

[Transcript] Casefile True Crime / Case 252: Margaret Maher, Mersina Halvagas & Nicole Patterson

Und du? Wenn isst du deine Pinklady am liebsten? Zum Frühstück oder gegen den kleinen Hunger? Pinklady vor dem Schlafengehen oder Pinklady nach der Arbeit? Pinklady zu Nachtschisch oder Pinklady als Snack?

Warum sich überhaupt entscheiden? Der Pinklady-Apfel einfach immer ein Genuss.

Wenden Sie Pinklady in den Zieldörfern der Deutschland-Tour vom 23. zu 27. August.

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The names of several witnesses in this case have been changed.

Melbourne resident Irene Langley was looking through the Herald Sun newspaper when she came across a job ad for phone sex workers.

The customer would ring a 1900 number and hear pre-recorded messages from various women.

When they heard one they liked, they dialed a pin number that directed the call to that particular person.

Irene took on the job and had the calls come through to her home phone.

After a year in the role, only three calls left her feeling disturbed.

One customer told Irene that he'd become sexually aroused while watching his sister shower.

Another expressed a desire to have sex with his own daughter.

The third man wanted to speak to an older woman.

To appease him, Irene pretended she was 55 years old.

In a mean, angry voice, the caller asked,

Do you know what I did to the bitch?

When Irene asked who, the man responded,

My mother, the bitch.

He said he'd pressed his hand on her neck before cutting across one of her breasts and slicing through her nipple.

As the man spoke of the blood, his voice became animated and his breathing increased as though he were aroused.

How does that make you feel? he asked.

Horrified, Irene ended the call.

The man called back shortly after, warning,

Listen, don't hang up, I know where you live and who you are.

Again, he started talking about attacking a woman, his tone low and hateful.

Irene listened in stunned fear, struggling to take in what the caller was saying.

He said he looked into the woman's eyes as he put the steel down her stomach.

He didn't say knife specifically, but Irene knew that's what he meant.

She tried to interrupt, but it only made the man angry.

He mentioned the blood again, how it had seeped out of the cut nipple and gotten on him.

He then spoke of, quote, fucking the woman with the blade.

Irene could hear his excitement growing and believed he was now masturbating.

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His description of the mutilation was so vivid, Irene could picture the woman as a real person. She called him a sick prick and hung up.

Irene waited, then picked up the receiver again.

The man was still there.

Old cunt, he barked, before Irene swiftly pulled the phone's cord from the wall.

It was a little after 1 p.m. on Saturday, October 4, 1997, when pensioners Ronald and Muriel McDonald drove down Cliffords Road.

The unsealed back road framed the Craigieburn Railway Line on the industrial outskirts of Summiton,

a suburb 21 km north of Melbourne.

The area drew little traffic and was used as an illegal dump site for hard rubbish.

The McDonald's often took Cliffords Road on their route home, keeping an eye out for any new junk piles to rummage through.

Sometimes they'd uncover something worth selling.

The couple were joined that day by Muriel's sister, Elaine.

The trio spotted an assortment of computer parts and boxes discarded among the overgrown grass and pulled over to examine the pile.

Ronald lifted a sheet of cardboard and exclaimed, oh, what's that?

He could see a hand and part of a leg.

Muriel thought her husband had exposed a store mannequin.

I don't think so, Ronald replied.

He observed rings on the fingers, a bracelet on the wrist and a tattoo on the leg.

He knew it was a human body.

Ronald returned to his car where he had a phone fitted and called the police.

Officers arrived and identified the body as a middle-aged woman with bleached blonde hair.

Her pants and underwear had been pulled down and her blouse and top were pushed up.

A large wound was visible on the left side of her chest.

There was also something poking out of the woman's lips.

It was a nipple.

Her left breast had been removed and stuffed into her mouth.

The victim was known to authorities and welfare services.

She was 40-year-old Margaret Ma from the neighbouring suburb of Craigieburn.

Margaret typically lived alone,

but her teenage daughter had been staying with her as they endeavoured to bridge a gap that had formed between them.

Margaret had lived an ordinary life as a bank worker until she was introduced to heroin.

By October 1997, she was a recovering long-term drug user and sex worker.

An autopsy concluded that Margaret had been killed elsewhere,

then dumped on the side of Clifford's Road in the early hours of the day she was found.

She had bruising and stab wounds across her neck, abdomen and limbs

and had sustained a severe blow to the upper right side of her head.

Her left wrist had a particularly deep incision and her neck featured evidence of compression, though her exact cause of death couldn't be ascertained.

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Margaret's left breast had been mutilated post-mortem by a knife used in a ragged, soaring motion. A timeline of her final movements was pieced together.

Margaret left home at 7 on the night of Friday, October 3, to visit a local news agency.

By the time she returned home, her daughter had gone out and taken the house keys with her, leaving Margaret locked out.

She asked a neighbour for help, but they didn't have the tools needed to get into her house.

At around 7.45pm, Margaret was sighted hitchhiking on the nearby Hume Highway.

This wasn't unusual, as Margaret often relied on hitchhiking to get around.

At 8.05pm, she was spotted entering a pharmacy in the nearby suburb of Strathmore, where she bought medication.

She got herself several kilometres north to a shopping complex in Broadmeadows.

Margaret was a familiar face in the supermarket there,

and was seen by staff browsing the health, beauty and hygiene aisles before paying for several items.

At around midnight, a woman saw Margaret walking through the complex's car park carrying several shopping bags.

She wasn't seen again.

It was likely that Margaret crossed paths with her killer as she hitchhiked to each destination.

A single black woolen glove found alongside Margaret's body was thought to be the key to solving her murder.

It was tested, but limitations in forensic technology prevented any significant discoveries.

A 15-minute drive south from where Margaret Ma's body was found is the expansive and serene grounds of Forkner Cemetery.

In the month following Margaret's murder,

a woman named Janet Morton visited Forkner Cemetery to research her family tree.

Janet stood alone in a rose garden examining plaques,

when she glanced up and noticed a middle-aged man on the opposite side of the flowerbed.

He was short and overweight, with thin, light-coloured hair styled in a bowl cut.

Janet smiled at the unassuming man, but he ignored her.

Janet went to another section, where she soon spotted the man again.

She then headed to an area 50 feet away,

only to realise the man had seemingly followed her there too.

Janet glanced over and met his gaze, realising then that he'd been watching her.

Janet moved on to an older area of the cemetery,

where she intended to find two particular graves.

Her attention was cast downward as she scanned the headstones,

when suddenly she heard something to her left.

It was the man.

He was moving quickly and intently towards her,

with a look in his eyes Janet described as frightening.

He got so close that she instinctively put her hand up at him in a stopping motion and nervously stepped backwards.

She either screamed or yelled, but couldn't remember in the heat of the moment.

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Whatever she did, it startled the man and he walked away.
But he didn't leave.
Janet spotted his feet poking out from behind a cluster of trees close by.
Overcome by fear, she turned and ran,
leaping over graves until she reached her husband,
who was waiting in their car.
She told him about the encounter
and led him to where the man was hiding.
He was nowhere to be seen.
Janet didn't consider herself to be easily scared,
but she was so troubled by the experience that she gave up on her research
and refused to go back to Forkner Cemetery.
Janet wasn't the only one who'd encountered this man in October 1997.
His behaviour revealed a prolonged campaign of harassment,
during which alone women in Forkner Cemetery were watched.
Some noted his prescription glasses within gold frames.
He once donned glue overalls akin to those worn by tradesmen.
No one saw him carrying a weapon,
though he kept his right hand in his jacket pocket,
as though hiding something.
The women either dismissed the man's actions as misinterpreted
and likely hunted him down.
The women either dismissed the man's actions as misinterpreted
and likely harmless,
or chose not to report him out of fear that he was indeed dangerous.
On the morning of Saturday, November 1,
Leimer Berman was maintaining the Latvian memorial section of Forkner Cemetery
when the man approached.
Reeking of alcohol, he introduced himself as John Roberts.
He kept his hands in his jacket pockets,
as he engaged Leimer in conversation.
Twice, he motioned to a nearby hedge and asked what was behind it.
He then pointed out a nearby grave and said it belonged to his adoptive mother.
Leimer sensed something unusual about the man.
She felt like he was trying to lead her away.
She offered him a rake to tidy the graveside of his adoptive mother
and carried on with her work.
Later, Leimer went by the grave the man had singled out.
It remained in a neglected state.
Throughout the day, the same man was spotted multiple times.
After 3pm, a woman noticed him coming towards her,
but he backed off when her boyfriend approached.
Shortly before 4pm, the cemetery's mournful silence

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was shattered by a woman's sharp and sudden scream.

It was coming from the north,

where the Greek Orthodox Memorial was located.

A second scream rang out barely a minute later.

The cries decreased in pitch and volume

before gradually turning into subdued moaning.

The area soon fell silent again.

At 6.45pm, Angelo Gorgeski arrived home from work

to find his house unusually quiet and empty.

His fiancée, 25-year-old Messina Helvargas, should have been there.

The couple were planning to have dinner out together

and Messina was typically reliable,

but hers passed with no sign of her.

Although she didn't like cemeteries,

Messina visited her grandmother's grave

fortnightly to pray, lay flowers, or light a candle.

It was still dark at 4.30am,

when Angelo arrived at the cemetery to see if Messina

was still alive.

It was still dark at 4.30am,

when Angelo arrived at the cemetery to see if Messina

was da.

The grounds were closed,

but Messina's locked car was alone in the parking lot.

Angelo called the police and escorted officers

to the Greek Orthodox section,

where Messina's grandmother was buried.

They wandered down Roam

and came across Messina Helvargas

not far from her grandmother's grave,

lying between two headstones.

She had been stabbed to death

in a frenzied attack.

The ground around her was covered in blood,

as were the surrounding headstones.

Flowers scattered across the scene

indicated that Messina had been set upon

unexpectedly while tending to her grandmother's grave.

A chaotic altercation ensued

with Messina's glasses and shoes

coming off during the fight.

Messina's attacker pulled her up a clothing over her head.

The garments remained tangled in her arms

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and bunched up around her chest,
partially exposing her bra.
Injuries to Messina's hands
showed she'd fought desperately for control of the knife.
She endured 85 injuries in total,
including stab wounds to her neck, abdomen and limbs.
The killer had zeroed in on Messina's chest and breasts,
which featured severe wounds.
The crime was particularly disconcerting,
as Messina had been killed just before 4 p.m. in broad daylight
in an inhabited public space.
The motive also wasn't abundantly clear.
Messina Helvargas, who worked for a bank,
was described as selfless and caring.
Her family was close knit.
She had no known enemies
and she had an expressed concern for her safety prior to her death.
The killer had likely been covered in blood,
yet they only had to run 40 meters to reach the car park
to escape without being seen.
Every bush and blade of grass around the crime scene
was checked, as well as the creek bed nearby.
All potential clues were thoroughly examined,
including several cigarette butts found at the crime scene
and unique tire tracks in the parking lot.
But it was soon realized that Messina's killer
hadn't left anything behind
that could lead to their identification.
Her heartbroken family fronted the press,
requesting the public's help.
Her father said,
every day is nothing but misery in our house.
There has to be someone who knows something or suspects something.
It's not going to make me feel better,
but at least we would know who did it.
Visitors to the cemetery on the day of the killing
came forward to report what they now believed
was the sound of Messina screaming mid attack.
As none had reported or investigated the screams,
the cemetery gates were closed at 8 p.m.
with Messina lying dead within.
More reports soon came in of the frightening man
who'd stalked women in the weeks leading up to Messina's death.

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Witnesses placed him in the cemetery on the day Messina was targeted, where he had looted for hours.

Police was certain he was Messina's killer and that every other encounter was a fortunate near miss.

This told detectives that they weren't dealing with a rational person,

but a cold and calculated killer with the presence of mind to stalk and hide.

A photo fit of the stalker was publicized and a million dollar reward was offered.

Six large binders were filled with information pertaining to the Helvargas case.

Detectives worked to 18 hours a day pursuing 400 leads and questioning 1500 people.

Several suspects were interviewed, but no charges were laid.

Messina's mother asked herself between Sobs, why, why us?

What did we ever do to deserve this?

Meanwhile, the investigation into the murder of Margaret Maher in Summerton had also gone cold.

A year and a half passed with no breakthroughs.

Then, at 7 p.m. on Monday, April 19, 1999, Rena Hoffman approached the weatherboard cottage rented by her good friend Nicole Patterson.

28-year-old Nicole worked from home in the suburb of Northcote, a short distance from Melbourne CBD.

The pair had dinner plans that night but Rena was running late.

She had left a message on Nicole's mobile to let her know but hadn't heard anything back.

Rena parked her car outside Nicole's home on Harper Street and made her way up the driveway

where a light illuminated the veranda.

Rena rang the doorbell.

Nicole's dog, Bella, started barking from the backyard but Nicole didn't appear.

Rena rang the doorbell several more times and waited.

Growing concerned, she forced herself in.

Nicole's home was lived in but tidy.

Lights were on throughout and music was playing from a radio in the lounge room.

Rena headed towards a room at the front of the house used as Nicole's home office.

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There, she found Nicole lying on the floor face-up in the crucifix position.
She was naked from the waist down with her underwear looped around one ankle.
Her cardigan was pushed up, revealing what appeared to be an orange or yellow top underneath.
The carpet around Nicole's body was soaked red and deep red.
Rena rushed to a phone in the lounge room and called emergency services.
The operator instructed her to check if Nicole was still breathing.
Nicole didn't react to Rena's voice or touch.
Her skin was cold and her pulse was imperceptible.
Rena placed her hand on Nicole's chest to see if she could feel a ring.
Nicole's bra was a skew and Rena quickly realized she had been mistaken.
Her friend wasn't wearing an orange or yellow top. It was fatty tissue.
Nicole's breasts had been removed.
The brutal depravity of Nicole Patterson's murder confuses her.
The brutal depravity of Nicole Patterson's murder confronted the seasoned homicide detective's task with investigating the crime.
She had sustained 27 stab wounds to her back, chest, abdomen and limbs.
Further incisions in her thigh, wrists and hands were deemed defensive.
There were no signs of forced entry into Nicole's home.
The rear door was locked, as were all the windows.
Nicole's large dog was secured in the backyard, meaning the killer had likely entered from the front.
The presence of mugs and a spilled coffee pot in Nicole's office suggested that she'd engaged her killer with pleasantries before the attack.
She was struck as her back was turned.
It couldn't be ascertained with absolute certainty that Nicole had been sexually assaulted.
What came next was deemed sexually motivated.
Once the bulk of the attack was over, Nicole was rolled onto her back.

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Her top was cut away with scissors and her breasts were removed with a knife in a ragged soaring motion. Nicole's killer then moved throughout her house, leaving bloodstains on a hallway wall, interior door jam, the front door and inside her bedroom. Nicole's breasts weren't found at the crime scene, indicating the killer might have taken them as a souvenir. Her purse and a driver's license were also missing. Residents along Harper Street were stunned by news of the murder, recalling that Nicole was a lovely and happy young woman. No one had witnessed anyone coming or going from Nicole's home on Monday, April 19, but one neighbour had heard something strange. They were walking past Nicole's home just after 9am when they heard a woman yell twice, you fucking can't. She didn't sound angry, just upset. The passer-by assumed it was a domestic argument and carried on, unwilling to pry. Another neighbour named Bruce Thompson lived three doors down from Nicole. He was smoking on his veranda just after 9am when he heard what sounded like an injured woman's scream from the direction of Nicole's home. Bruce looked up the street but didn't see anything untoward. He stayed outside for a little longer, just in case. Soon he spotted a stocky, short-statured man walking intently with his hands in his pockets towards West Garth Street. They locked eyes and Bruce gave a friendly nod, but the man carried on without responding. Bruce didn't recall seeing any blood on the man, which correlated with the crime scene. While Nicole's injuries were extensive, they weren't the type to cause extensive blood splatter. None of her arteries had been nicked and her breasts were removed post-mortem. Any mild splatter her killer might have received could have been absorbed by his clothing, leaving little visible. Detectives believed the man Bruce had witnessed was Nicole's killer, whose car was likely parked in West Garth Street.

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Scraps of Notepaper found next to Nicole's answering machine provided a clue.

Scrawled in her handwriting at the top of one page was the name Malcolm.

The word depression was written underneath.

Nicole was a certified psychotherapist and youth worker.

Described as someone always willing to help others, she had established a private practice at her home.

In an attempt to grow her client base,

Nicole advertised her services in the North Kurt Leader newspaper.

The weekend before her death,

Nicole spoke to her friends and family

about the very first client she'd taken on, named Malcolm.

He'd seen Nicole's newspaper ad

and booked a session at her home for 9 a.m. the day she was killed.

Nicole didn't elaborate out of respect for confidentiality,

but she was looking forward to the meeting.

There was evidence that the killer had cleaned up after himself by wiping down surfaces

and had scoured the home for clues before fleeing.

Detectives knew they were dealing with an experienced offender who knew how to beat the system.

Yet, he'd missed something very important.

Nicole's appointment book was hidden under clothing and couch cushions in the lounge room.

In it, she had noted her meeting with Malcolm and circled it.

Most importantly, she had also jotted down a mobile phone number.

The number was traced to a 24-year-old international student named Harbour Gunn Colley, locally known as Harry.

He told police that he had purchased the number

as part of a phone plan in mid-March 1999,

a little over a month before Nicole was killed.

It was just after Harry had arrived in Melbourne from India to study a Masters of Business Administration.

Harry assured police that the phone

had remained in his possession the entire time

and no one else had used it.

Detectives placed Harry under covert surveillance

to see if he did anything that would elevate him as a suspect.

All they determined was that he was a normal, law-abiding young man.

Speaking with Harry again,

Detectives learned that he'd recently applied

for general labour, cleaning and gardening work.

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He was given a contact named Peter,
who told him work would commence in mid-May.
Harry provided Peter with his mobile number
so that he could be contacted closer to the start date.
Detectives believed Peter had contacted Nicole Patterson
under the fake name Malcolm,
using Harry's number as his own
so that it couldn't be traced back to him.
It was a clever and calculated cover-up, but flawed.
Phone records from Nicole's Landline revealed
she had received 15 calls from a number
in the lead-up to her fatal meeting.
The number was associated with the Landline
in the suburb of Pascovale
and registered to a man named Peter Dupass.
Case file will be back shortly.
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3 decades earlier on the afternoon of Thursday, October 3, 1968,

15-year-old Peter Dupass left his home
in the inland suburb of Mount Waverly, Victoria.

After a short and purposeful walk,
he arrived at his neighbor's house and knocked on their back door.

Dupass was well acquainted with his neighbors
and got along well with the man of the house.

But he wasn't home that day.

Only his wife, 27-year-old Anne Ackerst,
was.

She was nursing their 5-week-old baby.

Anne opened the laundry door to Dupass,
who was still wearing his uniform after a day at school.

With urgency, Dupass asked to borrow a sharp knife
to peel some potatoes for his mother.

After commending him for being a good son,
Anne retrieved a small knife and handed it over.

Dupass stood silently with the knife's blade pointed towards Anne.

He then launched himself towards her.

What's wrong? Anne asked frantically,
as he forced her to the ground by her hair.

The teenager straddled Anne
before wordlessly slashing at her hands, face and neck.

Wounded and bloody, Anne desperately tried to grab the knife
while begging to be let go.

Dupass replied.

It's too late, Anne. I can't stop now.

They'll lock me up.

Losing strength against the determined teen,
Anne screamed as loud as she could.

Peter Dupass covered Anne's mouth and nose
with the palm of his free hand,
then pushed his fingers down her throat to silence her.

Just as he began to bash Anne's head against the floor,

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Dupass went still.
As if moving in slow motion,
he looked at the knife and turned it towards himself.
Anne riggelt away.
She had sustained mostly cuts and bruises
across her head and neck.
There were several deeper wounds to her fingers and face,
which would require a couple of stitches at most.
Anne coaxed Dupass to hand over the knife.
She hid the weapon before returning to Dupass,
who broke down in tears and begged her to call the police.
In a subsequent police interview,
Dupass offered no explanation for the attack.
He had no criminal history
and was described by those who knew him as ordinary.
At home, Peter Dupass' upbringing was reportedly normal.
He was treated warmly and lovingly
by his taxi driver father and a Tupperware-selling mother.
They raised Dupass as an only child,
as his two siblings were many years older.
He was spoiled and never beaten.
School was a far more hostile and isolating environment.
While Peter Dupass was well regarded by educators
for being polite and quiet,
his peers found him strange and unfriendly.
Vue took any notice of him
and those that did bullied him for being short and overweight.
Prominent Deposits of fat
formed over his pectoral muscles,
which, quote, had the appearance of female breasts
and led to further insecurities.
Dupass was physically weak
and only got into typical schoolyard scraps,
never showing signs of extreme violence.
With few friends and limited social skills,
Dupass' life was dominated by his parents.
He felt his mother was overprotective and smothering,
as he grappled with feelings of inadequacy
brought about by his perfectionist father.
Following the teens seemingly out of character attack
on Ian Ackerst,
the courts concluded that he was, quote,
caught in an emotional conflict

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between the need to conform to the expectations of his parents and the unconscious urges to express his aggression and his developing masculinity.

Dupass avoided serious punishment and was instead placed on probation for 18 months and ordered to undergo psychiatric treatment.

When speaking in the immediate aftermath of the attack, he explained,

I must have been trying to kill Ian or something.

I don't know why I was trying to do this.

As far as I am concerned,

there is no reason for me to do anything to her.

But I couldn't help myself.

During psychiatric observation,

Peter Dupass was considered a model young man.

He seemed caring and helpful

and was released from hospital within two weeks.

By March 1972,

18-year-old Dupass had finished school

and was working as an apprentice craftsman.

One evening he went to the suburb of Oakley

when at around midnight he approached a residence and peered through a bathroom window.

There was a woman showering inside.

Her husband spotted Dupass peeping and a chase ensued.

When apprehended,

Dupass asserted that he had only been taking a shortcut through the couple's yard to get to his car.

He was given a \$50 fine.

Almost two years later in November 1973,

police arrived at the Dupass home

and requested Peter Dupass accompany them back to the station.

When he asked if the matter would take long,

the officers informed him that they were inquiring about a rape.

Dupass became flustered.

The officers told him,

if you are not involved, you have nothing to worry about.

Dupass started to cry and told his father,

I don't want to go with them.

His father asked how his son came to be a suspect in the rape.

Two weeks earlier in the nearby suburb of Mitchum,

23-year-old Caroline Barton

was at home with her 18-month-old son

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when there was a knock at the front door.
It was a man Caroline didn't know.
He gestured towards a red car parked on the street
with its bonnet up, saying that it had broken down.
He asked if he could use Caroline's phone,
then remarked that he might be able to fix it himself
if she had a screwdriver.
As Caroline went to retrieve one, the man entered her home.
He pulled out a knife and grabbed Caroline's baby
to force her to comply
before binding the frightened mother with a cord
and violently raping her.
In the next fortnight,
two other women reported incidents involving a man
entering their home after requesting a screwdriver
for his broken-down car.
In the first case, he only stole money and fled.
He left the second woman's house abruptly
when she said that her husband would be back shortly.
Peter Dupass and his car were positively identified
by all three women.
The now 21-year-old faced charges for housebreaking,
housebreaking with intent to commit a felony and rape.
The trial judge stated,
this was one of the worst rapes that could be imagined.
You invaded the sanctity of her home by a false story,
relying upon her willingness to help in order to gain admission.
You threatened her with a knife.
You tied her up with a cord.
You struck her.
And worst of all,
you threatened to harm her baby when she tried to resist.
The judge reflected on Dupass's 1968 attack
against neighbor Ian Ackerst.
A psychiatric report at the time asserted that Dupass
had lost normal control
when becoming overwhelmed by pent-up feelings of sexual needs
and aggression.
The judge overseeing Peter Dupass's rape trial
rejected this explanation for his most recent offending,
saying,
this was no sudden impulse
because you must have left home that morning armed with a knife

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and provided with the cord to bind your victim.

Given that Dupass had entered two other women's homes under similar pretenses, further indicated that he was driven by premeditation and not impulse.

Little could be ascertained from psychiatric examination of Dupass as he wouldn't admit any guilt.

It was believed he used denial as a coping mechanism and he was diagnosed with an undefined psychosexual problem.

In a letter to the prosecution, a detective wrote, Peter Dupass is a very dangerous young person who will continue to offend where females are concerned and will possibly cause the death of one of his victims if he is not straightened out.

Peter Dupass was found guilty and sentenced to accumulative six-month incarceration for each of the breaking counts with a further nine years for Caroline's rape.

Dupass remained a placid and compliant prisoner in der Präparation für his first parole bid.

He said he felt certain he wouldn't reoffend and his supportive parents sought his release as early as possible.

A report by a parole officer revealed that psychiatric treatment for Dupass's type of personality disorder had been ineffective.

Although marking Peter Dupass as an ongoing threat to the community, the officer recommended he be paroled in condition that he have a great deal of supervision.

Dupass was released in September 1979 after serving just half of his decade-long sentence.

He moved back in with his parents who were now living in the beachside city of Frankston.

Dupass was required to receive outpatient treatment at a psychiatric hospital.

He was permitted to come and go as he pleased and no arrival or departure records were kept.

Shortly after Dupass's release at a campsite in the seaside town of McCrae, some young girls were bathing in a women's shower block when they spotted a man at the open doorway watching them. One of the girls screamed, causing him to flee.

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When two more incidents were reported, police conducted a stakeout of the amenities and caught Peter Dupass in the act. Although he denied peeping on anyone, he was charged with loitering with intent and offensive behaviour and fined \$140.

On the night of Friday, November 9, Nina Caden entered a women's toilet block in Frankston. As she went to leave the cubicle, Nina was confronted at knife point by a man wearing a balaclava. He ordered her to do as he said or she'd be killed. The man pushed Nina back into the cubicle and proceeded to rape her.

When other people entered the toilet block, the assailant pressed his knife to Nina's throat to keep her quiet.

Two nights later, Erika Danes was walking alone down Cars Street, a residential road on the cusp of Frankston CBD.

She soon realised the man was following her. Unnerved, Erika quickened her pace. The man matched her speed.

When Erika turned to confront him, he rushed in. That's when she noticed the blue balaclava over his face and the knife in his hand.

Erika ran into the middle of the road and screamed. Her pursuer gestured to her to quieten down, but when Erika continued to yell, he fled.

A week later, just after 9pm on November 18, Dorothy Elmore was walking along the Nepean Highway in Frankston when she was grabbed from behind.

The elderly woman was dragged to a vacant block of land and forced to the ground by a masked man.

Don't scream or I'll kill you, he warned as he straddled Dorothy with a knife in hand.

He attempted to remove her cardigan, but Dorothy resisted and screamed, prompting her attacker to run away.

Dorothy sustained a knife wound to the left side of her chest that required 14 stitches.

The following night, Amanda Folds was walking along Dendenong Road East,

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a stretch that ran beside the Frankston Railway Line,
when she too was grabbed and dragged to a vacant block of land.
Her mask wearing a silent groud
as he tried to overpower Amanda,
who screamed for attention.
The man gave up and fled.
Investigations quickly led police to Peter Dupass,
who admitted to carrying out the 10-day spree
of Frankston-based attacks.
He said,
In addition to the knife, Dupass revealed
that he'd also been carrying rope to bind his victims with.
He told police,
It just comes over me, I can't help myself.
I've had a problem for about six years.
I'm glad I got caught.
It all started again about two weeks ago.
I just find it hard to mix with people.
And I haven't many friends.
I just don't know what to say.
Detectives noted that whenever Dupass spoke with men,
he appeared timid and nervous.
He avoided eye contact,
speaking quietly with his shoulders hunched forward.
Doctors believed that the introverted,
cowering loner sought power by scaring women.
Dupass was convinced of the fact
Dupass was convicted of assault
with intent to rob malicious wounding
in decent assault and rape.
On the surface, the Pudgy baby-faced and non-descript man
appeared harmless.
But when it came to Peter Dupass,
police quickly learned that looks can be deceiving.
They found him deceptive, manipulative and intelligent.
He knew when to talk
or when to clam up and deny everything to better his outcome.
His offending was growing in number and severity.
A report stated,
there is little that can be said in Dupass's favor.
He remains an extremely disturbed, immature and dangerous man.
His release on parole was a mistake.
Yet, the police and prosecution were flawed

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when Peter Dupass was sentenced to just six and a half years jail. They had formed the belief that Dupass could not be rehabilitated and should be kept away from society.

Yet, he was released in February 1985 at age 31 after serving his minimum term of five years.

Like McCray and Frankston, the town of Blair-Gowry is located within an area along Victoria's southeast coast called the Mornington Peninsula. The Peninsula is a popular destination in the warmer months, but it was quiet on Blair-Gowry Beach when 21-year-old Hannah Gadsden arrived on March 3, 1985. Only a few figures were visible in the distance.

She reached the water, stripped down to her bathing suit, then went for a short walk.

Upon reaching an area of jagged rocks, Hannah passed a shirtless man who was wearing jeans.

It was Peter Dupass.

The rocks are sharp, Hannah remarked offhandedly as they crossed paths. Dupass smiled and watched as Hannah returned to her things nearby.

He then approached her while saying something about a purple-coloured starfish and the poor condition of the surf.

As Dupass closed in, he swiftly curled his arm around Hannah's throat and pressed a knife against her neck.

He warned her not to struggle or he'd hurt her.

Dupass ordered Hannah to get down on the sand.

She screamed out,

but Dupass clasped his hand over her mouth.

Hannah saw the knife on the sand beside her and reached out for it.

Dupass noticed and told her not to be foolish.

He then raped Hannah.

When she asked why he was hurting her,

Dupass didn't respond.

Afterwards, he asked the petrified young woman if she wanted a lift.

When she refused, he left.

Two men walking along a beach track soon came across Hannah, who revealed what had happened.

One rushed off in search of the assailant while the other helped Hannah to her car to get help.

They soon spotted Peter Dupass,

who was walking along a road unable to find where he parked his car.

He was swiftly apprehended.

Dupass initially claimed the encounter was consensual,

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but eventually confessed otherwise.
He'd only been out of prison for four days.
Dupass offered no explanation for his behavior.
He claimed he was enjoying laying back on the beach
when he saw Hannah Gadsden and couldn't help himself.
He said he knew what he did was wrong, adding,
I'm sorry for what happened.
Everyone was telling me I'm okay now.
I never thought it was going to happen again.
I only wanted to live a normal life.
Dupass was relocated to Frankston Police Station
for further processing,
where he attempted to take his own life,
though police doubted his sincerity.
At a trial in June 1985,
Dupass pleaded guilty to indecent assault
with aggravating circumstances and rape.
The judge explained that recidivism rates in cases like his
were between 80-90%,
and that Dupass was walking around
with a loaded time bomb in his pocket.
Quote, there seems to be a very good chance
if you were at large again
that some other girl might suffer in the same way.
The judge accepted Peter Dupass' assertions of remorse,
one must have sympathy for you,
but the community must also be protected.
He slammed the lenient sentence handed to Dupass previously,
saying it was inadequate,
and acknowledged that the community would be outraged
and apprehensive if Dupass was a free man.
He was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment.
He was to serve a minimum of 10 years
and be given appropriate treatment prior to release.
Depo Provera was suggested,
a drug that reduces offensive sexual behavior.
Shortly after arriving in prison,
Dupass penned a letter to his parents apologizing for his actions.
He blamed his deviancy on vague, extraneous circumstances,
saying,
The way I feel at the moment and have for ages
is that I'm far better off out of it all.
I tried, I really tried to work on myself and my problems,

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but I never felt I was getting anywhere.
We'll meet again someday.
After writing the letter,
Dupass attempted to take his own life.
A psychiatrist described his personality as brittle
and concluded that it'd take some considerable time
to resolve his issues.
Dupass's unwillingness to admit the full truth
about his offending hampered rehabilitation efforts,
prescribed drugs that restricted sexual urges were administered
with little success.
It was found that he lacked motivation for prolonged treatment
and instead wanted a nonexistent quick fix.
52-year-old Grace McConnell
was a mental health nurse who came to meet Peter Dupass
during his time in the prison psychiatric division.
Dupass initially viewed Grace as a motherly figure,
given their 16-year age gap.
But in time he became infatuated with her
and eventually admitted to have fallen in love.
He told Grace that she could help him come out of himself
and be a normal person.
Up until this point,
Grace had only fostered a professional relationship with Dupass.
Driven by pity, she became closer to him.
When he successfully applied to transfer to another prison
in rural Victoria,
he was able to continue their regular visits,
even though she suspected he was isolating her.
Dupass made Grace write to him every day
and displayed jealousy when she didn't give him her full attention.
She came to learn that Dupass had a superiority complex
and was a possessive, domineering man.
Grace was surprised when Dupass asked her to marry him.
Despite feeling their relationship was more mother and son
than husband and wife,
Grace agreed to the union.
She felt a moral expectation to, quote,
help Peter become a useful member of the community.
They tied the knot in a prison ceremony.
Grace never felt any real love towards Peter Dupass,
nor did she believe he felt any for her.
Dupass stated he had the capability.

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Instead, she believed he viewed her as a possession, like a piece of furniture.

Dupass cited his marriage to Grace when he began plotting his parole bid.

He referred to her as a beautiful person who would stop him from sexually offending.

He attended programs aimed at preparing inmates to return to society but for temporary release to work for a library, cemetery and recycling depot.

He also took a vocational training course at a local TAFE institution to retrain himself in fitting and machining work.

In reference to Dupass's sex attacks, a psychiatrist reported, he believes all of that is behind him since he understands himself better and has become more assertive.

By 1992, Peter Dupass had served seven out of his 12-year prison sentence and was granted release.

He settled with Grace in the country town of Woodend. The community were unaware of his violent history.

Peter gained work as a maintenance manager while Grace became a cleaner.

Theirs was a humble uneventful life as Dupass spent most of his spare time in front of the television.

He had few interests or hobbies and didn't care for anything in particular.

He confided in Grace about his unhappy childhood and how he was teased by his peers for being overweight.

His parents kept their home uncomfortably sterile and argued often.

Dupass stopped short of describing his teen years, though mentioned with a hint of bitterness at having once been engaged to a woman who gave the ring back.

Grace and Dupass didn't consummate their marriage until he was out of prison, where he felt it was more appropriate.

Grace described their sex life as basic and said she went along with it out of a sense of responsibility.

While Dupass didn't reveal any deviant sexual proclivities with Grace,

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he reached the point where she couldn't bear him touching her.
She otherwise appreciated that he was an overall well-mannered,
even-tempered man
and believed she had successfully reformed him.
He didn't lash out when upset,
instead he just sit and stare.
He got lost in thought often.
Then there were the random moments he'd break out in sweats
and begin shaking,
without ever explaining why.
Peter Dupass stayed out of trouble
for the 12 months he was under parole restrictions.
Once they lifted,
he was no longer under any supervision.
On Monday, January 3, 1994,
Lucy Irons was waterskiing with a group of friends
in Lake Apolloch,
an hour's drive north of Woodand.
Lucy went by herself to a women's toilet block
and while inside,
her cubicle door pushed inwards.
Lucy pressed her hand against the door
and firmly said no
to indicate the cubicle was occupied.
A long, black-handled knife
suddenly appeared from around the door.
The man wearing a cream-coloured balaclava
tried to squeeze in.
Lucy fought to hold the door shut,
but the man managed to slash her left hand.
Just turn around, he ordered,
while trying to force Lucy to face the wall.
Her palm and two of her fingers were dripping blood.
Lucy knew she was about to be raped,
but she tried to remain calm
as to not aggravate her assailant.
Very frightened, she said repeatedly,
just tell me what's going on.
The man kept the knife close to her face and neck.
When Lucy refused to let him push her against the wall,
the man grabbed her right arm
and dragged her out of the toilet block.
His demeanor then abruptly shifted.

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He let go of Lucy,
put both his hands in the air
and told her to go before he left.
Lucy glimpsed her attacker
heading towards a Blue Ford station wagon.
She alerted her friends
and they rushed at the car
just as its driver reversed and sped off.
Lucy's friends and fiance gave chase in their own car,
eventually meeting up with the Blue Ford at a roundabout.
It drove on at high speeds
before making a sharp left turn
onto a dirt road and spinning out of control.
When the vehicle came to a stop,
the pursuers pulled in front to block it
and carefully approached on foot.
Upon realizing the driver was unarmed,
they grabbed him and forced him out.
The police were contacted
and the offender taken into custody.
He was identified as Peter Dupass.
A search of his car revealed
two makeshift Balaclavas,
duct tape, condoms,
handcuffs, a plastic sheet
and a shovel.
There were also three knives,
one of which was stained with Lucy Irons blood.
There were traces of her blood
on his clothing as well.
Dupass was reluctant to speak to police
before contacting a solicitor first.
After doing so,
he said little else to investigators
other than no comment.
Prosecutors were in a difficult position.
There was no doubt about what Dupass
had intended to do to Lucy,
yet the evidence didn't support
an attempted rape charge.
Peter ultimately pleaded guilty
to unlawful imprisonment
in order to have the more serious charges

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of kidnapping, assault with a weapon
and in decent assault dropped.
Sentencing took place in November 1994.
Dupass's criminal history
was referred to in court as breathtaking.
His most recent attack was deemed calculated.
He had watched and waited until Lucy
was separated from her friends,
concealed his identity
and used a weapon with other equipment at hand.
The judge accepted that the crime
was sexually motivated but clarified.
I must punish you only for the offense charged
and not for what I think you were going to do,
but did not.
Highlighting that the victim was held captive
for only a few minutes
and was voluntarily released,
the judge told Dupass,
you acted in such a manner to give rise
to at least the hope and perhaps the prospect
that realization of the significance
of what you were about to do
activated your conscience.
I cannot therefore preclude
the possibility of rehabilitation.
Taking into account the guilty plea,
which the judge referred to as evidence
of Dupass's hints of conscience,
Dupass was sentenced
to three years and nine months' imprisonment.
This was a major blow to Victoria Police.
A year prior, the state government
had passed a controversial law
to protect the community from serial sex offenders.
It enabled courts to sentence criminals
to indefinite jail terms.
However, the law could only be activated
in cases where the defendant
had a so-called serious offense.
Unlawful imprisonment fell short,
as it was considered too minor.
A group of parents

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contacted the parole board
urging that Peter Dupass never be released.
Yet, by now, he'd mastered the legal system.
Realizing that denying his crimes
jeopardized his chance of parole,
he started admitting to them
an unnehmendlich accepting treatment.
One councillor remained skeptical of Dupass,
writing,
through long-term association
with various professionals,
he has learnt to manipulate any individual
who has endeavoured to challenge
his offending behavior
by the way of saying the right things
and behaving in a convincing manner
in a supervised environment.
Despite this and other scathing reports,
police were powerless to stop Peter Dupass.
He was granted release again
in September 1996
at age 43
after serving his two-year minimum sentence.
By this point,
he'd spent 17 of his last 20 years
in jail for sexual offences.
His wife Grace conceded their marriage was over,
telling the Sunday Herald Sun newspaper,
Peter was two people living inside one shell,
one was kind and gentle,
the other was pure evil.
Dupass's parents no longer supported him
and had moved into state.
He resettled in the suburb of Pascovale
in Melbourne's north,
where no one knew of his past.
Casefile will be back shortly.
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When Peter Dupass was linked to psychotherapist Nicole Patterson through calls made from his home, investigators were certain they had found Nicole's killer. Given his history, it seemed Dupass had escalated just as police predicted. They moved quickly and tracked Dupass to a hotel where they found him playing a slot machine in the gaming room. A glint of surprise appeared on his face when police encircled him. A search of Dupass's clothing revealed nothing of significance, though officers did notice two curved Scratches on his left cheek. They looked recent and were the type caused by fingernails. Dupass denied everything. He said he didn't know Nicole Patterson and had never been to Harper Street in Northcote. When asked about the Scratches on his face, Dupass, who was now a self-employed woodworker, claimed a piece of wood had flung up while he was using a lathe machine tool in his workshop garage. Before participating in any further interviews, Dupass called his Solicitor and a priest he'd met while incarcerated. He then resorted to a previous tactic of responding to all questions put to him with no comment. A search of Dupass's Pascovale home was underway. A note attached to the site of his fridge featured the name Harry and the phone number belonging to Indian student Harbagan Colley that was provided to Nicole Patterson by the mysterious Malcolm. Also found was a copy of a Herald Sun newspaper dated several days after Nicole Patterson's murder. The front page featured an article on the case titled Psycho Knife Killer. Someone had slashed the accompanying image of Nicole's face. Examination of Dupass's workshop failed to uncover the lathe he claimed caused the Scratches on his face. A bag inside his wheelie bin contained

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torn up pieces of newspaper.
They had come from the advertising section of the NorthCurt leader, where Nicole Patterson had advertised her therapy services.
Someone had written Nicole's home address on the page along with the words Nicky, NorthCurt, Malcolm, 9am and Mo believed to be shortened for morning. The other side contained Nicole's home phone and mobile numbers.
A handwriting expert concluded that this information was scrawled by Peter Dupass. Dupass ultimately admitted to making these notes and placing Nicole's to Nicole Patterson's home. He said he'd found her out in the paper and set up an appointment on the day of her murder to address his gambling and relationship problems. Dupass confessed to providing Nicole with a fake name and number in panic because he didn't want his girlfriend to know he was seeking therapy. He claimed that he had second thoughts about the session and rang to cancel. Nicole apparently understood and said if you need to contact me, contact me. Dupass insisted that he'd spent the morning doing work, errands and domestic chores and didn't go near Nicole's home at all. Inside his workshed on the bottom shelf of a cupboard, police found a jacket bundled up with other clothing. Inside one of its pockets was a balaclava. The jacket was also splattered with blood. Testing revealed the blood belonged to both Nicole Patterson and Peter Dupass. CCTV footage was obtained from a petrol station that Dupass had visited shortly before Nicole was killed, confirming he'd been wearing the jacket. Dupass admitted the jacket was his and that he'd worn it the morning Nicole was killed but denied knowing how her blood got on it. The circumstantial evidence was damning

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and as a result Peter Dupass was formally charged with Nicole Patterson's murder. He pleaded not guilty and faced trial in August 2000. Homicide detectives had worked diligently to ensure their case was solid. The defense team had limited options and resorted to insinuating that evidence against their client was planted by police. They implied that a detective had taken a vial of Nicole Patterson's blood to Dupass's home and dripped the liquid on his jacket, acclaimed the police denied. A soft-spoken Dupass took the stand where he appeared nervous. If he killed Nicole, Dupass asserted, no, I did not. He intimated that the evidence against him was just bad luck. The prosecution remarked and it's just bad luck too, isn't it, that the jacket you say you were probably wearing on that morning happens to have the deceased's blood on it. Dupass replied, for me it is, yes. A smile appeared on his face as he accused police of setting him up. Everything else Dupass admitted to from hindering identification efforts to destroying evidence, he insisted wasn't done with bad intent. The prosecution worked to prove the impossibility of police planting evidence. Then they had one final question for Dupass. Where have you hidden your trophies? The breasts you cut off the deceased, her driver's license and her purse. Dupass replied, I don't know what you're talking about. It took a jury less than three hours to find Peter Dupass guilty for Nicole Patterson's murder. The judge told him, you regarded Nicole Patterson as nothing more than prey to being trapped and killed. Her life, youth and personal qualities

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assumed importance in your mind
only by reason of the sense of satisfaction and power
which you experienced in taking them from her.
You carried out your crime with remorseless deliberation
and after careful manipulation of the situation
in full understanding of the significance of your actions.
You are now 47 years
with a deeply entrenched desire to engage
in unendlich violent Behaviour.
You have not responded in anything
remotely approaching an appropriate fashion
to sentences of imprisonment, psychiatric treatment
or community supervision.
Realistically considered,
the prospects of your eventual rehabilitation
must be regarded as close to hopeless,
that they can be effectively discounted.
Peter Dupass was sentenced to life imprisonment
without the possibility of parole.
Nicole's loved ones had mixed reactions.
Her boyfriend wanted Dupass dead.
Nicole's father was just grateful the chapter was closed
while her mother said,
it helps to know he's not going to be out there doing it again.
If he were to walk free, he would kill again.
Victoria police were elated that after 30 years
of hurting women, Peter Dupass would finally spend
the rest of his natural life behind bars.
But their work wasn't over yet.
They believed he held many more dark secrets.
The first centered around the unsolved murder
of Margaret Maher in 1997.
Her mutilated remains were found on the side
of an industrial back road in Summerton.
Following Nicole Patterson's murder,
links were drawn back to Margaret.
Notably, both women had one or both of their breasts removed.
The now imprisoned Peter Dupass was interviewed
about Margaret Maher's murder.
He began shaking.
Detectives asked if he knew Margaret
or if he had attended the same supermarket
she had on the night of her murder.

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They also asked if he owned any gloves in reference to the single black woolen glove recovered at the crime scene.

Dupass reverted to answering all questions with no comment, though he did agree to have his mouth swabbed for DNA analysis.

With technological advancements in forensic testing, the black glove from the Mar case was reexamined. Margaret hadn't worn it.

Biological mixture of at least two people were detected, but because they were mixed, it was impossible to confirm who wore the glove at the time of the murder.

One of the samples was from a random person police couldn't ascertain.

The other was consistent with Peter Dupass.

The clothing Margaret had worn at the time of her murder was also reexamined.

Her Topps had been cut away with sharp, smooth bladed scissors, similar to how Nicole Patterson's had been removed.

Examination of Dupass's phone records revealed that at the time of Margaret's murder, he had made multiple calls to phone sex lines.

One was traced to Irene Langley.

She never forgot the disturbing call she received around October 1997.

She told detectives how the male caller detailed hurting a woman with a knife.

Most significantly, he referred to cutting off one of her breasts.

A second attempt at interviewing Dupass went nowhere.

He remained as tight lipped as ever.

Despite this, he was charged with the murder of Margaret Ma.

At trial in July 2004,

the prosecution relied on the treatment of Margaret's body in relation to Nicole Patterson.

Quote.

We say the cutting of the breasts is so unique as to effectively be a signature, a stamp.

In fact, after examining almost 4,000 homicides throughout Australia between 1989 and 2000, the only other case involving breast mutilation was that of Nicole Patterson.

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While Peter Dupass didn't take the stand on this occasion, 51 other witnesses did. By the end of proceedings, the jury reached a guilty verdict. The judge told Dupass. After you murdered Margaret Ma, you left her by the side of the road in a desolate place as a disgusting display of loathing for the deceased and contempt for her dignity. Not content with what you had done to her in life, you robbed her of her dignity in death. Sentencing Dupass would have no practical effect as he was already serving life without parole. Still, the judge insisted that punishing him for Margaret's murder was not futile. By doing so, it vindicated Margaret's rights and those left behind to struggle with the grief and Trauma of her murder. For that, Peter Dupass was handed another life sentence without the possibility of parole. Margaret's loved ones thanked Victoria Police for their efforts to bring her killer to justice. Her brother remarked, Margaret lived her life the way she chose and no one had the right to take that life from her. Members of Nicole Patterson's family attended the trial as a show of support to Margaret's loved ones. Outside court, Nicole's sister said, It's such a rare evil that comes into this world that's destroyed these women and our lives. We're just praying that this man is accountable for everything he has done. By the time Peter Dupass was handed his second life sentence in 2004, Police was certain he was also responsible for Messina Halvages' 1997 murder. Dupass's grandfather was buried in Faulkner Cemetery, just 128 meters west of where Messina's grandmother lay. Nine women had since come forward to identify Dupass as the man who had harassed them in the cemetery before Messina was struck. One described him as having a unique tear in the right pocket region of his jacket, which matched a blemish on the jacket Dupass was

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when he killed Nicole Patterson.
He'd also been seen wearing gold-framed eyeglasses and blue tradesmen overalls, two items that Dupass was known to wear at the time. In the immediate aftermath of Messina's murder, Dupass discovered that Dupass had visited a salon to have his hair cut and dyed, as though to prevent him from being matched to the photo-fit of the cemetery stalker. Messina's upper clothing had become bunched up and tangled in her arms. Investigators believed this had prevented Dupass from mutilating her like he had his other victims. He couldn't risk the time it would take to remove it. Questioning Dupass about Messina's murder was characteristically futile, as he immediately resorted to his typical no-comment answers. Detectives contacted inmates who were in prison with Peter Dupass, hoping he might have said something incriminating while on the inside. One prisoner, a former high-profile Solicitor named Andrew Fraser, was serving time for his role in the importation and trafficking of the commercial quantity of cocaine. Given Fraser's previous employment, detectives assumed he'd refuse working with them and encourage Dupass to keep quiet. To their surprise, Fraser told detectives, you had better come and see me. Andrew Fraser provided a full statement in which he detailed his relationship with Peter Dupass. The pair were in protective custody together and were both tasked on garden duties. They also interacted while watching the prison television. Fraser found Dupass to be quiet, socially inept, suspicious and introspective. He was reluctant to talk, but when he did, he spoke in disjointed short sentences interspersed by long breaks, so he censored himself to avoid saying anything he'd regret. Fraser also witnessed to Dupass

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breaking out in mysterious full-body shakes,
sweat and tears.

In time, Dupass opened up to Fraser
as much as he thought the man was capable of.

Fraser described to Dupass as
the most dangerous and unpredictable person
I have ever met.

Fraser recalled a group conversation
involving himself, Dupass,
and a convicted rapist and murderer
named Raymond Edmonds,
better known as Mr Stinky.

Edmonds' crimes are covered in Episode 131 of Case File.

Edmonds was 20 years into his prison sentence
and was telling the others
that he had committed a bad offence,
regretted it and was paying the heavy price.

He turned to Dupass and asked,
what about you, Pete?

Dupass went quiet before admitting
offhandedly to killing Nicole Patterson.

What's done is done and I have to wear it,
he said.

One occasion Andrew Fraser
was working in the garden with Dupass
when he uncovered a makeshift knife in the dirt.

He showed it to Dupass,
who examined it and began to sweat.

A strange expression appeared on his face
before he uttered the word Messina.

Another time Fraser observed an inmate
approached Dupass and said,

you are Peter Dupass.

When Dupass confirmed,
the man revealed that he was Messina Halvargas' cousin.

He called Dupass an animal
and threatened to kill him when he got the chance.

Shaken, Dupass said to Andrew Fraser,
how does that cunt know I did it?

When Dupass was charged with Margaret Mars' murder,
he told Fraser he thought they might charge him
with Messina's murder as well.

Dupass stressed that no one witnessed the attack.

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He also remarked that he hadn't left any forensics at Forkner Cemetery.

It was true that Messina's killer hadn't left behind any forensic evidence, but that information wasn't public at the time.

Andrew Fraser, quote,

it was clear to me that there was only one way Peter would have known that fact, and that is, he is the killer.

Andrew Fraser's Statement came with a degree of criticism.

There was a million-dollar reward on offer in Messina Halvargas' case, and Fraser was given an undisclosed percentage of it.

Yet, homicide detectives stressed that this reward was offered months before Fraser entered the case, and that if he were motivated by money, he would have reached out to them, not the other way around.

Following Fraser's Statement, detectives questioned Dupass merely as a matter of procedure, though they knew he was unlikely to concede anything.

As expected, he kept a deadpan expression and responded no comment to everything.

Dupass was informed that a witness had provided a statement asserting he had confessed to Messina Halvargas' murder.

For the first time in all their encounters with Dupass, detectives felt he was genuinely shocked.

No comment, he responded.

He was then charged with Messina's murder.

His legal team tried to argue that he had become so infamous that a fair trial was impossible.

The judge disagreed and the trial went ahead in 2007.

The defence attempted to pin the crime on Messina's fiancé, Angelo Gorgowski, though their efforts were in vain.

Peter Dupass was ultimately found to guilty for Messina Halvargas' murder.

The judge told Dupass,

Messina's last actions were typical of her, a fine young woman in a place of peace and beauty, thinking not of herself but of others, devoted, considerate and good.

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Then you struck.
Just as Messina's presence at the cemetery
was typical of her goodness,
your presence at the cemetery was typical of your evil,
cunning, predatory and homicidal.
She had no chance against your strength,
your knife and your hate.
Then, with your bloody knife,
you vanished from the scene.
But it was your cunning that was to bring you undone,
for you left no forensics at Faulkner,
words which would come back to haunt you.
You have no prospects of rehabilitation, none.
You do not suffer from any mental illness,
rather, you are a psychopath,
motivated by a deeply entrenched, perverted
and sadistic hatred of women.
A complete contempt for them and their right to live.
Peter Dupass was handed his third life sentence.
He appealed but failed.
In 2012, he was granted a retrial
for Messina Helvages' murder,
only to be found to guilty again.
But his story wasn't over.
Authorities believed Dupass held the answers
to more unsolved violent acts,
sexual assaults and murders.
In his statement to detectives,
Prison-Informant Andrew Fraser,
wrote of an instance where Dupass was talking about
the murders being pinned on him and said,
I reckon I'm going to end up wearing the old Sheila Downs too.
It seemed Dupass was referring to
95-year-old Kathleen Downs.
Kathleen was stabbed three times
and her throat was slit while she lay in bed
in a Brunswick nursing home in December 1997,
a month after Messina Helvages was killed.
Kathleen, described as a dear lady with a wonderful nature,
was considered the matriarch of the nursing home.
Evidence indicated that her killer had broken into the building
in the early hours between routine checks of the residence.
Records showed that Peter Dupass was home

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when two calls were made to Kathleen's nursing home. One was made in the month before, the other occurred the morning of. Dupass was questioned about Kathleen's murder in 2013, but he denied any involvement. He assured Andrew Fraser, they will never get me for that. Yet, Dupass was ultimately charged with Kathleen's murder and set to go to trial in 2019. By this stage, Star-Witness Andrew Fraser was suffering from spinal cancer and was too unwell to give evidence and withstand cross-examination. As a result, the trial was discontinued. The presiding judge asserted that the decision didn't constitute an acquittal and that Dupass could be re-indicted on the murder charge at any time. Kathleen Downs' family were disappointed, but understanding and grateful to the police and prosecutors' efforts. Peter Dupass is also a suspect in the murders of 48-year-old Helen McMahan and 31-year-old René de Brunten. The specifics of Helen's murder are withheld by police, though they've established she was violently attacked while sunbaking in the seaside town of Rye. Helen was killed 16 days before Dupass raped Hannah Gadsden on a beach four kilometres away in Blair Gowrie. He denied involvement in Helen McMahan's murder and it was initially thought that he couldn't have done it as he was technically meant to be imprisoned during this time. Years later, it emerged that he was actually on pre-release the day Helen was targeted. Police believe Helen McMahan could be Dupass' first murder victim. In November 1993, René de Brunten was stabbed to 106 times in a clothing store she operated in Sunbury. René de had been holding informal counselling sessions out the back of her business and told friends she was meeting a man

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with a violent sexual history that day.
Her wounds centred around her chest.
At the time, Peter Dupass lived less than an hour's drive away
in Woodend, where Renéda also resided.
He has been unhelpful when inquired about Renéda's death.
Questioning Peter Dupass is described as frustrating.
Even in the face of overwhelming evidence,
he denies everything.
He then breaks down,
and just when it appears as though he is about to confess,
he straightens up and denies everything again.
According to one detective,
getting a clear answer out of Peter Dupass
is like trying to open a locked door without a key.
Following his guilty verdict
for the murder of Nicole Patterson,
Peter Dupass was asked by the judge.
At a fundamental level as human beings,
you present for us the awful, threatening,
and unanswerable question,
how did you come to be as you are?
Despite years of examination,
experts still don't know what exactly motivated
Peter Dupass' crimes.
Since his first attack as a 15-year-old,
he has been unable or unwilling
to provide any rational or honest explanation
for his violent outbursts.
He hasn't been diagnosed with any psychiatric disorders.
The level of planning and rehearsal he undertook
prior to committing his crimes
is not normally associated with someone insane.
In calls to sex phone worker Irene Langley,
Dupass described an attack that reflected Margaret Mars' murder,
but referred to his victim as his mother,
indicating there might be some issues there.
There are also theories that Dupass mutilated his victims
because of insecurities he might have
towards his own feminine-like breasts.
In a report tended to the court during the Margaret Mars trial,
a forensic psychologist concluded,
Dupass attacked women to fulfill fantasies
of conquest and control.

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For Dupass, the actual assault has not lived up to the fantasy which preceded the assault and is seen at times as disappointing. He does not feel reassured by either his performance or his victim's response and must find another victim, this time the right one. Thus his offenses become quite repetitive. Whatever the truth, Peter Dupass was an unusual case for the criminal justice system. He was deemed too dangerous to be let out in public, yet too sane to be institutionalised for life. Criticism has been levelled against the judicial system for allowing Dupass' continual release despite his escalating crimes and concerns expressed by authorities and the community. The President of Civil Liberties Group, Liberty Victoria, responded to this backlash by stating, neither imprisonment in itself nor parole in itself is going to stop everybody from committing offenses. What's important to bear in mind is that a person has to be sentenced for the offense that they've committed and that might mean that somebody gets a sentence that is proportionate for the crime but it doesn't cure them of the dangerousness or the characteristic that makes them continue to offend. Peter Dupass will remain in prison until he dies. In a letter he penned during his early days of offending, Dupass wrote, I feel that I'm not fully confident within myself and there is a possibility that I could reoffend at a later date. I have no desire to be launched like a time bomb in a community uncured. Once again, I can't stress how important it is not only to me but surely the whole community that this doesn't happen and I'm given the opportunity to work on my problem. Copyright WDR 2020