

Angels Of Death – Guilty And Innocent

By **Alexander Baron** - May 19, 2015



28
SHARES

One of the most bizarre phenomena of the Twentieth Century was the rise of recreational murder; this has persisted into the new Millennium. Indeed, there have been so many serial killers that criminologists have given them categories; one of the most deadly categories is that of the angel of death, because these people, sometimes doctors but mostly nurses, have the capacity to murder dozens or even hundreds of the most vulnerable of victims.

Victorino Chua has now been **convicted of only two murders**, so this particular angel of death does not qualify as a serial killer, but there can be no doubt that if he had not been stopped he would have committed many more.



Victorino Chua

This horrific tale began four years ago when a nurse at Stepping Hill Hospital, Stockport realised a number of patients on a particular ward were experiencing low levels of blood sugar. An investigation revealed that a number of saline ampoules and drips had been tampered with; there was no possibility this could have been either a fault in the equipment or accidental, and soon it would become clear this was an attempt to injure and very likely kill patients. Most but not all those affected were elderly, and there were five deaths, although these could not all be positively linked to the criminal acts.

The police were called in July 12, 2011, and as might be expected, they faced a complex investigation; security was also reviewed and stepped up. With the arrest of Staff Nurse Rebecca Leighton later that month, most observers might have thought this was the end of the matter. Leighton was a glamorous, clubbing type, and drugs, apparently stolen from Stepping Hill, were found in her home. She was charged with three counts of criminal damage with intent to endanger life, another three, similar counts, and one of theft. She was remanded in custody, and although protesting her innocence, might have been expected to be charged with murder in due course.

However, on September 2, all the charges against her were dropped; that same day the Crown Prosecution Service **issued a statement** explaining why. The theft charge could have been continued, but this would have been vindictive; although technically she was guilty of theft, this is the sort of charge that could be brought against almost anyone who works in the NHS and indeed in many other large corporations – state-controlled or otherwise.

Miss Leighton would subsequently **be sacked** by the hospital. Immediately after Chua's conviction, the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police apologised to her publicly, so it would appear time now for her to be re-employed if not by Stepping Hill then by some other NHS hospital; she is currently working in a local care home.

Had Victorino Chua quit while he was ahead, he might have gotten clean away with murder, but on January 3, 2012, tampering of a different sort was detected at the same hospital. This time, it was prescriptions and medical notes. A total of seven patients were involved. Two days later, Chua was arrested on suspicion of this tampering. The net was closing in.



Tracey Arden (44) and Alfred Derek Weaver (83) were killed by Chua's poisoning (Credits: Enterprise)

Although he had to be released on bail, the authorities were quietly building a case against him. On March 28, 2014 he was re-arrested at his home and charged with three murders. His trial opened at Manchester Crown Court on January 26 this year – the first trial having been aborted due to a juror withdrawing for personal reasons. The jury deliberated for eleven days – which much be some sort of record – and Chua was convicted on May 18 on two counts of murder, and a number of other offences relating to the unlawful administering of drugs.

He was cleared of murdering Arnold Lancaster who was 71 years old, and had been suffering from terminal cancer. Another victim was 83 years old, but Tracey Arden was only 44, which is far too young to die. The surviving victims are not all in the best of health. At least one has been left with serious brain damage.

Following Chua's conviction, questions were raised about his nursing qualifications; he is said to have arrived in the UK thirteen years ago with forged credentials. This begs the question how many other nurses or (supposed) professionals have entered the UK using forged documents? While none are likely to pose the same sort of danger as this man, it is clearly time for the Government to tighten up immigration controls all round. It is simply not true as those of a certain political colour (red) parrot tirelessly that the UK needs immigrants. Surely there is a more pressing need for nurses in the Philippines than there is here?

On May 19, 2015, Chua was given the **mandatory life sentence** with a tariff of 35 years. In practice he is unlikely ever to be released.

As Victorino Chua starts his life sentence, we should consider another angel of death, Colin Norris. Like Chua, Norris was a nurse, he worked at Leeds General Infirmary and St James's Hospital where in 2001 and 2002 he was said to have murdered 4 elderly patients. Norris appeared in court in October 2005 when he was remanded in custody, but the following March he was **granted bail** by a judge at Leeds Crown Court, something that is surely unprecedented in a case of serial murder. He stood trial in 2008, not in Leeds but at Newcastle Crown Court, probably to avoid local prejudice.

The trial lasted nineteen weeks, and the jury deliberated for four days before convicting him on all five counts: four of murder and one of attempted murder. For some time though it has looked as though the judge who granted him bail made the right decision, because the case against him was actually very weak or even non-existent. When serial killers are convicted, it is usually on overwhelming evidence, because many crimes leave many clues, but what appears to have happened here is that there was one alleged victim, which prompted the police to go back over all previous deaths around Norris and cherry pick their data. Then, the medical evidence was quite simply wrong. There is no suggestion there was any malice in this, rather this was an incredible set of circumstances, and is quite likely a terrible miscarriage of justice.

A **special website** was set up last year in support of Norris. His case has also been the subject of a BBC documentary and a book. The Criminal Cases Review Commission has had his case under review for at least two years. It remains to be seen when it will go to the Court Of Appeal, but clearly it is now overdue.

28
SHARES