

TRUE CRIME

L.I. CONFIDENTIAL

ROTISSERIE CRIMINALS

FANTASY LEAGUES TAKE AIM AT CONVICTS

by Bill Jensen

They finally got Margo Freshwater! That's 64 points. High-fives. Fist pumps. Beers all around. A criminal gets behind bars and you get points toward exciting prizes.

The Fantasy Fugitive Recovery League (www.fantasyfugitiverecovery.com) takes fantasy leagues to a new level, awarding points based on captured criminals. You may be playing with people's lives, but the FFRL is actually the only public-accessible site of escaped convicts on the web, making it a useful tool.

"It's the largest multiple-state database of fugitives," says Jeremy Juenger, who started the site last November. Every criminal on the list is linked to the Web site of the state that's looking for him or her.

Juenger, 26, had played fantasy sports games before, but yearned for a contest that every person could take part in. In the game he devised, individuals sign up for free and pick five escaped convicts from a master list — at press time, featuring 400 escapees from states from Arizona to Pennsylvania. If you don't see the fugitive you want on the site's master list, you can do some research and introduce a new player (Long Islanders might want to draft Shi Fu Huang, who was serving time for kidnapping and robbery when he sawed his way out of Nassau County Jail in 1989.). Teams earn points if any one of the players (escapees) on their team are caught.

Points are graded on the length of time between escape and capture. You get bonus points if they catch one of your players outside U.S. borders. Prizes will be awarded to the winning team at the end of the year.

Team Texas Department of Corrections (probably not affiliated with the real thing, but you never know) nabbed 64 points when Margo Freshwater was arrested four weeks ago in Columbus, OH. Freshwater had escaped from the Tennessee Prison for Women in 1970 by hopping a fence with another woman. She was serving a 99-year sentence for

first-degree murder of a liquor store clerk in Memphis, Tenn. She had spent the last 32 years living as Tonya McCartor in Columbus.

"They picked her up three weeks before she got caught," Juenger says of the key transaction.



The huge amount of time vaulted the Texas team ahead of Lecter's Next Meal, who had caught three fugitives but only had 12 points, since they had only been on the lam for a short period of time. If any team is going to catch up to Team Texas this season, they will have to dig deep into the vaults, like team Short Bus did, who could gain 64 points if officials capture Michael Laub, who escaped from an Oregon prison in 1979 while serving time for rape.

In seven months, 39 fugitives on the game's master list have been apprehended.

While the FFR League offers up a creative and fun way to track missing criminals, another league is taking the fantasy game to another level — Death.

FantasyDeathRow.com (FDR) is seen by some as a social commentary to the pro-sports-like system of rules, twists and turns that judges, district attorneys and defense lawyers must play within. By others, it's seen as a grim gladiatorial spectacle, with the web as the Coliseum, betting on the lives of convicts on Texas' Death Row.

Utilizing sports book-esque stats such as

over/unders, race cards and long-shot odds, the slick site splits up the states into three leagues: Stakes — "the Premier Courses" like Texas, Virginia and Florida, Claimers — "the Limited Action" arenas, such as New Mexico and Illinois, and Maidens — states like New York and New Jersey that have not executed anyone since 1976.

Teams must choose three convicts who are scheduled for death within the next two months. If there is a stay of execution, you get five points. If you get a pardon, that's 50. If he/she is executed, you lose 10 points. If they are executed and later proven innocent, you lose 50 points.



Your team gets 64 points if Michael Laub ever gets caught.

Players take the game seriously. After the site wasn't updated for a week, some started a mini-revolt. "Beazley has been dead a week now and Simmons is skylarking about and where's the warden? I got to say I'm getting a bit concerned," wrote one player on the site's message board (Beazley being Napoleon Beazley, executed on May 28 for killing a 63-year-old man over a car in 1994). ■

MURDER OF A GRANDMOTHER

She drank there every night.

On an October night in '54, Kathryn Damm, a grandmother, hit her usual spot, the Alcove Bar and Grill in Lindenhurst. By midnight, the 52-year-old was on top of a table, writhing to the music as the local barflies hooped and hollered. Last call was at 3. She hitched a ride with two guys. The first got dropped off. The second drove her to the cemetery. Then he drove away. Alone.

Less than 70 yards east of North Wellwood Avenue on the edge of Pinelawn Cemetery, Damm's body was found, naked, in a pool of blood. "Violent, frenzied, insane and senseless," barked Suffolk Coroner Joe Mauceri. She died from internal hemorrhaging, her body sexually mutilated. But she didn't lay there and take it. She fought back, as evidenced by the bruises on her chest and throat.

Otto Schaff, the man who got dropped off first, had never seen the driver before. He gave a hazy description, but remembered the car. It was a dark, late-model sedan. So cops staked out the bar the next night, and spotted a dark, late-model sedan. But before they could ask the driver to roll down the window, the car peeled out. One of the cops fired five shots. He thought he hit it once.

A bloody footprint, tire track and eyewitnesses, and still nobody could catch the guy. Then his mouth got him in trouble. Some woman calls up the cops in 1979, saying she heard a guy, Rudolph John Hoff, brag about an old murder he'd done back in '54.

The guy confessed, then recanted. Then his ex-wife did him in, saying she buried a bloody belt in her backyard. She remembers him washing the blood off his clothes that night. He told her he'd been in a fight. Now he's in Attica.



UNSOLVED CASE

**Murder
Rohan Wedderburn
October 24, 2001
Montauk Highway, Bellport**

His route that night went from East Patchogue to Mastic Beach. Earlier that day, Rohan Wedderburn, a 32-year-old Bronx resident, loaded up his long-term rented 2002 Ford Explorer with videotapes and music to sell out on Long Island.

At around 10:30 p.m., residents in Bellport noticed the Explorer driving in reverse in the area of Ecker Avenue and Montauk Highway. The truck then struck a utility pole. Inside was Wedderburn, shot in the head.

Operating a cash business and found with little money on him at the end of a day, the victim's brother, Dr. Raymond Wedderburn, believes the motive behind the killing was robbery.

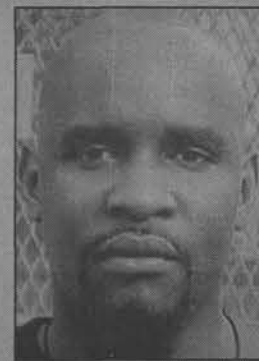
"I don't know of any other reason why someone would hurt my brother," says Raymond, 41, a Manhattan surgeon.

According to police, Rohan was shot by someone inside the vehicle.

"He was pretty savvy," Raymond says of his younger brother. "Whoever he let in the car, he did it for a reason."

Raymond had to drive out to Suffolk to identify the body, but he has yet to go to the scene of the crime. But what he has done is offer an extra \$10,000, on top of the one grand you can get from Crime Stoppers, for the arrest and conviction of the murderer.

"If they don't [find the killer], I'll have to live with it," says Raymond. "If they do, it won't bring my brother back. At least it will get someone off the streets."



Rohan Wedderburn

Have you ever heard anyone discuss this crime in detail in your neighborhood? Did anyone come into some money on the weekend before Halloween last year? Call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-220-TIPS or e-mail [TheNewIslandEar at L1Confidential@islandear.com](mailto:TheNewIslandEar@L1Confidential@islandear.com).