

TRUE CRIME

L.I. CONFIDENTIAL

BAPTISM BY FIRE

NASSAU'S NEW HOMICIDE CHIEF JUMPS INTO THE THICK OF IT

by Bill Jensen

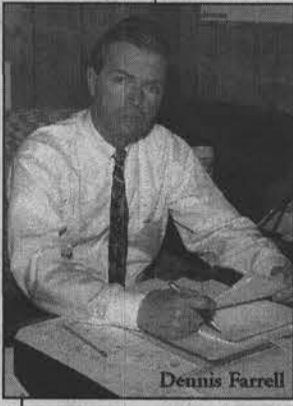
When a guy shoots someone with a semi-automatic rifle, the local papers cover the story.

When he shoots two people, local TV stations may give it coverage.

When he does the shooting in a church, killing a priest and a parishioner, every news outlet in the country runs with it.

Dennis Farrell was on the job as top homicide cop in Nassau less than a week when a double murder accompanied by national attention was thrown in his face. Everyone — from frightened neighbors to curious rubberneckers to the hounding media — looked to him for answers outside Our Lady of Peace Church in Lynbrook one day in March. The 53-year-old cop, who had just earned what he considers "the best job in the police department," took it all in stride.

"When we go to these scenes, we're aware that the media's out there," says Farrell. "But we can sort of block things out. We know what we have to do. Because the bottom line here is that people are dead and it's our job to find out why, how and who did it."



Dennis Farrell

On March 4, Farrell was named commander of the Nassau Homicide Squad, moving into the desk of retiring Lt. Frank Guidice. His 1960s-style wood-paneled office is a warm contrast to the stark white hallways of the Nassau County police headquarters in Garden City. Sitting in a corner is a picture of his brother, Firefighter Terry Farrell, who was killed on 9/11 in the service of Rescue 4. There are three Dennis the Menace cartoons underneath a sheet of glass protecting his desk. One of them has Dennis talking to his little pal Joey. "It's not whether you win or lose that's important Joey," says Dennis. "What's important is whether I win or lose."

At the desk sits 32 years of police experience wrapped in a man with a fine-toothed-comb approach to every case and an intense glare that tells you this guy ain't gonna stop until the case is closed. That is how Farrell earned his stripes — thoroughness.

"Being at the scene and seeing something that seemed insignificant but now is a critical piece of

the case as far as a physical evidence," says Farrell, who grew up in both Queens and East Meadow, "that's thoroughness. And over the course of a career, people take notice when you do those things."

Farrell credits his background as commanding officer of the sex crimes squad (now known as the special victims unit) as providing him the impetus to search for every drop of spittle, hair follicle or fiber at a scene.

In the beginning of his tenure as homicide chief, Farrell says he will be at every murder scene to show his squad of detectives what he looks for at a crime scene and the following investigation. The two major components he stresses are forensic evidence and the power of information.

"Nothing we do here is superficial," says Farrell, who arrested the Lynbrook church shooter, Peter Troy, on charges of double murder. "Ultimately, we're trying to identify a person responsible for the ultimate crime." ■

The 12 Days of Suffolk's First Spree Killer



Bloeth

Hans Hachmann was working the night shift at his Islip deli on West Main Street on the last day in July, 1959, when a thin punk walked in, pulled out a .32, shot Hachmann twice in the chest and emptied his pocket of 100 bucks. Five days later, Lawrence Kircher was closing up a deserted Diane Diner on East Main Street in Smithtown when he caught two slugs. Jump ahead 48 hours, and Westhampton Beach diner owner Irene Carrier is gunned down. Post-war Suffolk County had a spree killer on its hands.

"Don't take any chances — your first chance may be your last. A mad killer is on the loose," William Gardiner, assistant chief investigator of the Suffolk DA's office, announced to the public.

One anonymous tipster didn't take any chances. He dropped a dime and led police to Francis Henry Bloeth, a 27-year-old from Islip with a wife, a 7-month-old daughter, a rap sheet and a .32. His landlady, Antoinette Galeazzi, described him as a "good man."

Bloeth was convicted, but his death sentence was overturned due to a beef about pretrial publicity. He was paroled in '81 and now lives upstate, near Syracuse, punching a keyboard as a word processor.

COLD CASE

Janice Fullam:
Missing since Friday,
Oct. 30, 1981

It was the night before Halloween. Janice Fullam, a 17-year-old, 5-foot-7-inch brunette with green eyes, left a friend's house at the corner of Mt. Pleasant Road and Garvey Drive in Hauppauge for a two-and-a-half mile walk to the Pub 111 bar at the intersection of Rte. 111 and Rte. 347. She was never seen again. Officially, she's not listed as a missing person — she's listed as a wanted person, because she was scheduled to go to court for an LSD arrest three months prior. She had plea bargained and faced a year in jail.

What could have happened:

1) She ran. That's what the cops think. A friend, also arrested on LSD sale charges, had been sentenced to 45 days in jail the day before Janice disappeared, and Janice had said she was terrified of going to jail.

But her family doubts that she fled. "My parents were going to help her through the whole thing," says brother Joe Fullam, who was 16 when Janice disappeared. Janice had a new boyfriend, had gotten a waitressing job that day and had left all her favorite clothes in

her closet. She had attended school that day as a clown, and was looking forward to a city nightclub trip with her brother the next day. According to the family, she had only \$1.50 in her pocket.

2) She was abducted and murdered by town dealers. Part of her pretrial plea bargain was that she become an informant and buy drugs from bigger dealers around her high school. But the Smithtown West High School drug circle was a small one. News traveled fast that she had been arrested, and she did not make any buys for the cops.

3) She was abducted and murdered by a stranger. Janice was known to hitchhike, and the walk from her friend's house to Pub 111 at 10:30 p.m. might have led her to try to get a ride from a stranger. It was a Friday night, the night before Halloween, when plenty of crazies are out, and Janice was an attractive girl with a penchant for Led Zeppelin and partying.

"We all assumed she was abducted and killed," says brother Joe. "We just want to know what happened."

Contact Liconfidential@islandear.com, Joe Fullam at joeffullam@suscom.net or Crimestoppers at 1-800-220-TIPS ■



Janice Fullam