

Will Colin Pitchfork Be Paroled?

By **Alexander Baron** - Jul 6, 2015



Colin Pitchfork

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You will probably not have heard of Colin Pitchfork; he is a mere double murderer rather than a serial killer, but his real claim to notoriety is that he was the first murderer convicted anywhere by DNA evidence. In November 1983, he raped and murdered Lynda Mann, who was 15 years old. In July 1986, he raped and murdered another 15 year old, Dawn Ashworth. This poor girl was beaten brutally as well as strangled.

After Pitchfork committed these heinous crimes he compounded them by allowing someone else to take the rap for the second murder. Richard Buckland was arrested on a policeman's hunch after showing an interest in the crime scene; he ended up confessing to it, and was charged, but the newly developed DNA science proved he was not Dawn's killer. Without DNA, Buckland would almost certainly have been convicted perhaps of both murders, and Pitchfork would have been free to kill yet again. After he was brought to book, Pitchfork pleaded guilty to both murders, and was given a tariff of 30 years, although it was said, believed and hoped that he would never be released.



Lynda Mann (left) and Dawn Ashworth (right)

At this point, the families of his victims and everyone else concerned with these dreadful crimes might have reasonably supposed they had heard the last of Pitchfork until some time in the distant future the Home Office announced his death in a press release. Alas, they have been bitterly disappointed, because in April this year it was reported that he had been granted a parole review.

Reviews of this nature are routine, part of the checks and balances of the system, and do not mean a prisoner will be seriously considered for release. For example, on the other side of the Atlantic, one of the world's most notorious murderers had his first parole hearing as long ago as November 1978, a mere seven years after his conviction, but Charles Manson is still behind bars, and no one seriously believes he will ever see daylight again. However, there are indications that Pitchfork is being seriously **considered for release** if not within a year or two then certainly at some point in the foreseeable future. There are reports that he is reformed, and suggestions that he is no longer a danger to the public. Could this be true, and if so, should it matter?

With the abolition of capital punishment, there are basically two ways of dealing with convicted murderers and other life sentence prisoners, they can be kept locked up until they die, or at some point they can be paroled. There is an argument that anyone, however odious, outrageous or depraved his crime, deserves a second chance, and this can be said too of Pitchfork. Now here comes the but...

At his trial in January 1988, Colin Pitchfork admitted the following:

An indecent assault on a 16 year old girl in February 1979 – this could more properly be styled an attempted rape.

The rape and murder of both Lynda Mann and Dawn Ashworth.

The indecent assault of a 16 year old girl in October 1985. In fact, Pitchfork threatened to kill this girl with a screwdriver, and the offence of which he was convicted – forced oral sex – is now defined (rightly) as rape.



Rebecca Eastwood, Lynda Mann's sister

Pitchfork has had his second chance and then some. Whether or not he is genuinely reformed, sometimes being sorry is not enough. You can read the full details of Pitchfork's crimes and his sinner to saint conversion [here](#).

It goes without saying that not everyone is as impressed as those who are advocating on his behalf. One of these people is Rebecca Eastwood, the sister of Lynda Mann. Recently she started **a petition** against his release; if you don't want to see Pitchfork walking the streets before Halley's Comet returns in 2061, you might consider signing it.

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