

The Murder of Jacqueline Poole

— Case 69 —

The gruesome slaying took place on the 11th of February 1983. The killer was identified within a few days. He was tried and convicted 18 years later.

The delay was not the fault of Ms. Christine Holohan of Ruislip Gardens, West London.

Holohan called the police in response to their broadcast request for information that could shed light on the murder of a bar maid named Jacqueline Poole. Although Holohan had never met the victim in life and knew none of her family or friends, she had read something about the crime in the local paper and she had a feeling that the presence she had been sensing might be the spirit of Poole. When it actually appeared to her, however, the spirit identified herself as Jacqui Hunt.

The different name than that published in the media was the first thing that got the attention of Police Constable Tony Batters when he and Detective Constable Andrew Smith called on Holohan a day or so later. But the knowledge of Poole's maiden name was only the first drop in a flood of information supplied by her spirit via Holohan. Poole's spirit had come to Holohan for justice, and she provided 131 separate facts concerning her murder. These included:

- On the evening she was murdered, Poole was supposed to go to work but did not because she felt ill.
- Two men had come by intending to take her to work.
- After they left, another man came by to visit her.
- She knew this man through friends, but she did not care for him.
- She let him into her flat.
- She thought he had a message for her from her boyfriend.
- Her boyfriend was currently in detention.
- When the police arrived at Poole's flat, there were two coffee cups visible in the kitchen. One clean and one with coffee remains.

- Also visible were a black address book, a letter, and a bottle of prescription medicine.

Holohan went on to describe the attack, struggle, and murder in what the police referred to as graphic details, but those details were not released to the public. She said that there were rings missing from the body. Furthermore, she mentioned five names associated with the victim: Betty, Terry, Sylvia, Barbara Stone, and Tony.

Because Constable Batters had been the first on the scene of Poole's murder, he was aware of the coffee cups, address book, and other such details of the location. Of the other facts transmitted via Holohan, all but 10 were verified by the time the case was closed, and all but one of those were consistent with the known facts. The single at-variance item was Holohan's mention of Sunday, from which it was inferred that she thought the murder to have taken place on Saturday rather than on Friday.

"Betty" was Jacqui Poole's mother. "Terry" was her brother. "Sylvia" was her boyfriend's mother. "Barbara Stone" was a friend of Poole who had died several years previously, but the police did not make the connection at the time.

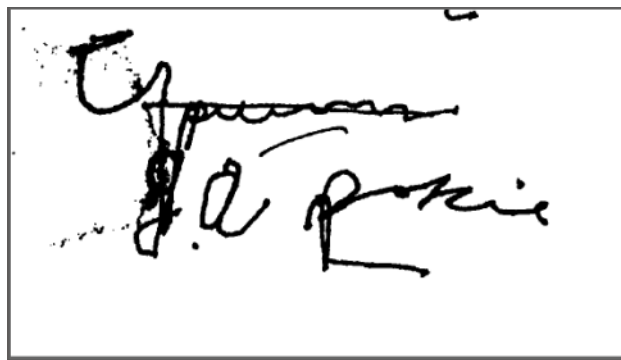


Figure 1 The nickname "Pokie" as produced by Christine Holohan's automatic writing.

As for "Tony," when Holohan tried some automatic writing in her attempt to name the murderer, the only person's name she wrote was "Pokie." The constables immediately recognized that as the rather uncommon nickname of one of their key suspects, Anthony (Tony) Ruark.

Ruark, who had a history of criminal but not violent behavior, had already been interviewed by the police, however no solid evidence of his guilt could be found. Based on Holohan's revelations, the man was detained and grilled at length and various items were confiscated during a search of his home. Nevertheless, no incriminating evidence was uncovered and Raurk was again released.

With nothing further for the police to go on, the Jacqueline Poole case grew cold, and what items had been collected as possible evidence were placed in storage. There they remained for 18 years until an informant claimed knowledge of the killer and the investigation was reopened. As it turned out, this new informant named the wrong man, but in the process of going over the stored evidence using the latest in DNA technology, the truth was revealed. A pullover that had been taken from "Pokie's" trash was found to have skin cells, body fluids, and clothing fibers that conclusively linked him to the murder.

In August of 2001, Anthony Ruark was convicted of Poole's murder and sent to jail for the rest of his life. Justice for Jacqui Poole was delayed, but her efforts to communicate via Holohan were not in vain, for it seems that it was the medium's prolific and accurate statements that triggered the search of the killer's home and resulted in the collection of the damning evidence. If that contaminated shirt had not been found in Ruark's trash, he would most likely have remained a free man.

The typical case in which mediums claim to have helped the police has little corroboration from the police themselves. Poole's murder investigation is most uncommon in that the detectives involved agreed to be interviewed by the researchers, supplied the researchers with copies of their original notes, and signed statements affirming the accuracy of the researchers' report on which this article is based.¹

Discussion

Psychic detective work is not, of course, the focus of *The Survival Top 40*. Therefore, the issue here is not how impressed the police were, but whether or not Holohan could have obtained her information from sources other than Poole's disincarnate mind.

Some critics have claimed that it is not impossible for Holohan to have obtained her information through normal means. When each fact is considered separately, their arguments make some sense ... sometimes. For instance, it is possible, as one critic suggests, that Poole's father, who was allowed access to the murder scene momentarily to identify the body, happened to pry his eyes away from the mangled body of his daughter long enough to note that there were two coffee cups sitting out in the kitchen. It is also possible that he felt the necessary curiosity and had the presence of mind to examine these cups and determine that one was clean and one still had some coffee in it. And it is just possible that in his grief-stricken state he thought to describe these cups to someone else. And, yes, it is possible that that someone was sufficiently impressed by two innocuous coffee cups to pass on the information and that — somewhere down the line of gossip — "news" of the cups reached Holohan. Possible ... but extremely unlikely.

To posit a long string of such outlandish possibilities for scores of other trivial facts is either being disingenuous or downright silly.

And then there are the facts that Holohan simply had no way of knowing, such as the name of Poole's deceased girlfriend, Barbara Stone. Even the police didn't make that connection for nearly 20 years.

Other critics might claim that Holohan was gleaned the information via mental telepathy. The coffee cups and such she could have pulled from Constable Batter's mind; the murder details

¹ Declaration

I confirm that the above account agrees with my recollection of my interview with Christine Holohan and with my knowledge of the case. (Signed) Anthony Paul Batters. Metropolitan Police Warrant No. 153617. 27.11.2002
(Signed) Andrew Smith, Detective Sergeant. Metropolitan Police Warrant No. 91/167901. 27.11.2002

from Ruark's mind; knowledge of the two who came to escort Poole from their own minds, and so on. Pulling just the relevant facts from so many different minds is theoretically possible ... say, about as possible as winning the lottery ten times in a row. But even those willing to swallow the idea of such super-ESP must choke on Holohan's mention of Barbara Stone — a girl who had nothing to do with the murder and wasn't even alive at the time.

The one mistake that Holohan possibly made actually strengthens her credibility, because the one thing that everyone involved in the case knew was that Poole was killed on a Friday. If Holohan was such a brilliant weaver of lies and guesses, she surely wouldn't have been wrong about the day of the week. Discarnate spirits, on the other hand, generally display a poor comprehension of time and dates.

For further information

This article was largely derived from a paper titled: "A Possibly Unique Case of Psychic Detection," by Guy Lyon Playfair and Montague Keen, published in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, vol. 68, no. 874, January 2004, pp. 1-17. Also pertinent (although this author has not read it) is a book written in 2006 by Christine Holohan, titled: *A Voice from the Grave: The Unseen Witness in the Jacqui Poole Murder Case*.



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