

# Is Lonnie Franklin The Grim Sleeper?

By **Alexander Baron** - Sep 10, 2015



(AP Photo/Nick Ut)

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In July 2010, Lonnie Franklin Junior was arrested on suspicion of murder. He is thought by some to be perhaps the most prolific serial killer in American history. Why then has he not yet stood trial? Why indeed? Last month, the judge **set October 14** as the date for jury selection to begin; Franklin has pleaded not guilty to ten counts of murder and one of attempted murder, but when his house was searched, the police found photographs of around a hundred and sixty unidentified women. This is not necessarily as sinister as it may at first appear; in the 2014 documentary *Tales Of The Grim Sleeper*, film-maker Nick Broomfield visited one of these women who is still very much alive. The evidence against Franklin looks compelling though.

The name Grim Sleeper comes from the belief that after his last murder in 1988, this serial killer did not strike again until 2002. There could be many reasons for this, he could have been in prison, perhaps, but it has now been suggested that the killer did not stop, rather he disposed of the bodies of victims murdered over that time frame in a rather novel way. Franklin worked at a garbage disposal site, so if he is indeed responsible for some if not all of these murders and suspected murders, he would have been able to cover his tracks.

How do we know all the victims were murdered by the same person? To begin with, all but one were black women; all were either shot with a specific weapon or strangled, and their bodies were found not that far from Franklin's Los Angeles home. There is also plenty of other evidence. The first definite Grim Sleeper murder was committed in August 1985; Debra Jackson was 29 years old, but the police have been looking into unsolved murders going back a lot further.

In a complex case of this nature, especially when the charges are so grave, delays and adjournments are not surprising, but most of them appear to have come from the defense. Even an alleged serial killer should be entitled to a reasonably speedy trial, but no one should be too surprised if there is yet another delay when the 63 year old Franklin appears in court next month.

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