

Wesu Ono - Murder

Monday, January 19, 1981

On Monday, January 19, 1981, the body of 70-year-old Wesu Ono was found in the front hallway of her Lyle Street (St. James) home. She had been struck numerous times about the head and facial area with a blunt instrument. She was wearing a nightgown at the time of the murder and may have been knitting in her living room just before the murder. There is no indication that the house was ransacked, suggesting that she may have surprised an intruder in the process of breaking into her home.

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70-year-old woman first murder victim of year



Wesu ("Winnie") Ono, was born to Japanese parents in New Westminster BC, on Valentine's Day in 1910. She was predeceased by her husband, Takeo Ono, who died in an industrial accident in 1940. Mrs. Ono was a devout and active member of the New Democratic Party (NDP) and her daughter's husband, Al Mackling, was the former Attorney General for Manitoba.

Mrs. Ono was an active member of the St. James Horticultural Society and was responsible for notifying its members of any upcoming meetings. She often sold plants from her front door during the summer and as a result, many neighbors knew her as the "plant lady". Mrs. Ono was devoutly religious; regularly attending the St. James United Church located on Parkview Street, and she regularly walked her dog in the afternoon. Because Mrs. Ono followed a regular routine, the time of her death can be narrowed down to Sunday, January 18, 1981.

Mrs. Ono was last known to be alive on the evening of January 17, 1981, when she contacted the members of the Horticultural Society about an upcoming meeting. However, no one recalled seeing her walking her dog on Sunday afternoon and she did not attend church that day as she regularly did. Furthermore, a friend was unable to reach her on the phone Sunday evening.

Because of her lifestyle, Mrs. Ono would have been a very low-risk victim of violent crime. As there was no evidence of a struggle or that any other crime had been committed (no overturned furniture, broken glass, forced entry, rifled drawers, pockets turned inside out, no missing jewelry, purse contents not strewn about, etc), it appears that she may have surprised her attacker during an attempted break and enter into her home.

Other than the assault, there are few signs of any interaction between Mrs. Ono and the offender. As such the crime scene suggests that her death was not part of the suspect's initial plan. As there is no evidence of any other crime being committed (ie: rape, robbery, theft), it appears that the suspect did not finish what he came for and that his plans were interrupted by Mrs. Ono's unexpected appearance.



Although there were no signs of forced entry, Mrs. Ono did not usually lock her door during the day. Regardless of how the suspect gained entry, the paradoxical elements present at the crime scene suggest that this was a situational murder or one that was unplanned prior to the commission of some other offense. The offender was probably in the process of breaking into the house when she caught him by surprise. As a result, Mrs. Ono was probably killed out of panic, confusion or impulse, most likely with a tool used for breaking into houses or one picked-up at the scene.

Typically, an inexperienced young male in his late teens commits this type of crime. They may have been impulsive and irresponsible normally, and possibly arrested for other criminal offences (most likely theft or break and enter). He would have lived in the area, done poorly in school, but since the act was not premeditated, he probably would have confided in or told other people about what he did. As such the police are looking for anyone who the suspect may have confided in.

