

50 Ways to Cleave Your Lover

Obviously Hialeah isn't the only municipality in Dade where ardor precedes murder. This county routinely tops Florida in domestic homicide stats, and, as might be expected, the emphasis is on the bizarre. In the spirit of Valentine's Day (or Lupercalia, anyway), consider the following:

In 1961 a South Dade man flagged down a deputy on the highway. He told the officer that he was walking his girlfriend home from a bar when she decided to relieve herself in their front yard. "She was shot by an unknown assailant while attempting to get her britches down to urinate," the police report noted. But the crime scene indicated she'd been shot in their bedroom and dragged outside. Police charged William McCottrell with murder, having deemed his alibi piss-poor.

Victor Arrollo Maisonat was found stabbed through the heart in 1966. According to the medical examiner's synopsis, "victim had just returned from visit-

ing a prostitute down the street. He came back home and told his common-law wife that the prostitute was a better 'puzzy' [sic] than she was and then told her to get out of the house." Maisonat was then foolish enough to lie down to sleep.

William Lee Roberts's philandering caught up to him one afternoon in 1969 as he sat drinking with his fiancée at a Perrine watering hole. An ex-girlfriend called out to him, then shot him in the stomach. He died staggering out of the Last Chance Bar.

A remarkable number of Dade Countians have died in the act of having sexual relations with their neighbor's spouse. Autopsy records note that on a scalding July day in 1964, Edith Mae Sabbs "was apparently enjoying herself while engaging in the act of intercourse with another colored man. While this act was 'going on,' her common-law husband forced entry into the apartment, shooting Sabbs, her companion, and himself."

The same fate befell Essie Jackson in 1960. Her husband managed both to kill Essie and to wound her entwined lover with a single shot. In 1969, Willie Davis, Jr., showed the poor judgment often associated with the sexually voracious. Rather than seek a more discreet locale, he consummated his desires with a married woman on her living-room couch — while his paramour's husband lay a few feet

away, in the bedroom. Apparently the husband was a light sleeper. Coroners found Davis clad in his undershorts and black socks, a bullet through his heart.

In 1966, Nathaniel Washington, echoing the madness of Othello, followed his wife to the home of William Herring. A few minutes later, he crashed the party. He stabbed his rival, who was in the act of disrobing, and dragged his wife home through the streets of Miami just as he

jolted her to death.

Mildred Thigpen was subjected to an equally unlikely demise in 1970. After arguing about their newly purchased Oldsmobile, her husband doused her and the car with gasoline, then set both afire. She died from the burns.

Not all women have proved so pliant. In one remarkable three-week stretch in 1959, five different women murdered their mates, three with guns, two with knives.

On a chilly night in November 1963, Charles Ray began complaining that he felt ill. His girlfriend Lottie Mae Revers (a.k.a. Hopkins) served him a mug of cocoa and two aspirin and sent the poor man to bed. He never woke up. The autopsy revealed cyanide poisoning, and police served Lottie Mae an arrest warrant.

Anna Osby tops all comers for sheer resilience. In 1968, her boyfriend Eddie Barrington confronted her on an Overtown sidewalk. He ordered her to return home, and when she refused he pulled out a revolver and shot her in the right cheek. "Osby took the gun away from Barrington and shot him in the left chest," coroner's records note matter-of-factly.

Undoubtedly the stupidest justification

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found her — stark naked.

Inflamed lovers have proved a resourceful lot when it comes to weapons of death. Among the instruments employed: a broom, an umbrella, a skillet, a garden hose, and a mailbox. A Hialeah butcher stabbed his wife to death with his favorite knife. One frightfully disturbed electrician bound his wife's ankles with wire and

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ever given for a crime of passion was that of 45-year-old Rene Quevedo, the estranged husband of a self-employed manicurist named Carmen. Quevedo burst into Carmen's Westchester home this past March as she was attending to a customer. His last words to her were: "I told you never to do another nail in this house!" Having emptied himself of this anguished proclamation, he shot Carmen and subsequently put a bullet in his own brain.

Interestingly, hot-blooded killers stand a better chance at trial than those who murder in cold blood. Take the case of Tien Wang.

Back in 1981, Tien flew back to his native Taiwan alone, under the assumption that he would return to join his wife, Pau-Chin Chou, in Florida. But the return ticket promised by Pau-Chin never arrived. Intent on saving his flagging marriage, the lovesick groom flew back to Florida and drove his wife from upstate to Miami. Pau-Chin called her stepfather, Donald Kirtley, and begged him to rescue her. Kirtley arrived posthaste. A violent quarrel ensued, during which Tien stabbed Kirtley to death.

He was convicted of first-degree murder. But jurists on the Third District Court of Appeals seemed strangely moved by Tien's plight. In an opinion that reads much like the synopsis of a low-budget television movie, the panel noted that "the homicide climaxed a day of impassioned efforts by defendant to persuade his wife not to leave him, which, in turn, had been immediately preceded by his having traveled halfway around the world to see her.... Kirtley brusquely rejected the entreaties of the

defendant as Tien Wang humbled himself before him and begged Kirtley not to take his wife from him."

This humiliation, they argued, so infuriated the defendant that he was not "conscious of the nature of the deed he was about to commit and the probable result to flow from it." He was incapable, in other words, of premeditation, the essential element in first-degree murder. (The previous year, the panel had overturned another murder conviction on identical grounds. In that case, a prostitute shot her pimp after he beat and raped her.)

Because of these rulings, Dade prosecutors must now be cautious in filing murder charges. "It used to be the cops came to us with a body that was shot six, seven times and we'd say, 'First-degree murder.' We can't say that any more," sneers veteran prosecutor David Waksman.

Medical Examiner Joe Davis, the man responsible for the county's meticulous death records, shares Waksman's disdain for the "heat of passion" argument. "The way the news media covers these things, it's always that the perpetrator was in a *jealous rage*. That's baloney! There are a lot of people in a jealous rage who don't go around killing. The people who commit these crimes are not simply angry. They're selfish, wicked people."

That's certainly a fair description of Jack Hogan. By 1966, his abuse had driven his wife Edith to seek a divorce. She took a job selling drapes at the Sears in downtown Miami. On Valentine's Day 1967, Hogan approached his estranged wife in the Sear's parking lot. He fired a shotgun into her chest. A restraining order was found in her purse.

— Steven Almond