

Thursday, August 30, 1978 – Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page A1, Column 1 – By Mike Phillips

## Computer To Help in Widow's Murder

Colorado Springs police today are using their crime analysis computer in the hope of finding a suspect in Wednesday's brutal stabbing death of an 86-year-old widow.

Katherine A. Simpson's blood-soaked body was found in her bed Wednesday at 1019 East Monument Street at about 7:30 p.m. by a grandson who came by to check on her. She had been stabbed repeatedly and possibly raped, police said.

"Right now, we have no suspects," John J. Collins, captain of detectives, said this morning. "But we are following several courses. We're using our computer to check out all recent activity in the area such as prowlers, suspicious parties, burglaries. Every activity is being checked through computer readouts."

Collins refused to confirm some reports that the woman had been raped.

"We won't release a motive – if we have one – to the press, or described the murder weapon," he said. The weapon was found in the home.

The murder was discovered by Mrs. Simpson's grandson, Charles Jackson of 1026 Florence Avenue. He found his grandmother in a front bedroom of the small but neat single-story home.

Another grandson, Charles Hemmend of 2523 West Monument Street, said he and Jackson stopped by the home regularly to assist their grandmother with her garden and yard work.

Detectives said they believe the elderly woman was working in her front yard earlier Wednesday, about 11 a.m., when a neighbor last saw her.

No evidence of forced entry to the home was found by detectives.

"Everything seems to be in place," said Detective Division Chief Charles Davis. Asked if any evidence of a struggle was found, he replied, "No. But then she was a frail woman."

"She had had two cataract operations, one on each eye," Hemmend said. "She worked out in the yard quite a bit. Charles was the last one to see her. I think he was over earlier this week, Monday I think. He came over today to tell her he would be over this weekend."

According to Hemmend, Mrs. Simpson had lived in the neighborhood for 16 years, rarely having trouble, "except," he said, "The back garage was broken into about a year ago and a window was broken out."

Neighbors in the area said they too have recently had trouble with crime, prompting the department's computer analysis.

Mary Watkins said her car has been stolen twice this year. "I know one neighbor down the street whose home has been broken into three times recently," she said.

Another neighbor, looking over at the quiet neighborhood, muttered, "She was one of the sweetest ladies."

Alberta and William Crumb, who live nearby, said they had known the Simpson family for many years, before Mrs. Simpson's husband, Jerry, died of a heart attack two years ago.

Simpson had been a printer for 50 years in Colorado Springs, according to Mrs. Crumb.

Referring to Mrs. Simpson, she said, "She was a very quiet little woman, a friend to everyone, and she never had an unkind word to say about anyone."

Mrs. Crumb said that Jackson, who found the body, lived with his grandparents when he was small boy.

She said she and her husband were next-door neighbors to the Simpsons at another downtown location for many years.

"We used to go to all the dances together, 35 or 45 years ago."

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Saturday, September 1, 1979 – Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page A4, Column 1

## Police Have No Suspects in Murder

Colorado Springs police Friday said they have no suspects in the brutal slaying Wednesday of Kathryn Simpson, 86, of 1019 East Monument Street.

"We're no further than we were yesterday, except that we know the cause of death," said Captain John J. Collins of the detective squad.

He said the crime was "sexually oriented" although El Paso County Deputy Coroner Clarence West determined Mrs. Simpson had not been raped.

"There are other ways of sexually assaulting someone other than having intercourse with them," he said. Collins said Mrs. Simpson's blouse had been torn off and all seven stab wounds were "in the chest area."

A wound through her aorta, apparently made by a pair of 10-inch shears, was fatal, according to the Coroner's Office.

Collins said he believes a man did the killing and he added Mrs. Simpson may have known the man. Although neighbors said she kept her doors locked, there were no signs of forced entry into the home, he added. Collins said the killer may have walked in or Mrs. Simpson may have admitted him.

He said detectives are checking reports of prowlers, burglars and other criminal activities in the area for possible leads.

# Homicide

Wednesday, August 29, 1979

VICTIM(S):

Kathryn Ann Simpson

SUSPECT(S):

James Ducoin

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Sunday, September 2, 1979 – Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page A4, Column 1

## Mrs. Kathryn A. Simpson

Services for Mrs. Kathryn A. Simpson of 1019 East Monument Street will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday in the Central United Methodist Church with the Reverend Keith Spahr and the Reverend George Edie officiating.

Burial will be in Evergreen Cemetery.

Mrs. Simpson died Wednesday at her home. She was born May 21, 1894, in Rathdrom, Idaho, and had been a local resident since 1925, moving here from Pueblo. She was a member of the Central United Methodist Church.

Survivors include three grandsons, three great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

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Thursday, September 27, 1979 – Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page B4, Column 1

## Murder Evidence May Spark Arrest

Colorado Springs police are examining evidence which may lead to the arrest of a suspect in the August 29 slaying of 86-year-old Kathryn Simpson.

Detective Captain John J. Collins said Wednesday, "We have a suspect in mind. But, right now, we don't have enough evidence to file charges on him. We're running through all of the physical evidence again and hope to come up with something we can use."

The detective would not comment further on the suspect, but he earlier said the woman may have known her assailant.

No evidence of forced entry was found in the widow's home at 1019 East Monument Street and police said the killer may have walked into the house or was admitted by Mrs. Simpson.

The woman was found dead on a bed in her home by a grandson.

She had been stabbed seven times in the chest area with a pair of 10-inch shears, said El Paso County Deputy Coroner Clarence West. The shears were left in the body.

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Sunday, December 2, 1979 – Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page A1, Column 1 – By Chris Coursey

## Unsolved slayings still haunt police files

The November 24 acquittal of James Perry, charged in the slaying of a young Colorado Springs mother and her two small children, left another unsolved murder case in police files.

Although the slayings have statistically been "cleared by arrest," the statistics will never cover the fact that whoever committed the crime is walking the streets – either in Colorado Springs or elsewhere.

A murder case is always tough, said Lieutenant Arthur Dalton of the Colorado Springs Police Department's detective squad.

Some, however, are tougher than others. In the files of the police department and the El Paso County Sheriff's Office are 23 of the toughest kind of cases – the ones which have never been solved.

Although Dalton said Colorado Springs has a good record for solving killings – more than 80 percent solved – the ones which lay open stand out. The files loom in the minds of the public, and the police as a constant reminder that killers walk the streets.

The oldest of the 23 is the case of city police officer Richard Burchfield, who was shot in his patrol car Thanksgiving Eve, 1953.

Since then, cases involving victims such as a 14-year-old baby sitter, a food store manager, an ex-narcotics officer, a hotel maid and a high school art teacher have marred the good record of police and sheriff's investigators.

The four most recent cases began 25 years after the oldest, when retired Air Force Colonel Neil G. MacEachern was found dead in his car outside a North Nevada Avenue nightclub Thanksgiving Eve, 1978.

MacEachern, 63, had stopped at the Candlelight Inn, 3820 North Nevada Avenue, for a drink on his way to his Woodmen Valley home after a ski club meeting.

After one drink and some small talk, the Colorado Racing Commission veterinarian left the bar. A short time later his body was found slumped across the front seat of his Volkswagen in the inn's parking lot by a patrolling police officer.

MacEachern had been robbed and shot five times with a .39-caliber weapon, police said. An autopsy revealed that one of the bullets pierced his heart, causing his death.

"That is an active case; we are working on it," Dalton said. "We do have a suspect in mind. We've got a lot of evidence now, but not enough to arrest the guy."

Dalton refuses to name the suspect for fear of "spooking" him, but said investigators have "been looking at him" for about six months.

# Homicide

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"All homicide cases are tough but this is a particularly tough kind," the detective said. "When you have someone killed in a public place like that, with no witnesses, you've got real problems. When a homicide occurs in someone's house it's a different story."

In the case of 22-year-old Yvonne Sisneros and her two young sons, the murder occurred in the Sisneros apartment and remains unsolved. The prime suspect, Perry, an apartment maintenance man, was acquitted of the slayings last Saturday.

"Everything we had in that case pointed to Mr. Perry," Dalton said. "The case is still open, of course; there is no conviction. But unless we come up with new leads or evidence, we're stuck. We can't try Perry again."

Mrs. Sisneros and her sons Carlos, 4, and Ben 2, were found dead in their east side apartment January 12 by her husband, Benjamin.

Autopsies showed more than 100 stab wounds had been inflicted on the three. In addition, Mrs. Sisneros had been sexually assaulted, Carlos had been bludgeoned with a set of barbells and paper had been stuffed down young Ben's throat.

District Attorney Robert Russel later described the killings as one of the worst "inhumanities" one person could commit.

Perry was arrested the day of the deaths, but, after 10 months of legal maneuvering a 17-day trial, was acquitted by the jury.

"Now, we just have to hope for new information, such as an informant coming forward," Dalton said. "We don't know of anything missing from the apartment which could be used as physical evidence, so it's just about got to be verbal evidence now."

Dalton said he can't help but be "a little frustrated," with the outcome of the case, but added, "You have to be objective."

"Of course, if someone didn't commit the crime you don't want him in jail, and you hope the jury is right in their decision. But the bottom line is still that there is a killer somewhere out there walking the streets."

The killer of 86-year-old widow Katherine M. Simpson is also walking the streets.

Mrs. Simpson's body, with a pair of shears protruding from the chest, was found August 28 in the bedroom of her home at 1019 East Monument Street by a grandson who stopped by to check on her.

Again, police said they have a suspect in that case but do not have enough evidence to arrest the man.

Dalton said the man is suspect in the case not because of involvement in similar crimes, but because of other evidence.

"In any case you have evidence from two sources," he said. "There's the physical evidence you get from witnesses, neighbors or contacts around town. One of the reasons we have such a good record for solving homicides is because we're still a fairly small town; usually the murderer knows the victim."

"But, this is another particularly tough case."

The fourth unsolved murder that occurred in the last 13 months is the brutal beating death of 19-year-old bartender Peggy Sue Gaylord. The case is being investigated by El Paso County Sheriff's detectives.

Ms. Gaylord was last seen alive December 11 by three Fort Carson soldiers who picked her up hitchhiking, said Lieutenant James Ivey. The woman was on her way to work at a Penrose bar and the soldiers dropped her off on the south side of Colorado Springs.

Her partially clad body was found the next day in a snow bank beside a little-traveled road off of Colorado Highway 115 south of town.

She had been beaten about the head, neck and shoulders with a blunt instrument and strangled, a coroner's report showed. She was neither raped nor robbed.

"We are developing evidence on two non-connected suspects right now," Ivey said. "We're working with the New York State Police on one of them. They have a suspect in several homicides, one of which is very similar to the Peggy Sue Gaylord case. There is a similarity in the victims and the forensic people believe the two cases are probably connected."

"But right now, both cases are based completely on circumstantial evidence; we have nothing really concrete."

In July, an inmate in a Kansas prison reportedly confessed to the murder. Although skeptical, a detective was sent to interview him, but after questioning, it was decided the inmate was not involved in the case.

"You've got to check every little lead out," Ivey said. "We usually will hold back from the public certain facts about a case only the murderer would know about it, so we can check out confessions. I think this particular guy was just trying to buy his way out of that jail."

As in the Gaylord, MacEachern and Simpson cases, authorities said they have suspects in at least half of the unsolved homicides on their books, but lack the evidence to arrest them.

"Of course, the quicker you get a case solved the better off you are," Dalton said. "If you don't have a suspect on good physical evidence after two or three months, you run into problems."

"An unsolved case is never completely dropped, it's just that when you run out of leads it slows down to a crawl. You've got to keep contacting people and checking out leads and rumors, but generally, if a year goes by without significant progress, you're out of luck."

"Sometimes, when you hit a dead end in an investigation, you just have to back up and start over," Ivey said. "It can be frustrating, but it's usually interesting. The job has its ups and downs"

Asked if the Sisneros case, where detectives worked for more than 10 months only to have the suspect acquitted, was frustrating or wasted time, Dalton replied, "Time spent investigating a homicide is never wasted."

"The police are the only ones the victim has to depend on; the only ones who will work to see it doesn't happen again. We owe this work to the victim, so it's never wasted time."

How about the prosecutors, who also worked long and hard on the case?

"We put everything we had," said Milt Blakey, first assistant district attorney. "But it didn't satisfy the jury, so there's not much we can do about it now."

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"I wouldn't say it was wasted effort, we did what we had to do. If that wasn't enough all you can say is you did your best. Once it goes to the jury it's out of our hands."

As far as the district attorney's office is concerned now, the case is closed, according to Russel. Somewhere, the person responsible for those "inhumanities" is walking the streets.

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Friday, March 22, 1991 – Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph – Page B2, Column 4

## Woman charged in child's death

A man arrested in New Orleans for a 12-year-old homicide waived extradition and will be returned to Colorado Springs on Saturday.

James Ducoin, 44, is a suspect in the fatal stabbing of an 86-year-old neighbor. Katherine Simpson, with seven stab wounds and the knife still in her chest, was found August 29, 1979, in her home at 1019 East Monument Street.

Ducoin left the city shortly afterward. An arrest warrant was issued for him two years ago.