemary LaBianca. Manson and his family of killers who perpetrated these murders are behind bars.

The Co-ed Killer, Edmund Kemper, is an American serial killer and necrophile who carried out a series of brutal murders in California in the 1970s. He murdered his grandparents when he was fifteen years old, then later killed and dismembered six female hitchhikers in the Santa Cruz area. He then murdered his mother and one of her friends before turning himself in to the police days later. He was found guilty in November 1973 of eight counts of murder. He received life imprisonment.

Dean Arnold Corll was an American serial killer who abducted, raped, tortured, and murdered at least twenty-eight boys in a series of killings from 1970 to 1973 in Houston, Texas. The murders became known as the Houston Mass Murders, but Corll was also known as the Candy Man and the Pied Piper because he owned and operated a candy factory and had been known to give free candy to local children. He was murdered in 1973 at age thirty-three.

The Son of Sam, also known as the .44 Caliber Killer, is an

American serial killer who wreaked havoc in New York City the summer of 1976. He shot and killed six victims and wounded seven others by July 1977. He is still at large.

Kenneth Bianchi and Angelo Buono, Jr., the Hillside Strangler. These two men kidnapped, raped, tortured, and killed ten females ranging in age from twelve to twenty-eight years old during a four-month period from October 1977 to February 16, 1978 in the hills above Los Angeles, California. They have yet to be apprehended.

Update: Gacy confessed and was arrested December 22, 1978 in Illinois. John Wayne Gacy, Jr., confessed to killing over two dozen boys and young men, burying their bodies in the crawlspace under his Chicago home. He came under suspicion when authorities began investigating the disappearance of a teen who was last seen with Gacy. Upon searching his home, twenty-nine corpses were found under the house, as well as four more that he'd dumped in nearby rivers when he ran out of room at home. Gacy was a well-known community figure who sometimes dressed up as a clown to entertain sick children. When he killed, he sometimes dressed up in his clown costume persona, calling himself Pogo the Clown. He designed his own costumes and taught himself how to apply clown makeup. It didn't take long for Gacy to be dubbed the Killer Clown.

I know what you're thinking. Almost all of these serial killers are men. Well, there are women serial killers, too. Not so much in this time period, but if we step further back in time, I'm sure we can find a few.

Elizabeth Báthory, a Hungarian countess at the turn of the 16th century, is considered to be the most prolific female

serial killer of all time. Publicly, she was accused of killing eighty young girls. However, some speculate that the number goes as high as six hundred-fifty. Some witnesses claimed they saw Elizabeth biting the flesh off her victims, while others claimed she drank their blood. It's easy to see why she earned her nickname the Blood Countess.

Amy Archer-Gilligan spent her adult life as a caretaker – and murderer – of the elderly. In the early 1900s Amy and her husband, James, opened the Archer Home for the Elderly and Infirm. Both of Amy's first two husbands died under mysterious circumstances and left her with large insurance payouts. Between 1907 and 1917, there were sixty deaths at the Archer Home. Amy was eventually found guilty in 1919 and sentenced to life imprisonment. She died at the Connecticut Hospital for the Insane in 1962.

It is known that Amelia Dyer killed six babies but she is also attributed to be the killer of between twenty to four hundred more. In exchange for a fee, Dyer provided lodging for women who became pregnant illegitimately. She would either procure adoptions for the infants or allow them to die. At some point, she began murdering them. Amelia was caught in 1879, released, resumed murdering babies, and was caught again in 1896, when she pled guilty and was hanged.

Madame Delphine LaLaurie was a Louisiana-born socialite and serial killer of slaves in the early 19th century. It was after a fire in her home that her torture chamber was discovered. Her victims are estimated to be at eighty-seven. After her house was attacked by an angry mob, Delphine fled to Paris, where she is suspected to have been involved

in the torture and murder of hundreds of black slaves.

Jane Toppan confessed to thirty-one murders in 1901. She was a trained nurse who used her patients as involuntary subjects in tests involving morphine and atropine. Jane concocted many of the patients' conditions herself, often creating fake charts to monitor their progress. After being fired, she began a poisoning spree, killing her landlords, her foster sister, and others. She was caught, arrested, and committed to the Taunton Insane Hospital.

In the early 20th century in Indiana, Belle Gunness was responsible for killing more than forty people. Most were suitors and husbands and her motive appeared to be their life insurance policies. After killing her first two husbands, Belle placed personal ads to attract suitors who became her later victims. Gunness supposedly faked her own death and set fire to her house with her children inside. Belle escaped by train. Her fate is unknown.

The next serial killers – male or female – have already been born. More are being born as I write this. The older ones may have already thought about killing. Maybe they've already done it.

Perhaps they are reading this article. Who will be the next serial killer?

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“Isn't it interesting that she always ends these articles the

same way?"

The reader thought about the article, running a finger over the text and letting Clara Hooper's words sink in. Just as it always did, it was the final question that garnered the utmost attention. Clara's question was repeated with zeal as the magazine was shoved under the bed with all of the others.

"Who will be the next serial killer?" A crooked smile curved the reader's lips.

"Me."

* * * *

Part One

Death

Evil is the black shadow that lives in all of us.

* * * *

Chapter One

*Shadylake, California, Friday, February 9, 1979
The Hartley House*

I killed someone else tonight.

And I loved it just as much as the first time! I've read a lot about murder. I thought a lot about murder before that first time. I started with killing bugs before I moved up to killing humans.

I wonder if murder is an addiction? Does this mean I'm evil?

She giggled at the thought. Grinning, she was pleased with herself.

How many is this now? Eight? Or is it ten? I've lost count.

As she'd brought the shovel down with all her strength on Matt's head, she'd heard a *thud* and cracking sound when his skull split open. Immediately a waterfall of Matt Hartley's blood cascaded over them like a geyser.

She'd lifted her head and closed her eyes, feeling the warm red liquid raining down. The whole experience was completely amazing and exhilarating — magical. *I've never been good at anything else in my life. But this, I'm good at.*

So she'd hit him again. Then she'd taken a closer look, seeing bone and what she assumed to be part of his brain.

She couldn't tell if her friend was happy or mad. She'd been pinned underneath Matt, covered in his blood. She supposed she should have been more cautious, since her friend was

right under him, but she'd killed him in the heat of the moment. The asshole had been raping her friend!

She'd had no choice. She'd tried to push him off of her, but he was too strong. He'd hit her hard and shoved her down to the floor.

As she stood there, still holding the bloody shovel, she tried to think about what Matt's head had sounded like when it had split open. She decided that it was kind of like a watermelon.

She wasn't sure how long she stood there after it was over, still gripping that bloody shovel. It seemed like a long time. It might have been merely seconds. Her friend's voice woke her out of her reverie.

"Get him off me!" she screamed as she tried to push the dead weight of the teenage boy away, but couldn't. He was too heavy.

Big baby, she thought, staring at her curiously. *It looks like her blonde hair turned red from all the blood.* She reached a hand up to her own brown hair, wondering if all that blood had turned her hair to auburn.

"He's dead! Get him off of me!" her friend screamed again.

"I'm coming," she told her, propping the shovel against the staircase railing. She grabbed Matt Hartley's corpse by his legs and pulled him onto the dirt floor. It seemed fitting Matt was face down in the dirt. It was where he belonged. Matt was a bad person. He deserved to die.

She watched as her friend slowly pulled herself up to her

hands and knees. Her clothes were torn and some of them were missing, all of them bloody. He had hit her, too. She had bruises on her face and arms. Then she vomited.

At the beginning of this so-called party, we were all pretty drunk. We're sober now. And Matt is dead.

She looked at her friend, then spoke, her voice calm and efficient.

The voice of experience, she thought, holding back a giggle. "Guess we better bury him."

The two teenage girls understood their situation and wasted no time. They decided on a location for the grave not far from where the attack had occurred. Locating a second shovel, they began digging in the soft dirt near the basement stairs. They knew what had to be done and they did it without talking. There really was nothing to be said. It was a team effort, and they worked in synchronized fashion. It was merely self-preservation that kept them going. They had plenty of time, since Matt's parents were gone for the weekend – the whole reason Matt had suggested the private party. They had the house – and basement – all to themselves.

When the hole was deep enough they dragged Matt's partially naked body to the edge and used their feet to shove it in. The blonde threw in his clothes. The brunette threw in the murder weapon – the bloody shovel.

"Throw everything in," the brunette stated. "Not one thing can be left behind to show we were ever here. There can be no evidence."

They looked around and began tossing in everything that indicated they had been in the Hartley's basement. All evidence had to be in the grave with Matt. They threw in beer cans, tequila bottles, the Styrofoam cooler, the deck of cards they had used to play strip poker, even all of the cigarette butts.

The blonde girl looked at her friend curiously for a moment. Then she smiled.

"You're good at this. You're really clever to think of all of these small details."

"Thanks," she said, taking the compliment seriously.

Next came clean up – not only themselves but also everything around them. This was the hard part. When they were done, they tossed every bloody paper towel and rag into the grave. They stripped and threw in their clothing. The only things that weren't covered in blood were their coats that they had left by the basement door. They knew Matt's parents kept gardening supplies and clothing here, so they each helped themselves to coveralls and work boots.

When they were sure they had missed nothing, the girls began to alternate shoveling dirt on top of Matt Hartley until all the evidence was buried deep in the earth.

Their grisly task completed, they took a last look around and were pleased with the results. They had done their job well. For those who knew this place, there was merely a slight disturbance in the dirt floor near the base of the stairs. Even that didn't matter. Matt's dad had the basement staked off in preparation for the construction crew coming this week to

lay cement.

From this point forward, everything in their young lives would be separated by *before* and *after*. They were not the same as when they had come to the Hartley House earlier that day expecting to have a good time and a little adventure. This day would be embedded in their memories forever and would surely shape their futures in ways they had yet to discover.

This cold January day was the day that Matt Hartley had changed their lives.

The two teenagers donned their coats, hats, and gloves over their unusual attire and opened the door to a cold, dark night.

Before they could step outside, the blonde grabbed her friend's arm and faced her squarely. "No one can know about this. *No one!* Not *ever!* It has to stay a secret! It *has* to! Do you understand?" Her voice was cracked and hoarse, but there was no mistaking her meaning.

Her friend didn't have to think twice. She nodded her silent agreement, then spoke as if the words were the most important ones in her young life. They probably were. "Our secret forever," she agreed without question. "You'll *never* tell what happened to me," the blonde teen insisted. "And I'll never tell what you did. No one will ever know what happened to Matt. This will be our secret," she repeated. "Forever."

"Forever," the brunette repeated.

The girls exited the basement and breathed in the fresh

mountain air as if for the first time. The smell of pine was like a perfume. The stillness, the eerie hush of the new-fallen snow, invaded their minds as a white mist engulfed them. An owl hooted nearby, the only witness to their presence. A lone coyote answered in the distance. Light snow continued to fall as they pulled their coats around them tight to ward off the freezing temperature. They walked into the darkness around the east side of the house, leaving their footprints behind in the snow. By the time they reached the street, a fresh layer of snow was already beginning to cover their tracks.

The girls stood in front of the Hartley's house, each lost in thought. When they turned to look at each other, only one of them had anything to say.

"Thank you," the blonde whispered in a small, weak voice as tears streamed down her cheeks. That said, she turned and began to walk the short distance up the hill toward home. Her gait was slower than usual, more cautious, as the pain from the injuries Matt had inflicted took a toll on her young body.

The brunette followed suit but turned in the opposite direction as she also began the brief walk to her house. Matt Hartley had hurt her, too, but not to the extent and degradation of what he'd inflicted upon her friend. She had heard of such things but had never seen it happen. It was an unimaginable horror that would always be engrained in both of their minds.

Funny, I'm thinking about what Matt did to her, not about what I did to him. Killing him was easy. The rape bothered me. The murder, not at all.

Unmindful of the white snowflakes that streaked her brown hair, she enjoyed the light snowfall. She turned her face up to the sky and let the snow land on her pale face.

One thought was dominant and wouldn't let go.

I'll keep her secret, but will she really keep mine?

The brunette thought about that and shrugged.

If not, then I guess I'll have to kill her, too.

She took in a deep breath of fresh air and smiled, her thoughts on murder. *I can't wait to do it again.*

She began humming a favorite song as she walked toward her house.

Under the eerie glare of the streetlight on this cold and snowy night, the teenager who had just ended Matt Hartley's life casually walked home. Unknown to her, at her feet a mysterious dark shadow seemed to follow.

This was no ordinary shadow. This was the shadow of a killer — a black shadow.

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Wednesday, February 14

While Matt Hartley's father was in the dining room on the telephone with the local police, a construction crew was at the rear of the Hartley House, preparing to lay the cement

slab in the basement.

“But he’s been gone longer than usual,” Laurence Hartley stated, his voice laced with frustration and concern.

This time he was really worried. Granted, Matt had run off for two or three days at a time often enough, but this long was not like him. He tried to convey this to the policeman at the other end of the phone, but it was like talking to the wall. Just because Matt had a record for being a runaway and a troublemaker, they figured he wasn’t worth looking for.

Laurence stood in front of the breakfast bar, tapping his fingers on the counter, the phone pressed against his ear. His tall frame seemed a little thinner than usual. Laurence was a grown-up version of his son.

“You aren’t listening to me!” he yelled as he hit his fist on the counter. “I know my son! I know his faults. I know he’s a screw-up. I know he’s run away before. It’s different this time. Something’s wrong. He could be dead on the side of the road somewhere and you wouldn’t give a damn! You need to get detectives on the case and find him!”

Laurence tried desperately to convince the man, but it was no use.

“Mr. Hartley, please try to understand. We’re doing what we can. You’ve already filed a missing persons report, but we don’t have the manpower to look for a probable runaway. I’ll bet Matt will come home in a day or two. Maybe sooner.”

“Meaning you aren’t going to do a damn thing! You’ll file that missing persons report at the bottom of your in-basket.

I'll bet things would be done differently if it were *your* kid! Or some other cop's kid! Cops' families are the only ones that count!"

"Mr. Hartley –" the sergeant began.

"Forget it! Though I'm sure you already have!" Laurence Hartley shouted as he slammed the phone down. He knew the police had no intention of exerting any effort to find his son.

His wife, Adele, watched him. Tears streamed down her thin, porcelain-pale face. Her petite frame began to spasm with sobs as she clutched a wad of tissue in her hands.

Laurence didn't know what to do to comfort her. He hated it when she cried. Which was often. Granted, today was different – he wanted to cry himself – but he tried desperately to hold it back. He walked over to his wife and held her hand lovingly, then turned and walked away before he lost control.

The Hartleys were well known in the mountain community of Shadylake. They practically owned it, earning their fortune primarily in lumber. Laurence Hartley had inherited the land and house on Hillcrest Lane with the imposing view overlooking the valley from his father, Earl, and had then taken over the family business – Hartley Lumber.

Many years before, Earl Hartley had commissioned the unique multi-level house for his wife, Madolyn. Tragedies marred the proceedings over the course of the year and a half it took to build the home on the dangerously steep incline – three construction workers met their deaths. One

fell from the scaffolding, a beam landed on another, and the last man fell down the basement stairs under mysterious circumstances.

Long before it was completed, the structure was known around town as the Hartley House. Earl and Madolyn lived happily there for many years with their only son, Laurence.

Laurence slid the glass door open and walked out onto the upper balcony. He leaned over the railing and looked two floors down, where the construction crew was hard at work. The cement mixer churned as a construction worker in a yellow hard hat directed a thick stream of cold, wet cement onto the readied dirt floor of the basement.

As Laurence Hartley idly watched the action below, his mind was still on his missing son.

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Thursday, February 15

The local newspaper, *Hilltop Today*, ran a small article on page three about Matt Hartley.

Missing Teen

Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Hartley of Hillcrest Lane have reported their teenage son, Matthew, 18, missing. He was last seen the

morning of Friday, February 9, wearing Levis and a Cheap Trick T-shirt. Matt is six-foot-one with hazel eyes and long, brown hair. If you have any information regarding his whereabouts, please call the Sheriff's Department.

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Under a pleasant, overcast sky, the young brunette happily worked in her garden, planting yellow pansies, her favorite. Beside her was today's newspaper, Hilltop Today. She sat back, admiring her new flowers, then picked up the newspaper and focused on an article at the bottom of the page.

Missing Teen. She smiled as she thought about being a murderer and how it made her feel. The thrill was the same every time she killed someone.

Murder is like a new drug!