

## HOMICIDE SYNOPSIS

KATHERINE MERRY DEVINE

CASE NUMBER: 73-17592-12

Camp Margaret McKenney Park is located in the Capitol Forest area of Western Thurston County. It is situated in the foothills of a small mountain range known as the Black Hills, which run north and south between Grays Harbor and Thurston Counties. Camp McKinney is geographically midway between State Highway 8 and State Highway 12, approximately 5 miles west of Interstate Highway Five. It is approximately 10 miles southeast of Olympia.

The park was designed primarily for outdoor recreation to include camping and picnicking. It is known for its natural environmental setting of rustic and scenic beauty. The site has picnic tables, open barbecue pits, outdoor toilets, ample vehicle parking and is designed to accommodate horse and motorbike enthusiasts. Miles of trails lead from the park and encompass the entire mountain area. One section of the park is isolated for horses and provides hitching rails and ample space for parking of trucks and horsetrailerers.

The dirt and gravel road to the park is known as the Waddell Creek Road, named for a wandering creek which runs along side the park. Few residents live on this road and the nearest resident lives approximately one mile away.

During the summer months, numerous vacationers can be found camping and enjoying the scenic beauty of the park. It is also a favorite place for horse clubs and riding enthusiasts, both horse and trail bikes. Local residents use the park often for overnight camping and afternoon picnicking. The park has also been the site of many teenage beer

parties, and is used frequently as a lover's lane. During the fall and winter months the park is used less often, except on weekends.

On December 6, 1973, a young couple hired by the State Department of Natural Resources as caretakers arrived and began their duties of cleaning up debris and trash strewn about by careless visitors during the previous week. This time of year, the caretakers make weekly trips to the park. For several days the weather had been temperate and wet with temperatures in the mid 30's to mid 40's occasionally dropping to freezing at night.

Not long after the caretakers began their duties, they discovered the partially disrobed body of a white female. The body was located near the park area designated for horses. The body was laying in salal brush in a small depression behind a large stump, and was difficult to observe, until you were very close. The caretakers confirmed that she was dead, then went to the nearest telephone and notified the authorities.

Upon receipt of the call, a deputy was dispatched to the scene. He verified the report, sealed off the area and called for assistance. A team of investigators and the County Coroner was dispatched immediately to the park. Upon arrival at the crime scene the team began their duties of photographing, drawing sketches and collecting evidence.

It was noted that the body was laying face down in a slight depression, left arm outstretched above the head. Her coat appeared to have been pulled up onto her back, after the body was laying down. Pockets on the coat had been cut open with a sharp instrument. Zippers on both pockets were later found to be in good working condition and easily opened. Victims blue jeans were pulled down slightly over the heel



of her right waffle stomper boot. The left boot was missing from the body and was not found during the subsequent crime scene search. Victim's bra and blouse were found to be shoved up above her breasts. Her blue jeans and panties had been cut with a sharp instrument from the small of the back to just below the crotch, then separated, exposing her buttocks. Next to the outstretched left arm two small pieces of 3/8 inch diameter hemp rope was located. The ends appeared to have been freshly cut. Red marks were found on both wrists. Found also by the left arm was a small chain and some loose links. This chain was subsequently identified as part of victim's Medic-Alert bracelet which contained her name, address and a notation of an allergy to penicillin. The remainder of the bracelet was not recovered.

During the subsequent body examination, victim was found to have a laceration on her left breast. The laceration was approximately four inches long, located just below the nipple, was shallow in depth, was lateral to the body and had been made with a sharp instrument. An abrasion was found on the right breast. A few insignificant small bruises were found on the legs and one on the back of her head. Exact cause of death could not be determined, due to the many vital organs being missing from the body. The majority of the neck, right side of the face from the eye to the chin, the tongue and most of the chest vital organs were gone. This appeared to have been caused by rodents or other small animals eating on the body. A small cut was found on the left side of the neck which led into the missing area of the neck. Victim is believed to have had her throat cut. No overt signs of sexual molesting was found. Oral, vaginal and anal smears were obtained and submitted for laboratory examination. Oral and anal smears were

found to be negative. Vaginal smears were positive for acid-phosatase only. Time of death was estimated to be between November 25 and December 3, 1973.

Victim was subsequently identified as Katherine Merry Devine, age 14, reported as a runaway by her mother on November 25, 1973. Her home was located in North Seattle. She was last observed by two girlfriends at 92nd and Aurora Avenue during the early afternoon hours, where she was hitchhiking. She was observed to enter an old pickup truck of vague description which stopped for her. Vehicle was headed south on Aurora Avenue.



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