

HOMICIDE SYNOPSIS

BRENDA J. BAKER

74-9255-6

On 17 June 1974, just prior to 1200 hours, the Thurston County Sheriff's Department received a call from a Mr. Thomas A. Ismay, a resident of Tumwater, Washington, advising our office that he had discovered what appeared to be a human body on his property next to Millersylvania State Park. Various deputies and detectives were dispatched to the scene and were directed to the location of the body by Mr. Thomas Ismay.

The body was located off 113th Avenue SW, also known as McCorkle Road, approximately 1/2 mile west of the Tilly Road, east of Interstate Highway 5. The investigators on the scene made note of a strong disagreeable odor as they approached the body. The body was laying between three fallen rails east of the lane, heavy foliage was all about the area. The road approaching the body is a dirt and gravel road that had trees laid across it to keep people out of private property.

Millersylvania State Park is a well used state park by many people both of our community and people outside the state. Mr. Ismay had been out the day of the 17th inspecting his property line and detected the strong odor. He accompanied with a friend, attempted to locate the source of the odor, thereupon discovering the body.

A closer look of the body showed it to be laying on its back with its head pointed south and the feet in a northerly direction. The right arm was laying along side the body. The legs were spread quite far apart. The body was clothed from the waist down in what appeared to be red slacks. Shoes were on the feet. The shoe strings in the shoes did not appear to be tied. Part of the chest was exposed, but the area of the head was covered with what appeared to be wearing apparel. One item

of this apparel appeared to be a jacket of tannish-brown corduroy which was later confirmed at the autopsy. Another item appeared to be similar to a gray blanket. On the victim's right wrist, two bracelets could be observed. A ring was also observed on the right hand. The chest area of the victim was quite badly decomposed and was heavily infested with maggots and flies. The stomach area could be partially seen and appeared to be quite swollen.

Upon completion of the photography by Captain Bade and Reserve Deputy West, a sketch was made of the crime scene by Detective Paul Barolift and Sergeant Cleland. Lacey Funeral Home was summoned to retrieve the body and upon arrival the mortician, assisted by Undersheriff Jack Crawford attempted to place the victim in a rubber bag. While placing the victim in the bag, both arms and jaws of the victim fell away from the body and had to be placed on top of the body to be transported.

At approximately 1930 hours, that date, the autopsy was performed by Doctor Charles Larson of Tacoma, Washington. Various investigators were present at the autopsy accompanied by Coroner Hollis Fultz. The autopsy began with removal of the clothing from the deceased. It was determined at that time that the deceased was a female. Upon investigation for possible identification through the clothing, found in one of the pockets of the jacket was a traffic ticket issued by the Washington State Patrol. Also found among the clothing was a note addressed to the cafeteria supervisor of a school, asking a certain girl to be excused for a meeting. A list of names was on the note. One of the names being Brenda Baker. Because the body was so decomposed, it was impossible for a fingerprint identification. Also located in the remains of the skull were two earrings of the pierced type. The age of the

victim was at first placed between 18 and 22 and was later determined that the girl was somewhat younger than 18. Due to the fact that the body was so decomposed, the pathologist was unable to determine whether sexual assault had taken place.

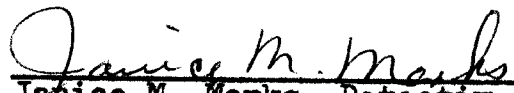
After considerable contact with the names found on the list and the names associated with the traffic ticket, we were able to ascertain that a girl was missing or listed as a runaway by the name of Brenda Baker.

On 18 June 1974 at approximately 1730 hours, Lieutenant H. V. Baesen, was directed by the Undersheriff to take the skull and jaw of the victim to Doctor Stewart Vendeland a dentist in Renton, Washington and at 1930 hours that date Doctor Vendeland examined the teeth and determined the identity of the deceased individual to be Brenda J. Baker. At the same time Dr. Vendeland was identifying the teeth of the victim, Mr. Bennie Baker was identifying some jewelry worn by his daughter the last time he saw her. He was accompanied by Mary Jane Handel and Joann Marie Jones who also identified the jewelry worn by the victim the last time she was seen.

Brenda Joy Baker left her home in Maple Valley, Washington, on the 24th of May 1974. Through family members, friends and family physician, it was learned that Brenda was pregnant at the time she left her home. She did not confide to her doctor who the father of her child was, however, close friends stated it was a soldier at Ft. Lewis known by the name of Flip. Brenda had runaway from home before and was very unhappy at home. In May when she left home the last time, was located at Western State Mental Institution as a result of being very depressed and threatening suicide. Brenda was known to hitchhike frequently and

was not afraid to take chances.

Investigation revealed that Brenda stayed two days with some friends in Sumner, Washington, where they attempted to talk her into returning home, however, she refused and she was last seen hitching a ride on the on-ramp of the Old Tacoma Highway and West Valley Way, just outside the city limits of Puyallup, Washington. She told her friends that she was heading towards Portland, Oregon and she was last seen getting in a pickup with two male subjects alive. This was as far as we could trace her whereabouts.


Janice M. Marks, Detective
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