

NEWS SPECIAL: Newcastle



Photo by Paula Dawson

SMALL TOWN TERROR

by Allan Carter

A small town usually has the following features: older couples walking along the street, children playing stick hockey in residential areas, and people leaving their doors unlocked.

All along the Miramichi, incidents have kept the people of these areas descriptions that can be used to describe the area.

Older people have always been comfortable here and younger people look forward to the progress that can be seen on the Miramichi.

But since May of this year the towns of Newcastle and Chatham, nestled along the Miramichi river, have been the homes of some very bizarre and terrible incidents.

On the 29th of May, a shopkeeper by the name of Annie Flam was attacked and killed, her sister Nina was also attacked but survived the incident. Their home was set on fire.

On the 30th of September, Morrissy John Doran was shot in the back after surprising an intruder that entered his home.

On the 1st of October, Edwin Russell and his wife Evangeline were attacked and beaten by an intruder that entered their home.

On either the 13th of October or the early morning of the 14th, Donna and Linda Daughney were sexually assaulted and killed. Their house was set on fire.

These and many other

morning and her young daughter unlocked the door and let him in.

A father in his thirties has a .308 special, loaded in his bedroom. A .300 savage rifle and a 16 gauge shotgun are in another room of his home. He always had the guns. "They were always there, just a bit closer than before," he says.

An older gentleman, who lives close to the home of Edwin and Evangeline Russell, knows that people are scared, but feels that people on his street know more than what they have told the police.

"That there is the best protection", he remarks, indicating a white and black mongrel that strolls by. "My dog will bark at anything. And when it alerts me, my rifle will be loaded and ready", he says,

pointing to his house.

A 36 year old single mother who has a young daughter was scared enough to consider buying a gun. But instead she decided to move out of her home which is a fair distance from the scene of the crimes and move in with her mother in Newcastle. She is nearer to areas where some of the crimes have taken place, but she is not along with her daughter anymore; and being alone is something most people in Newcastle do not want to be right now.

No matter where you go in Newcastle, these crimes are what people are talking about and justifiably so. At a local barber shop, a barber remembers seeing Donna Daughney, whom he grew up with, walking by the shop around four o'clock. The next morning he finds out she is dead. He will never forget that moment seeing Donna walking down the street. Seeing someone alive for the last time marks a person for life.

A lady in a local book store hopes that the police will find the killer(s) soon. She hopes it "just isn't someone we all know well." But she has a feeling it is someone local.

Two young female clerks at a local convenience store say that you just cannot think about the idea of a killer(s) on the loose. The store does not close until late and about ten characters can come through the door and all of the ten will resemble the sketch of the killer that was released to the newspapers last week.

The incidents have had quite an impact on Newcastle and other communities. Trick or treating has been cancelled in Newcastle. Smaller communities, like Loggieville and Renous-Quarryville, which are a considerable distance from Newcastle have cancelled trick or treating also.

Crime Stoppers are asking the public to help raise funds in order to give payments to people who have information that will lead to the arrest of the killer(s). They are hoping to raise \$25,000.

The local newspaper has placed a questionnaire in one of its publications asking people whether or not they feel safe. Seven pages out of twenty eight in the weekend paper in Newcastle were surrounded with incidents and reports concerning the murders.

A 14 year old boy cuts through some familiar residential property to get home earlier one evening and is frisked by the police in front of his house. A

few gentlemen, between the ages of twenty and twenty five, claim they were stopped four out of five night while "cruising" around town.

If a person drives through Newcastle or walks around town, it is not surprising to come across six or more traveling police cars in one afternoon.

Some businesses in Newcastle have seen quite a change also. A security firm has had to double its manpower. In addition a customer of a local gun shop claims that in a space of ten minutes, three people came into the shop requesting Fire Arm Acquisition Certificates. The gun shop owner refused to comment.

A local hardware store owner thrusts his thumbs up towards the ceiling and claims that sales are way up. Apparently he had around twenty burglar alarm systems that had been in stock for quite a while, that sold very quickly after the spate of murders began.

People are scared, he says, especially older people. He has sold three times as many locks as before the incidents started, and has difficulty keeping them in stock.

But he claims that it is not as bad as the media says it is, at least not in his store. People forget, he states, the first week they rush in and sales go up, but within a month's time things are back to normal. Until something else happens.

People in Newcastle and other areas of the Miramichi are hoping that the person or persons responsible for these terrible acts are caught immediately. Perhaps then they can rest easy. But questions will always remain for the Miramichi area. What has happened? What has happened to leisurely walks that could be taken through the park or residential areas of the town? What has happened to the concept of unlocked doors and trusting others?

Like other areas, the Miramichi area has changed dramatically. And like other areas it is debatable whether or not it has changed for the better. People of the area must come to grips with these changes, it is very possible that things will never be as they were before.

What was once an area to return to for retirement or a vacation spot to gain a little peace of mind through hunting, fishing and other events, has now become an area of fear, suspicion and possibly regret.



Scene of the crime:
The home of Donna and Linda Daughney. The two sisters were sexually assaulted and murdered in this house on the early morning of October 14.

Photo by Paula Dawson