

## *Jenkins And Hyde*

There are, it has to be said, only two schools of thought with regard to the murder of my foster daughter. There are those who say the guy did it in a fit of rage, he was a control freak and a bully who snapped over a triviality, picked up the spike, and before he knew it, the poor girl was dead. Then there are those who say he didn't do it, he couldn't possibly have done it, he's not the type, what motive could he have had, how could a senior schoolteacher, a man of not inconsiderable intelligence have committed a crime like this in such circumstances when he would surely be a prime if not *the* prime suspect?

I call the latter school of thought the thick-as-pig-shit brigade; it includes Bob Woffinden and that silly bitch who married me while I was on remand. Woffinden means well but he's so gullible that while he'll rightly believe the people who run the criminal justice system will sink to any depths to secure an unwarranted conviction, he takes at face value anyone who screams fix. I've no doubt that if Ian Huntley were to claim he was tortured into confessing to killing the Soham girls, Woffinden would take up his case.

The reason I killed Billie-Jo had nothing to do with any of the fluff that was bandied around at my three trials. There was no sexual abuse, of her or of anyone else, and my then wife, *Mein Gott*, who would believe anything she says? No, there was only one reason I killed her, that was to prove I could do it and get away with it. And believe it or not, the inspiration was a TV crime drama.

I can't remember what it was called, I was quite young at the time, but it had such a profound effect on my thinking that it shaped my personality for the rest of my life. Every major decision I've made since has been affected in some measure by it, even that business about my doctored CV. I didn't need to manufacture or even exaggerate my qualifications to secure a lucrative post; I did it to see if I could get away with it. And I did, until the murder, that is.

Now that crime drama. It was set in Canada. This character was sitting in the condemned cell awaiting execution for the murder of his wife, and he called in a couple of private investigators or some such to see if they could dig up some dirt on the person he claimed was the real murderer, his neighbour. The bottom line was that this guy really had murdered his wife, and tried to frame his neighbour for it, but he'd been a bit too clever for himself. He'd battered her to death with a candlestick or something he'd stolen from this guy's house, or maybe he'd used a knife - like I said, it was a long time ago - but the murder weapon was easily traceable, and he'd buried it in the garden where he'd hoped the police would find it. But they didn't, and as usual, they opted for the soft option, which was fitting up the most obvious suspect.

He tried desperately to manipulate these two sleuths into finding the murder weapon, and they did, but they were a bit suspicious, and when they told him they'd searched the garden but hadn't found it, he blurted out "But it was just under the sur..."

Of course, that cooked his goose; they simply walked away. A few years later, the same plot was used, presumably without accreditation, for an episode of the British TV series *The Professionals*. But, I digress.

Like I said, this guy was very manipulative, but he was also a bit too clever for his own good. So was I. Almost. First I set the scene; there was all this talk about a prowler at the trial.

**What nobody seemed to realise was that this all originated with me. True, there had been a number of burglaries in the area over the years, but there are something like half a million domestic burglaries in the UK every year, and that's only the ones people bother to report.**

**Where I nearly slipped up was with the other suspect, you know, the nutter with an obsession about plastic. It's amazing the things you find out as a schoolteacher simply listening to kids talk. I did my research on this character, staked him out, and I knew he'd be in or around the area at the time, so I went ahead with it. Whack, poor Billie never knew what hit her. She knew who hit her, but not what. Then when she was on the floor I shoved that bit of plastic up her nose. That was one hell of a clue, but the police didn't pick up on it, true, they did bring this guy in for questioning, but he had an alibi, not rock solid, but better than mine. And he was so far gone that there is no way he could have entered the house, done the deed and left without leaving a trace. I had nightmares about this before and during all three trials.**

**I used to visualise the prosecution's closing speech:**

**Members of the jury, this really is a simple case. You have heard a lot of talk about prowlers, a man with an obsession about plastic, silent phone calls and more, but there really is only one issue here. Typically when police investigate a crime of this nature they concentrate on motive, method and opportunity. In many crimes though, motive, or at least what to most people would appear to be a rational motive, is absent. Method is not terribly important, unless it excludes a particular suspect, a crime requiring great physical strength for example. But opportunity is another thing entirely; the key to this case is opportunity.**

**The defence would have you believe members of the jury that in a small window of opportunity, someone walked in off the street, gained access to the house, crept up behind the victim, smashed her skull in, then left as swiftly and silently as he had come, without leaving so much as a foot or fingerprint. The fact is there was no such window of opportunity, it wasn't a window, it wasn't even a mousehole. Meticulous investigation has demonstrated beyond all reasonable doubt that at the material time there were only ever four people present at this Lower Park Road address. One of those four was the victim; another was the accused; the other two were his young daughters. The victim is of course, dead, and her injuries were just as obviously not self-inflicted. That leaves just the accused and his daughters. If you exclude these two young girls, who does that leave? The accused is guilty as charged, and he is guilty for one simple reason: no one else could have committed this terrible crime. Whatever the motive or method, no one else on the face of this planet had the opportunity.**

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**That's what I was expecting, but fortunately that was not what I got. Even so, the jury at the first trial saw through the smoke and mirrors, and came back with the correct verdict. By the time of the first retrial, the waters had been muddied to such an extent that any jury would have had a shred of doubt, and by the second retrial, well, that really was bizarre, but that's enough.**

**You see, I did it, and I got away with it. True, it cost me nine years of my life, but the half a million I expect to get when my lawyers have finished will be some compensation. No more murders for me, but that doesn't mean I can't still have some illicit fun!**