

An incomplete history

As Texas anticipates execution, victim's identity remains unknown

GEORGETOWN, Texas (AP) — Her neighbors never are a woman who died eight days after her 99th birthday and an infant who died on the day of his birth.

In the archives of Texas crime, she is known as "Orange Socks" — so named because the pair of socks was only clothing she was wearing when a motorist driving along the frontage road bordering busy Interstate 10 spotted her body in a concrete culvert in Williamson County on Halloween afternoon 1979.

Almost five years later, a jury in San Angelo believed infamous self-described serial killer Henry Lee Lucas, who said he strangled her, and sentenced him to death. It is for her murder that Lucas, who now denies any role in her killing, was executed June 30.

Her notoriety, like her identity, is unknown to visitors to Georgetown's IOOF Cemetery, where people born when Texas became a republic in 1836 are buried side-by-side with Confederate soldiers from the Civil War and Spanish-American War veterans. The gray granite tombstone simply says: "Identified Woman. 1979." A single-stemmed tree is carved along the left side of the marker.

The cemetery, still in use today, borders a golf course and a horse corral within sight of Southern University. Depending on the time of day, her gravesite at the bottom of a slope is shaded by a large shade tree.

What is known is she was white, 5-foot-9, 158 pounds. She had hazel eyes, 10-inch-long brown hair with a reddish tint and probably was between 20 and 25 years of age.

An autopsy determined she had a hairline scar under her chin, she was wearing a silver abalone ring on the middle finger of her right hand and she had pierced ears.

According to Dr. Roberto Bayardo, the Travis County medical examiner in 1979, she was unrecognizable, in his judgment, appeared to have been an unkempt person.

She had no cavities in her teeth and no indication of any dental work. X-rays showed she never suffered any broken bones.

Her fingernails were covered with red polish. Her toenails were long.

Detectives initially believed a piece of wood chip was in an eye. The pathologist concluded it was a larvae egg.

Bayardo determined she died of manual strangulation. Her neck was extensively bruised. There were scratches and bruises on her left lower back,

Henry Lee Lucas By the Numbers

Some numbers associated with Henry Lee Lucas, the confessed and then un-confessed serial killer who faces execution on June 30:

- 3,000 — Homicides discussed with Lucas by law enforcement officers, as estimated by Texas Rangers.
- 600 — Murders Lucas says he confessed to
- 360 — Murders officials say he confessed to
- 150 — Murders in which he was considered a suspect by Texas Rangers
- 62 — Age, as defined by Lucas
- 61 — Age, as defined by prison records
- 40 — States from which detectives questioned him about murders
- 26 — States Lucas listed in confession as places where he committed murders
- 23 — Age when he killed his mother in Michigan in 1960
- 17 — Number of attorneys he figures he's had since 1983 arrest
- 17 — Age when he first went to prison, a three-year term in Virginia for burglary
- 13 — Years on death row
- 11 — Murder convictions
- 4 — Times he confessed to Orange Socks slaying
- 4 — Last grade he attended school
- 3 — Execution dates he has had
- 3 — Number of drugs used in lethal injection
- 1 — Death sentences
- 0 — His estimate of chances he will avoid execution

Information courtesy of Associated Press

indicating she had been dragged over a freeway guardrail and through the Johnson grass before she was dumped in the culvert 9.4 miles south of the Williamson-Bell county line.

She landed face down in the ditch where a slight trickle of water pooled, sprawled on her right side.

Her legs, bearing evidence of insect bites, were crossed. One arm was folded beneath her, the other was extended.

The pathologist's examination showed she suffered from an infection known as chronic salpingitis, the result of gonorrhea.

Two matchbooks were found at the scene: one with a Motel 6 logo, the other indicating it came from a Holiday Inn in Henryetta, Okla.

The only other evidence was determined to be a makeshift sanitary napkin, which was labeled among the evidence as a bloody towel.

In his confession, given beginning at 9:07 a.m. on June 22, 1983, Lucas said he had picked her up

as she hitchhiked in Oklahoma City, "the second exit off a turnpike."

"I think her name was Joanie or Judy — I don't remember exactly," he wrote.

He told of eating at a truck stop with her, of having sex with her at a roadside park or picnic area and of failing to be satisfied.

"I was drinking beer," Lucas scrawled. "I don't know if something was wrong with her or something was wrong with me. I killed her not long after that by strangling her with my hands."

He said he later undressed her and had unsatisfying sex with her after she was dead.

"I drug her out of my car somewhere on IH35 southbound toward San Antonio, and dropped her into a culvert," Lucas wrote. "I remember an iron guard rail with carved iron, because I skinned my knee on it."

At 10:47 a.m. he signed the statement.

"Henry Lee Lucas."

Family of slain woman campaign for extradition of suspect

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Sheila Bellush had just put life jackets on her quadruplet toddlers for a swim in the backyard pool when someone broke into her home, shot her in the face and slashed her throat.

The 2-year-old children were crawling, unharmed, through her blood on the kitchen floor when her 13-year-old daughter came home from school to find the body, police said after the Nov. 7, 1997, slaying in Sarasota, about 50 miles south of Tampa.

On Tuesday, her husband took the case to Washington, D.C. He picketed outside the Mexican Embassy, accusing the government of harboring the alleged triggerman who fled to Mexico and is challenging his extradition.

"This man — as plain as the nose on my face — shot my wife in the face, cut her throat, in front of my babies, and fled to Mexico. And he needs to be extradited immediately," Jamie Bellush told reporters after his brief protest in Washington.

Bellush, 36, is urging a boycott of Mexican products until Jose Luis Del Toro, Jr. is brought back to Florida. Del Toro, 21, is challenging his extradition before the Mexican Supreme Court.

He faces first-degree murder charges in Florida, but prosecutors have agreed not to seek the death penalty in exchange for his extradition. Mexico refuses to extradite prisoners facing the death penalty.

Two other men were charged in Florida in connection with Mrs. Bellush's slaying.

Samuel Gonzales, 27, pleaded guilty last week to conspiracy to commit murder and agreed to cooperate with prosecutors in exchange for a 19-year-prison sentence.

Daniel Rocha, who previously

pleaded innocent to conspiracy to commit murder, was indicted on a first-degree murder charge last week after prosecutors said he refused to cooperate.

Rocha, 29, is a Texas golfing buddy of Mrs. Bellush's ex-husband, Allen Blackthorne. Both live in San Antonio, Texas.

After the charge against Rocha was upgraded, his lawyer released documents outlining an interview conducted with Gonzales after his arrest in Texas.

In it, Gonzales told investigators Blackthorne was behind the conspiracy, saying he was angry over a custody dispute with Bellush over their two daughters.

Blackthorne's lawyer, Roy Barrera, Jr. has said that Blackthorne was in San Antonio the day of the slaying and had nothing to do with it. No charges have been filed against him.

Blackthorne and Bellush divorced in 1988 and he gave up parental rights to his daughters, Stevie and Daryl, several months before the slaying.

In Sarasota, investigators identified Del Toro as the triggerman shortly after Bellush, 35, was found dead.

They said Del Toro left his fingerprints on a clothes dryer in the Bellush house. A car he is believed to have driven from Texas to Florida was recovered in Austin. Inside were a .45-caliber handgun and directions to Bellush's street, authorities said.

James Bellush adopted his wife's two older daughters after the slaying and moved with the children to Sussex County, N.J., to be near his family.

"The bottom line is, this guy should have been deported right away, after he was captured," Bellush told Fox TV in a live interview from Washington.



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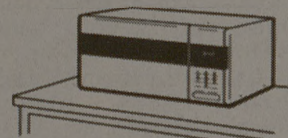
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