

Intruder

A textual mash-up by Bill Cushing

TRANSCRIPT/New incoming message, Ch. 35 studio: 24 July 1980: 4:13 a.m.

Message, 4:01 a.m.: It's four a.m. in the morning. I have to tell you I have just found you on channel 35 on cablevision. One of the most absolutely beautiful and delightful experiences I have ever had, it found me in a time of turmoil, and I found it in a time of need. The music is absolutely haunting—especially the violins that she plays. It's beautiful. I feel that I am with the whales or I'm in heaven soaring with the gods.

Missing Violinist Found Slain at Met

July 24, 1980

The nude and bound body of a violinist who went missing during a performance by the Berlin Ballet Wednesday was found in a ventilation shaft of the Metropolitan Opera House at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

Police said the victim, 31-year-old Helen Noon, had been hurled from the roof of the six-story backstage area of the opera house.

The roof is protected from street views by a 30-foot-high concrete wall on the west and a granite facade to the east. The victim fell about 60 feet.

Joseph Shannon, assistant house manager, said the woman was apparently dragged out onto the roof and pushed through a narrow opening. Investigators said they believed the killer was likely someone who works there but did not rule out the possi-

bility of an intruder.

The police said, after an all-night search, Miss Noon's body was found by the police at about 8:30 AM, lying face up on two wooden planks placed across a steel beam between the building's third and fourth floors.

There were no apparent wounds on Miss Noon's body, and authorities said the specific cause of death was uncertain. Nor was it known whether she had been sexually abused, police said although Ricardo Cassini, the department's chief of detectives in Manhattan, said at a news conference that the victim had been discovered bound and "disrobed."

He said her clothing had not been found, except for a pair of shoes on the roof, but he declined to say how or with what she had been bound.

Chief Cassini and other investigators said it was unclear where in the build-

ing Miss Noon had been killed. It was unclear which of the 15 elevators or the numerous stairways backstage the killer might have used.

While investigators and reporters swarmed through the building yesterday, a group of children from the School of the American Ballet arrived with their mothers for a rehearsal.

The slaying stunned the artistic community at Lincoln Center, the 18-year-old complex of dance, music and other performing arts, and prompted Arnold Cleese, executive director, to double security at the opera house.

Learning of the murder, some became visibly frightened while others demanded stepped-up security and said they had already complained to the house management about children wandering through the house without escorts.

TRANSCRIPT/New incoming message, Ch. 35 studio: 26 July 1980: 4:13 a.m.

New message: 4:16 a.m.: This is my second call. It's 4:15 in the morning. You have saved my life. You have given me beauty. You've given me joy. The sounds of the strings is especially celestial. I need to speak to the person who programmed this telecast over channel 35 on the cable. It's breathtaking. It has been a salvation to me. The man who did this, who designed this, who made this, is an absolute genius. He deserves praise and I will give that praise.

Autopsy Says Violinist Alive When Hurled from Roof

July 26, 1980

A 31-year-old violinist was alive when her killer hurled her, nude and bound, into an airshaft from the roof of the Metropolitan Opera House Wednesday night or Thursday morning, the New York City Medical Examiner said yesterday. He said she died of skull fractures and other injuries suffered from the fall.

The Medical Examiner, Dr. Elliot M. Grossman, declined to say whether the violinist, Helen Noon, who vanished during an intermission, had been sexually assaulted. Dr. Grossman also said the victim had been gagged.

Earlier reports said she had fallen onto wood boards placed across a steel beam, but Dr Grossman said yesterday that he put the planks there to facilitate his examination of the scene.

As the Medical Examiner disclosed his findings, one of the largest detective forces assembled for a murder case in the

city in recent years focused its search for the killer on the 1,000 people employed by the opera house.

More than 50 detectives questioned over 300 stagehands, ushers, dancers, technicians, musicians and other performers and employees of the opera house.

The police disclosed yesterday that clothes worn by Miss Noon on Wednesday night had been found near her body at about the same time that her remains were found Thursday morning. They had said on Thursday afternoon that only her shoes had been found.

Investigators declined to say whether Miss Noon had been gagged, or to specify how or with what she had been bound. They said such information might be required to identify the killer.

While they said they're not ruling out the possibility that an intruder killed her, detectives were leaning toward the theory that the killer was employed by the opera

house because of his apparent familiarity with the complex layout of the building.

The chief said the killer appeared to have been someone familiar with the building's back stage maze of corridors, tunnels, cul-de-sacs, rooms, offices, stairwells, and elevators.

The backstage area where Miss Noon apparently encountered the killer is a labyrinth of dressing rooms, storage rooms, no less than 40 staircases, 15 elevators, 10 above-ground floors and three underground levels of passageways, tunnels and garages.

Heavy security was apparent at the Met and other buildings in the Lincoln Center complex yesterday. Ten officers have also been added to the force of 22 that patrols Lincoln Center.

Despite the security, however, one reporter was able to walk into the stage entrance and wander backstage without being challenged.

TRANSCRIPT/New incoming message, Ch. 35 studio: 29 July 1980: 4:13 a.m.

Continuing my compliments, I can't believe the beauty that you are giving to the community. It's absolutely unsurpassable. I mean the joy, the music. You can feel everything about you. You can feel everything warm. Spring. I am sure the universe is watching me. Its authorities see everything I do and take note.

Sketch Aids Police in Slaying at Met

NEW YORK (Associated Press)
July 29, 1980

The chief of detectives investigating the murder of Helen Noon said yesterday that several supervisors at the Metropolitan Opera thought they recognized a man in a police sketch who was seen on a backstage elevator with the 31-year-old violinist on the night she was killed, July 23.

Deputy Chief Richard J. Cassini, the chief of Manhattan detectives, said that the

sketch, made from a description provided by a dancer from the Berlin Ballet with the aid of police hypnotists, had been shown to about 20 Met supervisors and other regular employees.

He said that more than one name had been suggested, but the police had not identified the man. He also insisted that the man was being sought as a witness and not a suspect.

TRANSCRIPT/New incoming message, Ch. 35 studio: 5 August 1980: 4:13 a.m.

Please play that music again. It is absolutely captivating and delightful and full of salvation. You have given it to us, and I appreciate it. I will probably call again. I am so totally overwhelmed with the beauty that you have given me.

Possible New Clues Disclosed in the Killing at Met

August 5, 1980

Detectives have found two new items at the Metropolitan Opera House that they believe could be evidence in the murder of Helen Noon, whose body—nude, bound and gagged—was found last month at the bottom of a cooling tower there.

The items—a tampon and a paper napkin stained with semen—were found two levels below the backstage area where Miss Noon was last seen.

Police sources said the napkin was found stuffed in

a pipe and the tampon was found near a complex of work rooms and rehearsal rooms one level beneath the orchestra pit.

If laboratory tests connect the items with the incident, the implication would be that Miss Noon was accosted by a man in a stage-level elevator, taken two levels down to sub-stage level where she was attacked.

The city's Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Elliot M. Grossman, said earlier that an autopsy found "no

evidence of rape." Asked whether there was evidence of any sexual assault, he pointed out that she had been found nude and gagged and said, "I'll leave it at that."

A dancer, believed to be the last person to have seen Miss Noon before her disappearance, told the police of having seen her enter an elevator on stage level at about 9:40 P.M.

Based on the dancer's description, a police artist drew a sketch of the man, being sought as a possible witness, officials say.

TRANSCRIPT/New incoming message, Ch. 35 studio: 8 August 1980: 4:13 a.m.

I need to hear the whale music again. That music is absolutely captivating and I still—you have my memory there, my number. I want to speak to someone about it. Your music is absolutely choice, absolutely perfection, but lacks one thing: the whales of heavenly God.

Met Preparing to Reopen Amid Worry Over Killer

NEW YORK (AP)

Aug. 8, 1980

After a ten-day hiatus, the Metropolitan Opera House reopens tonight amid tightened security and continuing apprehension over the murder of a 31-year-old violinist last month.

The police reported no major developments in the effort to find the killer of violinist Helen Noon, who disappeared backstage on the night of July 23 and was hurled to her death—nude, bound and gagged—in an airshaft from the sixth-floor roof.

The largest force of detectives assembled for a murder in recent years continues to work on the case. But to many Met performers and employees returning to work tonight or scheduled to open the Met's regular season on Sept 22, the possibility of a murderer in their midst has left a deepening sense of unease.

"There will be apprehension in the house

until this is solved,"

Anthony A Cleese, the executive director of the Metropolitan Opera Association, said in an interview yesterday.

Mr. Cleese said that no extra security personnel beyond the seven or eight house guards normally on duty would be posted, but he noted that assignments and procedures had been changed to tighten security and that studies on how to improve security further were under way.

"If it were possible to make security foolproof, we'd do it, but that is not possible," Mr. Cleese said. "You could bring in a detachment of Marines, and there would still be no way to cover all the fire exits, stairs, elevators, storage and all the rest."

To tighten security, he said, the identification badges of all performers and Met employees will be checked rigorously. In addition, some elevators

will be manned and others shut down; some guards will be assigned to patrol more areas, and everyone backstage has been instructed to be cautious and, where possible, to move in pairs or groups.

Three weeks after the murder, investigators found numerous clues and several key witnesses; analysis of some evidence by police laboratories and the Medical Examiner's office has added important information.

The 50 detectives working on the case have begun to learn many of the victim's movements on the night of the slaying.

The police believe the killer had a knife because some of the victim's clothing had been slashed.

While the police have not ruled out an intruder, they have said she was more likely slain by someone familiar with the Met's complex backstage layout.

TRANSCRIPT/incoming message, Ch. 35 studio: 12 August 1980: 4:13 a.m.

Your choice of music continues to amaze me. Some of it, ten years ago, I would have abhorred. I would have hated it, but you have brought it to me in such a pleasant way. There is wisdom with you. I would like to have a conversation with the gentleman or lady that made your music happen this way.

It's so delightful, so complete. I feel akin to that man that was on our shores not too long ago, who wrote the music that I adore. You're very kind. You're very sweet. You're very lovely. And I wonder if I will be around long enough to make things better.

Stagehand named Key Suspect in Met Killing

Aug. 12, 1980

A stagehand employed by the Metropolitan Opera emerged as a prime suspect in the slaying of Helen Noon, the violinist hurled to her death last month from the roof of the opera house at Lincoln Center, sources close to the investigation said yesterday.

The suspect, whose identity was not disclosed, has not been arrested because police and the Manhattan District Attorney's office believe that not enough evidence to make a concrete case against him has been developed, sources said. However, they added, several important clues have cast suspicion on the stagehand.

One is part of a fingerprint found on the opera house roof. The stagehand has denied involvement in the murder, the sources said, but he admitted under

questioning when confronted with the fingerprint that he had been on the roof, contending that he went there sometime after Miss Noon's fatal plunge.

Moreover, sources said, the suspect resembles a police sketch of a man seen with the victim on a back stage elevator, making him the last person seen with her alive.

Finally, sources said, the suspect's account of his whereabouts and activities on the night of the murder were not substantiated and to some extent contradicted, by statements given by some of the more than 250 people who worked backstage that night.

Sources said the effort to obtain more evidence was continuing, and they noted that the stagehand was still employed by the Met but kept under sur-

veillance and could be taken into custody soon.

According to sources close to the investigation, suspicion focused on the stagehand when the police compared information given in interviews with employees and performers at the Met and discovered that his account did not jibe with statements made by others.

"There's enough to make you wonder," one source said.

While an autopsy by the city Medical Examiner's office found no evidence of rape, the police have said they believe the killer's motive was sexual.

With the possibility of a murderer in their midst, employees and performers of the Met have apprehension over the unsolved murder.

TRANSCRIPT/New incoming message, Ch. 35 studio: 15 August 1980: 4:13 a.m.

For sure I'm totally involved with what you're doing. It's totally perfect. I can't stand the music you're doing. I can't stand anything you're doing. It's totally fantastic, and I have to give praise to any current that would give anything this beautiful to the world. It's just totally fantastic.

Stagehand, 21, Seized in Murder of Violinist at the Met on July 23

Aug. 15, 1980

A 21-year-old Bronx man employed as a stagehand at the Metropolitan for the last four years was charged yesterday with the slaying of Helen Noon, the 31-year-old violinist hurled to her death last month.

Ending one of the most intensive homicide investigations in New York City in recent years, the police seized the suspect, Craig Devon, outside his home in the Bedford Park section of the Bronx, and booked him in Manhattan early yesterday. The suspect was arraigned in Manhattan and remanded to Riker's Island without bail.

Sources close to the investigation said Devon had made "admissions" under questioning Friday night and been booked on the basis of these and other evidence.

These included a partial fingerprint found on the Met roof; a police sketch,

and inconsistencies in his account of his movements on the night of the murder, including reports that he was missing from his job during the hours the murder was believed to have been committed.

The suspect, who is not married, was born and raised in New York and quit Manhattan Vocational High School after two years to start work at the Met. He lives with his father, an electrician at the Met for 20 years who helped get his son his job at the Met. The suspect has held a variety of jobs at the Met.

Chief Sullivan said there were no indications that the suspect knew Miss Noon, and he reiterated that investigators believed her murderer was sexually motivated.

Miss Noon's body was found on a steel ledge in an airshaft at the rear of the

opera house, and an autopsy later showed she had been alive when hurled—nude, bound and gagged—from the sixth-floor roof, and had died of skull fractures and other injuries suffered in the plunge.

Detectives who worked on the case said that the violinist's hands had been tied with a type of rope used backstage and that the knot used was a type used by stagehands to secure scenery.

Mr. Devon said that he does not remember details about the night of the because he was intoxicated and slept most of the night in the basement of the opera house.

Fellow stagehands told the police that Mr. Crimmins missed a 9:30 P.M. cue and could not be found in the backstage area he usually used to sleep off his drinking sprees.

TRANSCRIPT/Ch. 35 studio: 6 Aug., 1980: 4:13 a.m. No new messages.