

Donna Connon Murder, 1975

On Friday, October 24, 1975, the body of 27-year old Donna Hale Connon was found in the bathtub of her south St. Vital home; she had been hit over the head with a hammer.

At about 10:00 a.m. that morning Mrs. Connon took the family station wagon to St. Vital Lumber at 441 St. Mary's Avenue (no longer exists) and picked up a sheet of drywall for her father-in-law. After dropping off the drywall she stopped at the Canada Safeway Store at Dakota Village Mall (now Sobeys) and purchased a small number of groceries before returning home to her residence at 14 Blue Spruce Crescent. Several neighbours saw Mrs. Connon arriving home at 11:00 a.m. carrying her groceries.



Within minutes of Mrs. Connon arriving home, neighbours also observe a vehicle (either purple or blue) park in front of her house, facing the wrong way on the street and on the wrong side of the road. The neighbours then observed a male walk up the driveway and speak with Mrs. Connon at her front door. The male is allowed inside the house and shortly thereafter he is seen walking with her around to the side of the house. No more notice is paid of this man or his vehicle, however, the male was described as being 30-40 years old, 5'7"-5-8", darker hair and possibly heavy set, although he was wearing a coat.

Mrs. Connon had just returned to University that fall and had an English class starting at 12:40 p.m. that afternoon. To get to class on time, it is speculated that she would have had to have left home around noon. Mrs. Connon never made it to class, indicating that the murder happened between 11:00 a.m. and noon – about the same time as the stranger is seen at her door.

When her husband arrived home from work, Mrs. Connon's schoolbooks and notes were found scattered down the steps inside the house. The groceries had not yet been put away and her purse sat untouched on the kitchen table. There were no signs that the house had been ransacked, however, upon searching the house Mr. Connon found his wife bound and tied in the bathtub of their home. She had been hit over the head with a hammer taken from a toolbox found by the back door of the house. There was no sign of forced entry.

Of particular interest was a piece of notepaper found on the steps among the scattered schoolbooks. The paper was originally from a notepad found in the kitchen and had a name and phone number written on it. Both were determined to be fictitious. As the handwriting on the note did not belong to Mrs. Connon it is believed that it was written out by the suspect, possibly as part of a con to gain entry to the home.

It is believed that the suspect used a con to gain entry to the home to see if Mrs. Connon was alone. A possible scenario was that the Connon's had a 1962 Ford Sunliner Convertible at the side of their house that had been put away for the winter. The suspect may have used the ruse of

asking if the vehicle was for sale and leaving a fictitious name on the notepad for her husband to call him if it was. Such a ruse would have established that Mrs. Connon was home alone and that her husband was not expected home until later.

It is believed that the suspect observed Mrs. Connon while she was shopping at the Canada Safeway store and followed her home. The act was probably impulsive as all of the material used to bind, gag and kill Mrs. Connon came from her own home. Furthermore, he drew attention to himself by parking the wrong way on the wrong side of the street.



While the assault was sexually motivated, it appears that the suspect did not plan on any resistance from Mrs. Connon. However, her family indicated that she would not be submissive and would probably be hysterical and fight off any attacker. The fact that Mrs. Connon was not physically assaulted suggests that the suspect was not usually violent and was able to control his victim's through fear or intimidation. When this failed he may have panicked at his loss of control and killed Mrs. Connon out of fear of getting caught.

Based on the nature of the assault, there is a strong possibility that police have previously arrested the suspect in this matter, possibly for other sexually related offences involving threats of violence and bondage. He may be viewed by his friends as cunning, manipulative, irresponsible and indifferent to the welfare of society. He may have a violent temper, may dress well and select victims he can control and dominate.

Based on the description of the male seen speaking with Mrs. Connon it is believed that the suspect is a white male, about 30 years old (now 75), 5'7"-5-8", stocky build, dark hair and may have been driving an older model green or blue station wagon (in 1975). He was either unemployed or worked as a shift worker or otherwise had an occupation that allowed him flexibility during the day.

As such, anyone who has information on this crime or about someone who fits the profile of the suspect and who has a history of similar offences and was active in the St. Vital area is requested to contact the police.

If you have any information about this case, please contact [Winnipeg Crime Stoppers](#) at 204-786-TIPS (8477). Long-distance callers dial 1-800-222-8477.

HAMMER SLAYING

Wife's body found in tub

Winnipeg police were continuing their search Monday for both a suspect and a motive in the hammer slaying of a St. Vital woman.

The bludgeoned body of the woman, Donna Hale Connon, 27, was found in a bathtub in her home at 14 Blue Spruce Crescent at about 6 p.m. Friday by her husband Gregory.

A police spokesman said Mrs. Connon had been beaten severely on the head. A hammer found in the bathroom was thought to be the murder weapon, he said.

However, the spokesman said, determination of the official cause of death would have to await completion of an autopsy.

Mrs. Connon, an arts student at the University of Manitoba, and her husband,

ada, had moved into the area last year.

Several neighbors said in interviews they knew nothing of the woman's death until shortly after 6 p.m. Friday when several police cars arrived at the Connon's home.

"I didn't suspect anything at all until I saw the police come," said Betty Courteau, who lives next door at 18 Blue Spruce Crescent. "Even then, I just thought Donna had just cut herself or something."

Mrs. Courteau said her husband Frank had been outside in the garden when Mr. Connon arrived home from work. She said they exchanged greetings before the neighbor went indoors.

"Then about 10 or 15 minutes later Greg came back

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St. Vital woman found bludgeoned in bathtub

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outside and Frank could hear a siren approaching. He said to Greg that it appeared to be coming this way and Greg said 'it's for here.' "

Mrs. Courteau said Mr. Connon's mother arrived at the house a short time later and he was overheard telling her that his wife was dead.

Mrs. Courteau, like other neighbors in the area, said Mr. and Mrs. Connon appeared to be quiet people who didn't socialize too much with those living nearby.

"Donna told me not too long ago that she wanted to meet the neighbors and I was considering putting on a coffee party to introduce her around," she said.

"But then, it just kept getting put off . . . she was only around on Tuesdays and that wasn't a good day."

Mrs. Courteau said she had not heard anything from the Connon's home Friday, especially a scream. However, she said her own two children were home all day so it was possible she wouldn't have heard anything anyway.

"If I had heard a scream or anything, you can bet I would have gone over and knocked on the door or something."

Another neighbor, Stephanie Wilkes of 15 Blue Spruce Crescent, said Mrs. Connon's death had left the neighborhood concerned about safety.

"None of us, especially those of us with children, feel very safe right now," she said. "We all have started locking our doors."

Mrs. Wilkes said the death came as "quite a shock" to the area as it has always been a "very nice and quiet" place in which to live.

"It has always been a quiet area and then all of a sudden this happens," she said. "It comes as quite a shock to everyone."

Mrs. Wilkes also said she knew little about the Connon's, except that they had no children.

"They kept very much to themselves and went to their cottage every weekend during the summer (at Paddy Lake)," she said. "I didn't even know her first name."