

# Cold War-era mystery killings become online riddle

March 18 2009

---



The mysterious death of a talented Australian scientist and his Communist colleague near a river in Sydney during the height of the cold war in 1963 has inspired a professor to host details of the case in an interactive format on the Internet.

A brilliant, married Australian scientist about to depart for a job with Bell Laboratories in the United States is found dead by a river with the wife of a Communist colleague.

It appears they were poisoned.

Thus begins a mystery set in Australia during the Cold War and which continues to haunt people to this day. Aspiring detectives can now investigate the 1963 case and its many perspectives in an interactive format on the Internet.

"They never found out what killed them," Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology professor Rebecca Young said of Margaret Chandler and Gib Bogle.

"I wanted to find a creative way to tell the story; a way to show what might be possible."

Young tells a tale of the pair's demise in interactive style online at [rebeccayoung.org](http://rebeccayoung.org).

The website overlays pictures, diagrams, and interviews to tell the story from the perspectives of police, witnesses and local media stories.

Chandler was a 29-year-old former nurse and a mother of two young children. She and her husband, Geoffrey, loved vintage cars and dachshund dogs.

Bogle was an acclaimed scientist credited with a significant role in developing a precursor to the laser.

Chandler and Bogle enjoyed one another's company at a "bohemian-themed" New Year's party that was part going away bash for the Bogle, whose wife stayed home to care for their ailing child.

There was chemistry between the pair and Chandler's husband was a believer in "free love," according to Young.

Bogle was to give Chandler a lift home after the party, but instead the two wound up dead on a bank of Lane Cove River in Sydney.

The cause of death was determined to be that their hearts and breathing stopped, but in which order wasn't determined.

"They had only just met; there was no suggestion they were going off to have sex," Young said. "People are still wondering whether it was a [political murder](#), a [crime](#) of passion, or a strange accident."

Chandler's husband was considered a suspect, as were hydrogen sulfide fumes exuded from mangroves near the river.

Theories included that the killings were political, because Bogle's new US employer worked on anti-missile and anti-satellite systems and Bogle was helping create a futuristic "death ray."

Young was fascinated by the case. Her parents were members of that close scientific community and her mother would walk her dog with Chandler.

"After the deaths, my mom and dad would talk about it over the dinner table," Young said. "Being scientists, my parents would be very analytical, dissecting what could have happened."

Perspectives in the story lent themselves naturally to telling the story on the Internet, where visitors can easily shift between points along a time line, according to Young, who created the interactive story as a doctoral project.

"People in the same place at the same time gave different accounts of what happened," Young said, citing a tendency that routinely nettles crime solvers.

"It lent itself to a story told from different perspectives."

Young's online work was among finalists for best artistic new websites at South By Southwest Interactive awards this week in Austin, Texas.

"I think it's quite astonishing, really," Young said.

"It vindicates me having spent nights in front of a computer after the kids went to bed."

*(c) 2009 AFP*

Citation: Cold War-era mystery killings become online riddle (2009, March 18) retrieved 29 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-03-cold-war-era-mystery-online-riddle.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.