

Lonely death of call girl who brought down the Government: Norma Levy destroyed the careers of two Conservative ministers. And now she's taken secrets of a THIRD Tory grandee - who's still alive - to her grave

**Nora Russell's brother and sister flew to Britain to hide her notebooks
It contained exact dates and activities of her sexual encounters with clients**

**She died of pancreatic cancer in 2007, decades after fleeing Britain
when her affair with Lord Lambton was revealed by New Of The World
in 1973**

By [DAVID JONES FOR THE DAILY MAIL](#)

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While her fellow patients' spirits were lifted by visitors bearing gifts and bouquets of flowers, no one came to comfort the mysterious British woman as she languished in a hospice bed.

Though Nora Russell's brother periodically phoned from England to check on her progress, and her sister would call from Australia, it was only on the day before she died from pancreatic cancer that they arrived at her bedside in Toronto.

No doubt they had made the long journey to say their goodbyes — but there also appears to have been another pressing reason for their visit.

During the Seventies, Russell's working alias had been Norma Levy, and as a convent-educated vice girl, she had been the femme fatale in a scandal that not only wrecked the careers of two Tory ministers, but almost brought down Edward Heath's government.



A life of vice: Norma Levy kept a notebook with dates - and activities - of sexual encounters with MPs

But as Levy had told me, in what proved to be her last interview, the Defence Under-Secretary Lord Lambton and the leader of the House of Lords, Lord Jellicoe, were just two of the high-profile figures who used the services of the society madam who hired her.

Others included members of the nobility, film and pop stars, business tycoons and at least one more Tory minister, who somehow escaped the great scandal and is now among the party's respected elder statesmen.

And in an A4-sized notebook she kept in her apartment in Maida Vale, North-West London, Levy had recorded not only the names of all her clients, but the dates when she serviced them, the fees they paid her and even their sexual peccadilloes.



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Secrecy: While the girls in the Profumo affair are household names, Norma's family have hidden her past

During our conversation, she never made it clear if she had retained this documentary dynamite.

But according to her closest friend and confidante, Sharon Carter, who was too ill to visit her in the hospice, Levy's oil executive brother Jack Russell and sister Mary, an eminent physician, were taking no chances with that secret notebook.

'They went to her apartment to go through her belongings and took away everything she owned,' Ms Carter told me. 'They also came to my home to get two suitcases Levy had left here after staying with me.'

'I'm sure they came to see her for the last time, but they also seemed determined to make certain nothing that might cause another scandal was left behind.'



Scandal: Antony Lambton, formerly 6th Earl of Durham and known before 1970 as Viscount Lambton, Lord Lambton resigned as an MP in 1973 after a scandal involving prostitute Norma Levy

When Norma was 16 they fell on hard times and moved near relatives on Teesside. She had to abandon her education and earn money for the family. After a year, she ran away.

Assuming Ms Carter is right, many ageing men in high places will heave a sigh of relief — not least the married Tory grandee whom Levy identified to me (but cannot be named for legal reasons), claiming he regularly used the services of a voluptuous German prostitute called Rocha, who operated from a flat near Harrods.

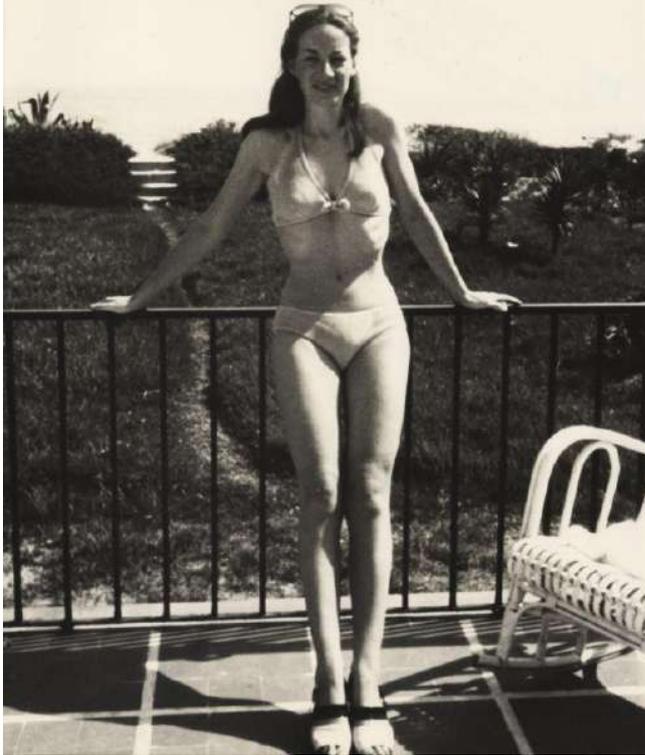
Lasting more than six hours and punctuated by tears and ribald humour, my unforgettable interview with Levy took place in a plush Toronto hotel in January 2007.

Overweight and careworn, with cropped, dyed red hair, she was 59 and unrecognisable as the temptress captured in post-coital repose beside the cannabis-addled Lambton and a second call girl (his lordship liked threesomes, sometimes with another man) in an infamous snapshot.

It was taken by a camera hidden in the stereo unit facing her bed and sold to the News of the World.

Whether or not she knew she had a short time to live and was speaking to put the record straight, in her eyes at least, is anyone's guess.

But less than nine months later, I can reveal today, she was dead.



Restricted: As a teenager, Norma was not allowed to have a boyfriend and was banned from going out

Had the news been announced, there would have been lengthy obituaries about a woman whose name became as synonymous with political sleaze in 1973, when the Lambton affair was revealed, as those of Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice-Davies, in the Profumo scandal a decade earlier.

Extraordinarily, however, while memories of that pair are being revived in Andrew Lloyd Webber's new West End musical, Levy's passing went unreported, a secret kept by her family and one or two friends.

It has only come to light following my own extensive inquiries.

Norma Levy died on October 8, 2007, and was cremated four days later, apparently after a baleful little service attended only by her brother and sister, who disposed of her ashes in some unknown location.

Few would question that in her perpetually horizontal heyday, she had morals to make an alley cat blush. Listening to tapes of our interview again this week, though, and speaking to Ms Carter, to whom Levy decanted her story after settling in Toronto in 2001, one begins to understand how she was drawn into this debauched existence.

Such was her lust for life's luxuries that she was willing to fulfil the kinkiest fetishes for the right price

It damaged her life as surely as that of Lambton, his wife Belinda and their six children.

Levy's background was far removed from the seedy London to which she gravitated. Raised in a devout Irish Catholic family in Co. Cork, one of her aunts was the mother superior of a convent and an uncle was a monk.

She attended a harsh convent school and told me, with a hollow laugh, that she had learned some of her sadomasochistic techniques from the nuns who beat her.

Her father, Harry, had been a successful cattle dealer and her mother a nurse.

When Norma was 16, however, they fell on hard times and moved near relatives on Teesside, where — as the oldest of four children — she had to abandon her education and earn money for the family. By day she worked at the local ICI factory; by night she was a barmaid.

It was the era of The Beatles and mini-skirts, but she was not allowed to have a boyfriend and was banned from going out.

After a year, she ran away, first to Manchester, then to London, where, with her dark good looks and lithesome figure, she became a hostess in Churchill's nightclub in Bond Street, coaxing wealthy older men to buy expensive drinks and keeping a percentage of their bar bills.

Having sex with the customers was 'optional' for the girls, she said, and at first she refrained.

In fact, she told me, she was 19 before she lost her virginity and — failing to see the irony — railed against the moral standards of today's teenagers.

Late beginner or not, she certainly made up for lost time and struck it rich after being taken on the books of Jean Horn, then the madam of choice for the rich and famous.



Wild life: With dark good looks, she got a job as a hostess in a Bond Street night club coaxing wealthy older men to buy expensive drinks. Though having sex with customers was optional, she later did



Not so high end: Clients whisked her to Surrey mansions but this Maida Vale high rise was home for Norma

Reeling off her client list, she mentioned the Greek shipping magnate Stavros Niarchos, the Shah of Iran, the head of an oil-rich Middle Eastern state, a fraudster

who funded Richard Nixon's presidential campaign and the brother of a former Lord Mayor of London.

There were more we cannot identify for legal reasons. A girl from Horn's stable entertained a pop singer who remains a household name. Surely her weirdest customer was oil tycoon Jean Paul Getty.

Summoned to his Surrey mansion, she was paid the modern-day equivalent of £600 to wear a white robe and lay in an open coffin for an hour, pretending to be a corpse as he gazed down at her.

But as she confessed, at times in rather too much detail, such was her lust for life's luxuries that she was willing to fulfil the kinkiest fetishes for the right price.

Realising it was easier and more lucrative to torment her clients than sleep with them, she became London's most sought-after dominatrix, with a fiendish range of props that she kept with her until her dying days.

By 1971, she told me, her average weekly earnings topped £1,800 (the equivalent of £24,000 today), but she was sometimes paid almost twice that for a single assignment.

She was paid the modern-day equivalent of £600 to wear a white robe and lay in an open coffin for an hour, pretending to be a corpse as oil tycoon Jean Paul Getty gazed at her

She bought her own apartment in the most fashionable part of London, drove a sporty Mercedes and holidayed in the Seychelles. According to her confidante Sharon Carter, Levy sent large amounts of money to her parents.

'She was their cash cow,' Sharon told me. 'They must have known where all this money was coming from, but were happy to accept it until the scandal happened.'

Levy said she once went home wearing a black mink coat and her mother confiscated it, saying she had always wanted one.

But after the Lambton scandal, Sharon says Levy's mother slapped her face and later blamed her for the death of her father, by causing him to fall ill. Cruelly, Norma was banned from his funeral.

The truth behind the Lambton affair has never been established.

What is known for sure is that it happened a few months after Norma met and quickly married Colin Levy, a London cabbie who apparently owned a yacht in the South of France and moved in shadowy circles.

Was he — as some suggest — working for MI5, who might have wanted to expose Lambton's use of prostitutes to remove him from the Department of Defence and warn off other misbehaving ministers?

Or was he an agent of the Left, which wanted to damage the reputation of the Heath government at a time of political strife?

Or did he simply set up pictures of Lambton in bed with his new wife Norma (accompanied by sound recordings captured on a device hidden in the nose of her favourite teddy bear) to sell the story to the Sunday papers for money?



Rose up: Norma Levy, here with Det Chief Supt Wickstead, amassed weekly earnings of £1,800 in 1971 (£24,000 today). When the Lambton affair hit headlines, her mother slapped her

Norma was never sure. But having been questioned about the Lambton affair by CIA agents many years later, after she moved to America where she was jailed for running a vice ring from Philadelphia, she was convinced she was the fall girl in a high-level smear.

In any case, from that Sunday morning in 1973 when the News of the World published its sensational scoop — minus the incriminating photograph, which was withheld at the request of the government — her life went into an irreversible tailspin.

Convicted of living off immoral earnings because she had briefly managed Jean Horn's business, she was heavily fined and had her apartment confiscated for contravening the terms of the lease.

Having received death threats and been attacked in the street, she fled Britain to live in a succession of foreign countries with her husband Colin (who, at that point, she still wasn't aware had shopped her).

But they quarrelled when she learned about his role. She claimed he tried to mow her down in his car. They divorced soon afterwards.



Escape: She fled England with then-husband Colin Levy, unaware that he had shopped for her



Divorce: When she discovered Colin's role the pair's marriage broke down and they divorced in 1975. Norma (pictured at their wedding day in 1972) claimed Colin tried to run her over in his car before it ended

She then began a new life in America — claiming she would have quit the sex industry if she'd been given a permit to work legally.

Despite paying a corrupt judge £2,500 to sanction an arranged marriage in the hope of getting a Green Card, which would have allowed her to work in America — and taking two further husbands — she was denied the permit.

So she reverted to the only business she knew. By the late Nineties, she ran one of the biggest call girl agencies on the U.S. East Coast, employing students from Princeton University desperate to pay off their college fees.

Inevitably, the law caught up with her again. Her £1.5 million assets, including a mansion, were sequestered and, after serving 18 months in jail, she was deported (for the fifth time) to Ireland.

It was her plan to sneak back into the U.S. via Canada, but she was prevented as a result of tightened border controls after 9/11.

Thus apart from a miserable few months living in North-East England with her brother's help, she was stranded in Toronto.



Norma Levy, aged 57, pictured in a police mugshot in 2004, arrested for drug and disorderly charges

For a time she was so broke that she lodged in a homeless hostel. She later became friendly with Sharon Carter, a retired civil servant, and dossed on her couch. She lived on benefits of £150 a month.

Sharon says Levy suffered panic attacks and ‘was terrified powerful enemies were still out to get her’.

In her last years, Levy at least had a roof over her head — provided by an 80-year-old American man who felt sorry for her. She died without self-pity or any regrets, says Sharon, who last spoke to Levy by phone two weeks before she died.

‘No one should judge her,’ she insists. ‘She was a good person — she just did what she had to do to survive. She also had integrity.’

She said Levy refused to tell strangers the name of the other Tory minister. ‘She just wanted her privacy and thought he deserved the same.’

Given Levy’s chequered past and her penchant for assuming aliases to reinvent herself as she eluded the authorities down the years, even Ms Carter’s assurance that Levy had died had to be treated with the utmost caution.

But a death certificate confirms that Hanora Mary Russell — as she was born in Limerick on June 4, 1947 — died, aged 60, at the Bridgepoint Health Centre, Toronto.

As for her occupation, someone has written on the document: ‘Unknown.’

A woman with an acid wit whose death will allow at least one politician to sleep easier in his bed, Norma Levy would doubtless have chuckled at that.

Additional reporting by Dennis Rice

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2519622/The-lonely-death-girl-nearly-brought-Government.html>