

Homicide: The Game

Presents

Painseeker

“First Suspect”

by Nick Graves, Private Investigator

Homicide detectives follow some pretty straightforward rules in murder investigations. Many consider these rules to be unquestionable. The bulk of these are obvious: secure the crime scene, look but don't touch, and never use the sinks or bathrooms at a crime scene. There is another investigative rule which I feel was a significant reason why this case remains unsolved. It is the reason the police weren't able to get past step one in their investigation.

The rule: When a crime is exceptionally violent, the first suspect is the victim's husband or significant other. Although there are times when this person is not the person responsible for the crime, the person can be a valuable tool for learning who are the most important people in the victim's life. This can consist of trusted friends (who may also be useful in providing information) and deepest enemies (who also make primary suspects). More often than not, though, it is the first suspect that investigators believe committed the crime. The sheer violence of a crime scene can indicate the passion of the crime, and therefore the proximity of the murderer from the victim. In Raychel's case, after viewing the crime scene photos, I believe the murderer knew the victim very intimately.

If you've read anything on this site, you understand the difficulty the investigators probably had navigating this simple sounding task. Unless I miss my count, there are four potential suspects who would in some way fit the basic profile of the first suspect. I've spoken with one of the detectives who was initially assigned to the case and was less than surprised by the difficulties he encountered in determining a primary suspect.

The initial “first suspect” was clearly Kyle McAllister. A person with a violent history with the deceased, the two of them had lived together for much of the last year and a half of her life. He had also been the one who “discovered” the body and called the police. However, the police did not feel that he fit the profile of a murderer at the

time of the murder itself. When confronted by a hostile investigator attempting to make McAllister confess, he was despondent and withdrawn until well into his questioning. The detective acknowledged to me that he felt that Kyle McAllister was suffering from shock at the time, which is quite the opposite from the standard profile of a murderer immediately after the crime. Considering the violence of the crime and the obvious struggle, it was expected that the murderer would be showing signs of combativeness or hostility immediately after the crime. While some circumstantial evidence pointed to Mr. McAllister as a suspect, there was nothing concrete at the time to make him the primary suspect.

Geoffrey MacIntyre's sudden appearance at the crime scene was an oddity for the police. Mr. MacIntyre appeared before the police had the opportunity to remove the body from the apartment. It has recently been uncovered that in addition to his professional relationship with Raychel, the two of them had an affair which had been broken off a couple of months prior to Raychel's murder. Had the police been aware of the relationship between Mr. MacIntyre and Raychel, I am certain that he would have received a long and hostile questioning from the police. That being said, his alibi is very strong. He claimed to have been at Safehaven with Laura Douglass and Sharon Wolfe.

In a less direct interpretation of the "first suspect" rule, I would personally consider Laura Douglass due to the significant amount of time Raychel spent with her. Their living together on an on-again/off-again basis does establish a relationship similar to that of a spouse or significant other. However, her alibi is corroborated by both Sharon Wolfe and Geoffrey MacIntyre.

When the investigators learned that Lance Wagner claimed to be Raychel's husband, they believed they were finally on the right track. However, after interviewing him they were less convinced of his believability. Mr. Wagner's absence from much of the last year and a half of Raychel's life did little to establish either a strong motive or a believable stream of information on Raychel's life. Combine that with his inability to produce a marriage certificate (sound familiar?) and the police ceased their cursory investigation of him. Frankly, they believed that he was a crackpot. That being said, I allowed for the possibility that he was not.

With the information culled from his earlier recollections on this web site, I simply went to the Los Angeles County Courthouse and filed through the marriage certificates for February 14, 1998. While there were a lot of records, I was able to find it. Mr. Wagner may be a bad record keeper when it comes to allowing others to view the simple proof of his marriage to Raychel, but he is undeniably Raychel's husband.

Why was this not discovered by the police? Quite frankly, I don't think they cared to find it. Searching through records is something that is done by those who work on an hourly basis (private investigators) versus those who work a salaried job (the police). I also believe, after discussing it with the police, that they did not consider Lance Wagner a suspect. As I said, they thought he was a crackpot.

I do not believe that Mr. Wagner is a crackpot. I believe he is the first suspect. I also think he deliberately chose not to "find" his marriage certificate. By showing his certificate, he shows his motive. I believe he never conceived that a murder investigation would result from his establishment of this web site. That is why he felt secure enough to post that he was Raychel's husband. However, once the site became what it has become, he had a choice to make. Either he would be considered a prime suspect by proving his marriage to Raychel or he would be considered a delusional loser. I believe that he chose what he considered the lesser of two evils.

Now the truth is out, Lance. I believe you. And I'm very, very curious.