

True Police


FEBRUARY 1973 50¢
06895

CASES

HER BODY BOUGHT MURDER

There was nothing
the amorous playboy
would not do for
the woman he loved
— and that included
killing her husband!



Almost three years ago, searchers found the headless bodies of two university coeds buried beneath a ack of logs in a West Virginia wilderness. Despite one of the most intensive investigations in the annals of law enforcement, the case remains unsolved. However, authorities are still hopeful that somewhere, someone has knowledge of a fragment of information that eventually may provide the key to a solution of the case. State Prosecutor Joseph Laurita has assured the editor of this magazine that "this case is still our



The decapitated, decomposed bodies of lovely Mared Malarik (above) and Karen Ferrell were found buried beneath these rotting logs on a remote West Virginia hillside. Their killer is still free

number one priority and we will be grateful for any information that may help us solve it." He promises the full protection of his office to any person who comes forth with such information. Any person who has knowledge of the activities of Karen Ferrell and Mared Malarik from January 18, 1970 to April 16, 1970, is urged to contact any of the following: Prosecutor Joseph Laurita in Morgantown, West Virginia, any State Police Barracks in West Virginia, or the office of Governor Arch A. Moore Jr. in Charleston, West Virginia.



Two headless coeds in a wilderness grave

by SCOTT PAULSON

As the Sunday night crowd poured from the theater in Morgantown, West Virginia that January night, it was greeted by snowflakes drifting lazily against the glow of street lights. The crowd represented a cross-section of Morgantown citizenry —

Blonde, ever-smiling Karen Ferrell and Mared Malarik, a pretty brunette, were accompanied by two other students, Paulette Burns and Clarence Lewis, when they left the theater. Playfully, they tossed bits of snow at each other as they made their way up High Street to its intersection with Willey Street. It was a typical West Virginia winter night with the temperature hovering barely below the freezing mark and a nippy wind kicking up whisks of snow from the sidewalk.

"Hey, how are you getting back to the dorm?" asked Paulette. She had suddenly realized that Karen and Mared both roomed at Westchester Hall, located on University Avenue a mile away. "You're going to freeze if you walk."

"Maybe we can hitch a ride. There'll be someone going that way," said Mared, clutching her white-wool coat.

For Paulette and Clarence, there was no problem. Both lived within easy walking distance of the theater.

Saying their goodbyes, the foursome parted with Mared and Karen waiting on the corner and Clarence and Paulette

walking along High Street. The sound of a car caused Paulette to glance back.

"Oh, good," she said. "Look, they've got a ride. At least they didn't have long to wait."

Paulette and Clarence watched as the two freshmen girls climbed into a late-model car with a lone occupant behind the wheel and disappear into the night.

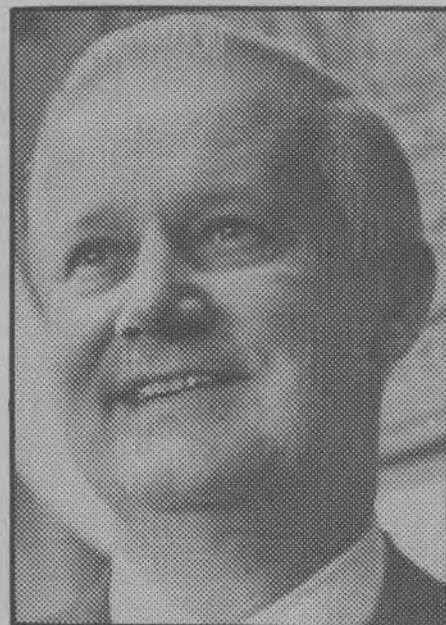
Karen, 19, was from Quinnwood, West Virginia, a small hamlet in the southern part of the state. Mared, also 19, had come to West Virginia University from Kinnelton, New Jersey on the East Coast. Their practice of hitchhiking was not unusual, although officials at the college continually warned students against it. But with 14,000 students traveling back and forth between two campuses, it was common to see students waiting on street corners with their thumbs out. The old part of the campus, the main educational complex, was established back in the 1800s. But in the 1960s, there was an expansion boom that necessitated splitting the university so that it was separated by the city. Westchester Hall

moms and pops who enjoyed the movie, young lovers who had enjoyed one another, and a liberal number of students from West Virginia University who were having a last bit of relaxation before reporting back to classes the following morning. For two of those laughing students who lifted their faces to the falling flakes, it was to be the last movie they would see.



JOSEPH LAURITA

Prosecutor Laurita personally spearheaded the investigation. Governor Moore (below) urged state police to spare no effort in finding the killer



GOV. ARCH A. MOORE JR.

A True Police Unsolved Mystery



Following a three-month search, the bodies of the headless coeds are lugged from the forest grave that hid them

was located off Route 119 north of downtown somewhat between the two campuses.

At the dormitory, supervisor Mary Thompson drew her robe together and put aside her books a few minutes before midnight. She walked down the stairs wondering why anyone would build a six-story building without an elevator in it. It was her job to see that the girls met the Sunday midnight curfew at Westchester.

The university required that female dormitory students sign out and sign in when they left and returned to the campus on weekends. The curfews were strictly enforced and violators were subject to strict penalties. As midnight passed, Mary Thompson became aware that Mared Malarik and Karen Ferrell were the only two residents who had not checked in. The supervisor made a quick check with their roommates and learned they were not in their rooms.

The self-appointed 'preacher' told police where to find the bodies — but swore he did not kill the girls

Looking out one of the curtain festooned windows of the dormitory, Mary noticed that the snow seemed to be falling more rapidly and decided that the girls probably had been delayed by the weather. She took up her vigil in a downstairs sitting room and was soon dozing.

At one o'clock, the striking of the clock in the hall startled her. By now, her duties were clear. Even if the missing freshmen were staying with friends and had simply forgotten to call, it was her duty to phone in a report. The campus security officer on duty took a description of the girls and then notified the Morgantown Police Department that the two students were not in their dormitory. In response to a request from the security officer, Mary Thompson went upstairs to ask the roommates to check their closets.

"I need to know what they were wearing today. I know they both had on bell-bottomed slacks. But do you remember if they were dressed warmly?"

The answers were affirmative. In each case, Karen and Mared had worn heavy sweaters under their winter coats. Mary Thompson passed this information along to the campus dispatcher who gave it to university patrolmen as well as city police headquarters.

Working together, campus and town police followed the routine they generally follow when a student is reported missing after hours. They go about their work quietly to keep from raising any undue alarm. In most cases, the missing students are found at another dormitory with friends. On rare occasions, a couple of swingers may decide to go on a spree and then turn up the next day to sheepishly accept their punishments. But that was not the case this time. Up and down Route 19, officers checked the nightspots that were still open. None of the proprietors could remember Karen or Mared.

"Look, any girl who's here at curfew, I make her leave," assured one burly barmen. It's a policy generally followed by club personnel along Route 19.

The clerk at the bus station was closing up when a patrolman asked him about the two freshmen coeds. He shrugged. "I haven't noticed them, but then, sometimes I just don't look at the faces of my passengers. Maybe they got tired of studying and decided to take off."

As the police searched for the girls that night, uppermost in their thoughts was an event which occurred on a very similar night four years earlier. It also was a Sunday — December 23rd — and it had been snowing when they found the body of Kenneth Carter, age 22, a student at the University. He had been beaten to death.

Oddly enough, he also was last seen leaving the theater following the last show. His killer was still at large.

By morning, when Morgantown Police Chief Ben Palmer learned of the missing coeds, there was a forboding feeling that something genuinely tragic had happened to Karen Ferrell and Mared Malarik. After reviewing the reports of his officers, Palmer instantly considered the possibility of foul play.

"If we have to start searching in this weather, we're really going to have a job on our hands," he said. Palmer's first act was to place a call to the State Police office in Morgantown to alert its patrols of the facts in the case.

Chief Palmer had good reason to be concerned about any kind of intensive search of the countryside. "Wild, Wonderful West Virginia," is the slogan used by the state to attract its many tourists. The slogan is not without reason.

When this area of the earth was formed, it was almost as though the Almighty dragged a giant garden rake across the landscape, leaving deep furrows and steep mountains — beautiful, yes, but wildly rugged. Along the depressions the highways wound. In between, there are thick forests, some of them remote and desolate. West Virginia may be a paradise for hunters but it can be



Superintendent Robert L. Bonar of the West Virginia State Police has devoted many hours seeking a solution to the crime.

a nightmare for a searching party.

In the wilderness surrounding Morgantown, man has left some signs — mostly in the form of abandoned deep mine shafts, piles of refuse from mining operations and strip mine pits, some empty but others filled with stagnant water. Even the most knowledgeable hunter can get lost in these woods and walk for miles before he happens to find a highway buzzing with traffic.

The woods can become a trap for an innocent hiker or they can serve as a grim depository for a killer wanting to hide the evidence of his crime.

After talking to Paulette Burns and Clarence Lewis, the thought that Karen and Mared had embarked on a ride of no return began to gnaw at the minds of Morgantown investigators. And, although they were reluctant to discuss the possibility publicly, the authorities were convinced that the secret of the missing coeds lay somewhere in that surrounding wilderness.

By Monday morning, the state police had sent out a thirteen-state alarm and Chief Palmer had sent Patrolman Sprague out to the girls' dormitory to check the rooms of the missing coeds.

"Nothing missing out here," was Sprague's report to Palmer about an hour after he had arrived at Westchester Hall. "Their clothes are still in the closets. The cosmetics they use are on top of their dressers. Their roommates showed me their luggage stacked in the closets," he added.

"All right, Jim, now circulate among the students there and find out if they might have taken off on a spree, if they mentioned being unhappy in any way, or anything you can find out," were the chief's directions.

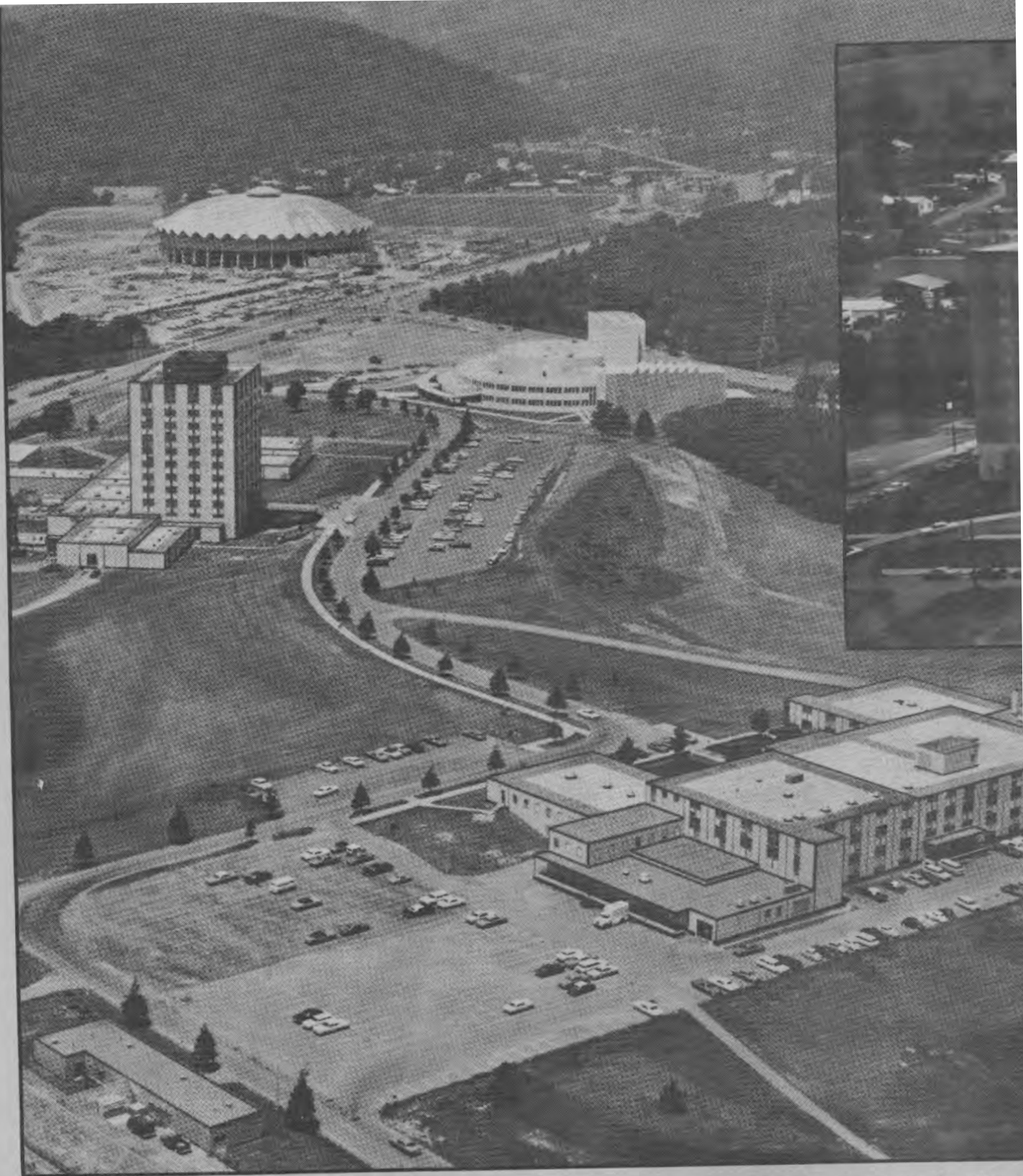
"I did hear they might have been seen by another couple. One of the girls thought they mentioned a boy and girl who might have gone to the same movie."

Okay, check it out and let me know as soon as you can."

Johnson knew that it was not usual for freshmen to leave campus on a lark but he could not afford to rule this out.

Meanwhile, Patrolman Virgil B. had driven outside of town to a hilltop community located on a hilltop only accessible over a deeply rutted road. His engine groaned and the transmission growled as the high-speed cruiser's tires spun trying to gain a grip in a muddy surface that was icy in spots because the sun had not had a chance to melt away the crust.

He had no difficulty gaining admittance to the ramshackle farmhouse the shaggy



youths were using as a commune.

But, none of the female occupants matched Jared or Karen's description. "Sorry to trouble you," Banks said politely as he eased back into the cruiser.

"Peace, bless you brother," said a tall gaunt youth who looked to be about 24 or 25 years old. "Come back again. You'll be welcome."

"Sure," Banks replied as he shifted into low gear to keep the car steady as it nosedived back down the steep, winding road.

While this was taking place, two other

such communes were scrutinized by police—one near Morgantown and a larger one inhabited by 50 or more adults and children on a hilltop near Moundsville, West Virginia, the home, incidentally, of the state penitentiary.

At both places, police were received courteously. They were allowed to poke into outbuildings and ask questions of the motley crews inhabiting the places—most of them dressed in long robes.

The quest was unsuccessful. But the officers were still not certain what evil nature might lie beneath one of those

robes of serenity. How many times has an arch criminal tried to hide under a cloak of respectability? But for the moment, at least, this avenue of investigation was closed. "We'll keep these places under surveillance," a state policeman decided.

As soon as word of the coeds' disappearance was known, their families were notified. The parents of both expressed worry and concern. It was not like their daughters to accept a ride from strangers, officials were told. Nor, would they be likely to go off on a spree. This just was



The campus of the University of West Virginia. At right, the dormitories where Karen Ferrell and Mared Malarik resided

not the nature of the girls, the families insisted.

Captain Larry Walters of the Morgantown Barracks of the State Police had been in touch with the Ohio State Patrol and Pennsylvania State Police.

While it was hard to pin down, there had been rumors of a white-slave ring operating in the busy Tri-State area — that triangle formed by Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. There had been reports from Youngstown, Ohio, Pittsburgh and Steubenville, Ohio, of such activities.

"I know it will be hard to uncover, but would you check with your informants," he asked all three state agencies as he gave them a repeat description of the missing girls.

This accomplished, the captain swung around to take a call on another telephone on his desk.

"Yes, Ben, I heard that two people saw them. You talked to them? Good. Did you get a description of the car?" After a pause, his face became sober. "Only that much. No idea which way it went? But it was light-colored, a Chevy, late model, with only the driver visible. All right, thanks."

It was evident that the Burns girl and Lewis youth had made known their presence late Sunday night and had given police the information that Karen and Mared had hitched a ride after leaving the theater. But apparently they did not know which direction the car took after

it went down on Key Avenue.

"I wish we knew whether he turned north toward the campus or south along 119," Walters said to his associate Harry Templeton who had just arrived at the barracks brushing snow off his hat.

"I've just come from the campus. I informed the dean of women and President Harlow what we have so far. They're both concerned," he said, working his fingers along the wide brim of his trooper's hat.

Also informed was Governor Arch A. Moore Jr., an alumnus of WVU and an ardent supporter of the university. As a parent he felt sympathy for the families of the two girls. He wasted no time in getting his friend Superintendent Robert L. Bonar to the governor's office in the State Capitol in Charleston.

"Bob, I want you to take personal charge of this case," the governor told the man who was a member of his cabinet and a longtime friend. "I want every man you can spare on this case. Don't spare anything in your efforts to find those girls."

As a parent, the governor could almost feel the anguish and torment that must be plaguing the minds of the girls' parents in New Jersey and Quinnwood.

"Now, Morgantown and campus men will help, I know," said the governor. "Talk to Sheriff Janco. He'll give you assistance. I want this case solved, and quick," Moore said sternly. "I'll contact the FBI and see if they can aid you."

"We'll use every man available," Bonar pledged as he left the governor even as he was placing a call to FBI headquarters.

Moore had served 12 years in Congress

and personally knew FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. Getting through, he was referred to Hoover's chief aide.

"You know we'll do everything we can, Governor, but unless this case involves crossing state lines we can't enter it."

"I know, I know," Moore said impatiently. "How much help can you give us?"

"The facilities of all the labs are yours for checking evidence. And, we can check any fingerprints you may uncover. Don't hesitate to call us."

(Continued on page 58)

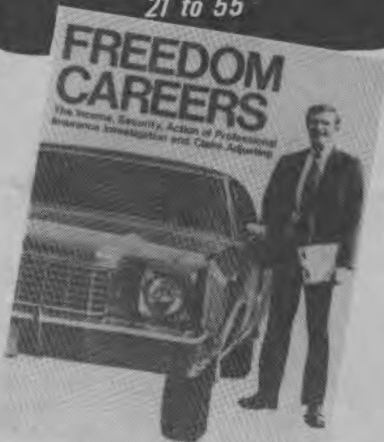


Coroner William Bowers thought the killer might have been on drugs

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TWO HEADLESS COEDS...

(Continued from page 17)

"Fine. I knew I could count on your help," Moore said, ending the call.

Bonar wasted no time after leaving the governor's office.

He quickly marshalled his forces from Morgantown, as well as men from the Shinnston Barracks at Grafton, some ten miles south of the campus. With superior facilities and manpower at its disposal, the State Police agency took charge of the probe.

But as the investigation progressed, lead after lead came to light and promptly faded.

There was a call from Ripley, West Virginia. A truck stop owner had reported two girls who were asking drivers for a ride into Virginia. The hitchhikers turned out to be two airline stewardesses, and not the missing coeds.

Throughout Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, similar calls kept coming in. But all investigations proved negative. In two cases, however, runaways were caught and held for their parents. The white slavery angle also proved to be a dud. Informers circulated through the darkened hallways of illegal operators but could find nothing that would lead them to believe the girls had fallen into the clutches of men who would engage in white slavery.

Groups of students, obviously trying to help in the search, took time off from their studies to tramp the woods along the rivers and patches of timber that dotted the campus, mostly in the Evansdale area. Athletic fields near the giant, new Coliseum were combed by lines of serious-faced young men and women who feared for the lives of the two freshmen.

Some of the more brave students asked homeowners in residential areas to search their basements and garages. President James G. Harlow, feeling the responsibility of his office, tried to buoy the hopes of the girls' parents, with frequent reports, even though he could not convey good news.

Soon a week had passed, then two, and February brought new snow to hamper efforts to spot the trail of the missing girls. Days began to warm somewhat as February waned and this was good news for thirteen-year-old Steven Trickett who often walked along 119 north of Grafton, where he occasionally found pop bottles to redeem for pennies at the store.

On March 1st he was trudging along the highway when he saw what looked like a piece of cloth under a clump of weeds just off the road. It was a nudge with his foot he realized he had come upon a woman's purse. Scattered on the ground near it were some loose coins and papers.

Steven communicated his find to his parents who excitedly informed Grafton

police. Quickly the purse was taken to the Shinnston Barracks, and, in turn, to Bonar and the governor.

"Looks like our first break," Bonar told the governor on the telephone the next day. "We'll keep it quiet, but I'll have men out here tomorrow to see what else we can uncover."

Oddly enough, although troopers and helicopters joined in searching the wooded area near where the purse was found, news of the hunt remained secret. The purse, however, was identified by Mared's parents and her classmates.

Time and again, throughout March, teams of troopers tramped the heavy underbrush, probing old mine shafts and uncovering dead logs in a vain hunt for something to add to the young boy's find. April bloomed with no success.

By using the computer at the State Department of Motor Vehicles, the investigators were able to obtain a list of owners of late model Chevrolets in the Morgantown area. But in no case could one of them be linked to the missing coeds.

Then, in early April, events began to unfold in rapid order.

On April 8th, a secretary to Governor Moore was sorting the mail when she came across a letter with a stunning message. The secretary immediately notified Norman Yost, the governor's personal aide. Yost took one glance at the letter and pressed the intercom button.

"Get Superintendent Bonar and me to contact me as quickly as possible," he told the main operator. Then the aide reread the letter more carefully.

"Gentlemen," it began.

"I have information on the whereabouts of the bodies of the two missing West Virginia University coeds, Mared Malarik and Karen Ferrell.

"Follow my directions very carefully — to the Nth degree — and you cannot fail to find them.

"Proceed twenty-five miles directly south from the southern line of Morgantown. This will bring you to a wooded forest land. Enter into the forest exactly one mile — and there are the bodies.

"25 plus one equals 26 miles total.

"Will reveal myself when bodies are located.

"Sincerely."

At the bottom of the letter was a strange triangle.

It did not take Bonar long to reach Yost, who by that time had brought the letter to the attention of the governor.

"What do you make of it?" Moore asked the police chief.

"Well the purse we found was 25 miles from Morgantown, but I'd better tell you this letter and have it dusted for prints. I'll send some men up there. Let's see that map of the state behind you, Norman," Bonar said. "That would put it about in Taylor County, near where the purse was found at Grafton."

For two days a search of Route 119 in Taylor County near Grafton was launched with Moore announcing to the public that he had received the letter and, "at this very moment State Police and National Guardsmen are searching the

area."

Then on April 11th another letter arrived at the governor's office. It read:

"April 10

"Gentlemen,

"I saw the article in this morning's newspaper concerning my previous letter on the two missing coeds.

"If you re-read my first letter carefully you will see the directions were specific 'directly south from the city', meaning the southern limit of Morgantown, West Virginia, straight south 25 miles and you will come to a forest woodland. Enter one mile south. Fanning out you will locate the bodies of the girls covered with brush. Look carefully. The animals are now on the move.

"Do trust this will help you out to exact location. Will still identify myself when bodies are located.

"Sincerely,"

Included with this missive was a diagram, in the left corner at the bottom, showing the location of the bodies.

Now, State Police searchers were being assisted by members of the Morgantown Rescue Squad headed by William Overbey, and city policemen led by Sergeant John Heis. They centered the search on Route 119 between Morgantown and Grafton, a distance of 26 miles, as mentioned in the letter.

On April 12 a searcher called out excitedly to his companions as they probed a small road just off the highway.

"This looks like a pair of girls' glasses," he shouted.

Subsequently, the clues were to check with a prescription issued by a New Jersey optometrist for Miss Malarik.

"Keep that hunt going," was Moore's instruction to Bonar. And bit by bit clues began to turn up. Tuesday, April 14, a bottle of medicine, a compact and a purse identified as belonging to Karen Ferrell were found in another area — this time a bit further into the wooded area lying off Route 119 near County Road 73. The road led to what is known as the old "Weirton Mine".

A reporter from the Morgantown Dominion-Post, Mike Connell, while keeping tabs on the search, wandered near a small stream and soon had police running to his side. He had found an old campsite with discarded cans and scraps of food.

At another point a discarded umbrella was found. It did not belong to either of the coeds, subsequent inquiry proved.

By now National Guardsmen, state and local police and the nearby Marion County Police Reserve had concentrated on a spot about 10 miles south of Morgantown on Secondary Highway 21 off County Road 73.

This was a desolate area. Men used walkie talkies to keep in touch. Companions could become lost in the heavy brush, yet only be a stone's throw away from each other. Dense mountain laurel and boulders hampered the search.

Deeper into the woods other personal effects of the girls were found.

By Thursday an inch-by-inch search was being made and it continued into Friday.

Steve Slavinsky, a member of the National Guard at Morgantown, was working in one of the few clearings in the woods. Near a pile of old logs and brush an object caught his eye.

"That looks like a foot," he said to himself bending down to take a closer look. "My gosh, it must be them," he exclaimed, turning around to shout to others nearby. "Hey over here! I think I've found them."

Captain W. F. Bowley of the Shinston Barracks had been placed in charge of the search so the grisly discovery was left undisturbed while he ran to the scene from some distance away. He found the skeleton of a human foot protruding from beneath a pile of logs.

"Let's remove those logs one at a time," the captain ordered. "Be very careful and don't disturb anything."

As the logs came off, it became apparent there were two bodies in the unusual grave. But the remains consisted only of bones and rotting cloth.

"It looks like them, all right," said a grim Captain Bowley. "They're wearing fur coats and sweaters. And, what's left of the slacks seem to match the description of what the girls were wearing when they disappeared."

(Continued on page 57)

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TWO HEADLESS COEDS...

(Continued from page 59)

Then, as a log was lifted, one of the men gasped. "My God, Captain!" he said. "They don't have any heads! They've been decapitated."

The bodies were lying side by side. After a brief examination, Captain Bowley turned to a patrolman. "Get on the radio and get the coroner out here," he said. "And I want this whole area searched — every inch of it."

Following the coroner's examination of the bodies, he talked to newsmen:

"The bodies were too badly decomposed to determine how they died or if

they were sexually assaulted."

Meanwhile, Captain Bowley had concluded that the girls had tried to leave a trail by tossing items along the route to the spot of their tragic deaths. "They seemed to be saying 'here we are, follow us,'" the captain said.

The officers speculated that the person who committed the act might have been high on drugs.

Meanwhile, with the help of Maryland police, more than three thousand signatures on drivers' licenses were being compared to the handwriting on the letters Moore had received from the mystery man in Cumberland.

A thorough search of the death scene failed to produce any additional clues.

Then, on April 22, two other coeds staggered into Morgantown Police Headquarters claiming they had been kidnapped. What looked like a link to the

murdered coeds faded two days later when charges against two men who had given the coeds a drive were dropped. The girls admitted they voluntarily entered the car. The case was dismissed.

Oddly enough, these two girls also lived at Westchester Hall.

As months went by the handwriting comparisons dragged on until late in July, when Sergeant R. L. Mazingo, who had been placed in charge of the case, struck pay dirt.

He found the writer of the first two letters, a self-ordained minister named Richard Hoover. Hoover said he wrote four letters after engaging in seances with two other members of his cult.

Hoover and another man, Fred W. Shanning, a resident of Cumberland, were linked to the letters that came after the first was found, and they had nothing to do with initiating the search near Graf-

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ton, police claimed. The third person involved in sending the letters was only identified as a woman. She was not named.

One story Hoover gave out said the triangle at the bottom of the letters was a symbol for the Holy Trinity — The Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But when an extensive investigation was completed, Superintendent Bonar cleared the cultists of any connection with the slaying of Mared and Karen.

Hoover and members of his c... allegedly cooperated with officials u... he learned he was not eligible for the more than \$3500 reward offered for discovery of the girls' whereabouts, police said.

Bonar claimed the directions in the letter were of no help. The area mentioned was far south of where the bodies were found, he said.

After Hoover's identity became known, it developed he had sent three letters to the state police... one to the parents of the Malarik girl... New Jersey. Two of the letters were dated after the bodies were found.

Searchers went back to the wilderness and continued to hunt for clues. A mine pond was drained. The abandoned Weirton Mine was the object of an intensive probe.

But it was all to no avail.

Later in the year, a Princeton resident named Edward Fiedler was sentenced in Roanoke, Virginia, to fifty years in prison for killing a cabdriver.

He had police scurrying to question him after writing a letter to Morgantown police claiming he had slain the two freshmen students. Because West Virginia had abolished the death penalty, Moore said he felt Fiedler might have been motivated by this fact. But information he gave officers wasn't consistent with known facts in the coed's deaths, and Fiedler was eliminated as a suspect.

Where does the answer lie?

West Virginia authorities wish they knew.

Theory after theory has been advanced.

Why would Mared and Karen have accepted a ride from a stranger? After entering his car, did the driver proceed to their dormitory, or turn off and head south on Route 199? ... he then meet a confederate who helped him perpetrate this horrible crime? If one man did it would not one of the girls have been able to fight him off and run for help?

Did the girls drop their items along the roadway in a desperate attempt to call attention to their plight? Or did some mad killer carefully place the clues as his demented mind thrilled at seeing police struggle to find the bodies?

On the second anniversary of the crime that shocked Morgantown, the State Prosecutor Laurita said the coed case still has "No. 1 priority in my office."

"There has been no relaxation in our efforts to solve the crime," he said recently. "And, there will be none."

Time and again State Police and agents from Laurita's office have sped to crime

scenes with the hope that a captured felon might have some link to the campus crime.

The latest flurry of excitement was centered in Belmont County, Ohio, where Lance Levitt, 24, was arrested for kidnapping a trio of girls. He had picked them up in Bridgeport, Ohio, across the river from Wheeling West Virginia. According to the girls, Levitt had taken them to a remote strip mining area near St. Clairsville, Ohio.

Alert to any such happenings, Laurita had men on the scene the next day.

"Joe, this man used a knife to force the girls to obey him," an excited investigator told Laurita from the office of Belmont County Sheriff George Neff. But despite intensive interrogations by Jack Malik, the Belmont County prosecutor, no link could be established between Levitt and the murdered coeds.

It did develop, however, that Levitt was a student at West Virginia University from January 1970 to June of that year. He had been on campus, officials said, when the coeds disappeared. Levitt pleaded guilty to assault with a deadly weapon and was sentenced to a term of one to five years in Ohio. The kidnapping charge was dropped.

In September, he was indicted by a grand jury in Wheeling and is currently facing a charge of murder in the shooting death of a 12-year-old girl who was gunned down in broad daylight in May of 1971.

Finally, West Virginia State Police and Laurita were forced to admit that it was impossible to put together a case against Levitt. He was definitely in the clear.

According to Laurita, Levitt was "somewhere between Maryland and West Virginia" on the January night the girls disappeared. "And he was only one of many persons who have been investigated since we started looking for the murderer."

Meanwhile, the hunt continues and somewhere, perhaps on the college campus itself, a killer walks free. Mindful of this fact, coeds at the University have become fearfully cautious. No longer do they use the remote roads outside the town for lover's lanes. And, only seldom can a coed be seen hitchhiking along the routes between downtown and the campus.

The authorities are still hopeful that someone, somewhere will come forth with information that will allow them to rid society of the person who took the lives of Karen Ferrell and Mared Malarik. And in the meantime, they can only pray that this killer's blood-lusts have been satisfied and that he will not strike again.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: In order to protect the identities of certain innocent persons caught up in this murder investigation, the following names were changed: James Sprauge, Virgil Banks, Larry Walters, Harry Templeton, and Mary Thompson.)

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