

Elsie Frances Tasker - Murder

Saturday, October 4, 1947

At 4:00 p.m. on the afternoon of Saturday, October 4, 1947, the body of 42-year old Elsie Frances Tasker was found in the living room of her 522 Young Street home. She had been stabbed several times in the back, chest and throat area. There was no sign of forced entry to the home and it appeared relatively neat. While there was no indication that the home had been ransacked, her purse had been dumped out on the kitchen table. It is unknown if her purse contained any money, however, her car keys were missing.



Ms. Tasker was last seen alive during the late afternoon of Friday, October 3, when a neighbour saw her leaving in her car. However, while Ms. Tasker's body was found in her home, her 1941 Buick Coach was subsequently found on Rupert Street, just west of the side entrance to the McLaren Hotel, shortly after her body was discovered. As her keys were still in the ignition, it is most likely that the car was stolen by the suspect as the keyring also

contained the keys to her home. Regardless, Ms. Tasker was well known to the police as the owner/proprietor of a very successful after-hours "sporting house" where patrons could drink, gamble or obtain sexual services and it is possible that she was involved in a dispute with a client or someone she knew. While robbery is also a possible motive, it does not appear that the rest of the house was searched and the killer left behind three diamond rings containing a total of 17 stones that Ms. Tasker had been wearing.



While this case is now over 70 years old, if the killer was in his 20's at the time of the incident, it is possible that he is still alive today which is why this file is still considered active by the Police Service.

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Death of Elsie Tasker

Authorities may have shut down the Point Douglas red-light district, but they couldn't shut down the sex trade. Instead, madams relocated their brothels throughout the rest of the city, especially Winnipeg's west end, where the familiar cycle of prostitution, drugs and violence continued.

Whoever killed Elsie Tasker wasn't after her diamond rings, but he was likely looking for sex.

So while Tasker's homicide is one of the oldest cold cases in the Winnipeg Police Service's files, it also reaffirms another grim historic reality: the sex trade then, just like today, was rife with violence. And the women are the ones who die.

It was Saturday, Oct. 4, 1947.

Elie Frances Tasker, 42, was already well-known to the police. For years, her modest, clean home on Young Street was actually an after-hours gaming house, where clients could drink, gamble and pay for sexual services behind closed doors.

But sometime between Friday afternoon and Saturday afternoon, when she was found lying in the foyer, somebody killed her.

She had been stabbed over and over again: in her back, on her neck and head. Her purse was ransacked and her car was stolen.

But the person who killed her didn't bother with the three diamond rings she was wearing, with 17 stones in total.

That's why police suspected that robbery wasn't so much a motive as revenge. Anger, possibly, over services gone wrong.

For years, the unsolved homicide remained in the police service's cold files, since there was still a chance the killer could be alive today.

Today, 66 years later, that seems unlikely, but not impossible.