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For Becky

“Without this testimony, my life as a writer—or my life, period—would not have become what it is: that of a witness who believes he has a moral obligation to try to prevent the enemy from enjoying one last victory by allowing his crimes to be erased from human memory. . . . To forget would be not only dangerous but offensive; to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time.”

Night by Elie Wiesel
(1958) New York: Hill & Wang

PROLOGUE

December 1, 1977

ON THAT EXQUISITE autumn morning sunshine warmed the sapphire sea surrounding the twenty-square mile volcanic mass in the Atlantic Ocean that stands alone and, as some say, “different.” But as night approached, rain clouds escorted a tuxedo-clad hangman, brought for this occasion all the way from England, making his approach by boat to foreboding Casemates Prison, its bleak rocks protruding from the banks of Ireland Island, one of those in the chain comprising the place we know as Bermuda.

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The governor’s announcement a week before that two black men would hang that night for the political murders four years earlier of five white men had detonated island-wide violence. No doubt, land travel across narrow roads leading to the tiny barbed wire-barricaded bridge guarding the lodging of Bermuda’s villains would be far too dangerous. Hence the approach by sea.

Agitated crowds swarmed over Hamilton, while attorney Lois Browne Evans, the first black female to have the audacity to lawyer on the tiny island controlled by rich white men, made her final desperate appeal inside Supreme Court, carrying a petition pleading that the men be spared the gallows. Outside, mobs stoned the courthouse, breaking windows, causing frightened judges to hurry their refusal and rush from the courthouse to safety. About 10 p.m., Browne Evans’ dynamic young black colleague Julian Hall emerged from the building and gave the crowd the thumbs down signal. All hell broke loose. Baton wielding police fought rioters. Buildings set ablaze, the sting of pepper spray everywhere, and an all-night prayer vigil at the African Methodist Episcopal Church on violence-charged Court Street.

Distraught, Browne-Evans told gatherers she would go to Casemates and be with the men as they died. Four hours after midnight, despite anguished pleas for mercy, in hastily-constructed gallows, the two men swung to their deaths. That night would mark Browne Evans’ darkest hour.

On the opposite end of the twenty-square-mile island, another young black woman, sixteen-year-old LeYoni Junos, shuddered as the skies turned into a crimson inferno. She and her Salvation Army family huddled in their house while rioters demolished vehicles, smashed windows and set fires, tossing homemade bombs at police firing tear gas into the crowds. Sirens screamed as fire trucks rushed to one blaze after another. At the majestic Southampton Princess Hotel, where some thought the hangman stayed, arsonists killed two tourists and an employee.

Carol Shuman

The next morning, Junos crept behind a wooded area next to her house to a nearby grocery store, now burned to ashes. She stroked the charred remains of a guard dog, its bones still chained to the ground. Carefully, she moved its brittle skeleton to a spot between two casuarinas, their magnificence protecting her tiny consecration. She wondered how humans could care so little for those who are helpless, no matter what their kind.

That night of violence, its deep-rooted repercussions long whispering beneath the cold limestone floor of this tiny speck in the sea, contoured the moral fibers of both women: Lois the lawyer and LeYoni the advocate, born a generation apart.

It would take the murder twenty years later of Rebecca Middleton, a young white Canadian tourist, for their paths to collide on this island, once considered “the Queen’s Jewel in the Atlantic,” where murder often happens in black and white.



PART ONE
BENEATH THE CASUARINAS

ONE

Blood once more soaks the soul of balmy Bermuda—the isle of unsolved murder. For the close-knit island community clams up when outsiders...call.”

The Sun (London)--March 12, 1973

Detour to Murder

July 3, 1996

DANA RAWLINS CHECKED his watch. Three thirty a.m., a time when very little good happens in Bermuda to those who aren't safely nestled in their beds. Clouds that a few hours earlier dropped dense rain over the island had drifted away, leaving a murky, sinister haze.

Rawlins wanted to get home, but a new guy needed a ride to a tent he'd pitched earlier in the day at Ferry Reach Park. It was well out of Rawlins' way, but he felt sorry for Coy Fox, who was homeless and working odd jobs, typical of more than a few on this wealth-saturated island.

Fox had managed permission to stay a few nights at the Bermuda Regiment barracks, but he had outlived his stay and set up housekeeping at Ferry Reach. This isolated park at the end of Ferry Road clings to Bermuda's airport waterway on one side and lapping ocean waves of Whale Bone Bay on the other. Down to his last few dollars, Fox had returned a rental bike earlier that day, and so needed the ride. Rawlins' friend Angela took the front seat, and Coy Fox piled into the back seat with two others, Sharon and Antonio.

Rawlins' veered his car with its four passengers off the main road and climbed a steep hill along the narrow roadway originally designed for horse and carriage traffic. There were no other cars in sight.

The few twinkling lights from tiny pastel houses would have disappeared by then. Rawlins remembered noticing two enormous hounds, barking and dancing on their leashes, not far from limestone walls that tighten into callous chambers, frightening reminders of the great eruptions that gave birth to the island millenniums ago. That night the rocks' musty odor added to gloom that would seem to welcome the devil, daring all others to pass.

Nonetheless, the five young people in the car were laughing and listening to music as they bumped along.

Suddenly Angela shrieked.

"What the fuck," Coy Fox yelled.

Had a dog had run in front of the car? Or maybe a motorbike accident, a frequent deadly event late at night on Bermuda's isolated roads. Or possibly what some call a "Saturday Night Special," alleged baseball bat slams to the back of a bike rider's neck by another passing rider during gang warfare.

Dana Rawlins slammed on the brakes.

It's not hard to imagine what the four saw. Branches of the casuarinas hanging down, like tentacles of ghostly creatures. Tree frogs would have been screaming like banshees. A scene that can be found in many such locations in Bermuda.

This time there was an added element. A body lay across the road.

"It's a woman," Angela shouted.

All four got out of the car and went to look. They saw an almost naked young woman covered in so much blood that it had pooled on the road beneath her. Her blonde hair streamed across the yellow line. Her neck was covered in slashes. The headlights of Rawlins' car shone on a grass verge directly under the two casuarinas, the location of two more pools of scarlet blood. A ripped skirt, panties, and sandals lay nearby. The girl's blood-soaked bra and shirt still clutched to one of her shoulders. Rawlins knelt next to her, watching her diaphragm move as she struggled for air and to speak, able to produce only wheezing, no words, silent tears.

Rawlins found a strong pulse; she turned her head toward him. "Can you hear me?" he asked.

She blinked. Tears ran down her cheeks. Rawlins took her pulse again. It was now faint.

Coy Fox was too frightened to go near. Someone suggested that one of them stay while the three others went to the nearby park phone booth. But they were worried that an attacker might be lurking, and they left the young woman alone. When the four returned about ten minutes later the dying girl hadn't moved. Rawlins listened for a heartbeat and heard nothing. He checked her pulse again and found it, barely palpable.

"She didn't try to talk anymore," Angela later told police. "Dana held her hand. We were all trying to talk to her to keep her going. Her eyes were dilating, I could see her drifting."

Rawlins kneeled down and kept talking. "Hang on, hang on, you'll make it."

Sharon got a light blue towel from Rawlins' car and covered her nearly naked body.

"We wanted so badly to try and save her life," Coy Fox recalled.

A man on a motorcycle rode up. Sharon asked the stranger to go back and summon police. Before the man left, he gave them a rolled cigarette.

When the first police officer arrived, Angela was screaming, Coy Fox was throwing up.

Rebecca Middleton was dead.

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About the Author

Dr. Carolyn (Carol) Shuman, who holds a Ph.D. in psychology, has long held an advocacy platform, beginning with her ten-year career as a newspaper reporter and editor in the U.S., cited by the Georgia Associated Press for enterprise reporting. She also holds a Ph.D. in behavioral medicine psychology from Texas A&M University-Commerce, with military and private clinical practice in Bermuda before becoming a fulltime writer in 2003.

Born in Canada three months after her English war bride mother arrived there—raised some sixty miles from Becky's home in Belleville, Ontario--Shuman left Canada with her parents as a child, then spent most of her adulthood in the U.S., moving to Bermuda in 1990. There she has worked with the U.S. Navy, practiced clinical psychology, writes, researches, and advocates for human rights, investigating cross cultural and other psycho-social issues.

Along with her professional writing that has encompassed more than forty years, Shuman has published a book for children to deal with the events of September eleventh and other catastrophes: *Jenny Is Scared: When Sad Things Happen in the World*, Magination Press (2003). Used by professionals and parents internationally, this work also has been published in Japanese and Korean.

Kill Me Once...Kill Me Twice: Murder on the Queen's Playground is her first adult non-fiction book.

