

## [Transcript] Sword and Scale Nightmares / Doctor Death

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On March 13, 2008, Dr. William Hunter returned to his Omaha, Nebraska home after a long day at Creighton University, where he held a pathology residency program director position. In other words, he was in charge of training resident physicians in a particular specialty. Dr. Hunter was skilled in his craft. Before his role as a professor, he worked hands-on taking live tissue samples or biopsies from patients and analyzing them for abnormalities. Dr. Hunter's wife also worked at Creighton as a physician. Her specialty was cardiology, but she was on a business trip that week. One of the most noble pursuits is to work in a field where the goal is to save lives. And that's precisely what both of the hunters did.

It's not often that those in the medical field are targeted for violent attacks, which is why the discovery that Dr. William Hunter would make that Thursday was incredibly shocking. It's the drug dealers, gang bangers, and money launderers that are always looking over their shoulders, waiting for the shadows of their past transgressions to catch up with them. The way the hunters lived their lives was the total opposite. Dr. Hunter had no reason to believe that anyone had it out for either of them. But the discovery he made in his home that night seemed to imply otherwise.

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It's been an extremely long day. Dr. William Hunter had stayed late at work and is just now pulling into the driveway of his beautiful red brick colonial style home a little before six in the evening. When he left for Creighton University that morning, he knew their housekeeper 57-year-old

Shirley Sherman would be there when his 11-year-old son Thomas got home from school, as she was every Thursday. She usually left before Dr. Hunter or his wife returned home from work, but they could tell when Shirley had been there to clean. So he's pulling into the driveway and he sees that Shirley's white Ford Taurus is still parked next to his house. He thinks, huh, she must be running behind with things. He goes through his usual routine, locks up the car and steps into the house. As Dr. Hunter enters his home, he sees Shirley Sherman sprawled out in the hallway with a knife sticking out of her neck. There's blood everywhere and she's clearly dead. Dr. Hunter has seen dead bodies before, having been through medical school. He's even performed autopsies, but he isn't prepared to see any of his loved ones in this way.

When the initial shock of discovering Shirley's body subsides, Dr. Hunter hears his son's X-Box.

It's playing that song that only plays when Thomas finishes a game. The tune repeats over and over as Dr. Hunter rushes around the house in search of his son.

To his horror, he discovers his youngest son has been murdered also.

Like Shirley, young Thomas has a knife sticking out of his neck. Dr. Hunter recognizes these knives. They're from the knife block in his own kitchen. He also notices that the front door is open. Thomas always knew to keep the front door closed and locked. Dr. Hunter suddenly feels unsafe, like someone might still be in the house with him. So he runs outside and calls police.

The investigation into these murders hits a dead end pretty quickly. Nothing was stolen from the home. Detectives have no DNA or fingerprints, and Dr. Hunter can't think of anyone who might want to hurt his family. A few witnesses do report having seen a man driving in a crappy car along Hunter's street that afternoon, but it's not followed up on. There's nowhere to go from here, and the case freezes. Dr. Roger Brumback, another physician at Creighton University, does an interview and says that everyone at Creighton is stunned by these murders.

The FBI gets involved in the case in early April, but they make no headway.

Early 2009 Law and Order even makes an episode based on the murders. A few weeks after the Law and Order episode airs, Crime Stoppers doubles their reward to \$50,000 for information in the murders of Thomas Hunter and Shirley Sherman. Three more years go by and this unsolved Omaha double homicide is featured on America's Most Wanted. Dr. Hunter and his wife are desperate for answers at this point, but there seem to be no leads. Shirley Sherman was a mother of two and a grandmother to five children. She grew up in Omaha and cleaned houses full-time for a living. When she was home, she loved to care for her grandchildren and her garden. She only cleaned for the hunters one day a week, but she happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time this particular Thursday. Had she been cleaning any other house, Shirley may still be alive.

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Thomas Hunter was a bright 11-year-old with a sweet personality and a love for math and science, like his parents. The hunters enrolled Thomas at King Science and Technology Center, a magnet school. He was deeply interested in nature and animals, specifically squirrels. He played soccer and basketball with the local YMCA leagues, but despite his outdoorsy tendencies, Thomas did enjoy video games and junk food from time to time. Thomas had three older brothers who were out of the house by the time the murders happened. These brutal killings had everyone stumped. Why would someone slaughter the youngest child of this prominent medical power couple? Why murder their once-a-week housekeeper? It all seemed absurd. The case wouldn't start to unravel

for police and the people of Omaha until 2013, which would reveal two more murders.

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On May 12th, 2013, Mother's Day, a different member of Creighton's pathology department, Dr.

Chandra Butra, had her home burglarized. It happened around 2pm and whoever broke in had attempted to get in through a pair of French doors in the back of the property, but the person

set off the alarm and fled the scene without taking or damaging anything. Just a few hours later, one more member of Creighton's medical staff would be victimized, but in a much worse way.

Remember Dr. Roger Brumback? He was chairman of Creighton's pathology department. He and his wife Dr. Mary Brumback had both turned 65 and were retiring from their prolific medical careers.

They were in the process of moving to West Virginia. So on May 14th, 2013, piano movers show up

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at the

Brumback house, a cream colored two-story home in a nice neighborhood. They walk up to the front door and quickly notice that it's already open. They nervously look at each other and then look toward their feet and they see a magazine, not a Time Live or Cosmo or even a GQ. This particular type of magazine goes in a pistol and it's just laying there on the front porch near the door.

Obviously, this is not the usual vibe of their appointments. Most of the homes they arrive at are safe, but this situation though, this doesn't feel safe. So they decide to retreat and call 911.

When the police get there, they find Dr. Roger and Mary Brumback dead just inside the entrance of the home. They've been laying there for two days at this point in very comfortable temperatures, so this wasn't a fun scene for police to walk through. Roger had been shot three times and stabbed six times, including injuries to the neck and face. His poor wife Mary had a head injury and numerous stab wounds to her neck, face, and head. Dr. Brumback was the youngest member

of the inaugural class at Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine. He finished his undergraduate degree in only two years graduating at the age of 19. Dr. Brumback's career and impact

are almost too vast to describe briefly. He worked in neurology, stroke prevention, Alzheimer's research, pediatrics, and he co-authored 19 books and 130 medical journal articles. His contribution to medicine will be remembered. That's an understatement. His wife Mary Brumback

was just as prolific. A pharmacist and philanthropist, she often co-authored books with her husband. The couple had three children, one of which became a pediatric neurologist.

Investigators quickly made the connection with the murder of Dr. William Hunter's 11-year-old son, Thomas, back in 2008. Both Dr. Hunter and Dr. Brumback held high-level careers in Creighton's pathology department. When Dr. Chandra Butra heard about the Brumback murders,

she immediately called police to report the break-in she'd experienced two days prior.

That made a third Creighton employee. Who had done this? Who could possibly have such a burning vendetta for a group of pathologists at a medical center in Nebraska? And to commit these murders five years apart, whoever had done this had an unquenchable anger, one that didn't dissipate with time. That's a very dangerous kind of person. The kind of person that prisons are made for.

Only one name came up multiple times. Anthony Joseph Garcia. Not only had there been reports of an

olive-skinned man with dark hair driving a silver compact car near the Hunter's residence that day in 2008, but Anthony had distinct contact with Dr. Hunter, Dr. Brumback, and Dr. Butra at Creighton, where he had participated in Creighton's pathology residency program.

You see, Anthony Garcia absolutely had to become a specialized doctor. And in his mind, these people ruined that opportunity for him. Police realized that Garcia had been terminated from the pathology residency program way back in 2001. Dr. Chandra Butra, a member of Creighton's

pathology department, described Dr. Garcia as, quote, rude, lazy, adversarial, disruptive, arrogant, combative, and means spirited. She also complained to Dr. Hunter that Garcia seemed to lack foundational knowledge. She was being polite. Anthony Garcia wasn't very bright. And he had no idea what he was doing as a doctor. In fact, he only screeched by in medical school

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graduating in 1991 from the University of Utah with bad grades. When he landed his first residency program of family practice residency in Albany, New York, he was fired pretty quickly for being lazy and arrogant. They used those words to describe him, just like Dr. Chandra Butra would later on. In the year 2000, Anthony got this new pathology residency at Creighton University Medical Center. It was supposed to be a four-year program. At first, he seemed like the average hardworking resident, but he quickly revealed his true colors, acting immaturely and being disrespectful to both colleagues and those in authority positions. Dr. Chandra Butra was outspoken about her opinion of Anthony Garcia. As a result, he had begun to turn

to alcohol to cope with his mounting stress. People were starting to see through his facade. After all, his parents were the ones who really wanted him to become a doctor, and then he liked numbers and he'd always been interested in mathematics. This was not his calling, and everyone knew it. His dislike for the career path coupled with alcohol abuse began to seep out even with patience. One woman reported that her routine pelvic exam was made unnecessarily painful by Dr. Garcia. In another case, just before his termination, Dr. Garcia made a fatal error with a patient's deceased body, a mistake that was embarrassing to Creighton Medical Center. Here's a letter from Dr. William Hunter to Dr. Roger Brumback.

On Monday, February 19, 2001, at 8.30 a.m., I received a phone call from Bob at Boyd Brahman Mortuary in Omaha, Nebraska regarding a weekend autopsy performed by Dr. Anthony Garcia on patient Goldie Delancey. He was very unhappy about what he found when he obtained the body after the autopsy. He found the body lying face down, which markedly distorted the face. He found this completely unacceptable and intended to discuss the problem with the family. This is completely unacceptable for the resident to allow this to happen. Please investigate this incident as soon as possible. Dr. Garcia had apparently done very well, abiding by all the standard procedures while he was being supervised, but as soon as the authority figure left for the day and Garcia was alone with the body, he flipped it over and left it like that. Like, for no reason. Nobody knows exactly why. After death, blood pools in whichever position a body is left in, which is why it's so important to leave corpses face up. Anthony either didn't know this and was really, really not very bright at all, or just didn't care, which would have made him equally as lazy. However, you want to describe it, this guy had an astounding lack of awareness. At one point, Anthony Garcia sent a letter to Dr. William Hunter basically complaining about Dr. Chandra Butra. The letter dated February 15, 2001 said in part, This letter is in response to our conversation today. Butra has on many occasions humiliated, degraded, and has made fun of me. Butra continues to hound you by saying, you should know this, and why don't you know? Her purpose is to put you down and have you submit to her power. She uses her position to verbally abuse the residents she works with.

On February 14, 2001, during a conference, she, as usual, began asking detailed questions continuously. She consistently said, Why don't you know this material? You are being sassy. Don't come to my lectures. Just shut up. In another letter to both the chief pathology resident Dr. Hunter and Dr. Brumbach, Anthony Garcia lamented once again, As you are chief resident, I would like you to inform Butra that she has insolent behavior and she has on many occasions humiliated, degraded, and has insulted me. If she illegally defames my name again or abuses me again,

I will sue her. The list of Anthony's transgressions and bad practices goes on forever.



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At first, Dr. Hunter and Dr. Brumbach told Anthony they would not be renewing his contract after the first year. But Anthony somehow weaseled his way back for a second chance. The final straw only came when Anthony made a prank call to Dr. Brumbach's wife while the doctor was taking an important exam. Here are the important bits of Anthony Garcia's termination letter. Dear Dr. Garcia, an appeals committee met on July 26, 2001 to hear the appeal in regard to termination of residency training by the Department of Pathology on the grounds of willfully placing a telephone call to a fellow resident's home while the resident was in the process of taking the USMLE Step 3 examination and informing the resident's wife that he needed to return to the Department of Pathology. This resulted in considerable anxiety and distress for the wife and resident at the time when the resident was attempting to pass a high stakes exam which would ultimately determine whether or not he could continue the residency program. The committee unanimously supported the decision of the pathology program to terminate Dr. Anthony Garcia and this letter represents official notification of that action signed by Dr. Hunter program director and Dr. Brumbach chairman. Anthony's termination from Creighton's residency program followed him everywhere. He even tried to lie on some applications but his secret was always discovered. Anthony was even barred from practicing in several states after he was terminated from programs in Chicago, New York, and LSU Shreveport. For the years following his termination, 2001 through 2013, Anthony Garcia spent money on hookers, strippers, cocaine, and booze. All the good things in life. Just kidding. At one particular strip club, he reportedly spent about \$150 a night, up to four nights a week. It was spent mostly on one particular dancer. When she told him that she, quote, likes bad boys, Anthony, hoping to prove this to her, confessed that he had killed an old woman and a little boy. He genuinely thought that this would impress a stripper. Anthony expected his life to go in a different direction. He thought he would become a successful doctor and make his mother proud. He owned a home in Terre Haute, Indiana, but it was now under foreclosure. By 2013, police were knocking on the door looking for Anthony, but the house was totally empty. Anthony's life was completely unraveling. In May of 2013, it was clear to Omaha police that the person targeting members of Creighton's pathology department was Anthony Joseph Garcia, a man who had been terminated from Creighton's pathology residency program back in 2001. When police pulled up to Anthony's Terre Haute, Indiana home, it was empty. Anthony was on the run. Being the dim-witted criminal he was, Anthony had his cell phone with him, which was pinging every 30 minutes in southern Illinois. Anthony was traveling north. So police finally caught up with Anthony on July 14th, and they arrested him for driving very drunk. They'd found a gun, bullets, a sledgehammer, a crowbar, an LSU lab coat, and a stethoscope in his car. LSU was the last place he attempted to finish a residency. In fact, the first double murder of Thomas Hunter and Shirley Sherman happened just two weeks after his termination at LSU. Many think Anthony could have been on his way to LSU to enact revenge on their staff members too. He wanted to kill Dr. William Hunter, but he killed his son and their housekeeper instead. He wanted to kill Dr. Chandra Butra, but she wasn't home. He succeeded in murdering Dr. Roger Brumback and his wife, Mary. Anthony was just going right down the list of people he thought were the reason he'd never work in medicine. It's too bad his own name was not the first on that list. When they searched his home, police noticed a black Ferrari parked outside, but the inside was totally empty except for random things like an air mattress, insurance documents, titles, and deeds. And some strange notes that Anthony had written to himself. One in particular

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read,

Here's another note.

This guy was obviously aware that police were catching up with him. He had begun to get sloppy. He may have planned to make the drive to Canada after all. He may have been drunk, but he was heading north. In his house, he had left behind the deed to the foreclosing property, the title to the Mercedes he attempted to flee in, his birth certificate, his homeowner's insurance policy, and his medical license from back in Illinois. In the kitchen, a gross smell emanated from the sink, where there was a black garbage bag floating in stagnant water.

The contents of the bag smelled like chemicals. Inside was a collection of Anthony Garcia's negative reviews and his termination letter. The evidence against Anthony was stacked high, and after sleeping through most of his trial on October 26, 2016, Anthony was convicted on nine counts, four counts of first degree murder, four counts of the use of a deadly weapon to commit a felony, and one count of felony burglary. This case was fraught with evil, which meant that Anthony Garcia was eligible for the death penalty. The same year that this case was tried, the state of Nebraska was actually set to vote on whether or not to keep the death penalty option. They voted in November and decided to retain it, and in September of 2018, a panel of three judges sentenced Anthony Joseph Garcia to death. The lives Anthony took had a ripple effect, like a raindrop in a pond. Everyone he murdered had a network of people who loved them dearly. Anthony was immature. He couldn't take ownership of his own mistakes, all of which were the true reason he lost his ability to continue practicing medicine.

It was no one else's fault, but his own. Anthony, though, didn't see it that way. He wanted revenge, and in many ways, he got it. I think it goes without saying that there's something highly disturbing about a doctor that kills. It's something that's so backwards it just doesn't make sense. It's literally the opposite of what you're supposed to do, to heal, not injure, not kill.

Primum non nosere, first, do no harm. It seems that Anthony Joseph Garcia missed this important teaching from medical school amongst the various other things he failed to learn. But I guess at the very least, we can all be thankful that Anthony Joseph Garcia will never become an actual practicing doctor.

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