

## **CRIME STORIES WITH STRANGE COINCIDENCES**

A coincidence is defined as a series of events and circumstances which seemingly have no apparent connection to each other, but wind up being related by pure chance. Whenever a mysterious crime takes place, investigators will attempt to solve it by piecing together the events and circumstances surrounding the case. However, complications can ensue when a coincidence enters the picture. An investigation can be seriously hampered when one is forced to look into events which, at first glance, appear to be connected to the crime but turn out to be nothing more than a bizarre coincidence. In many of these cases, the coincidence had no direct connection to the crime but made for an interesting “story-within-a-story.”

### **The Trunk Murders**

During one seven-year period, the town of Brighton, England had two unrelated murders in which female victims were dismembered and found inside trunks. There were also two similar murders nearby. In 1927, a trunk containing the body of a dismembered woman named Minnie Boniati was found at Charing Cross Station in London. Her killer, John Robinson, was soon charged with the murder and hanged. Seven years later, two trunk murders took place within one month of each other. On June 17, 1934, an unclaimed trunk was discovered at Brighton Railway Station containing the dismembered torso of a young woman. Her head, arms, and legs were missing but, one day later, a suitcase containing the legs was found at another railway station. The victim was five months pregnant, but there was no indication about who she was. To this day, the identity of the woman and her killer remains unknown.

In an attempt to solve the murder, police started searching through residences in the area. Incredibly, they would find a trunk containing another dismembered woman. The decomposing victim was identified as a 42-year-old prostitute named Violette Kaye, who had been missing since May. When Kaye disappeared, her boyfriend Tony Mancini told everyone she left for Paris. The trunk containing Kaye's body was found inside Mancini's flat, and he was arrested and charged with her murder. At trial, Mancini's defense team argued that Kaye had been killed by someone else.

When Mancini found her, he was worried about being accused of the murder, so he decided to dismember her body and hide it inside a trunk. Believe it or not, the jury bought Mancini's story and acquitted him. In 1976, Mancini finally confessed to Kaye's murder, but he could not be tried for the crime again. In spite of their similarities, the two Brighton trunk murders were determined to be unrelated.

### **The Liquid Matthew Case**

On December 6, 1983, an unidentified Hispanic man was found strangled to death in a vacant lot in Hialeah, Florida. For a brief period, this baffling murder became known as the “Liquid Matthew Case” because of a series of bizarre notes discovered at the scene. A plastic bag was found taped behind a nearby “no dumping” sign containing a note with some strange poetry. It read: “Now the motive is clear and the victim is too. You've got all the answers. Just follow the clues.” The poetry also contained a riddle which led police to the next clue: Another poem was taped behind a speed limit sign. This poem contained the cryptic verses: “Yes, Matthew is dead, but his body not felt. Those brains were not Matt's because his body did melt. For Billy threw Matthew in some hot boiling oil. To confuse the police for the mystery they did toil.” However, there soon turned out to be an innocent explanation for this confusing mystery. On Halloween, four local churches had organized an elaborate murder mystery game where the participants concocted fictitious crimes and hid cryptic clues throughout the area. The strange poetry was all part of this murder mystery game. Since it wound up raining on the night the game took place, the notes were never retrieved and remained there for over a month. In a macabre coincidence, a real murder victim was found in the exact same area, but his death ultimately had no connection to the cryptic poetry whatsoever. In the end, the victim was identified as a Colombian seaman named Francisco Patino Gutierrez, and his murder was believed to be related to drug smuggling.

### **The Lucia De Berk Trial**

One of the most sensational murder cases in the history of the Netherlands was the trial of Lucia de Berk, where the very concept of coincidence was introduced as evidence. De Berk worked as a pediatric nurse at three different hospitals in The Hague. On September 4, 2001, De Berk was present when an infant girl died at the Juliana Children's Hospital. Her co-workers soon expressed concern after noticing a pattern: De Berk just happened to be on duty during a large number of deaths and resuscitations at the hospital, most of them involving infants. After an investigation, the hospital concluded that these deaths were unnatural and decided to press charges against De Berk. On March 24, 2003, she was sentenced to life

imprisonment on four counts of murder and three counts of attempted murder. Since there was no physical evidence against De Berk, or any witnesses to her crimes, statistics were used as the linchpin of the prosecution's case. They claimed that De Berk's presence in the hospital when all these deaths took place could not be coincidental. An expert testified that the odds of it being a coincidence were 1 in 342 million. However, De Berk had numerous supporters who believed she was the victim of a miscarriage of justice, and appealed her conviction. They sought to debunk the statistics from De Berk's trial, which had been presented by an unqualified law professor. A professor of mathematical statistics argued that the odds of all these deaths being a coincidence were 1 in 48. The case was heard in front of the Supreme Court of the Netherlands, which agreed that the statistical evidence was flawed and granted a new trial. A new investigation concluded that De Berk's alleged murders were likely natural deaths. In April 2010, she received a not guilty verdict and was exonerated.

#### **Couple Reports Murder before Being Charged With Unrelated Murder**

Shortly after midnight on July 3, 1991, 21-year-old Kirsten Davis was finishing up a trip from her hometown of Boulder, Colorado to visit a friend in Vidalia, Georgia. Davis was approximately 8 kilometers (5 mi) away from her destination when another vehicle pulled up alongside her station wagon. Someone from the vehicle pulled out a shotgun and fired it at Davis's head. She was killed instantly, and her car overturned on the side of the road. Shortly after, a young married couple named Tracy and Karen Wilkes happened upon Davis's overturned car and reported her murder to the police. In a strange coincidence, the couple would soon find themselves embroiled in another murder in the area—which they themselves committed.

About 45 days after the Davis murder, Tracy and Karen Wilkes burglarized and burned down the Treutlen County home of 69-year-old Moril V. Hudson, shooting him three times in the head. The couple attempted to flee the area and escape to Alabama. When Tracy decided to return home to retrieve some items, he was subsequently arrested. Shortly thereafter, Karen was found living in a trailer in Alabama and had the murder weapon in her possession. On August 23, they were both formally charged with murder, burglary, and arson. Naturally, authorities started to suspect that the couple who found Kirsten Davis's body were actually responsible for her murder. However, they both passed polygraph tests, and there is no evidence they committed the crime. Tracy and Karen pleaded guilty to the Hudson murder and went to prison, but Kirsten Davis's senseless - and seemingly random - murder is still unsolved.

Список використаних джерел

1. 10 Crime Stories With Strange Coincidences – [Електронний ресурс]. – Режим доступу: <https://listverse.com/2015/02/27/10-crime-stories-with-strange-coincidences/>