

[Transcript] Casefile True Crime / Case 246: Grégory Villemin (Part 2)

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Today's episode involves crimes against children and won't be suitable for all listeners.

It was 1.15pm on March 29, 1985, when Jean-Marie Villemain approached the La Roche's front door with a shotgun in hand. Bernard had just arrived home with his wife, son and father-in-law.

Jean-Marie raised his gun towards his cousin.

Taken aback, Bernard said, don't do anything stupid. He urged his cousin to put the gun down.

I swear I didn't hurt your kid, Bernard said. It wasn't me.

He invited Jean-Marie to come inside so the two could talk.

Jean-Marie demanded answers. He hadn't come with the intention to cause harm, but the more Bernard tried to placate him, the more overwhelmed Jean-Marie became.

The words from the crow's letter haunted him.

I hope you die of grief.

He aimed the gun at Bernard's chest and pulled the trigger.

Jean-Marie Villemain had been astonished that the man

he believed killed his son was allowed to walk free while suspicion fell on his pregnant grieving wife Christine. He had told the press that the investigators were doing everything they could to push her over the edge. He made no secret of the fact he wanted Bernard La Roche dead, even telling one journalist of his plans to pull off the assassination one month prior.

If the police weren't capable of getting justice for his son, Jean-Marie remarked,

I'll do the job myself. Before the shooting, Jean-Marie was spotted loitering around Bernard's work and home on several occasions. Marie-Anne La Roche feared they'd be targeted and requested police protection. Her requests were denied. And now her husband lay in a pool of his own blood, the shotgun blasting a hole near his heart and killing him instantly.

Jean-Marie Villemain jumped in his car and raced to the hospital where his wife was still being cared for. He screamed as he told her what he'd done. He then turned himself into police and was placed under arrest for the murder of Bernard La Roche. Press gathered outside the La Roche home and snapped photos as Bernard's body was wheeled away. Four days later on Tuesday, April 2, 1985, over 200 mourners gathered for Bernard's funeral. The family warned the press to keep at bay, but photographers still assembled at a safe distance. Bernard was laid to rest in Ormonsey, an inscription on his gravestone reading, Here lies Bernard, innocent victim of blind hatred.

In accordance with French law, if a suspect passes away before a conviction is secured, any legal action against them is terminated. This meant that even though the murder charges against Bernard La Roche were still active at the time he was shot, in his death he essentially benefited from the presumption of innocence. There would be no further investigation into his potential involvement in Gregory Villemain's murder. While Jean-Marie and Christine Villemain believed their son's death had now been avenged, many others disagreed. In the eyes of the authorities,

the public, and Bernard's anguished family members, a killer was still on the loose, and many believed they knew exactly who that killer was.

In late April, police conducted an extensive search of Jean-Marie and Christine's home.

It was no longer occupied. With her husband now in jail, Christine had gone to live with her

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grandmother in a small town roughly an hour's north of La Pange. As police scoured the chalet, they were on the lookout for one item in particular. In the cellar, they came across some sheets of metal that had been tied together with rope. It was exactly what they were looking for.

Forensic analysis revealed that the rope in the Villemain's home was identical to that which was used to tie Gregory's hands and feet together. Jean-Marie told police the rope came from his father, who had helped him with some work a few months prior to Gregory's death.

Jean-Marie said rope from the same bundle had also been used to fix the roof of Bernard La Rocha's car.

His father denied this. Although the discovery was compelling, it wasn't exactly the smoking gun investigators were hoping for.

The rope was a common household item in the region and most residents purchased their hardware from the same suppliers. But when combined with the handwriting analysis and the reported witness sightings of Christine Villemain at the post office on the afternoon of Gregory's abduction, the circumstantial evidence against Christine was starting to mount.

All that was missing was a motive.

With Bernard La Rocha out of the picture, tabloids ran wild with the possibility that Christine Villemain could be Gregory's real killer. A rumor gained traction that Bernard and Christine had been having an affair. Some wondered if Gregory found out about it and Christine killed him to ensure his silence. Or what if Bernard was really Gregory's biological father? Maybe Christine had killed Gregory because she could no longer stand the living, breathing proof of her adultery. Christine told reporters it wasn't her job to convince the public she was innocent. All that mattered was what the authorities believed. The public scrutiny became so intense that she avoided going out altogether. Authorities still hadn't managed to uncover any evidence that Christine had been unfaithful to Jean-Marie. But there were whispers that their marriage wasn't the solid United Front they presented to the media. Christine had met Jean-Marie when she was just 16. He was her first and only love, and today they'd been inseparable ever since. There were whispers about domestic violence. Christine claimed Jean-Marie had slapped her once in 1979. She'd gone to stay with her mother, and today they'd reconciled quickly after that. Investigators wondered whether Christine could have killed Gregory to spite her husband for mistreating her in the past.

The possibility was also floated that Christine could be mentally ill and had killed Gregory during some kind of psychotic episode. Maybe she didn't want to spite Jean-Marie at all, but was jealous of his love for Gregory and wanted her husband's attention all for herself.

A month after Bernhard La Roche's murder, Jean-Marie Villemain participated in an official reenactment of the shooting. Although it was standard police practice, it was a media spectacle with hordes of press in attendance. Fears of further vigilante justice were so strong that Jean-Marie was required to wear a bulletproof vest. He remained in custody awaiting trial.

Christine visited him several times a week, never budging from her stance that the husband and wife were anything other than completely united. By the start of July 1985, Christine was six months pregnant. For eight and a half months, her son's unsolved murder and the subsequent events had dominated national news. As journalist Michael Dobbs wrote in *The Washington Post*, Whoever you go in France this summer, there is no escaping the insistent question.

It screams at you from the front pages of newspapers and the covers of news magazines.

It turns up in endless conversations on trains in working-class bistros on the beach at dinner parties.

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But the press were running out of new angles to cover. Relatives of those involved and village locals had a long-grown weary of the incessant media attention, with some displaying signs on their doors that read, We have nothing more to say. The public wanted justice and investigators were eager to close the case once and for all. On Friday, July 5, Christine Vilman was arrested and charged with Gregory's murder. Christine was unwavering in her claims of innocence. After six days in custody, she announced she was going on a hunger strike unless she was released from remand. News of the strike reached her husband in prison and he too stopped eating. Five days into the strike, the courts agreed that there wasn't enough evidence to warrant holding Christine behind bars. She was released under judicial supervision to await trial in her grandmother's care. By this point, several media outlets had labelled Christine Vilman the most hated woman in France. Adding fuel to the fire was a controversial article published in the popular daily newspaper Liberation titled Sublime, necessarily Sublime, Christine V. The article was written by Marguerite du Rasse, a famous writer known as one of France's most important literary figures. Du Rasse was convinced of Christine's guilt. She reported that Jean Marie had once hit Christine because she overcooked some steaks. Du Rasse wrote that Christine lay awake at night fantasising about gouging out her husband's eyes. In Du Rasse's opinion, Christine felt trapped in her marriage and never wanted to be a mother. Killing Gregory and encouraging Jean Marie to avenge his death by shooting Bernard La Roche was a way to free her of both traps. It was the perfect plan. Du Rasse wrote, No man in the world can know what it's like for a woman to be taken by a man she doesn't desire. Marguerite du Rasse had never met Christine. She based her opinion mostly on a feeling that she had upon seeing the Vilman's home in La Pange. Although the article was prefaced with a warning that the work was purely the view of the writer, it had a huge influence on public opinion. Wanting to avoid another Bernard La Roche situation, Christine was put under police protection.

A month after Christine's arrest, a six-page letter arrived at the office of Case Magistrate Judge Jean-Michel Lambert. Postmarked from a town 600 kilometres west of La Pange, the letter began. My name is Corinne. I'm 16 years old. I'm a friend of Muriel Boll, Bernard La Roche's sister-in-law. I can no longer keep to myself what Muriel told me. Corinne explained that she was from La Pange but was sending the letter while on vacation. She claimed that Muriel had confided in her that she had indeed been in Bernard La Roche's car on October 16, 1984, the day Gregory Vilman was killed. Muriel had retracted her confession out of fear of her family. According to Corinne, Muriel said that Bernard was madly in love with Christine Vilman. Christine had rejected his advances, so Bernard killed her son out of revenge. Surely before the crime, Christine allegedly told Bernard she was glad she didn't marry him because his son was flawed, whereas hers was perfect. Bernard was said to have responded. Don't worry, he won't be perfect for long. The mysterious Corinne couldn't be found.

It was possible this was a fake name or that the letter was a ruse written by one of Christine's supporters. Christine denied ever making such comments to Bernard. Either way, investigators didn't put much weight on it, instead proceeding with their case against Christine. In late September, Christine gave birth to her second child, a son. Her lawyers recognized it as an opportunity to change her public image. At their advice, Christine allowed photographers from Paris

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Match to take photos of her and the newborn in hospital. She was paid generously for the exchange. Instead of showing her as the loving, doting mother she hoped it would, the public accused Christine of exploiting her new child and profiting from the crime.

Regardless, she continued making paid media appearances, gracing the cover of major magazines and writing a book about her experience.

People interpreted her willingness for the spotlight as a further sign of her guilt and her lack of remorse. She was slammed for making money off the back of her dead son, but with mounting legal bills, Christine felt she had little choice. Even her in-laws turned against her. Gregory's grandparents, Albert and Manique Villemont, who had also been viewed as a threat to her family, thought the pieces of the puzzle all fit together.

Wednesday, October 16, 1985 marked the one-year anniversary of Gregory Villemont's death.

Investigators were still gathering information to determine if there was enough evidence to proceed with Christine Villemont's trial. The case against Christine was entirely circumstantial. Unless they could find evidence linking her directly to the crime or exposing an indisputable motive, they had nothing. The argument that Christine had killed Gregory due to some kind of mental illness or postpartum episode was quickly losing traction.

Christine had been subject to psychological testing during her time in Remand, and nothing had been

found to indicate she was of anything but perfectly sound mind. Close friends, family members, co-workers, neighbors and teachers had all been questioned about Christine. They all described her as a doting, devoted mother who loved her son and husband dearly. No one could provide a valid explanation as to why she might want Gregory out of the picture. Jean-Marie was also indisputably confirmed to be the boy's biological father.

Regardless, Judge Jean-Michel Lambert remained convinced of Christine's guilt.

Reconstructions were held to see if Christine could have committed the crime during the purported time frame. Christine's movements were unaccounted for between picking Gregory up from

his nanny's house at 5.03pm and alerting her neighbors to Gregory's absence shortly after 5.30pm. The location in Docelle where Gregory's body was found was 6km from the Vilman's home in

Leponge. The timings didn't fit. However, the day after Gregory was killed, tire tracks and the imprints of a woman's shoe had been found in the riverbank at a clearing in the village of Desimon. This was only 2.3km from the Vilman's home.

Although it would have been a stretch, authorities concluded that if Christine was exceeding the speed limit, it was possible that she'd killed Gregory at her home and then dumped his body in Desimon in that time frame. On Saturday, December 6, 1986, just over two years after Gregory Vilman's murder, the court agreed there was enough evidence against Christine Vilman to warrant a trial. The decision flawed Christine. Fearing it meant that baby Julian would be taken away from her, she overdosed on tranquilizers and had to be rushed to hospital.

Christine survived the suicide attempt and her lawyers appealed the decision.

They argued that the biased press coverage guaranteed there was no way Christine would get a fair trial. One of her lawyers remarked that the media had distorted Christine's image so severely that there was no hope this could be restored in court. Furthermore, the circumstantial case was just too flimsy. The circumstantial case was this. There was heightened activity on Christine and

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Jean-Marie's phone line during the peak times when the crow was active. Several of Christine's co-workers believed they'd seen Christine at the LaPange Post Office on Tuesday, October 16, around the time the letter was sent by the crow claiming responsibility for Gregory's murder. Some experts believed Christine's handwriting was the closest match to the crow of all the extended Vilman relatives. A reconstruction had shown Christine would have had enough time to commit the crime had Gregory's body been thrown from the clearing in Desimone. Thin rope later found in her home matched that used to bind Gregory's body. However, each of these points could easily be refuted. The heightened phone activity could be explained by Christine calling others to alert them of the crow's harassment. It was possible that her co-workers were mistaken about the day they saw Christine at the Post Office.

This could be proven by the mail order she sent the day before Gregory's murder, as well as the descriptions of the outfit she'd been wearing at the time.

Questions were also raised about the rope found in the Vilman's home.

Some neighbours who had watched the search unfold accused the police of incorrectly handling the rope by not placing it in sealed evidence bags. It was also deemed odd that prior searches of the Vilman's home hadn't revealed this rope. Accusations arose that police had planted the evidence in a desperate bid to get a conviction. Others blamed vigilantes.

Some citizens were so convinced of Christine's guilt that it was possible someone had snuck into her empty home and fabricated evidence against her.

As for the handwriting, while some experts believed it matched Christine's, others pointed to Bernad La Roche as the author of the crow's letters.

Furthermore, the timeline presented for Christine to commit the crime was implausible.

Not only was there no proof of where exactly Gregory's body had been thrown into the water, even if the timeline did fit, it still didn't prove that Christine was guilty.

The Court of Appeal ordered that further investigation be conducted.

They weren't convinced there was enough evidence to charge Christine and had also identified some procedural errors that had been made along the way. It was yet another in a long series of roadblocks.

The fact that so much time had passed without a conviction was a major sore point for authorities. Something needed to change.

The criticism against Judge Jean-Michel Lambert had been escalating. His desire for the media spotlight had led him to disclose information that impacted the integrity of the investigation.

Accusations of a conspiracy continued, along with claims that Judge Lambert had become enamored with Christine. The case needed a fresh set of eyes. The decision was made to start the investigation from scratch in a new district with a new magistrate taking charge.

The job went to Judge Maurice Simon, who was aged in his 60s. As an older and much more experienced judge, he had a formidable reputation for being level-headed, discreet and impervious. He also kept a safe distance from the media.

The original investigation file had amassed over 3,000 pages of information.

Judge Simon took over the file in March of 1987.

After painstakingly trawling through each detail, 450 of those pages were immediately deemed invalid

due to improper handling. The various co-workers who had allegedly seen Christine Vilman post

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a letter on the day of Gregory's death were re-interviewed. It quickly became clear that they'd all gotten together to corroborate their stories. When pressed, these witnesses admitted they may have been mistaken about the day they saw Christine at the post office.

Judge Simon ordered full reconstructions of all the possible routes Christine could have taken if she was indeed responsible for Gregory's death. It was a major operation. The original reconstructions had been done in just three hours. Judge Simon's meticulous reconstructions lasted three full days. A similar model car to Christine's Renault was driven from the Vilman's home to the various locations along the Valone River that had been pinpointed as the possible launching site for Gregory's body. The roads were narrow and windy. In each scenario, it was deemed

impossible that Christine could have completed the round trip in the designated time frame.

Not only would she have had to have the skills of a race car driver, there were many other cars on the road. There was no way someone driving at the required speed to commit the crime would have gone unnoticed. Again, a mannequin of similar proportions to Gregory Vilman was thrown from various locations to try and determine the killer's launching point. When discarded from the clearing in Desimone where the tire tracks and women's shoe print was found,

the mannequin passed through protruding rocks, got stuck in branches, and became covered in river slime. To get to the area where Gregory's body was found, it also had to pass through an area of shallow water only 15 centimetres deep. The clearing in Desimone was ruled out. There was simply no way Gregory's body could have made it downstream without sustaining a single mark.

Plastic casts of the tire tracks were compared to the tires of Christine Vilman's Renault.

They didn't match. Nor did the shoe print match any shoes found in her possession at the time of the crime. This location was eliminated from the investigation entirely.

The reenactments determined it was much more likely that Gregory had been thrown into the water behind the fire station in Dosell. The same place his body was discovered four hours after he went missing. The problem with this theory was that various multi-level buildings and residences overlooked this area. There were no trees or anything else that obscured the river bank.

Many people had been in this area on the night Gregory was killed, and no one had witnessed a single thing. Two new forensic experts were appointed to review the findings. Based on the condition of Gregory's body at the time he was found, they determined there was no way the boy had been in the water for four hours. It was much more likely that he'd been held somewhere else for a period of time before being thrown in the river shortly before he was discovered.

Not only did this explain why there were no witnesses, this presented a new possibility entirely. All this time investigators had been working on the theory that one or two people had been working in conjunction to pull off Gregory's murder. It explained the two voices that had been heard during the calls from the crow. But if Gregory had been held elsewhere, it was possible that whoever had abducted him had then handed him over to another accomplice. This raised the question, what if a third person had been in on the crime?

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For the forensic experts tasked with reviewing Gregory Villemans case, the absence of defensive marks or other signs of a struggle on Gregory's body was a major clue. They concluded the most

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likely scenario was that the four-year-old had been anesthetized shortly after his abduction. While chloroform or something similar could have been used, the vial of insulin found near the crime scene couldn't be ignored. The two milliliter vial was six times higher than the recommended dose for a four-year-old diabetic. If Gregory had been injected with the insulin, it would have taken about 90 minutes for him to fall into a coma. The killer or killers could have therefore held him unconscious for several hours before tying him up and throwing him into the river under the cover of darkness. There, he would have drowned peacefully within minutes. Tying his limbs together might have simply been done to add another macabre element to his death. Without toxicology testing to prove if Gregory had been drugged, it was only a theory. But for Judge Maurice Simon, it was the most credible theory so far. It also threw Bernard LaRouche and Muriel Boll back into the fold. Muriel's alleged presence at the crime scene had always been a big question mark. If Bernard had indeed killed Gregory, why did he involve his teenage sister-in-law? The insulin theory could explain this. Muriel had access to the drug via her mother and purportedly knew how to administer it. The now 20-year-old Muriel was interrogated again. Over five hours, Judge Simon used all of his expertise to pry information from Muriel. She claimed she could no longer remember any details of Tuesday, October 16, 1984. As reported in the Netflix documentary *Who Killed Little Gregory*, Judge Simon believed Muriel was on the verge of confessing multiple times. He got the feeling she was terrified of her family. In one instance, their eyes locked. Judge Simon felt like Muriel was trying to convey a message that said, Don't you understand, I can't talk. I tried everything, and I lost. Judge Simon scrutinized every single detail of the case for over two years, determined to leave no stone unturned. When the crow had been active, Manika Vilman had kept a notebook of the time and dates of all the calls she and her husband received. Judge Simon discovered this notebook had since been tampered with. Various pages had been torn out and details had been altered. Among the missing pages were calls that took place at times where Christine Vilman was at work and unable to use the phone. An audio expert listened to all the recorded tapes of the crow's phone calls and concluded that there were indeed two different people responsible for the calls. One was a male, likely middle aged, between 45 and 50 years old. The other initially sounded like a woman of similar age, but the more the expert listened, he concluded the second voice was likely a younger male, aged between 30 and 40, whose individuals were remained unknown. There had never been any doubt that the crime had been committed by someone in the family or with a very close connection to the family. Judge Simon considered all possible motives and rumors. He investigated claims of blackmail, extortion, affairs, illegitimate children and generational grudges. Despite these monumental efforts, he uncovered no evidence of any sinister family secrets. Every key member of the extended Vilman family was re-interviewed and subject to another handwriting test. Most were reluctant to talk. Gregory's grandparents Monique and Albert were tight-lipped. Judge Simon got the feeling there was something they were trying to hide. Over the years, questions had been raised as to the potential involvement of Gregory's uncle, Michelle Vilman. Not only did Michelle have a close friendship with Bernard La Roche and harbor a deeper jealousy for his brother Jean-Marie, he was the only family member who'd been

alone

every time he'd allegedly received a phone call from the crow. Some wondered if he'd made the calls up entirely to deflect attention from himself. If Michelle presented himself as a victim of the crow, surely no one would suspect him as being involved? As part of the re-enactments, investigators had Michelle Vilman replay his movements from the afternoon of October 16, 1984.

Michelle was visibly nervous as he relived the phone call he'd received from the crow, announcing that Gregory had been killed. Michelle said that after receiving the call, he ran outside and yelled for his 12-year-old brother Lionel, who was playing outside with a friend. The crow had told Michelle, I'm calling you because there is no answer next door. Michelle therefore told Lionel to go and find their parents and let them know what had happened. Police had questioned Lionel about this just days after Gregory's death in 1984. At the time, Lionel said he didn't hear the phone ring. Judge Simon re-interviewed Lionel. This time, Lionel said he did recall hearing the phone ring. The friend he was playing with outside did not. Michelle's re-enactment raised some concerns. Some viewed his movements as strangely formal and precise as though he'd rehearsed things in advance. There was also the question of why Michelle had sent Lionel to notify their parents given the urgency of the situation. Michelle was older, faster, and had a car. Why not do it himself?

The call from the crow had come through at 5.32pm. This was the same time that Christine had just noticed that her son was no longer playing in the front yard. The crow told Michelle that Gregory's mother was out looking for him. At a time, she'd barely registered that he was missing.

The crow also said that Gregory had been strangled, which was inaccurate.

There was one possible explanation for these discrepancies. Michelle hadn't received a call at all, but was simply repeating what someone had told him to say.

By 1990, Judge Maurice Simon had arrived at the conclusion that Christine Villemann had nothing to do with Gregory's death. All signs pointed to Bernard La Roche, possibly working in conjunction with one or two accomplices. However, with Bernard now deceased and unable to defend himself, Judge Simon had to be incredibly careful about publicly implicating him.

He agreed to a meeting with a reporter from the magazine *New Detective*, under the presumption that anything he said was off record. However, the magazine published the story, complete with the judge's theory. Lawyers for the La Roche family filed a complaint against Judge Simon for violation of confidentiality. He was automatically removed from the case, thus undoing his years of hard work. But the worst was still to come.

On Tuesday, January 30, Judge Maurice Simon suffered a heart attack and fell into a coma.

When he regained consciousness, he could no longer remember anything about the Gregory Villemann case. The curse of the valone as the investigation came to be known had claimed another victim. Prior to Jean-Marie Villemann's arrest for killing Bernard La Roche, he and Christine had sold their home in La Panche, eager for a fresh start. A woman named Charlotte eventually bought the house. As Charlotte became close to her neighbours, one of them made a confession.

There was a detail about the day of Gregory Villemann's abduction that the police didn't know.

Marcel Claudon was a farmer who kept her cows grazing in a field near the Villemann's home.

In the evenings, she would go to the field to herd them back to their barn.

When questioned by police in 1984, Marcel said that on the afternoon of October 16, she was late to retrieve the cattle. At 5.15pm, her husband drove her down the road to collect them. They didn't see Gregory playing outside, nor did they notice any other cars or people in the area.

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However, Marcel had since told her new neighbour Charlotte that this was a lie. Marcel hadn't been with her husband that day at all, but with her male friend. When driving down the narrow road to collect the cows, they passed a green car. The car had to stop and reverse to let Marcel and her friend pass. There were two occupants inside. One looked just like Bernard La Roche.

After Judge Maurice Simon's heart attack in 1990, Charlotte reported this information to the new judge in charge of the investigation. Marcel's friend, whose name was Claude Collin, was tracked down. He confirmed the story. Although Claude couldn't remember the colour or make of the car, he recalled that the occupants were a portly man and a red-haired woman. Descriptions which matched Bernard La Roche and Muriel Boll.

Once Claude found out about Gregory's death, he asked Marcel to lie about his presence in the area. Claude didn't want his wife to find out he'd been there, as it was rumoured that Marcel and Claude were lovers. He was also supposed to be at work at the time and feared that he'd lose his job if his employers found out. Faced with Claude's confession, Marcel Claude on admitted she'd lied to police, but not only to protect Claude or the status of their relationship.

In the wake of Gregory's death, Marcel claimed she'd received anonymous threats from someone saying they'd burn her house down if she spoke about what she saw. This was a huge revelation. One of the main reasons that suspicion had been cast on Christine Villemont was that none of her neighbours had noticed anyone else in the area at the time of Gregory's abduction. It was a close-knit community and neighbours were known to protect one another.

Armed with this new information, investigators considered it was possible that other neighbours also saw a vehicle in the area, but had lied to protect Marcel Claude on.

The 1984 confession made by Muriel Boll that implicated Bernard La Roche in the crime was put under the microscope. Muriel had claimed that the local police had threatened and intimidated her into making the false statement, but at the time she was being held in custody, she was visited by her family doctor who knew her well. The doctor reported that Muriel was visibly happy and relaxed. When they asked if the police were treating her well, Muriel reportedly responded that they were really nice. She had been given food, adequate breaks, and was allowed to watch television. After Muriel made her confession, her father had been summoned to the police station.

The police wanted to know if his daughter was a reliable witness. Not only did Muriel's father say there was no reason to doubt her story, but when he asked Muriel if she was okay with being questioned further, she allegedly said, it's no problem, the police are my friends. Muriel claimed that a police officer had drawn the sketch of the route she and Bernard supposedly took with Gregory. Further investigation revealed that an officer did indeed draw a map of La Pange, but only because Muriel couldn't describe the village from memory. It was Muriel herself who then used the map to pinpoint the key locations they visited. Muriel's mother Jeanine had since passed away. Prior to Judge Maurice Simon's removal from the case, he questioned as Jeanine's former nurse. She had taken care of Jeanine for several years and became her close confidant. According to the nurse, Jeanine had made a deathbed confession.

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She believed that Muriel was telling the truth about having accompanied Bernard to kidnap Gregory, although Muriel adored children and would have never gone along with it if she knew the young boy was in danger. Jeanine also refused to believe that Bernard was capable of murder.

She thought it much more likely that he'd handed the child off to an accomplice to finish the grisly deed. The nurse confirmed that while treating Jeanine, she had left insulin and syringes at the bowl residence. She had also taught Muriel how to administer insulin injections, but she recalled this happened in 1985, a year after Gregory Vileman was killed.

Judge Simon had also spoken to Bernard's aunt, Louisette Jacques, who lived next door to Bernard and his wife. Louisette had a mild intellectual disability but was considered sensible and incapable of lying. On three separate occasions, Louisette told Judge Simon that shortly after Gregory Vileman was killed, Muriel approached her in tears. She confided that she had been in Bernard's car with his son Sebastian and little Gregory. Bernard had left with Gregory and returned shortly after, alone. Muriel's classmates who claimed to see her get into a car on the afternoon of October 16, 1984 were re-interviewed. Two of them were shown a photo board containing several vehicles.

When asked to identify the one they saw Muriel get into, the witnesses both pointed straight to a green Peugeot 305 belonging to Bernard La Roche.

By February of 1993, eight years and three months had passed since Gregory Vileman's murder. His mother Christine had spent seven and a half years trying to avoid facing trial for the crime. On Wednesday, February 3, the Criminal Court released a 93-page judgment relating to Christine Vileman's possible involvement in her son's death. The findings were unprecedented.

After reviewing all the available evidence, the report concluded that Christine had been a victim of years of judicial misconduct. Multiple factors had contributed to this. The shortcomings of the initial investigation, procedural errors, rivalry between the various law enforcement agencies, disagreements between experts, and the violation of confidential information.

The court also ruled that the extreme media coverage had influenced witnesses, leading some to provide unfounded information and others to withhold vital details out of fear that their own personal lives would be exposed. Because of this, liens had been blurred to a point that the ongoing investigations could no longer determine the truth.

Any theoretical motives for wanting Gregory dead were officially quashed.

The court declared Christine Vileman innocent of all charges and ordered that her name be cleared entirely. The report concluded that the immense effort that had been put into the investigation since Judge Maurice Simon's takeover placed an overwhelming amount of suspicion on Bernard LaRouche.

The original investigation had ruled it implausible that Bernard could have kidnapped Gregory without

the little boy screaming or fighting, given he was very wary of strangers. But, as the report pointed out, Bernard LaRouche was no stranger. The two had met several times, and Gregory had no reason not to trust him. It had also been deemed unrealistic that Bernard would have kidnapped Gregory in the presence of his young son and sister-in-law. The court disputed this.

Although Muriel Bohl didn't recall ever meeting Gregory Vileman, she had actually looked after him before. Gregory had also played with Sebastian on several occasions. Therefore, Bernard could have purposely taken the youngsters with him knowing that it would put Gregory at ease.

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Moreover, if Christine did come out of the house while Bernard was mid-abduction, he could have used Muriel and Sebastian as an excuse by explaining the trio were passing through and had simply invited Gregory to join them for a walk. The most questionable part of Bernard LaRouche's story had always been the 45-minute window between 4.45 and 5.30 pm on October 16, 1984, that was unaccounted

for. He claimed that he'd driven to his friend's house after they had failed to arrive at Aunt Louise's for a pre-arranged meeting to go buy wine together. When interviewed by Judge Simon, the friend had no recollection of making this appointment. He also said it was doubtful that Bernard would have driven to his house given that none of his neighbours recalled seeing anyone pull

up. The report admitted that although there was no physical evidence tying Bernard LaRouche to Gregory's murder, it was still possible that he'd been involved in the kidnapping.

It also pointed out that because Bernard didn't immediately come under suspicion, he had plenty of time to destroy evidence. As for the possibility of laying charges against Muriel Bol, the court found it was likely she did indeed attend the kidnapping of Gregory Vilman and had inadvertently facilitated the abduction by reassuring Gregory with her presence. However, it was entirely possible that she was completely unaware of the purpose of the expedition and had only realised her involvement upon reading of Gregory's death the next day.

In the absence of any criminal intense or physical evidence, the court found it impossible to indict Muriel Bol for any charges. The report concluded. Ultimately, there are very serious charges against Bernard LaRouche. On the other hand, the underlying reasons for the hatred which seems to have dictated this crime remain uncertain. It is impossible to affirm that Gregory Vilman, whose death remains shrouded in mystery, was killed by Bernard LaRouche.

As long as the witnesses who claim to know nothing or give versions of the facts apparently contrary to the other results of the investigation, no new hearing, confrontation or other investigation

will succeed in overcoming their stubbornness and dissipating the thick mists that still remain.

For these reasons, the court hereby rejects the requests for new additional information and declares there is no reason to proceed further against anyone.

The media had been quick to stigmatise Christine Vilman as her son's killer, but with the courts officially absolving her of the crime, it barely made the news.

The announcement brought mixed emotions for Christine and Jean-Marie Vilman.

Although they were thrilled that Christine had been officially exonerated, they still hadn't received closure about their son's murder. There were still so many unanswered questions. By killing Bernard LaRouche, Jean-Marie had hindered any further investigation into his involvement. In an earlier interview with the journalist Marianne Orsini, Christine was asked if there was anyone she would never be able to forgive. Christine replied, Muriel Boll is the one I hate the most right now. If she hadn't recanted, LaRouche would be in jail. He would have been tried, and Jean-Marie would not be in prison. He would always be by my side, and I wouldn't be wrongly accused. But we'll have to know the truth someday.

Jean-Marie had been released from prison in 1987 and placed on judicial supervision awaiting his official sentencing. His trial finally went ahead in December of 1993. All the key individuals in the Gregory Vilman case were scheduled to appear, including witnesses, family members, police, and experts from various fields. The presiding judge saw it as the closest the courts

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might ever get to holding a trial for Gregory Vilman's killer. Recognizing an opportunity to publicly dissect all the circumstances relating to the young boy's death, the judge declared that no topic would be off limits. He stated, This abominable affair has been made of suspicions and gossip. We must take advantage of this trial to wash it out. Only the truth can bring a bit of peace from all this sadness. On the first day of the trial, hordes of people gathered outside the courthouse hoping for a seat inside. Jean-Marie Vilman was placed behind a bulletproof barrier for his own protection. Although he openly admitted to killing Bernard La Roche, Jean-Marie reasoned that his actions were warranted given his firm belief that Bernard had killed his son and managed to get away with it. Jean-Marie told the court, I regret what I did. At the time, I was overwhelmed by grief. But don't ask me to beg for forgiveness. The crow said I would die of grief. Maybe. But I wanted to have him first. Bernard's widow, Marie-Anche, was also present. Outside court, she told reporters that she didn't blame Jean-Marie for killing her husband, as he too was a victim. Instead, she placed blame on the media and the botched investigation for fueling Jean-Marie's rage. The case's original magistrate, Judge Jean-Michel Lambert was called to testify. On the stand, he answered a barrage of questions regarding the failures of the early investigation. He mostly gave evasive answers, responding, I don't remember, or simply, it's possible. Judge Lambert said he regretted giving inappropriate interviews to the press, saying he was influenced by the media madness at the time. He admitted that it was an error to release Bernard La Roche, stating, I certainly made mistakes, I recognize them, but I refuse to be a scapegoat. On the stand, Muriel Bolle stuck by her story that the police had intimidated her into making a false confession. Gregory's grandmother, Manique Vilman, strongly denied she was lying to protect a family secret. Her husband, Albert, conceded it was possible that his son, Michel Vilman, was behind the crow, an accusation that Michel strongly denied. Some of the recorded phone calls from the crow were played in public for the first time. The fear they invoked in many members of the Vilman family was obvious. New voice recognition software had recently been developed, but the court had denied a request to have the recordings of the crow analyzed, on the grounds that the testing was too unreliable. A scientific advisor for the software company was put on the stand to explain that unlike a fingerprint, there is no unique voice print that can be attributed to an individual. The recordings of the crow were also of very poor quality, hindered by background noise and voice overlays, making testing even more difficult. After six weeks of testimony, the jury deliberated for four hours before declaring Jean-Marie Vilman guilty of murdering Bernard La Roche. He was sentenced to five years' prison, taking into account time already served. Jean-Marie was released in secret two weeks later to avoid the inevitable media onslaught. Once again, emotions were mixed for Jean-Marie and Christine Vilman. On one hand, Jean-Marie was free. On the other, the trial had made very little progress in identifying their son's killer. The infuriating mystery of the crow remained. Case file will be back shortly. Thank you for supporting us by listening to this episode's sponsors. Thank you for listening to this episode's ads. By supporting our sponsors, you support case file to continue to deliver quality content. Jean-Marie and Christine Vilman did their best to move on with their lives. They relocated and had two more children, including a boy named Simon, after Judge Marie Simon,

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who had been unwavering in his quest to find answers. The couple stopped doing any media appearances, but they never wavered from their determination to get justice for their son. Although Gregory's case went cold, Jean-Marie and Christine continued to stay abreast of any technological advancements that could lead to a breakthrough.

In 2016, years after Gregory's murder, the couple requested that the investigation be reopened to examine any possible DNA evidence. The letters from the crow were all looked into. Only one still contained a postage stamp, the stamps on the others having since disappeared. An analysis of the remaining stamp revealed traces of DNA, but the DNA was unusable. The letter had simply exchanged too many hands over the years and hadn't been properly stored. Undeterred, Jean-Marie and Christine requested that the DNA be reexamined in 2009.

This time, DNA was found on the final letter sent by the crow.

There were two separate DNA profiles. One belonged to a male and one to a female.

DNA was gathered from over 100 members of the extended Willman family and tested against the profiles found on the letter, but no matches were found. The following year, the letters sent by the crow were tested again to see if any DNA could be found on the seals of the envelopes. Nothing of use was detected. In 2010, the case was discreetly reopened after pressure from the attorney general.

They requested that a full analysis be done of the clothes Gregory was wearing at the time of his death, as well as on the pieces of rope that had been used to tie him up. No DNA was found on the rope, but a strand of hair was detected on Gregory's pants. The hair was tested, revealing traces of mitochondrial DNA. Hopes were high that this would finally be the breakthrough that determined who killed Gregory once and for all. But the DNA didn't match anyone on file.

The vial of insulin, its packaging, and the syringe that were found near the crime scene were also examined. No usable DNA was found. Several fingerprints and traces of DNA were also found on the letter from Corinne, the mysterious friend who claimed Muriel Bowe had confided in her about her involvement in Gregory's abduction. The fingerprints belonged to a magistrate and two police experts, while the DNA couldn't be linked to anyone.

The voice recordings of the crow were digitized. Using advanced audio recognition technology, they were compared against the voices of the various protagonists in the Gregory Vileman case, as had been recorded by journalists in the early days of the investigation.

Once again, the voices of both a man and a woman could be detected, but it wasn't possible to identify a specific individual.

In 2013, the Attorney General announced,

there is still hope in so far that the file is not closed. But from a scientific point of view, hope is fading.

While re-examination of the crow's letters hadn't led to a DNA breakthrough, they had revealed something else of interest. Investigators kept their findings quiet, thus surprising everyone when on Wednesday June 14, 2017, it was announced that multiple arrests had been made. Earlier that morning, police descended on all Monzae and knocked on the door of 72-year-old Marcel Jacob and his wife, 73-year-old Jacqueline. Marcel was the younger brother of Gregory's grandmother, Monique Vileman, and therefore Gregory's great uncle. Although Marcel was technically an uncle to Bernard La Roche, there was only a 10-year age gap between the two. They'd grown up together and remained close in adulthood.

Marcel Jacob had been looked into in 1984. He immediately came under suspicion as he was known

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to have a strange relationship with Gregory's grandfather Albert, as well as a majority of the Vileman sons. The only one of the family Marcel was on good terms with was Jackie Vileman, the illegitimate son who the crow seemed determined to defend.

When Jean-Marie received his promotion to factory foreman, Marcel was particularly scornful. He accused Jean-Marie of sucking up to his superiors, sneering, I don't shake hands with a boss.

Some members of the family had suspected Marcel Jacob of being the crow for various reasons. Albert Vileman believed he'd once heard someone walking up a staircase in the background of one of the crow's calls. Marcel's home phone was situated at the top of a staircase.

A letter from the crow had also referenced an altercation between family members that Marcel Jacob had witnessed. Marcel and Jacqueline had a teenage daughter, and some thought they recognized her voice as the female crow. But most significant was the fact that Marcel and Jacqueline lived next door to Bernard La Roche in a house perched on the hill above the home of Gregory's grandparents. The Jacob's were close friends with the La Roches, but when Bernard and Marcel were questioned in the wake of Gregory's murder, both tried to downplay their friendship. Bernard and Marcel also looked remarkably similar. One witness had even come forward to identify the composite sketch of the suspect as Marcel Jacob.

At the time, Marcel's schedule on the evening Gregory was killed had been looked into.

Both he and Jacqueline worked at the Ormonse spinning factory.

They'd been rusted on for the night shift, which ran from 1pm to 9pm. Marcel claimed they'd both attended a union meeting from approximately 2pm until 4.45pm. Police had contacted the factory supervisor who confirmed their presence at work that day. With his alibi established, Marcel Jacob was ruled out of the investigation.

When Judge Maurice Simon took over the case years later, he requested a meeting with the Jacqueline Jacob who had never been questioned before. She refused to attend. Then in 1991, handwriting experts reexamining the letters from the crow noticed some striking similarities in handwriting. She was formally summoned to a police interview. Jacqueline was reluctant to answer any questions, which only served to cast further suspicion on her and her husband. Marcel and Jacqueline's alibis were looked into further. While they had indeed been rusted to work that day, investigators learned that factory employees often swapped shifts or took over from one another at a machine. It was therefore possible that one or both of them had temporarily left work after the union meeting finished at 4.45pm. If they'd conspired with their close friend, Bernard La Roche, he could have been tasked with abducting Gregory, while the Jacob's were tasked with finishing the job.

The factory in Ormonsee was approximately 17km or a 20-minute drive from the location in Doselle where Gregory's body was found. A witness had seen a couple in a van driving towards Doselle at 4.45pm. It was possible that one or both of the Jacob's could have driven there and taken Gregory off Bernard La Roche's hands before killing him, dumping him in the Valone River and returning to the factory before their shift ended at 9pm.

By the time this theory was properly explored, 7 years had passed since the crime was committed. The factory where the Jacob's worked didn't use clocking machines, so there was no record of their work hours on the day of the crime. The courts determined that too much time had passed to pursue any charges. In the absence of any sufficient evidence against them, any further investigation into Marcel and Jacqueline Jacob was dropped.

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In 2016, the creation of new software allowed investigators to upload information from the hundreds of testimonies that had been gathered in the Gregory Vilmar case over the decades. The program then used this information to establish an extremely detailed chronology of the day that Gregory was killed. This allowed for the alibis of various family members to be cross-checked. Aerial photographs of the key locations in the case were also analyzed to see whose movements lined up with the crow and who had access to the information divulged by the crow

over the years. Based on the findings, investigators generated a report that concluded two different scenarios. One, Bernard La Roche had kidnapped and murdered Gregory Vilmar with the complicity of Muriel Bol. Two, Bernard La Roche had kidnapped Gregory with complicity from several accomplices.

Someone other than Bernard had committed the final act of murder. In this scenario, all of the accomplices would have shared the same jealousy towards Jean-Marie Vilmar. Several names were highlighted. One of those was Gregory's uncle, Michel Vilmar.

While Michel's confirmed presence at home on the afternoon Gregory was killed ruled him out as being directly involved in the crime itself. The report speculated that Michel played a key role as intermediary. His wife Jeanette was also known to harbor intense jealousy towards Jean-Marie and Christine Vilmar. The report concluded that Michel and Jeanette had fed at the crow gossip, which allowed them to harass various family members for years.

The other accomplices were determined to be Marcel and Jacqueline Jacob. The report concluded, on October 16, 1984, Marcel and Jacqueline Jacob were able to satisfy their hatred for the Vilmans by carrying out the assassination of little Gregory.

In 2017, the decision was made to arrest the couple for complicity in murder, failure to disclose a crime, and failure to assist a person in danger.

The couple, now aged in their 70s, were taken into police custody and interrogated.

Jacqueline mostly evoked her right to remain silent.

Marcel was tight-lipped at first, but eventually began to speak.

He maintained he'd been at work on the evening of October 16, 1984, and he and his wife had both attended a union meeting. Marcel said he'd learned of Gregory's abduction at around 9pm from his supervisor. The police asked why he didn't participate in the search.

Marcel responded that he'd only ever met Gregory once and didn't want to get involved in things that weren't of concern to him. However, Marcel's daughter Valerie told police that in the days following Gregory's death, Marcel had called her from work seeking updates on the case.

This not only proved that he had an interest in the investigation, but also that he was able to make personal phone calls from his work. This detail was significant. Some of the calls from the crow had been made during a time Marcel Jacob was confirmed to be at work. Background noise heard in the phone calls could potentially be explained by the factory noise.

According to Valerie, her mother had twice tried to leave her father.

She'd only come back after Marcel threatened to reveal something about her.

Valerie also told police that her parents had permanently kept a pair of binoculars in their living room during the early 1980s and constantly used them to look towards Monique and Albert Vilman's home. Police conducted a search of the Jacob's house. They found multiple items of interest, including minutes from the union meeting that Marcel and Jacqueline claimed to have attended

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on the afternoon Gregory went missing. These handwritten minutes listed both of them as attendance.

This was odd. Marcel had been questioned about his alibi back in 1984. If he had proof he was at the meeting, why not hand it over then, or when he was interrogated by Judge Maurice Simon years later.

A letter written by Marcel to Gregory's grandparents, Monique and Albert, was also found. It was dated Monday, December 14, 2009, around the time that the DNA in Gregory's case was starting

to come under the microscope. Marcel wrote, Regarding the Gregory Vilman affair, I am 100% innocent. I swear on the lives of my mother, my daughter, my grandchildren, and all my family. If you don't believe me, life no longer has any meaning for me.

This raised some significant questions. Marcel Jacob had never been officially deemed a suspect, so why did he feel the need to write a letter to his sister declaring his innocence?

But perhaps the most interesting discovery was made in the couple's basement.

A sealed cardboard file containing newspaper clippings relating exclusively to the Vilman case. Marcel explained that he'd written a letter claiming his innocence just in case he was ever wrongfully arrested. He said the timing had nothing to do with his DNA being collected.

As for the meeting minutes, he'd held onto them in case they ever proved useful one day.

Marcel said it was impossible to leave the factory without a written permission slip signed by a supervisor. When questioned, other coworkers disputed this, saying that Marcel had been known

to come and go on occasion. Marcel and Jacqueline weren't the only ones arrested on June 14, 2017. Michel Vilman had passed away in 2010, but his ex-wife Jeanette was also taken into custody. During her interrogation, she was mostly evasive, saying she couldn't remember the answer to most of the questions. Jeanette denied that she or her ex-husband harboured jealousy towards Jean-Marie and Christine. She claimed they were happy for the couple's success. Jeanette was released.

Gregory's grandmother, the now 86-year-old Manique Vilman, was also questioned.

In 1989, Judge Maurice Simon had received an anonymous letter encouraging him to investigate Christine Vilman for her son's death. The reopening of the case had identified the handwriting as belonging to Manique Vilman. While Manique conceded to police that the handwriting

did look like hers, she said she didn't send the letter. She still believed that Bernard Laroche was innocent, but denied that she was lying to protect anyone. Manique described the relationship between Marcel Jacques and her family as very good. The police asked Manique, are you sure you've said absolutely everything you know about this sad affair? To which she responded,

yes. After four days in custody, Marcel and Jacqueline Jacques were released due to their age, but held under judicial supervision. News of their arrests immediately made news, catapulting the case back into the headlines. After 33 years, members of the media continued to blame the drawn-out unsolved case on the failings of the original investigation led by Judge Jean-Michel Lambert. On Sunday, June 11, 2017, Judge Lambert took his own life. A suicide letter explained that he no longer had the strength to fight.

Over the years, Muriel Boll remained steadfast in her claims of innocence, but in May 2017, a parishioner of a church in La Pange made a startling discovery.

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The church had a register where individuals could sign in or leave a message. Scrawled in the book from a recent visitor were the words, it is indeed Bernard L. who killed Gregory. I was with him. The message was signed by Muriel Boll and dated May of 2008. This didn't make sense. The register book had only been in the church for a few months. Regardless, the page of the book was forensically tested. The DNA profiles of six individuals were detected. Among them, Muriel Boll. In late June 2017, Muriel Boll was indicted for kidnapping and forcible confinement followed by death. Held in custody, Muriel went on a hunger strike to protest her innocence. Re-examination of the DNA on the notebook determined it wasn't a match for Muriel after all. However, one of the DNA profiles did belong to a magistrate who had been involved in the Gregory Vilman investigation, leading to the possibility they'd written the message as a hoax. Muriel was released on judicial supervision just over a month after her arrest due to a lack of evidence. In 2018, the now 49-year-old released a book titled *Breaking the Silence*. Muriel told a reporter for *Le Parisillon* newspaper that it was the only way people could hear her side of the story. She said her involvement in the case had ruined her life and hurt her family. I'll fight until the end to prove my innocence, she said. I am innocent. In her book, Muriel described Bernardo La Roche as loyal, protective, kind and generous. She wrote, Who can still believe today that if Bernardo was the culprit I would cover for him? Why would I have covered up the murder of a child? If Bernardo had anything to do with the death of a child, I would have said it without hesitation, whatever the price to pay. Later that year, another surprise announcement was made. Handwriting experts analyzed the letter from the mysterious Corrine and determined it had likely been written by Gregory's grandmother, Meneek Vilman. In mid-2020, the 88-year-old matriarch passed away due to complications from coronavirus disease. A lawyer for the family told *Paris Match Magazine*, I think that Meneek knew certain things regarding Gregory's crime. She could have made certain revelations, but she did not do so for reasons that belonged to her. A Swiss expert in stylometry was tasked with examining the case. Stylometry is the study of linguistic style. Rather than focus on the physical handwriting itself, it focuses on the words, vocabulary, sentence length and grammar used to attribute authorship to disputed documents. The stylometry expert released an intricate 174-page report of their findings. They concluded that the letter from the crow had been written by as many as five different people, one of whom was Jacqueline Jacob. While the stylometry findings were compelling, the merits of this technique aren't considered infallible, especially when it comes to criminal cases. A lawyer for Jacqueline Jacob told reporters, previous handwriting reports have offered totally different conclusions. If we want to oppose this quackery, we can do it. But that won't bring us closer to the truth. As of early 2023, Gregory Vilman's murder remains unsolved. The case has been subject to at least 15 books, multiple documentaries and TV series. As explained by journalist Michael Dobbs for *The Washington Post*, the Gregory case continues to grip the public as a quote, has been the story with everything, a murdered child, black male, rivalry between different police forces, a second murder, family hatreds and dark suspicions that some terrible injustice has

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been done. Back in 1993, a lawyer for the La Roche family told the LA Times that stupidity was the reason the case hadn't been solved. He commented, all the mistakes in an investigation that could have been made have been made here. His sentiments were shared by a lawyer for the Vilman family,

who added, the institution's only function if the people in them function. In this case, the people didn't function. Throughout the investigation, various pieces of evidence have been mishandled or gone missing entirely. Expert testimony has been nullified. Gregory's autopsy has been declared inadequate. Investigators have been blamed for being biased towards certain persons of interest, with their lack of control allowing the media to railroad everything. The media fast can't be understated, as one academic explained. From an ethical perspective, this case is disturbing, not only because of the gruesome details, but also due to the negligible morality of the media's coverage. It has been questioned whether the protagonists in this story were merely observed by the journalists or whether the journalists pushed them to act. A lawyer for Bernard La Roche once told the press, perhaps if from the beginning everyone had remained silent, reporters wouldn't have stayed here, and it would have been just another ordinary crime in France.

Over the years, Muriel Boll and Marie-Anne La Roche have both received financial compensation for the way the investigation was mishandled. Jean-Marie and Christine Vilman also received a payout for being served a miscarriage of justice. For many years, the cemetery in La Pange was a tourist hotspot, with people flocking from all over to visit the grave of little Gregory. Eventually, Jean-Marie and Christine had their son's body exhumed and cremated in a private ceremony. They kept half of his ashes for themselves, something private after all the years of extreme

public scrutiny. They are still married, having raised their three children in the suburbs of Paris where people no longer recognise them. Christine and Jean-Marie say they only managed to survive through the ordeal because of their love for each other and their children, whom they say restored the balance in their lives. But their firstborn son, Gregory, will never be forgotten. In the days following the child's death, a sobbing Jean-Marie told journalists, Gregory was lively, tender. He grew up in happiness.