

Gone Shopping:
The Murder of Lisa and Devon Manderach
by Ryan T. Calhoun

Introduction

On September 10, 1995, Lisa Manderach, 29, informed her husband, James, known as Jimmy to friends, that she was taking their daughter Devon, only 19 months old, to a shopping center in Collegeville, Pennsylvania not far from their home in Limerick Township, Pennsylvania. She said they would not be out long and Jimmy said he was going to remain home, watching the Philadelphia Eagles football game on television. He gave his infant daughter a bag with a pretzel and a cookie and said goodbye to his wife and daughter as they left.

Lisa Manderach, with her daughter in the back seat of her 1988 Pontiac Firebird drove to the shopping center as planned, and parked outside of Your Kidz & Mine, a children's clothing store that had just recently opened. Little did she know that the man working at the store that day had murder on his mind, and in his own disturbed mind, a perfect victim for the heinous crime.

Lisa and Devon Manderach were never seen alive again. Devon Manderach's dead body was found in Valley Forge National Historic Park the next day, with Lisa's nowhere in sight. While finding a suspect may not have been difficult, convicting him came with an essential yet difficult decision made by the Montgomery County District Attorney, and a dive straight into one of the mind and background of one of the most psychotic and dangerous people in the history of Pennsylvania.

The Manderachs

In exploring articles and documentaries and many other mediums in attempt to collect information of the Manderachs tragic demise, there is not even the slightest mention of anything even remotely negative about anyone in the Manderach family, especially Lisa. Lisa Manderach was born on September 30, 1965 as Lisa Marie Agostinelli¹, and was one half of one a rare case of love at first sight. Patty Jones, longtime friend of Lisa Manderach, said that "She was in love with James since she was 10 years old."² Though this love for him was shared in the way of friendship in their developmental years, with Lisa growing up in a rowhouse on Powell Street³ in Norristown, it did not come to marriage immediately in their adulthood. James Manderach married another woman first⁴, though not long after their divorce, he proposed to and married Lisa Agostinelli Manderach in 1992 at St. Patrick's in Norristown, the same church in which they were both parishioners⁵. Lisa was working at Fleming Cos. in King of Prussia, originally as an assembly line worker, the position she got after graduating in 1983 from Norristown Area High School, though she eventually became a forklift operator for the company, since the

¹ Langland, Connie, and Louis S. Hansen. "Friends Recall a Young Mother as Loving and Strong." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 13, 1995.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

position paid more⁶. James worked for Resco Products in janitorial services, and him and Lisa would earn extra money on weekends by cleaning offices⁷.

On February 4, 1994, Lisa's only child, Devon Marie was born⁸, with her sharing her mother's middle name. Her love for her child was noted by anybody that knew her, with a friend after the murders relating, "She would have done anything for that baby,"⁹. She also often spoke of how her love for Devon was so great that she was considering having a second child in the near future.

The Manderach's were by all means a perfect, happy couple, with a lovely home in the Heritage Ridge development of Limerick Township, where dozens of other happy families also resided. It is with nothing but great sadness to know how short it lasted, and how disturbing to know the mind and the motive which ended it all.

Caleb Fairley

The life of Caleb Fairley was in almost every way the complete opposite of the life of anybody in the Manderach family, especially that of Lisa Manderach, his target in the murder. Rather than growing up surrounded by people who loved and cared for him, Caleb Fairley was described by many as being socially awkward, fearful and even loathing of girls, and raised by a mother who while not abusive was not conducive to a healthy development of her child.

Caleb Bradley Fairley¹⁰ was born on October 21, 1973¹¹ in Gulph Mills, Pennsylvania to Ruth Fairley, who had opened the clothing store called "Your Kidz & Mine" a few weeks before Lisa and Devon Manderach were slain, and James Fairley, who ran a pharmacy in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania¹². His life was struck by tragedy at the age of 15 when on June 27, 1989, his 4-year-old brother David accidentally shot himself¹³. It was determined to be the gun of James Fairley, and usually was kept at the pharmacy, hidden and locked away, but for reasons that have never been clear it was at their Gulph Mills home and in a place in which it could be reached by the toddler, and sadly it cost him his life.¹⁴ Many people who knew Fairley in his neighborhood could see the tragedy's impact on Caleb's life, with Pat Carson, one of Fairley's neighbors stating, "I don't think he ever really got over his brother."¹⁵ Another friend, Mike Olbert, later said that even years after the incident he could still see a sadness in Fairley whenever the incident was brought up¹⁶.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "Lisa Marie Agostinelli Manderach ." Find A Grave. Accessed December 16, 2017. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/7056668>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ "Caleb Bradley Fairley." Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. Accessed January 15, 2018. <http://inmatelocator.cor.pa.gov/#/results>.

¹¹ "Caleb Fairley." Murderpedia. Accessed January 15, 2018. [http://murderpedia.org/male.F/f/fairley-caleb.htm](http://murderpedia.org/male/F/f/fairley-caleb.htm).

¹² Spencer, Kyle York, Allie Shah, and Richard Henson. "A Life Spent Trying, and Failing, to Fit In." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 20, 1995.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

As sad as losing one's young brother in accidental death may be, it does little to explain or excuse a wide assortment of Fairley's other behaviors. Some of that however may be explainable by the persistent bullying he received while attending Upper Dublin High School, which included a rumour spreading that Fairley had been masturbating in the school bathroom. That may not be a nice rumour to spread, especially given that its accuracy has never been confirmed, though there is definitely a chance that it may be entirely true, as it would fit neatly with Fairley's obsession with pornography (other obsessions included computers and comic books). He was also ridiculed by girls in his school, which explains why one of his friends would later describe Fairley as, "Caring and quiet among friends, yet leering and vulgar toward women he did not know."

This behavior was amplified in 1992 when two women reported to the Upper Merion police that Fairley had harassed, and then grabbed them inappropriately. Police never paid the incidents that much close attention, and Fairley was never charged¹⁷.

Fairley also had a strong hatred for his mother, which according to the only woman he ever dated, was a result of her being a control freak. She later said, "She would always call him stupid, tell him he had no common sense. She told him that he didn't know how to do anything right, and would curse at him."¹⁸ Nevertheless he would, in addition to working for his father's pharmacy, also work for his mother's brand new children's clothing store, "Your Kidz & Mine" in the Collegeville Shopping Center which had just opened. However, this was another avenue for Fairley to explore his dark sexual feelings as it was later discovered that there were peepholes poked in the children's dressing rooms in the store¹⁹. Police also found pornographic videotapes hidden behind the counter.²⁰

Another important aspect of Fairley's life was another one of his obsessions; he had an extreme fascination with vampires. When police were investigating Caleb Fairley as a suspect in the Manderach slayings, they obtained a warrant to search his Gulph Mills home. Inside, they found a shirt with a vampire violently molesting a woman that had an uncanny resemblance to Lisa Marie Manderach. Investigators believed that this made Manderach a perfect target for Caleb Fairley, as a perfect fit for his deviant sexual fantasies. This disturbing fact was also noted by an FBI behavioral expert, and it was stated in a probable cause affidavit that Fairley would likely have preferences for women resembling Lisa Manderach appearance²¹.

On Sunday, September 12, 1995, Caleb Fairley was working at his mother's children's clothing store. Lisa and Devon Manderach had left their house at 3 p.m.²² and arrived at roughly 3:15 p.m. Also at 3:15 p.m., Caleb Fairley received a call on the store telephone from his mother²³. They talked very shortly²⁴, with the conversation ending with Caleb telling his mother, "I have to go. I have a customer."

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Metz, Andrew. "Fairley Won't Face Death Penalty." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 13, 1995.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Spencer, Kyle York, Larry King, Edward A. Robinson, and Louis S. Hansen. "For Safety, Deal is Cut with Murder Suspect." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 13, 1995.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

The Murder

After telling his mother that he had a customer and could no longer continue the conversation on the telephone, Caleb Fairley began to stare at the female customers in the store. One woman named Heather Vernon later recalled that she was “so uncomfortable”²⁵ and that she could not wait to leave the store. She paid for her items at 3:39 P.M.²⁶ and left the store. Then, Caleb Fairley realized that he was alone with Lisa Manderach and her young daughter, so he locked the door preventing any possibility of escape²⁷. He then attacked Lisa Manderach, and strangled her to death as she desperately fought to not just save her life, but also the life of her young child.²⁸ After the assault, Caleb Fairley had sex with her corpse, and then proceeded to strangle young Devon²⁹.

He then took the bodies and put them in his car. He drove through Valley Forge National Historic Park and tossed Devon’s lifeless body into the woods. He then took Lisa Manderach’s body to an industrial park down the road from a health club in King of Prussia and laid it down, with the legs spread out.

Devon Manderach’s body was discovered by police the next day, and was positively identified by the family. Lisa’s body, however, would be harder to find, and would involve a controversial deal made with the twisted mind of Caleb Fairley.

The Deal

After days of searching for Lisa Manderach’s body, prosecutors became worried about the risk of losing potential evidence. Michael D. Marino, District Attorney for Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, was afraid that Caleb Fairley could get away with the crime, due to the fact that even though he was the most likely suspect, there was no forensic evidence to tie him to the scene³⁰. Julie Barnyock, a woman who had disappeared a few years prior and whose body was not discovered for a month, was on Marino’s mind. He had always been haunted by the case and was terrified that this case could produce the same result: A body that takes so long to find that when it is found, there is little if any forensic evidence (A fear justified by the fact that Barnyock’s murder is unsolved to this day).

However, Caleb Fairley and his lawyer Marc Robert Steinberg were having similar thoughts, with different feelings. They were willing to take a gamble that there was not enough evidence on the body to connect Fairley to the slaying, and went to First Assistant District Attorney Bruce L. Castor Jr. with an offer. Steinberg told Castor that if he would, “Forget about the death penalty,” he would tell them where Lisa Manderach’s body was.³¹ After consulting with Marino, they agreed, and Steinberg led them to the location by showing him on a map in the Yellow Pages³². They were hoping that they would still not find enough evidence on the body to charge Fairley with murder. Fortunately, they were incorrect. Lisa’s hair was compared to hairs

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Evans, Tracy, prod. "Shopping Spree." In *Forensic Files*. Accessed January 15, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87iazwlyvoU>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ King, Larry. "How the Deal Was Struck to Spare Caleb Fairley's Life." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 17, 1995.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

found in the vacuum cleaner at Your Kidz & Mine, and were found to be microscopically similar, as were fibers found on Lisa's blouse when they were compared with fibers on Caleb Fairley's shirt.³³ Similarities however are not definitive. What was however, was when investigators got a perfect match between biological material found under Lisa Manderach's fingernails to the DNA of Caleb Fairley. This was enough to arrest Fairley and charge him with double murder, as well as aggravated assault, theft, and abuse of a corpse.

The Aftermath

Caleb Fairley pled guilty to the murder but he stated the murders were not premeditated³⁴. Castor cited the fact that a person can develop an intent to kill in a split-second³⁵. Caleb Fairley was convicted and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole³⁶. He is currently incarcerated at the Fayette State Correctional Institution.³⁷

The murder of Lisa and Devon Manderach is one that will never be forgotten by those in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, and especially not by those who live in Limerick Township. The township even built a new park and named the playground section, "Manderach Memorial Playground" in their memory³⁸.

Caleb Fairley is now housed in the Fayette State Correctional Institution, where will spend the rest of his life. He has tried and failed many times to appeal on various, baseless grounds. Lisa and Devon Manderach are buried at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cemetery in Norristown, Pennsylvania³⁹, Montgomery County's seat and hometown of Lisa Manderach.

Caleb Fairley and his horrific crime will never be forgotten. He managed to avoid execution, but will nevertheless never be released from prison, and will be a name forever associated with evil, heartlessness, and as one of the most evil and psychotic people in the history of the state of Pennsylvania.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ King, Larry, and John Murphy. "Fairley Guilty of Double Murder in First Degree." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 26, 1996.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ "Caleb Bradley Fairley." Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. Accessed January 15, 2018. <http://inmatelocator.cor.pa.gov/#/results>.

³⁸ Panaritis, Maria. "Two-Story Slides and Saucer Swings: A Wonderland Like No Other After 1995 Murder of Limerick Mother and Infant." *Philly.com*. May 19, 2017. Accessed December 16, 2017. <http://www.philly.com/philly/home/A-playground-like-no-other-where-murder-oasis-of-unbridled-play-.html>.

³⁹ Ibid.