

One Of The Worst True Crime Stories Ever...

Those of you who know me are aware that I'm a true crime buff. For all of you many (I hope!) new readers – I am a true crime buff! I like to read about true crime, so I guess you could say that I have a hidden agenda when I ask my brother-in-law (the cop) how his job is going. A few years ago, there was an incredibly shocking crime in my brother-in-law's jurisdiction of which he was forced to be a part, and it was terrifying for the entire community.

In July of 2004, Anson Paape decided to have an 18th birthday party for one of his kids' friends named Michael Murray. The party was at Paape's home in what is normally a quiet suburb of Chicago, Illinois. For some reason, he decided to supply the teenage party-goers with alcohol. Even worse than that, he decided to round up some of the teenagers and take them down to his basement for a poker game. The reason I say that the poker game was worse than furnishing the teens with alcohol is because this was a poker game with a deadly twist – Russian Roulette. Paape distributed bullets to each of the teens, and the person with the winning hand was supposed to load his bullet, put the gun to the head of the player to their right, and pull the trigger. As if playing this so-called game (and with teenagers!) wasn't crazy enough, Paape decided to mix it up, and he kept changing the rules. When Michael Murray won the hand of poker, Anson Paape picked up the weapon, held it to Murray's forehead and pulled the trigger before Murray could even react enough to push it away. Michael Murray was killed instantly on his 18th birthday. The other teenagers fled the house, and tracked down some police officers who were on patrol. When they arrived at the crime scene, Anson Paape was nowhere to be found. He was gone for two days before finally being

apprehended, and he was tried, convicted, and will spend probably the rest of his life in prison.

It's an insane story – it defies all reason. I can't imagine what this man was thinking. And what a tragic outcome. Not only did a young man lose his life, but Anson Paape's 5 children are now without a father. They were also witnesses to the horrifying event, along with other teenagers at the party that night. It's just so sad.

The reason I'm writing about this is because I remember when this happened. My brother-in-law had to work overtime to help man the SWAT trailer they had to set up while Paape was on the lam. I think everyone in Chicagoland was relieved when they caught him.

Williams County Murders

The other night some friends and I had a conversation about local murders that have taken place in our county. Because we are a rural county, murders here are few and far between. A resident city council member who is also a local historian gives a yearly presentation, usually on Halloween, detailing the murders in Williams County, Ohio. Because many people know everyone else, he doesn't cover anything past the 1950's, but I was able to find some information on my own. For the incidents that did take place a long time ago, many of the circumstances are interesting as they reflect the moods and cultural attitudes of times past. Being both a researcher of local history and a true crime buff, I've attended several of these presentations and decided to share the notes I've taken for those who are interested:

Williams County Murders

6/20/1847 – W. Unity – David Schamp murdered by Andrew F. Tyler and Daniel Heckerthorne. Buried in German cemetery on Cty Rd. K. Botched ransom kidnapping – family farm is 1/2 mi. W of US127. 4 pg article in Bryan Times on 150th anniversary. In 1939, Ralph Gall wrote several articles in Inside Detective Magazine (June, July, Aug) about the crime.

3/23/1865 – Bryan – Conrad Rutman murdered by unknown – found hung in outhouse

12/1/1868 – West Jefferson – Unknown female infant by unknown

12/3/1873 – Bryan – Peter Himes by Ben Evarts

4/8/1875 – Bryan N. Main St. – unknown infant found in cigar box just N of RR trks

5/17/1877 – Denmark – unknown male infant

2/21/1878 – Bryan – unknown male infant

7/25/1878 – W Unity – Infant Loveless by mother, Lucy Loveless. Father of infant was mother's brother in law.

4/7/1880 – Edgerton – Unknown f infant

6/3/1880 – Edgerton – James Marshall by unknown

9/11/1880 – Bryan, dwntrn, N side of square – John Burchell, Jr. by William Everett – gut cut in fight

5/2/1883 – Melbern – Jacob Nihart killed with ax by mentally ill wife, Saloma Nihart. Both buried in Brown cemetery.

7/21/1889 – Edgerton – Sarah Hoadley (71) and Christian Newman (72) by Hiram Hoadley, Jr. (45). Murder / Suicide – in process of divorce, didn't want to pay \$2,000. Divorce announcement in same issue of newspaper as the murders.

8/26/1891 – Montpelier – Milton Hogue by Perry Yoder

1/11/1892 – W. Unity – Infant Hayes – female, by Dr. Frank O. Hart

2/20/1892 – Bryan, SW corner of Beech and High. Tom Murphy age 63 by unknown

5/4/1892 – Bryan. Alley next to Christmas Manor went thru to High St. before Central School building was there. Arthur Brown, about 22 yrs old, was at a saloon bragging about having a lot of money. He was murdered by George and Michael Burchell, Walter Plummer, and William Elkins. Witnessed by little girl from window of her house on W Butler. Story

featured in "Native Sons Gone Wrong" booklet. Victim buried in Old Pulaski cemetery across from Winery.

5/8/1898 – Florence – Unknown Male infant

7/2/1904 – Bryan, just N of overpass. Noah Schartzer shot by unknown. Buried in Brown cemetery. Case of mistaken identity. Stopped and checked every train between S Bend and Toledo.

6/7/1905 – Montpelier – unknown infant

9/21/1905 – Montpelier, E of Bryan on RR trks – August Julius by unknown

2/7/1914 – Bryan, W side of Portland St. 2nd blk. Portland and Mulberry – murder/suicide – Blanche Stauffer by Charles Stauffer. 12 pg suicide letter – "She was a hard person to live with."

11/10/1914 – Pioneer – Joe Varada by Joe Dohon. argument over wheelbarrow, shovel over head, both Hungarians.

3/14/16 – W. Unity – Mrs. Andre by Wilson Andre

6/12/18 – Montpelier – Alex Grant by James Morgan. Morgan (Afrcn/Amer.) wanted to get from Chicago to Detroit, didn't have any \$, so he hid in the btrm on a train where Grant was conductor. Morgan was executed in Columbus, picture from OH Dept. of Prisons

9/29/27 – Montpelier – James Andrews (Afrcn/Amer.) by unknown

12/11/27 – Stryker – Celina Huber by Camiel Clark who was fined \$125 for liquor violations. Huber, age 39, was cut during fight, went to lay down, bled to death.

1/4/32 – Bryan – Fred Wonser, Jr. and Margaret Wonser by Lewis Wonser

12/28/36 – Bryan – Frank Lewis by William White

12/1/38 – Edgerton – Vern Eck, age 42 by Nona Goeltzenluchter. Murder-suicide. Having an affair, though both married to other people. She was accusing him of seeing yet another woman.

6/14/45 – Pioneer – Murder/Suicide. Mary Jane, Earl, Alice May, Betty Lou, Alva Stoner by their father, Alfred Stoner, age 38, just gotten back from WWII, distant cousin of Mark Kelly (murders in Wms Cty speaker). Drove himself and kids

into gravel pit S of Pioneer while wife was in hospital giving birth to baby 6. Over 1,000 people showed up to watch the search for the bodies.

9/19/46 – Bryan – Emily Abernathy, age 30 by James Engle, age 21. Jim was drinking a coke across the street at the bowling alley when the body of his victim was found in the library – rumor has it he watched them secure the crime scene as he was sipping his coke. She had been strangled, beaten, and cut with a pen knife, died from strangulation. Jim confessed – said he wanted to see what it was like to kill someone. Paroled in 1974, moved to Bryan in 1989, currently resides in local nursing home. Crime was chronicled in tv show “The Big Story”, but the show upset Bryanites.

5/5/1948 – Bryan – John (age 56) and Pearl (age 63) Gabriel by Ervin “Bud” Ingle, age 14, “King of 8th grade”. They were his neighbors, and he wanted to borrow their car. There is a rumor that Mrs. Gabriel liked young boys, and John did the killing. Years later, Bud was a chauffeur for the governor, and the governor thought highly of him and wrote a book. There was a photo of Pearl’s body in the newspaper.

1/2/50 – Edgerton – Helen Bigger by Vernon O. Bigger – father in law of victim, possible molestation.

5/5/50 – Melbern – George and Evalina Fisher by their grandson, Jack Hartman.

9/12/51 – West Unity – Celia Walters by Edwin Walters

8/18/59 – Pioneer – James W. Elliott by unknown

9/11/59 – Blakeslee – William Bigger by Harold H. Bostater

12/29/61 – Blakeslee – Howard Tanner by Ned Eugene Tanner

8/18/63 – Montpelier – Dean Allen Nichols by David W. Nichols

6/22/64 – Pioneer – Dr. William Crall by Frank Patalon

5/21/66 – Montpelier – John McCamis by Raymond Burgess

8/31/68 – Stryker – Eben Henry Harney by William O. Bolster

10/12/71 – Stryker – John F. Meisner by Thomas E. Elliott

9/30/72 – Stryker – Judi Hagerman by Jon Garber

4/28/76 – Edgerton – Deborah Unger by Jeffrey Ailiff

3/15/77 – Bryan – Danny Hanisko by Lawrence E. Finn

6/19/90 – West Unity – Genieve Willene and Orlo E. Ansley by

William Ansley

2/2/91 – Montpelier – Travis Pospeshil by Timothy Kelley.

Invol. manslaughter. released from prison 9/11/06

2/7/92 – Montpelier – Torilyn Contreras by Jonathon Leggett –

Invol. Mansltr.

9/30/96 – Melbern – Brenda Sue Kafai by Rocky W. Kafai –

invol. manslaughter. released 9/23/06

2/15/98 – Edgerton – Beth Garber by Shane Frisbie

12/6/98 – Edgerton – Terri D. Swearengin by William M.

Swearengin

12/7/00 – Holiday City – Mary Kosier by Jason Crawford and

James Jones Jr. – they kidnapped Mary who was an employee of

Econolodge near toll road for robbery, killed her near covered

bridge

6/30/01 – Bryan – Thomas G. Flint by Linda Ames (**NOTE** – a

reader left a comment below containing additional info about

this event. I have not verified the source and am still in

the process of research)

Skipping Christmas

As a kid, I was a very avid reader – I would always read myself to sleep. Somewhere in my 20's though, I lost sight of my reading hobby; I guess that's when I got too busy and too tired to lie in bed awake at night and read. During my last pregnancy, however, I started reading before bed again, and it's something that I really enjoy, even though I often get too tired to make it through more than a few pages per night.

When I recently began reading again, I started by reading mostly non-fiction; it was really fun for me to unwind at night and learn something at the same time. I read a book about an Afghan girl who stepped on a land mine, lost her leg,

and fled the Taliban by coming to America. I read a book about a family that bicycled across the country – they had kids who were 13, 11, and 3 years old, and they made it from New Jersey to Colorado on their bikes. There was also the book about the Burnham's; they were husband and wife missionaries who were held hostage in the Philippines for almost a year. The wife wrote a book about their daily struggles as hostages – it was fascinating. Then I switched to a few fiction books by Christopher Pike, an author best known for his young adult horror novels. I read those as a teen, so as an adult, I decided to try his novels for adults – one I really liked and one wasn't so good – *Falling* and *The Blind Mirror*, respectively. I then started a book about the plight of Terri Shiavo, a woman who collapsed in the early 90's and suffered brain damage. Her case was in the national spotlight because her husband insisted that she would have never wanted to live hooked up to machines while her parents disagreed. The governor tried to help, and even the President of the United States tried to step in, but ultimately Terri's right to live became just another case in the courts and her husband won. Her feeding tube was removed and it took her almost 14 days to slowly starve and dehydrate to death. The case fascinated me at the time, and I found this book about it written by Mark Fuhrman of the OJ Simpson murder trial fame. Except that I'm having trouble reading the book since it's about a rather dark and depressing subject, and that's not really how I want to unwind before bed. Though I did learn something interesting from Mark Fuhrman: according to him, a coroner is an elected official who doesn't even necessarily have to have a medical degree. Hmmm...

A friend recommended the author John Grisham, and the other day I ran into the library, trying to be very quick since the family was waiting in the car. His books looked so large and lengthy and intimidating, so I grabbed the smallest one I saw called *Skipping Christmas*. I began to read it, and it's about a family called the Krank's who decide to skip Christmas one

year. That sounds familiar, I thought, and after a quick trip to imdb.com, I discovered that the awfully panned movie of 2004 called [Christmas With The Krank's](#) is indeed the movie based upon John Grisham's book, *Skipping Christmas*. So far the book is ok, but nothing that keeps me looking forward to reading it or anything. I have Grisham's only work of non-fiction on hold at the library, maybe I'll get up there today to get it because maybe I'm sick of fiction and it's time to go back to non-fiction... I hate to admit it, but I really like to read true-crime books before bed, mostly about murder. True, murder is a dark and depressing subject, but not in the same way as the story of Terri Shiavo; it's hard to explain. And it sounds kind of strange, but true-crime books are the ones I seem to be drawn to and I can't watch true-crime on tv in bed anymore – too many nightmares for my husband and I. One of the best true-crime books that I ever read was *The Stranger Beside Me* by Ann Rule. If you don't know, Ann Rule is a famous true-crime writer, and this book was extra-fascinating because it chronicles her relationship with the famous psychopathic serial killer, Ted Bundy. Ann Rule was actually friends with Ted Bundy – they met working at a suicide hotline together. The book chronicles their friendship while working at the hotline, while the murders were taking place, and after Ted was caught – very interesting read, and crazy that one of the most famous crime writers had a friendship (unrelated to her ever writing a book about him) with one of the most prolific serial killers of all time.

88 Minutes

We finally saw the movie [88 Minutes](#) the other night. I don't know what we were so busy with when it came out in the theaters, but we somehow didn't get around to seeing it then.

The reviews were so unfavorable that I forgot we had missed it; I guess I just wrote it off. I've learned time and time again to go opposite what most reviewers say, so I don't know why I let them get to me this time...

So anyway, the movie is about a very well known forensic psychiatrist played by [Al Pacino](#). A serial murderer he testified against is hours away from execution when Pacino receives a phone call saying he has 88 minutes to live – tick tock tock. Much action and plot twists ensue, and at the conclusion, I found myself very satisfied with this movie as a thriller – something I can't say about the last few thrillers I've seen. There are a whole bunch of characters, and the movie manages to make all of them interesting and VERY suspectable. What surprised me was my ability to keep them all straight – that is usually something I have a problem with when watching movies – I tend to mix up characters especially when the actors playing them look the slightest bit alike, and I also have trouble remembering names. Although I can't put my finger on what was different about this movie, I was able to differentiate between all the characters; not only remembering who was who but their names and relationship to the main character – rarities for me. Adding to my enjoyment of the movie was the fact that it kept you on the edge of your seat, and its many plot twists and turns kept you guessing and didn't come out too cheesy in the end, which can sometimes ruin a good action movie. Al Pacino was good and believable in his role, though believe it or not I don't think I've seen him in anything else. [Lee Lee Sobieski](#) and [Amy Brenneman](#) also rounded out the supporting cast with strong performances. Overall, a very good action suspense film and I would definitely recommend it to fans of the genre. Others who might enjoy it are true-crime buffs and CSI fans.