A silhouette of a person crouching in a long, narrow hallway with rows of lockers or storage units on both sides. The person is facing away from the camera, reaching out towards the end of the hallway where a bright light source is visible.

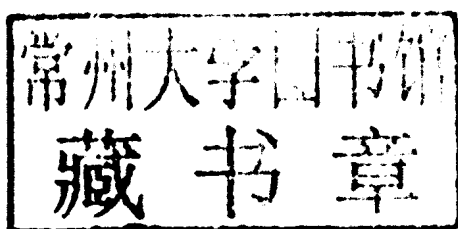
Jack Branson and Mary Branson

# DELAYED JUSTICE

Inside Stories from America's Best  
**COLD CASE INVESTIGATORS**



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**Prometheus Books**

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*In the midst of researching  
the ugliness of humanity,*

*it's a respite to consider  
Catherine Friedel Kinney  
—a lady most beautiful and rare.*

*She brought out the best in every life she touched.  
If all mothers were like her, the pages of this book  
might well be empty.*



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## Acknowledgments

**C**onducting an investigation is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. Before the case can be closed with finality, you need every piece of the puzzle in place. Some elements of an investigation constitute the framework—the all-important edges of the puzzle. Who was the victim? Even when Jane Doe’s killer is identified, the case cannot be closed with satisfaction until Jane’s identity is known. Who was the perpetrator? No case can be solved without that piece of the puzzle.

With these primary pieces in place, a case may reluctantly be filed away, but it will never be closed for a dedicated investigator and for family and friends of the victim until all the puzzle pieces are identified and in place. Some pieces are hard to locate but are no less important to those involved. Why did the perpetrator commit the crime? Why did he or she choose the victim? As the framework of the case falls into place, missing pieces become more noticeable. Every piece of an investigative puzzle is valuable, and when it’s missing, it’s missed.

It’s the same when writing a book. An author can create the framework for a book, but its richness comes from the pieces generously contributed by others. Some of these pieces have strong, vibrant colors, and some have deeper hues that make up the background. But a book is made strong by each contribution and enriched by their variety.

We created a framework for this book, but we are not presumptuous enough to think that we put together the puzzle. We're grateful to acknowledge the resources and the people who filled in the framework with their support, encouragement, expertise, insights, and experiences:

Our family—Penny, Adam, Taylor, Elliott, and Kayla—you make everything worthwhile, including writing. We love you.

Our friends and editors Bob and Ruth Hall—you find all the things we miss, and you do it diplomatically. We admire you.

Our agent, Claire Gerus—you have a knack for finding just the right publisher for each book. We appreciate you.

Editor in Chief Steven Mitchell, Prometheus Books—this book was originally your brainchild. We hope it meets your expectations.

**Print Resources.** Though we did not quote directly from print resources, we read as much as we could about the cases described to us by investigators, including reading from the (North) *Carolina News Channel* online version; the *LaGrange* (Georgia) *Daily News*; the *Virginia Pilot*; the *Red Orbit* (North Carolina) *News*; CharMeck.org (city of Charlotte, North Carolina, and Mecklenburg County government news); charlotteobserver.com; WKBW-TV online news; the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*; the *Madisonville* (Kentucky) *Messenger*; WGRZ.com (Buffalo, New York); latimes.com (Los Angeles, California); the *Gaston Gazette* (Gastonia, North Carolina); the *Washington Post*; Fox Radio online news (Redding, California); and the *Anchorage* (Alaska) *Daily News*. If you'd like to read an in-depth study of the Timothy Spencer rape/murder trial, we recommend Paul Mones's *Stalking Justice* (Pocket Books, 1995). For details of the Moore's Ford Bridge murders, see Laura Wexler's *Fire in a Canebrake* (Scribner, 2003). And for more information on murderer Russell Winstead, we suggest our own *Murder in Mayberry* (Berkley, 2009).

***The victims of the violent crimes described in these pages.*** It is our hope that by telling your stories, you will be no longer victims but victors. If your stories can help readers understand the mind-sets and behaviors of perpetrators and learn strategies for bringing killers and rapists to justice, your already-valuable lives will be even more valuable. You are repre-

sented in the final chapter by Jessica, a victim who survived and tells her story. Jessica is one of the most courageous women we've ever met, and she speaks with candor about what it was like to be a victim, to wait ten years for justice, and to meet a cold case detective who cared about her as though she were his own sister. She relived her painful experiences in order to help cold case investigators understand the immeasurable gift they give families when they solve cases long forgotten by most.

*The families of the victims whose stories we've told.* We are the family of a violent-crime victim, and we know the pain of watching television reenactments and reading hundreds of newspaper articles describing the brutality of the crime. But we wrote about the murder in our own family because we believed it would help others going through similar experiences. We hope that you will see the retelling of events that are deeply personal to you as a way of helping investigators solve more cold cases.

*The families of the perpetrators.* You are the forgotten secondary victims, and you must suffer more than most of us can imagine. You face blame and public embarrassment while trying to reconcile the person you love with the crime that person committed. We know that environment can play a big part in shaping criminals, but we also acknowledge that some of the vilest perpetrators came from loving homes. We regret what you've experienced, and we understand your torn loyalty.

*The investigators, prosecutors, and others who generously shared their expertise and insights.* Throughout the interviewing and writing processes, you amazed us with your generosity in sharing what it took years to learn and what you're paid to share as you lead seminars and workshops. We sensed that, without exception, your primary goal is to get the bad guys. Here, in alphabetical order, are our cold case heroes extraordinaire.

*Detective Troy Armstrong* began his career as a street cop in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1991. In 1999, he was temporarily detailed to a

regional homicide cold case task force to assist in the investigation of the possible serial murders of more than thirty high-risk females. During this assignment, he discovered a keen interest and ability in handling older cases. When the task force disbanded in 2001, he joined Charlotte's Sexual Assault Unit.

In 2006, he became the first and only member of the Sexual Assault Cold Case Unit, which he now works with the assistance of what he describes as "a crack group of retired detectives." Troy has helped solve more than a hundred sexual-assault cold cases, resulting in the conviction of more than twenty suspects with combined sentences of more than 850 years.

Troy is in high demand as a speaker and instructor, and he generously shared his extensive experience and insights to enrich this book.

When asked the reasons for his success, Troy says, "Over the years literally hundreds of people have been involved in our cold case successes. The victims, their families, and I are forever grateful to everyone who played a part in the investigations. I especially appreciate some who have gone above and beyond in their dedication and pursuit of 'delayed justice': the CMPD (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department) Crime Lab; Major Rick Williams; Sergeants Darrell Price, Marsha Dearing, and Dick Riedel (ret); Detective (ret) Linda Holmes, CMPD Lab Director (ret) Jane Burton; volunteer Halli Gomez; Assistant District Attorney Samantha Pendergrass; and most important, the victims and their families, whose courage never ceases to amaze me."

*Investigator Clay Bryant* has a law degree, and he's also a certified paramedic. But since childhood, when he rode with his dad, small-town police chief Buddy Bryant, all Clay had wanted was to be a law enforcement officer.

Clay served as an officer with the Georgia State Patrol before being appointed chief of police in Hogansville, Georgia. From 2002 to 2006, he served as an investigator for the Coweta County Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office. During this time, he solved four intricate high-profile cold cases. Due to his diligence and expertise, five defendants are now serving life sentences for crimes once thought unsolvable.

Bryant was dubbed “Cold Case Clay” by an *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reporter. His cases have been featured on *48 Hours*, Investigation Discovery Channel, A&E, and *Cold Case Files*.

**Judge Dennis Delano Sr.** grew up in Buffalo, New York, and has spent most of his life there. He married his wife, Cheryl, while in his late teens and immediately set about to accomplish his childhood dream of being a public servant. He began as a volunteer firefighter, then a full-time firefighter and paramedic, and eventually a uniformed peace officer. In 1985 he became a Buffalo Police Department patrol officer, later moving to the detective division’s Auto Theft/Arson Unit, then to the Major Crimes Unit, and then to the Homicide Unit.

While working in homicide, Den taught himself about cold case investigations. When the department formed its first cold case unit in May 2006, Den’s superiors recommended him for the unit’s three-person team. A few months after the unit was formed, Den was reassigned to a multiagency task force formed to catch a serial killer/rapist who had been preying on young women in the western New York area for thirty years. The unit launched an intense two-month investigation that resulted in the suspect’s capture and the freeing of an innocent man who had already served twenty-two years in prison. Den then returned to the cold case squad, where the team was able to identify another killer and free an innocent mother who had served thirteen years for her daughter’s murder.

During his nearly thirty years of service to western New York, Den was awarded numerous citations for outstanding service. Now grandparents, Den and Cheryl still live in the area Den has loved and served for most of his life. He currently holds the position of judge for the City of Cheektowaga, New York.

**Prosecutor Alan Goodwin** graduated from the University of Alabama School of Law in 1998. Since that time, he has served as an assistant district attorney for the Alaska Department of Law and as a judge advocate in the US Air Force Reserve. Goodwin has primarily prosecuted violent crimes and crimes against children in Anchorage, Alaska,

and has prosecuted Air Force Courts-Martial in California, Alaska, Japan, and Germany.

Alan credits detective Glen Klinkhart with solving the cold case he shared in this book, and he lauds his team for making the prosecution possible: case paralegal Marilyn Sansom and legal assistant Laura Bianchi. "This case was much more about the detectives, the analysts, and the evidence than it was about me," insists Alan.

*Capt. (ret) Cindy Isenbour* worked patrol, crime prevention, and vice and narcotics, but she spent most of her career working in criminal investigations, where she recently retired as captain and commander of the Criminal Investigation Division of the Gastonia (North Carolina) Police Department. She served as a detective, polygraph examiner, and supervisor in Criminal Investigations. She is a graduate of the FBI National Academy 199 Session.

Cindy was the first woman in her department to reach the rank of captain and the first woman to serve as commander of the hostage negotiations team. She was the first woman law enforcement administrator to serve as president of the North Carolina's FBI National Academy Association.

Cindy's husband, Jeff, recently retired as assistant chief of the Gaston County Police Department. Cindy's two sons and a daughter-in-law are all police officers.

*NCIS Special Agent in Charge Joe D. Kennedy* has served as a special agent for the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) since 1986, where he now serves as director for the Joint Counterintelligence Unit (JCIU), Kabul, Afghanistan. Joe was instrumental in setting up the NCIS Cold Case Squad at NCIS headquarters in Washington, DC, where he and his team have investigated more than three hundred murders worldwide. Joe has gained national attention for his innovative approach to solving cold cases. He has provided training on cold case methodology and protocol all over the world, including in Asia, in Europe, in South America, and in the Caribbean.

Some of Joe's many strategic assignments include serving at Quan-

tico, Virginia; Washington, DC; Puerto Rico; and Okinawa, Japan (where he served as a counterintelligence officer). He has been deployed to Afghanistan as deputy director for the Joint Counterintelligence Unit, and to Iraq as a supervisory special agent.

Joe is in demand as a cold case investigations trainer, and he spent years accumulating the wealth of information he contributed to this book. Many of the investigative steps and strategies in this book are adapted from Joe's presentations, with our comments and explanations added.

*FBI Special Agent (ret) Art Krinsky* is CEO of Arthur L. Krinsky & Associates, Inc., providing private investigations, specialized law enforcement training, and consulting services to business and law enforcement. He serves the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) as a Team Adam Consultant in active cases of child abduction and sexual exploitation, and he is also an NCMEC Project ALERT volunteer working on cold cases.

During his more than thirty years as an FBI special agent, Art investigated numerous violations and violent crimes, and he was an FBI master police instructor, a legal advisor, an undercover agent, a critical incident debriefer, and a member of the Metro Atlanta Fugitive Task Force. After retirement from the FBI, Art was appointed by the Department of Homeland Security as senior instructor for the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, with assignments in the Legal, Practical Applications, and Counterterrorism Divisions. He is a Georgia POST-certified law enforcement officer, a Georgia licensed private investigator and classroom firearms instructor, and a member of the Georgia and Ohio Bar Associations.

*FBI Special Agent (ret) Steve Mardigian* is president, CEO, and violent crime consultant with the Academy Group, the largest privately owned forensic behavioral science firm in the world. The Academy Group includes a cold case analysis program, enriched by its members' previous experience with the Behavioral Science Unit at the FBI Academy.

Steve served in the FBI for thirty-one years as a supervisory special



agent, a regional field office program manager, a violent crime assessor, and as administrator of the FBI's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC). During his time in the Behavioral Analysis Unit at Quantico, Virginia, his work included helping law enforcement officers investigate cold cases. He now uses the expertise he gained in his years with the FBI to continue to assist law enforcement. He's a specialist in crime-scene and communicated-threat analyses.

*Kentucky Commonwealth's Attorney David Massamore* is our personal hero. He prosecuted the four-year-old murder case that brought justice for our family, and we witnessed the powerful way he reconstructed the crime for the jury and shared the investigators' findings with power and clarity. An outstanding litigator with a successful thirty-year career as a prosecutor, David has helped close a number of cold cases and has brought peace to countless families like ours.

David received his undergraduate degree in history, political science, and military science from Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky, and was then commissioned as a second lieutenant in the US Army. After his time in the military, David received his law degree from Cumberland School of Law, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama. He has served as assistant county attorney and assistant Commonwealth's Attorney. He was elected Kentucky Commonwealth's Attorney in 1994 and has been reelected unopposed since that time.

David is quick to acknowledge that everything he's credited with accomplishing is the result of teamwork and that his team is exceptional: First Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Kathryn Senter, Second Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Kimberly Senter, administrative assistant Lisa Harris, victim advocate Charlie Weatherford, and secretary Amy Cline.

*Detective David Phillips*, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department Cold Case Squad, credits his entire team with its phenomenal success solving cases: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Sergeant Melissa Mangum and Detective Steve Furr; FBI special agent liaison Ernie Mathis; and volunteers Dr. Vivian Lord (professor, University of North Carolina at