

Murder of JonBenet Ramsey

Taken From TruTV – Crime Library By Marilyn Bardsley and Patrick Bellamy

Exposure - The JonBenet Ramsey Story



The first images of JonBenet Ramsey that were broadcast to the world showed a pretty little girl in heavy make-up and flamboyant costumes parading across a stage. At the time, the media described her as "a painted baby, a sexualized toddler beauty queen."

From the day in 1996 when JonBenet was found dead in the basement of her home in Boulder, Colorado, the Boulder police and a large proportion of the world's media believed that her parents, John and Patsy Ramsey, were responsible for her death.

Prior to the murder of their daughter, John and Patsy Ramsey's life seemed almost ideal. Patsy, a former beauty queen, was married to a successful businessman. They had moved to Boulder where John ran a computer company that he had started in his garage, in 1991. The Ramseys readily adapted to their new life in Colorado and made many new friends. They built a large house in an elite suburb, and entertained often. Their last party in Boulder, just three days before the murder, was particularly happy. Over a hundred guests were present at a Christmas function. The Ramseys believed that they had good reason to celebrate. Patsy had warded off a recurrence of ovarian cancer and John had been voted Boulder's "businessman of the year."

According to the Ramseys' testimony, they drove home the few blocks from a party at a friend's house on Christmas night. JonBenet had fallen asleep in the car so they carried her up the stairs to her room and put her to bed at 9:30 p.m. Shortly after, Patsy and John went to bed, as they planned to get up early to prepare for a trip to their holiday home on Lake Michigan.

The next day, Patsy woke just after 5:00 a.m. and walked down the stairs to the kitchen. On the staircase, she found a two-and-a-half page note that said that JonBenet had been kidnapped by a "small foreign faction" and was being held for a ransom of \$118,000. She was to be exchanged for the money the next day. The letter warned that if the money was not delivered, the child would be executed. Patsy yelled to John as she ran back up the stairs and opened the door to JonBenet's room. Finding she wasn't there, they made the decision to phone the police. The 911 dispatcher recorded Patsy's call at 5:25 a.m. The police arrived at the house seven minutes later.

The uniformed police officers that attended were openly suspicious from *The Start*. The Ramseys, treating the ransom demand seriously, were already taking steps to raise the ransom money. The note said that the kidnappers would call John Ramsey but no call came.

Suspicion Mounts



Investigator enters Ramsey crime scene.

It was while the police were waiting for the call that they made several critical mistakes. They did not conduct a proper search of the house, the area was not sealed off and friends were allowed to walk in and out at their leisure. No moves were made to protect any forensic evidence. The scale of their mistakes became apparent later that afternoon when a detective asked Fleet White, a friend of the Ramseys, to take John and search the house for "anything unusual." They started in the basement. Later, during the documentary *Who Killed JonBenet?*, made by Channel Four in London, John Ramsey describes what they found:

"As I was walking through the basement, I opened the door to a room and knew immediately that I'd found her because there was a white blanket — her eyes were closed, I feared the worse but yet — I'd found her."

While the Ramseys went to stay with friends, their home became a major crime scene. As this was the only murder in Boulder that year, the investigating police had little experience in that type of crime, with very few of them having conducted a murder investigation at all. Regardless, they immediately assumed the Ramseys were guilty. The fact that JonBenet had been found in her own home by her father was considered highly suspicious. By the time her body had been taken from the house that evening, some of their suspicions had been passed to a local journalist.

On December 27, *The Rocky Mountain News* quoted an Assistant District Attorney as saying, "It was very unusual for a kidnap victim's body to be found at home — it's not adding up." According to Charlie Brennan, the journalist who wrote the story, the police had also indicated to him that they held a strong belief that the parents were responsible. Julie Hayden, a television reporter for Denver's Channel 7, also covered the story on the same day and drew the same conclusion. She later explained that from her first exposure to the case, the police had made it very clear that they were not scouring the area looking for "some mad kidnapper," but instead, concentrating their efforts on John and Patsy Ramsey.

From that day on, a clear pattern emerged in the coverage of the case. While police chief Tom Koby made little comment, reporters had their own sources, which tended to implicate the Ramseys. At that point, John and Patsy were placed under police protection but were largely unaware of the mounting suspicion against them. One man, however, saw the early warning signs and acted. Mike Bynum, a lawyer friend of John's, hired Brian Morgan to act as their personal counsel. In the same documentary, Bynum defended his appointment, stating:

"It is foolish to blindly throw oneself into the maw of the justice system and to trust the result. One simply must be thoughtful about the way one acts, especially in a case of media attention that reaches the point of near hysteria and especially in a case of media attention which, from the outset, portrays certain people as clearly guilty."

He also defended the need for legal representation:

"If you're guilty, you want to think about having a lawyer, and I want to tell you what, if you're innocent you better have a lawyer — there is no difference."

The Media Evidence

By December 28, various local news sources made it clear to their readers that the Ramseys were the principal suspects in the case. While the police made few comments regarding any evidence they had to implicate the parents, the media began to cite their own "evidence." The first "clue" they focused on was the supposed lack of footprints in the snow surrounding the house, which suggested that someone inside was responsible. Later the media admitted that this opinion was based on an official report from a policeman at the scene who noted: — "Strange, no footprints." The next item was also gleaned from a police report. It stated that there were allegedly no signs of forced entry.

The mayor of Boulder, Leslie Durgan, added further weight to the story when she appeared on television stating: — "By all reports there was no visible signs of forced entry. The body was found in a place where people are saying, someone had to know the house."

The facts surrounding the so-called "evidence" tell a completely different story.

The first point to come under scrutiny is the snow cover. News video footage shot on December 26 clearly shows that large areas surrounding the house had no snow cover at all. In support of this, Julie Hayden, the television reporter states:

"We looked at the videotape once the footprints in the snow started becoming an issue and one of the things that I observed was, there did not seem to be snow going up to all of the doors. So, in my opinion, this thing about footprints in the snow has always been much ado about nothing because it seemed clear to me that people could have gotten in the house, whether they did or not, without traipsing through the snow."



The Basement Window

Even with blatant visual evidence that proved that the theory was groundless, the story continued to be told. Even more doubtful was the claim of "no forced entry." The police report on December 26 noted that there were a number of open windows and at least one open door; therefore, an intruder would not need to break in. One possible point of entry was the basement window. Not only was it easily accessible via a ground level lift-out grille, it had been broken sometime before Christmas and could not be secured. These facts, although well documented by the police, did not come to public attention until a year after the event.

When questioned regarding the accuracy of the information he received, reporter Charlie Brennan stated that up until March 1997, he and other members of the press did not know that there was a broken window in the basement and believed that his police source had fed him false information.

The reality of this situation is that an intruder could have easily entered the house through the basement window and moved around the house virtually undetected and unheard. JonBenet's bedroom is one floor below her parents' room, a total distance of 55 feet of walkways, covered by thick carpeting, making it ideal for a soundless approach. Furthermore, there is no hidden room. A carpeted spiral staircase, a few feet from her room, leads down to the kitchen. From the kitchen, it is only a few steps to the door that leads to the basement stairs. At the bottom of the stairs is a short corridor that leads directly to the room where her body was found.

The end result? — No secret room, no need for forced entry and very little snow, which leads to one of two conclusions — either the press distorted the facts to embellish their story or someone inside the police department leaked false information, intentionally or otherwise. Despite having been proved incorrect, all three bits of misinformation were given continual coverage.

Personal Attack



A time of grief

On December 29, four days after the murder, a memorial service for JonBenet was held at a local church. As the Ramseys mourned their daughter, the police and the media turned their attention to the behavior of Patsy and John. One story, printed by *Vanity Fair* magazine, suggested that John Ramsey had left the house before the police had arrived. Ann Bardach, the journalist who wrote the story, described how John Ramsey had used the excuse of going out to get the mail. The story was false and was traced back to another leaked police report. Curiously, even after the story was proved to be untrue, the police did not make any attempts to correct the situation. Perhaps they were hoping that such stories would place additional pressure on the Ramseys.

Next to come under attack was the level of the family's grief. *Vanity Fair* quoted a policeman saying that on the first morning, Patsy Ramsey, while weeping, had been "peering at him through splayed fingers." Friends and family members who were present at the time tell a far different story, describing how John and Patsy were so overcome with grief that they were unable to talk without crying. Their opinion was quickly dismissed as being biased.

By Monday, December 30, the Ramseys had returned to Atlanta to bury JonBenet. Again, another story was released concerning how they got there. According to the article written by Charlie Brennan, John Ramsey flew his family to Atlanta in his private jet. The story, which had attempted to portray John as an unfeeling elitist, was also false. The jet actually belonged to Lockheed-Martin, the company that had previously purchased Access Graphics, John Ramsey's company. He did not pilot it. The company, hearing of their loss, had offered the services of one of their jets.

JonBenet's funeral took place on New Year's Eve, 1996, at her parents' family church in Atlanta. That day, the family had to shield the Ramseys from the growing hostility that the media coverage had created. Even as they buried their daughter, a new story emerged that revealed that John and Patsy had hired several criminal lawyers. Although Mike Bynum hired the attorneys, it was seen as another indication of the parents' guilt. Alarmed by the mounting criticism, Bynum and members of the family urged the Ramseys to go on television and defend themselves. The following day they appeared on CNN.

"A Killer on the Loose"



John and Patsy Ramsey on TV

One of the questions raised during the interview was: "Do you believe that someone outside your home killed JonBenet?"

Patsy answered in a tearful voice: "There is a killer on the loose, I don't know who it is, I don't know if it's a he or a she — but if I were a resident of Boulder I would tell my friends to keep their babies close to you."

Rather than explain their point of view, the broadcast only served to bolster the theory that the Ramseys were pretending and would rather talk on television than talk to the police.

The next day, Mayor Leslie Durgan gave a press conference to reject Patsy's claim, stating: "People in Boulder have no need to fear that there is someone wandering the streets of Boulder, as has been portrayed by some people, looking for young children to attack. Boulder is safe, it's always been a safe community and it continues to be a safe community."

The Ramseys were outraged. They simply couldn't understand why someone such as Mayor Durgan would say such things publicly when it was obvious to them that JonBenet's killer was still out there. Sadly, they were yet to realize that Durgan's comments were indicative of the opinions of the police and a large percentage of the general public who believed that John and Patsy were solely responsible for the death of their daughter.

During a 1997 interview, Durgan explained her reasons for making the announcement: "It was done in large part to allay the fears of children in our community and to let people know that the information that I had at that time was that we did not have some crazed person wandering the streets of University Hill."

When asked by the interviewer where she had gotten her information from, she replied, "The police chief."

Serious Allegations

When the Ramseys returned to Boulder to assist in the police investigation, they had no idea that worse was still to come. They moved in with friends where they were besieged by the media, who added a third element to the case against them. News stories appeared reporting that the police believed that JonBenet had been sexually assaulted prior to the time of her murder. The televising of footage from JonBenet's beauty pageants and the suggestion that the Ramseys might have sexually abused their daughter brought over 300 journalists to Boulder. Soon after, the story exploded.

Mainstream journalists followed the tabloids. Any mention of the Ramseys attracted readers and pushed up ratings. The stories continually criticized John and Patsy for "degrading" their daughter in "sexualized" pageants, and for hiring two lawyers; this, according to the press, made them look "twice as suspicious." They were accused of refusing to cooperate with the police and of actually delaying the investigation. According to Brian Morgan, their attorney, the reality was quite different:

"The Ramseys were interviewed on the 26th, the Ramseys were interviewed on the 27th. On the 27th they give samples of physical evidence, blood, hair and fingerprints. When they returned from Atlanta, the Ramseys gave five handwriting samples, voluntarily. To say that the Ramseys had not cooperated in this investigation is a gross mischaracterization."

The samples of handwriting that John and Patsy provided to the police were later found to bear no similarities to those on the ransom note.

The Ramseys' desire to cooperate with the police did not last long. Their attitude towards the police changed dramatically when they got back to Boulder and learned from Mike Bynum that the previous week, the police had refused to release JonBenet's body until John and Patsy agreed to be interrogated. Even though Bynum had been successful in having the body released in time for the funeral, the police continued to press for additional interviews. After hearing this, John and Patsy Ramsey finally realized that the police, to use John's words — "Weren't there to help us, they were there to hang us." They became very suspicious and untrusting of the police and made further moves to defend themselves.

As the weeks passed, the police started to apply more pressure on the Ramseys. In February 1997, District Attorney Alex Hunter told journalists, "I want to say something to the person or persons that took this baby from us, the list of suspects narrows. Soon there will be no one on the list but you."

The inference was that he had been talking directly to John Ramsey, who was now being openly branded as a murderer.

Soon after, another leak from police records indicated that warrants had been sought to search the Ramsey house for pornographic material. The media had a field day and carried stories of how a father's deviant sexual behavior had resulted in the death of his daughter. In May, the Ramseys gave a press conference, part of which showed John Ramsey staring into the camera and declaring emphatically, "I did not kill my daughter JonBenet." It was a last desperate attempt to declare their innocence, but no one believed them.



JonBenet with her brother, Burke

John did it!

The basis of the new "evidence" was an allegation that John Ramsey had frequented a pornographic book shop in downtown Denver. Ramsey strenuously denied the allegation, stating that he had never been inside such a store in his life. The book shop in question was never identified and no evidence was ever tabled to support the theory. The extensive police search for pornographic material yielded nothing, but results of the search were never reported. After their failure to prove John Ramsey's involvement with pornography, the police turned their attention to something more sinister: his alleged sexual assault of his daughter. Again, John Ramsey rigorously denied the allegation.

As before, stories circulated in the media which tended to "prove" the allegations of the police. One story element described how JonBenet had been taken to a local pediatric clinic 27 times over a four-year period. Dr. Francis Beuf, the Ramseys' pediatrician, was later interviewed and stated that he did not believe that the number of visits was excessive and considered JonBenet's medical history to be consistent with other children of the same age. In regards to any evidence of sexual abuse, he stated that in all the times he had examined JonBenet, he had never seen any evidence of any such abuse.

Other stories claimed that the "vaginal abrasion" mentioned in the autopsy report suggested sexual abuse, however this conclusion is not supported by the balance of medical opinion. Dr. Thomas Henry, the Denver medical examiner states:

"From what is noted in the autopsy report, there is no evidence of injury to the anus, there is no evidence of injury to the skin around the vagina, the labia and there is no other indication of any healed scars in any of those areas. There is no other indication from the autopsy report at all that there is any other previous injuries that have healed in that particular area."

Unfortunately, the absence of physical evidence, in itself, is not conclusive, but statements given to the media by John Ramsey's ex-wife, Lucinda Ramsey, and by John's brother and sister-in-law, Johnson and Peggy Ramsey, categorically deny that John Ramsey is, or has ever been, a child abuser. To further defend the claims, John Ramsey's son, John Andrew, and elder daughter, Melinda, told interviewers that their father had always been a loving and gentle person who "cherished" his children and had never abused them in any way. Both children were interviewed as possible suspects in the murder but were later cleared.



While the testimony of his family can be discounted as biased, their comments are supported by Boulder's Family Services department. After the murder, they videotaped a long interview with JonBenet's nine-year-old brother, Burke, while the police watched from behind a two-way mirror. Social Services later reported that there was "No indication of either physical or sexual abuse." In addition, the official police inquiry, conducted over several months, yielded, as one law enforcement official put it, "Zero, f_ _ _ ing zero."

All the allegations against the Ramseys had been proved groundless, but the lack of any real evidence against them and the failure of the police to pursue other explanations for the murder had not lessened the pressure. The media indictment continued to gain momentum, to the point where the host of a major American talk show conducted a live "murder trial," complete with judge and jury. The program's verdict was that John and Patsy Ramsey were considered "liable for the wrongful death of their daughter JonBenet."

No Wait — Patsy did it!

The program *Hard Copy* later ran a story by *Globe* magazine which alleged that JonBenet had gone to her parents' bedroom on the night of her murder because she had wet her own bed. The program then suggested that, "The most likely scenario is that her frazzled mum had completely lost it and battered her." The Ramseys dismissed the claim as "absurd."

Next came the allegation that John Ramsey had a mistress. Kimberley Ballard, the alleged "other woman," was asked on national television whether she thought that John Ramsey was capable of committing such a crime. She answered, "I don't know if he actually did it, but I feel that he was definitely involved, knowing his personality the way I do." After the story ran, John Ramsey denied any such affair or ever having met the woman. The allegations were never investigated and the story and Kimberley Ballard eventually disappeared.

On October 29, Ann Bardach, the author of the *Vanity Fair* article, appeared on NBC's *Dateline* and reported that the Boulder police were so sure of their case against the Ramseys that they already had affidavits for their arrest, which had been prepared the previous May. She stated that the affidavits "list evidence against the two parties in quite specific detail. This information supports the charge of murder." The police would not confirm or deny the story.

The Ramseys' concerns regarding the aggression of the media is shared by many journalists who believe that their profession has declined considerably due to intense competition, a loosening in regulations and the increasing view of news as a profit making, rather than a journalistic, pursuit. Sadly, the news has become entertaining instead of informative, and personal tragedy has degenerated into a public spectacle.

The editor of Boulder's own *Daily Camera* newspaper, Barrie Hartman, viewed coverage of JonBenet's murder with increasing alarm and expressed this opinion:

"One of the failings that we in the news print media have is that when we have stories that the tabloids have reported, we feel obliged to report on them as well, which can cause us some problems. I think JonBenet was a good example of that, where the details are repeated before they are verified as facts."



A candlelight vigil by children outside the Ramsey home

Late in 1997, Mayor Leslie Durgan attempted to distance herself from the JonBenet media circus when she told an interviewer, "I now have learned an important lesson and that is I don't believe what I read in the press, hear in the press, listen to on talk radio anymore, but at that point I did. I was pretty naive, I thought that if it was in the press then it was probably true." This was a strange comment considering she claimed that she got her information from the police department.

The final word on this "trial by media" is from John Ramsey when he told an interviewer:

"Where is our common sense as a race of people? We've got a cancer in the American society, in the form of our system of information. We're going to take a shot at trying to fix it and that's what we are trying to do here."

Who Did It?

The next question to be answered is, if the Ramseys didn't do it, who did? There are two main theories. The first is that JonBenet was murdered by an unknown assailant who entered the house, presumably via the basement window. JonBenet was found wrapped in a blanket and lying in the middle of the basement floor. She had duct tape across her mouth. She lay with her arms above her head and a white cord was wrapped tightly around her neck. The same cord was tied loosely to her wrists. The broken handle of a paintbrush, measuring approximately 4.5 inches in length, had been looped into the cord to form a garrote. At the time of her death, JonBenet was wearing a sweatshirt over a long sleeve shirt. The lower half of her body was clad in white pajama bottoms over white panties.



Garrote

There was a thin gold ring on the middle finger of her right hand, and a bracelet with her name engraved on one side and the date "12/25/96" on her left wrist. A red heart was drawn on the palm of her left hand. Around her neck was a gold chain with a single gold cross attached. The evidence suggests that either someone took the girl from her bedroom by force, or lured her to the kitchen with the promise of food, which would explain the undigested remnants of pineapple found in her stomach at the time of her death. She was then taken to the basement, had tape placed over her mouth, and was bound with the nylon cord. She was then sexually assaulted, after which she was strangled with the garrote and bashed about the head. The killer or killers then wrote out a two and a half page "ransom" note on a pad from the house, demanding \$118,000, and left it at the foot of the staircase.

If this theory is correct, then the killer would have to be someone who:

- Is familiar with the layout of the house.
- Knows the Ramseys personally enough to know that John Ramsey received a bonus of \$118,000.
- Is small enough to have gained entry via a narrow basement window and possibly exited the same way.
- Was confident enough to spend the time to not only commit the offense, but to have the presence of mind to write a long note in an attempt to draw suspicion away from himself.

Former FBI agent and expert criminal profiler, Robert Ressler believes that:

- JonBenet knew her killer
- The killer could have come from a small circle of friends around the Ramsey home in Boulder
- The circle would include family, neighbors, and employees of the Ramseys.

Ressler's analysis is further strengthened by an excerpt from a letter of resignation that Detective Lou Smits, a veteran investigator of 32 years' experience, sent to District Attorney Alex Hunter:

"The case tells me that there is substantial, credible, evidence of an intruder and lack of evidence that the parents are involved."

Someone Outside the House

The evidence observed by police at the scene strongly suggests that the attack came from someone outside the house; for instance:

- A footprint made by a Hi-Tec stamped hiking boot was found in the concrete dust of the wine cellar. The boot has not been connected to any of the Ramseys or to the 400 people or more who have been to the Ramsey house.
- An unidentified palm print was found on the door of the wine cellar. It does not belong to John, Patsy or Burke Ramsey.
- A pubic hair was found on the blanket in which JonBenet was wrapped. It does not belong to John, Patsy or Burke Ramsey.
- A piece of broken glass was found under a basement window. The window was open and the sill showed signs of disturbance.
- There was a scuff-mark on the basement wall below the window. Someone had to have climbed in or out of this window (however, no footprints were found outside the window).
- The duct tape and the cord used in the murder were not found in the Ramsey house. The offender must have brought them in and taken them out when he/she left the house after the murder.

The list of possible suspects in this case is enormous. Not only did the Ramseys have hundreds of guests through their home at various times, they also had a large number of trades people that worked on an extensive remodeling project on the house. One theory suggested that because the Ramseys had given out a number of house keys to friends, one of them may be responsible. If that is true, why then would the killer bother to enter via a basement window? (Assuming that is where the entry was made)

One possibility is that the killer wanted to give that impression.

A basic method of homicide investigations is to draw up a list of possible suspects and concentrate on eliminating them, either by comparison with physical evidence or by checking their whereabouts at the time of the offense. Using this method, the investigative body does not become side-tracked by suspects who "seem" suitable at the time. By using this process of elimination, the list of suspects is narrowed considerably. The only drawback with this method is that in a case like that of JonBenet Ramsey, the large number of suspects would take a great deal of time to examine in the necessary detail, even with a large task force.

Another possibility would be a person with a history of child sex offenses who may have frequented the pageant circuit to select future victims. Given the Ramsey's penchant for entertaining, it would not be difficult for a prospective perpetrator to insinuate himself into the Ramsey's social circle to gain the necessary information required to commit the offense. Presumably, the police have cross checked offenders of this type with anyone who knew the family or had access to the house.

Another side theory is that the killer may have been involved in a child pornography ring that operated in or around Boulder, and had earmarked JonBenet as a likely subject. The connection of child pornography with child sex murders isn't new. In 1997, 18-year-old Jeremy Strohmeyer stalked a seven-year-old girl in a Las Vegas casino before raping and murdering her in a restroom. Strohmeyer was a self-confessed devotee of child pornography on the Internet. If the pornography connection is true, then the murder may have been committed by more than one person as part of a conspiracy to possibly kidnap JonBenet — a plan that was later abandoned when the victim died before she could be removed from the house.

Time of Death

A factor to consider is the time that JonBenet died. The normal body temperature of a human is 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. The body gradually cools after death. The rate of cooling is determined by the ambient temperature around the body and by the victim's body size and clothing. The temperature of the body is normally taken rectally by the medical examiner as the buttocks, being the largest area of a body's mass, are the last area to retain body heat. Body heat dissipates from a deceased person at approximately 1.5 degrees per hour, but will often vary according to the temperature in the room, and to the age and gender of the victim.

The rate of advancement of rigor mortis is another method used to determine time of death. Rigor mortis is the stiffening of the muscles caused by chemical changes in the muscle tissue after death. The onset of rigor mortis normally begins within 2 to 4 hours after death and takes between 6 to 12 hours for the entire body to be affected. Normally, after 24-36 hours after death, the effects of rigor mortis have dissipated.

According to the police report, JonBenet was last seen alive at approximately 10:00 p.m. on December 25, 1996. John Ramsey, in company with Fleet White, found JonBenet dead in the basement at approximately 1:05 p.m. on December 26, 1996. When police first sighted the body, they observed that the body was affected by advanced rigor mortis. Rigor mortis is known to spread through the lesser muscled parts of the body first and gradually spreads through the body, affecting the larger body parts last. John Ramsey found JonBenet at 1:05 p.m. and her body was completely set with rigor mortis, which indicates that she had died between 10:00 p.m. on December 25 and 6:00 a.m. on December 26.

The police also reported a smell of decomposition on the body. Again, the rate of decomposition depends on room temperature and the body's levels of bacteria and enzyme activity. Typically, for every ten-degree increase in room temperature, the rate of decomposition is doubled. For the odor of decomposition to have been detected by the police, JonBenet would have had to have died near the beginning of the estimated time frame. If that was the case, the perpetrator would have had ample time to commit the offense, write a ransom note and escape.

The second theory is that the murder was committed by someone in the house. Given that the evidence implicating the Ramseys had been largely based on rumor and innuendo, and all physical trace evidence has failed to prove their involvement, there aren't too many other possibilities. Police never seriously considered Burke Ramsey, JonBenet's brother, a suspect.

A Continuing Saga

On October 10, 1999, the members of District Attorney Alex Hunter's prosecution team met with well-known criminalist Dr. Henry Lee to discuss the forensic testing that had been conducted during the Ramsey case. The tests, which were conducted by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, were based on samples that were taken from JonBenet's fingernail scrapings, blood from her panties, and hair samples. Some of these are said to contain traces of the victim's blood and other DNA evidence that could possibly provide a link to the killer. So far, tests on the Ramsey family and other police suspects have failed to provide a match. The mystery of the DNA sample is the fact that it can't be proven to be connected to the murder or to the perpetrator responsible. Dr Lee, who became known for his work on the O.J. Simpson case, had been Hunter's forensic adviser since the beginning of the investigation.



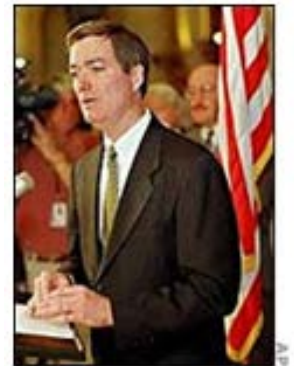
DA Alex Hunter

On October 13, 1999, Alex Hunter called a press conference to announce that a grand jury that had been assembled 13 months previously to hear the evidence of the case had found that there was insufficient evidence to charge any suspect with the murder of JonBenet. Apart from John and Patsy Ramsey, the police have never publicly named any additional suspects in the case.

Three weeks after Hunter's announcement, Colorado Governor Bill Owens told interviewers that he still considered John Ramsey a "prime suspect" in the murder of JonBenet Ramsey. Owens made the statement after John Ramsey had offered to meet with him in an attempt to convince the governor to appoint a special prosecutor to oversee the case. The governor declined the offer, stating:

"Mr. Ramsey is considered to be a prime suspect, it would be very inappropriate to meet with him."

The governor wasn't the only public official to point the finger of blame. Regardless of the failure of the grand jury to indict the Ramseys, newly appointed Boulder police chief Mark Beckner stated that, as far as he was concerned, the Ramseys were still "under an umbrella of suspicion."



Governor Bill Owens

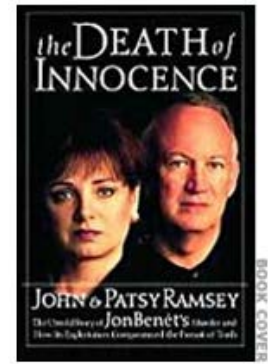
By the end of October, the Ramseys' answer to these comments, particularly those made by Governor Owens, was to threaten legal action over what they described as "slandorous remarks." In response, Troy Eid, chief counsel for the governor, announced that he believed that Governor Owens was within his rights when he suggested that the Ramseys "quit hiding behind their attorneys" and cooperate with investigators looking for their daughter's killer "no matter where that trail may lead."

Eid, who was also a member of the special advisory task force that worked with Owens to decide whether to appoint a special prosecutor to the Ramsey case, further stated that the governor was well within his constitutional rights to say what he did, having been protected by the First Amendment in his role as a public official.

Another legal issue raised its head in early November when it was announced that Craig A. Lewis, a journalist for the supermarket tabloid *Globe*, may be indicted by a grand jury for "information brokering" related to the JonBenet Ramsey killing. He was also charged with commercial bribery and extortion relating to an offer of \$30,000 that Lewis allegedly made to an independent documents examiner for a copy of the ransom note featured in the case.

The Death of Innocence

In the midst of threatening legal action and attempting to counter adverse public opinion, John and Patsy Ramsey made the somewhat untimely announcement that they had signed a book deal with a Nashville-based company that specializes in religious books. In a prepared statement, the Ramseys stated that they had decided that it was time to write the book, to be titled *The Death of Innocence*, so they could fully explain their side of the story and make the world aware of their innocence and their faith in God. John Ramsey told a news conference, "We have patiently waited for the justice process to evolve in the matter of our daughter's death. We have remained silent while baseless and slanderous accusations about our family were made by the frenzied media. The time is appropriate to recount our experiences in this tragedy."



Book cover: *The Death of Innocence*

Amidst growing criticism and accusations that they were "cashing in" on their daughter's death, the Ramseys announced that any proceeds from the sale of the book would go towards their legal fees and the JonBenet Ramsey Children's Foundation, which the couple established to "help children grow spiritually."

Within days of the book announcement, the Ramseys were again in the news when it was revealed that they had hired L. Lin Wood, a prominent Atlanta libel attorney. Wood, confirming the appointment, stated, "John and Patsy Ramsey are probably the most convicted individuals in recent history who have never been charged with any crime. They're not murderers," he says. "I'm sure of that."

He told reporters that he wouldn't have taken the case if he had thought the Ramseys were guilty, and stated that he is paid on a contingency basis, earning a percentage of any legal settlement won. Wood says the Ramseys have been seriously libeled in the nation's media and he'll begin with a civil suit against *The Star* supermarket weekly on behalf of the Ramsey's 12-year-old son, Burke. *The Star's* front page on May 25, 1999, ran a story under the headline "JonBenet Was Killed by Brother Burke." The paper later printed a retraction.

Wood acknowledged that the Ramseys and their lawyers damaged their credibility by "stage managing" their contact with the media. "A criminal defense lawyer's job is to insulate his client before a criminal investigation. Unfortunately when doing so, that client loses the ability to fight back against the accusations of the media," he said.

Wood wasn't shy in accusing Governor Owens of lying over the governor's statement that the Ramseys hadn't cooperated with the authorities. "Part of the Ramseys' problem," Wood says, "is that sensational newspapers like *The Star*, *The Globe*, the *National Enquirer* and others are afforded the same First Amendment protections as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. You're talking about people who will spend any amount of money as long as there's money to be made," he says.

Star attorney Dori Ann Hanswirth in defending the publication, said, "*The Star* is an ethical publication that is entitled to all the protections of the First Amendment."

One of Wood's main criticisms of the media was the accusation that the Ramseys have been "acting strangely" after their daughter's murder. Wood himself has had personal experience with sudden loss. "I discovered my mother's body when I was 16 years old," he says. "There was no guidebook to tell me how to look and react in what I experienced. If you think they didn't act right, my advice would be to refrain from that kind of judgment until you've walked in their shoes." He cited his own struggles after his mother's death. "You just hope you make the right decisions," he says. "But if you don't, you hope that you will be understood and forgiven." Wood believes what happened to the Ramseys could happen to anyone.

The Case Goes Cold

"People's eyes glaze over when you start talking about the First Amendment and privacy," Wood says. "But if we allow the media to try people outside of the judicial system, without any boundaries or limitations, everyone is at risk. Serious journalists need to start asking themselves: Do I want to be judge and jury for this person?"

John Ramsey tried to have the last word when he told a TV interviewer, "When you've lost a child, nothing else matters... You're rendered as low as you can possibly be without dying," he said. "Our focus was laying JonBenet to rest properly, and that's all that mattered during that time." Patsy Ramsey added, "I don't know who will want to read it, but if they do, it's going to be there as best we can portray what we've been through in two and a half years," she said.

Governor Owens had his own views on the matter. "If they're innocent, they're sure not acting like they are."

Regardless of ongoing rumors to the contrary, as the months progressed, the JonBenet Ramsey murder investigation showed definite signs that it was winding down.

Among other things, the police case files pertaining to the case were placed in storage; the lead grand jury prosecutor, Michael Kane, moved to the East Coast; and case detectives were reassigned to other duties. Finally, after spending more than \$500,000 on the case, Boulder District Attorney Alex Hunter announced that his office had run out of money for the case and had no immediate plans to seek additional funding. "We are making no request at this time," said Bill Wise, first assistant district attorney. "That is not to say that we may not have to go back before the commissioners and make a request, but I cannot predict if that will happen."

In addition, when asked if the department had spent any money on the case in recent months, police spokeswoman Jennifer Bray said, "I can't imagine any costs have been incurred at all. Any expense would be very small. The room that detectives had been using is being turned into the major crimes unit's room."

Bray also said that Ramsey investigation files have been "stored away in a secure location." The last four detectives assigned exclusively to the case have been assigned to more recent cases.

It appeared that the investigation had finally run out of steam regardless of the statements made by the key players after the grand jury handed down its decision in October:



Mark Beckner

"We are not going to quit on this case." (Alex Hunter October 14th)

"From the police perspective, this will remain an open, ongoing investigation ... This case is not dead in the water." (Boulder Police Chief Mark Beckner — October 14th)

"The right people are now working the Ramsey case.... And I am confident that each day brings us closer to the day when you (the killers) will reap what you have sown." (Governor Bill Owens — Oct. 27th)

Up until that time, the city of Boulder and the state of Colorado had spent a combined total of \$2,063,456.42 over three years investigating the murder of JonBenet Ramsey. Of those funds, only a miniscule \$25,500 remained, which was used to keep grand jury special prosecutor Michael Kane on retainer even though he had moved to Pennsylvania and to keep Hunter's spokeswoman, Suzanne Laurion, on his staff in a reduced capacity.

In mid-November, Boulder County commissioners approved Alex Hunter's \$2.9 million budget request for the year 2000, none of which was allocated to the Ramsey investigation.

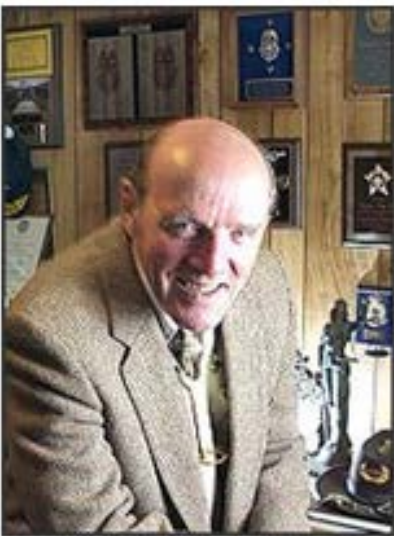
Fighting Back

By the end of November, John and Patsy Ramsey made it clear how they were going to proceed. "What we wanted and what we continue to want is that the investigation continues, that it be staffed with people that are really experienced in homicides and this type of crime," John Ramsey told a Nashville TV station. "The last thing we want to have happen is for the investigation to be shelved."

As if in answer, prosecutor Mike Kane traveled to Connecticut following the broadcast to examine crime scene evidence in company with noted criminologist Dr. Henry Lee. At the same time, a Boulder police spokeswoman, Jana Petersen, also confirmed that physical evidence was still being tested.

The Ramseys said they agreed to the interview primarily to promote their book, in the hope that it would spark renewed interest in the case and help to bring the killer to justice.

The following month, they announced through their attorneys that they would be continuing a court action against *The Star* newspaper and would be seeking \$25 million in actual and punitive damages. A statement released by American Media, *The Star's* parent company, said it would fight the suit and use the libel case as a chance to re-investigate the case.



Lou Smit, former investigator

As 1999 drew to a close, Lou Smit, a former member of the JonBenet Ramsey prosecution team, announced that he was working with John and Patsy Ramsey to prove the theory that an intruder killed their child. Smit, 63, a former El Paso County homicide investigator and a respected veteran of more than 150 Colorado murder investigations, had previously come out of retirement in March 1997, to work with District Attorney Alex Hunter on the investigation. He resigned Sept. 20, 1998, due to concerns that Hunter's team was wrongly targeting the Ramseys.

After the announcement, Boulder Police Chief Mark Beckner was quick to criticize Smit's decision when he told an interviewer:

"It would seem somewhat unethical to do that, to have a police investigator that worked for the DA's office, now consulting with people who are still under suspicion in the case. I don't know how you can assist in a third-party investigation without sharing information that you became aware of as a participant in that investigation on the prosecution side, I don't know where that's possible."

In January 2000, the only activity in the Ramsey case wasn't provided by the police, the DA's office or Lou Smit, but rather by a CBS film crew shooting footage for a television mini-series on the murder investigation of JonBenet Ramsey.

The mini-series, to be called *Perfect Murder, Perfect Town*, is based on the book of the same name.

Fighting Back — the Deposition

As January came and went, Dr. Lee tabled the findings of his latest forensic analyses but no further action was taken, apart from Dr. Lee telling the press that he still considered the investigation to be a "warm case." Dr. Lee indicated that there was still a lot of evidence to be examined.

By February, the general public had a glimpse inside an active murder investigation when a copy of John Ramsey's deposition, detailing Ramsey's answers to questions relating to his daughter's murder while he was under oath, was made public.

While the lengthy deposition revealed very little in relation to the murder itself, it did reveal on a more personal level how the family dealt with the murder and with the legal and media aspects of the investigation.

One of its more revealing facets was when John Ramsey admitted to being under a doctor's care for almost two years and to taking the anti-depressant Prozac.

At one point in the deposition, John Ramsey is asked if he suspects anyone of murdering his daughter. He answered: "Let me say two things. One, when you have something like this happen in your life, you lose trust.

So do you suspect everyone? Yes," he says. "Secondly, I try to remind myself not to rush to judgment, as obviously happened in this case, and I don't want to be guilty of that myself."

Ramsey also revealed in the document that an interview he gave on CNN a week after the murder was done at the suggestion of family friend Fleet White, who had been with Ramsey when he discovered his daughter's body in the basement of their home.

The deposition came to light as part of a libel lawsuit filed by photographer Stephen Miles against the *National Enquirer* and John Ramsey. The lawsuit accused Ramsey of leaking information to the tabloid as to who committed the murder. The lawsuit was eventually thrown out of federal court, but Ramsey's deposition, consisting of about four hours of questioning, was made public by a story in Boulder's *Daily Camera* newspaper. Despite the CNN appearance, Ramsey says in the deposition that he wanted to keep the case out of the "media limelight" because he believed that made it more difficult for the police to do their work. He also revealed that he had not spoken with Fleet White or any member of his family for some time and did not know why the Whites had broken off all contact.

The deposition also describes how the Ramseys, working with their attorneys and others, have tried to crack the case. "We have spent a lot of time and effort and energy trying to develop leads that we thought were useful," Ramsey attorney Bryan Morgan says at one point. "A lot of junk comes in over the transom, and it's junk. There is also stuff that, in our view, was not junk." Morgan adds that the Ramsey team has tried "to develop some useful lead for the police." Morgan, at the same time, expresses reservations about how such information is handled. "But our experience has been that anytime anything like that is said, then it is immediately leaked and it appears in the tabloids with the worst possible spin on it. And we are extremely leery of that," he says. "And I will say on the record that that has been our experience with the Boulder Police Department as well."

Fighting Back — the Police

The police department and the district attorney's office also came under fire from attorney Lee Hill, who took the deposition. "These were sworn statements under oath by an important figure in the investigation," Hill said. "Boulder's spent over \$2 million on this investigation and all they had to do for this information was pick up a transcript, and they didn't until now. It's very troubling to me."

Boulder Police Chief Mark Beckner and a representative of the district attorney's office acknowledged that they were not informed of the deposition until *The Daily Camera* began asking questions. Beckner denied that there was anything significant in the deposition in regards to the criminal investigation, and added that John and Patsy



Patsy and John Ramsey

Ramsey had undergone 40 hours of interrogation by members of the investigative team.

Although the Ramseys had been previously accused of hiding behind their attorneys, Ramsey says that it was an attorney who approached him, just two days after JonBenet's death, with an offer of legal help.

On the 27th of February, the four-hour television movie, *Perfect Murder, Perfect Town*, based on the Lawrence Schiller book of the same name, went to air on national television. One man who watched the program with more than a passing interest was former Boulder police commander John Eller. Eller was detective division commander when Boulder police went to John and Patsy Ramsey's home the morning that they reported the kidnapping and discovered the ransom note.

Eller, one of four Boulder police officers whose careers were damaged over the Ramsey case, left Boulder in 1998 to take up a position in the Attorney General's Office in Florida. To this day, he still harbors strong feelings about the case that led to his retirement from the Boulder Police Department after an 18-year career.

Following the release of the film, Eller gave an interview to *The Rocky Mountain News*, during which he shared some of his observations about the case.

His main assertion was that, in his view, Boulder police had enough evidence to support an arrest, but not enough to file a murder charge and win a case at trial.

Although falling short of naming the person(s) he suspected, he told reporter Kevin McCullen: "At the time I left the investigation, no, there wasn't. We felt we had probable cause to make an arrest, but there wasn't enough there to nail a homicide charge."

He further claimed that he could have remained with the investigation if he'd "kept my mouth shut," and followed every request of prosecutors in the Boulder District Attorney's Office, but he instead clashed with prosecutors throughout much of his command of the investigation into the death of JonBenet.

The media coverage of the case also came under attack, with Eller labeling the coverage as "inaccurate" and blaming the books and movies that followed for "contaminating a potential jury pool."

A Possible Witness?

Also in February, a private therapist came forward and told the press that one of her clients claimed to have crucial information about the death of JonBenet Ramsey.

Mary Bienkowski, a licensed marriage, family and child counselor, said her client had given the police the names of individuals who were witnesses in the killing of JonBenet as well as ongoing sexual and physical abuse of other children.

She claimed that she has treated the client for over ten years for trauma arising from having been the victim of sexual assault, and had information that a widespread sex ring could have been behind JonBenet's murder.

The following day, the Boulder Sheriff's office released a statement that claimed that the woman making the claims had a long history of making false reports, and as such, her claims regarding the Ramsey case had not been taken seriously.

However, Alex Hunter pushed for a full investigation, saying witnesses who might have memory problems from past abuse should not automatically be discounted. The FBI also indicated that they had interviewed the woman, who is now in hiding.

Boulder Police Chief Mark Beckner would later tell reporters that three detectives were working full-time to try and verify the woman's information, but declined to make further comment. Ramsey attorney Lee Hill, who also represents the woman, said his client acknowledged making reports to local authorities, but claimed that they had not been followed up and denied that her reports were false.

"They refused to believe her," Hill said. "This is part of the reason she is seeking a more objective law enforcement agency's review."

In early March, after months of speculation, Alex Hunter formally announced that he would not be seeking re-election as district attorney, saying that the Ramsey investigation had influenced his decision to step down after his seventh term. He told the media that he had done everything he could with the evidence he had to work with. "I think this case may well be resolved," he said, "But not anytime soon. The investigation is still active and leads are being followed up as we speak." Hunter said he plans to remain involved with the case after he leaves office. "JonBenet's picture is on my desk to remind me of what this case is about, and it has been for three years," he said. "It's about her death and about hoping sometime to do justice for this little girl."

The Intruder Theory

In mid-March, retired detective Lou Smit outlined previously undisclosed evidence that led him to believe that John and Patsy Ramsey were not responsible for their daughter's death. "I believe there's evidence of an intruder, and I believe people should still be looking for him," Smit said. "There's a dangerous guy out there."

According to Smit, that evidence included:

- A metal baseball bat found outside the Ramseys' Boulder home. Fibers on the bat matched a carpet found in the basement near the storage room, where JonBenet's body was found. The bat was found, "in a place where kids normally wouldn't play," Smit said, declining to elaborate.
- DNA evidence that indicates JonBenet's attacker was a male, but the DNA does not match John Ramsey.
- Peanut-shaped foam packing material and leaves found in the basement that Smit thinks might have been tracked inside by someone entering through a broken basement window. "It would have been something that would not have been blown in there," Smit said.

Smit is not only an experienced detective. He has been credited for having solved one of Colorado's most baffling crimes, the murder of 13-year-old Heather Dawn Church in her Black Forest home in 1991. Smit was asked to come out of retirement to take over the case. Heather Church had vanished from home one evening while her mother and two brothers attended a Scout meeting. Two years later, her skeletal remains were found miles away, in a ravine west of Colorado Springs. With the trail truly cold, but still prominent in the public's mind, newly elected El Paso County Sheriff John Anderson asked Smit to head the investigation in 1995. Smit agreed and examined all of the evidence, focusing his attention on a set of unidentified fingerprints found in the Church home. He directed his detectives to begin sending the prints to every state and local law enforcement office in the country.

After contacting 92 different jurisdictions, a Louisiana police department matched the prints to Robert Charles Browne, a paroled thief who had moved to Colorado and was still living a half mile from the Church home three years after the killing. Browne later confessed that he had killed Heather with a blow to the head when she discovered him burglarizing the home.

Sheriff Anderson, having been trained in homicide investigation under Smit before becoming sheriff, has great respect for Smit's abilities. "He always had a sound method that started with the evidence and let it guide him toward the truth, rather than starting with a theory and forcing the evidence to fit it," Anderson said.

In the same article, *Newsweek* also reported that it had asked Arapahoe County Coroner Dr. Michael Doberson to review evidence from Smit that a stun gun was used on JonBenet. According to the magazine, Doberson was provided with pictures that the police had never shown him. Doberson was quoted as saying that the "stun gun theory" was compelling. "It just looked to me, superficially, that it fits," Doberson said.

A Stun Gun

The measurement of the two electrodes on the end of the stun gun was within a millimeter of that of the two injuries on the little girl's chin, Doberson said. He also noticed where a small metal bar on the weapon also could have left a mark. Doberson noted that any stun-gun wounds on JonBenet would not have been lethal. "There's some danger in making a decision based on photographs without having talked to the people who did the autopsy and who saw the injuries," he said.

Chief Beckner said he was already familiar with Smit's theory that a stun gun was used on JonBenet. "I can say, we have evidence to the contrary." He also said he was disturbed that Smit decided to talk about evidence in the unsolved case. "He's willing to go out and talk about his theory, but in so doing, he ignores a lot of other evidence," Beckner said.

Boulder County Coroner John Meyer declined to comment on Doberson's opinion.

Some weeks later, John and Patsy Ramsey continued to promote Smit's intruder theory when they gave an interview to ABC's *20/20* program. They also suggested that the police should look to the Ramseys' "inner circle" to find their daughter's killer, perhaps someone who was familiar with the family and may be a pedophile. The Ramseys said they believe an intruder may have waited for hours in their home before strangling and beating JonBenet. "I can't believe that we have ever knowingly met anyone that can be this vicious. But someone killed our daughter. So we have to start looking. We start at the inner circle and keep moving out," Patsy Ramsey said.

The Ramseys also accused police of ignoring such evidence as a handprint and DNA that could not be matched to family members or friends. Later, when appearing on the *Today* show, John Ramsey again suggested that people assume an intruder killed JonBenet, and he asked the public to contact authorities if they had any leads. "I'm not going to try to persuade people that I'm innocent. That's not important here. I want people to be objective and listen and think. Because that's how this crime is going to be solved," he said.

Smit resigned from Hunter's office in September 1998, after Hunter decided to take the investigation to the grand jury. Smit said he quit, in part, because he believed Boulder police and prosecutors "had developed tunnel vision and were focusing only on the Ramsey family and not on other suspects."

The Book

On Friday March 16, the Ramseys' book, *The Death of Innocence*, officially went on sale. The 396-page book, which is an emotional account of the Ramseys' life since JonBenet was killed, includes sharp criticism of how the case was mishandled and how John and Patsy believe it can be solved. The book outlines seven key pieces of evidence that they think might help find the murderer and names several names as being possible suspects:

- One of the Ramseys' former housekeepers, who may have intended to kidnap JonBenet because she was having money troubles.
- A man who played Santa Claus at the Ramseys' Christmas parties, including one the week JonBenet was killed.
- A former Access Graphics employee, who Ramsey writes "was extremely agitated with me" after he left Ramsey's company.
- A former freelance writer whose girlfriend reported he was acting suspiciously the day after the murder and seemed overly agitated by the killing.

In response to the book's allegations, Boulder Police Chief Mark Beckner later told reporters that all the people named in the book have been individually investigated and are not considered as "active suspects"

The book also details the evidence the Ramseys want re-examined, including:

- DNA found under JonBenet's fingernails,
- The cord found around her neck and the duct tape across her mouth,
- A pubic hair found on her blanket,
- The ransom note,
- The stun gun that might have been used to subdue her,
- A palm print found on the cellar door,
- A footprint of a Hi-Tec hiking boot found near her body.

It also provides a profile of the murderer as being a male pedophile, between the ages of 25 and 35, who may be an ex-convict who used techniques he saw in the movie *Ransom*, which was playing in Boulder shortly before JonBenet's murder. The Ramseys speculate that the suspect's original intention may have been to use a stun gun to immobilize JonBenet and kidnap her for the \$118,000 demanded in the ransom note.

They offer the theory that the attacker's plan could have failed when JonBenet woke up and recognized her attacker, turning the would-be kidnapper into a killer. They write, "When the suspect's background, post-murder behavior, and physical evidence are put together, the identity of this monster will be clear to someone who knows him."

They believe that the killer entered their home while they were at a Christmas evening dinner at the home of Fleet and Priscilla White. They further believe the intruder may have known the layout of the home after touring it during an Historic Boulder Homes Tour in Christmas 1994, and could have become aware of John's business successes through local newspaper stories.

The book also attacks the Boulder police department, criticizing them in an early chapter for not searching the home after the ransom note was discovered. Additional criticisms continue throughout the book, the harshest of which is aimed at John Eller.

The book also heavily criticizes the media, likening them to "vultures, waiting to find tidbits of flesh to pounce on." They explain in great detail how they cooperated with police on 16 separate occasions.

They also describe how they offered to testify before the grand jury and meet with Governor Owens and his advisory council. Both offers went unanswered.

The Book II

On the same day their book was released, John and Patsy Ramsey appeared on ABC's *20/20* program to discuss the book. They continued to assert that they had made every attempt to cooperate with the police investigation and had offered to undergo a lie-detector test to prove their innocence.

The following day, Chief Beckner told reporters that the Ramseys' claims of having been cooperative with police detectives investigating their daughter's slaying was a "smoke screen."

According to an account in the Ramseys' book, they cooperated on the following occasions:

- Police questioned them both on December 27 and John again on December 28. Officers were with the Ramseys 24 hours a day from 6 a.m. December 26, the day JonBenet's body was found, through 2 p.m. December 29, when the Ramseys left for the funeral in Atlanta.
- Police questioned Burke Ramsey on December 26. The conversation was tape-recorded without either parent present and without parental consent. A police psychologist interviewed Burke on January 6. Burke was interviewed again, over three days, in May 1998.
- Handwriting samples were given by John (December 26, 28, January 5, 1997); Patsy (December 28, January 4, 1997, February 28, April 12, May 20), and Burke (December 28).
- After the Ramseys returned from JonBenet's funeral in Atlanta, their attorneys offered to make them available for a joint interview January 18, 1997. The police declined this offer and stated in writing that such an interview would not "be helpful" because "the time for interviewing John and Patsy as witnesses who could provide critical information that would be helpful in the initial stages of our investigation has passed."
- The police countered with an offer that the Ramseys come to the police station at 6 p.m. on a Friday night and subject themselves to an open-ended interrogation. That suggestion was rejected, in part because of the written statement above.
- Patsy and John gave hair and blood samples, as well as fingerprints, immediately when the police requested them; so did all other members of the family. In February 1997, both Patsy and John voluntarily gave pubic hair samples.
- Early in the investigation, the Ramseys offered to let the police search both of their houses, John's office, their cars and his airplane hangar, without a search warrant.
- On April 11, 1997, John and Patsy Ramsey, with their attorneys, met with Peter Hofstrom of the DA's office and Tom Wickman of the Boulder Police Department. This meeting was held at Mr. Hofstrom's and Detective Wickman's request. An apology was given for the way the family had been treated. The Ramseys were asked to give additional interviews and continue their previous cooperation. John accepted their apology and agreed to move forward. No conditions were placed on the manner in which the interviews would be conducted.
- On April 12, 1997, the Ramseys agreed to let authorities search their house again without a warrant; agreed to destructive testing of walls located at their home; agreed to identify Patsy Ramsey's prior writings; and agreed to make themselves available for separate interviews on April 23. The Ramseys also agreed to answer any questions put to them. On April 22, the Boulder police cancelled the interviews.
- The Ramseys agreed to be interrogated by the Boulder police and district attorney's office on April 30, 1997. These interviews lasted two hours (John) and six hours (Patsy).
- They were interrogated by the district attorney's office for three full days each in June 1998. No additional interviews were requested.
- They signed more than 100 releases for information requested by the police, ranging from medical records to credit card records and even videotape rental records. The Ramseys provided all evidence and information requested by the police.
- Burke Ramsey, John Andrew Ramsey and Melinda Ramsey Long all were subpoenaed and testified before the grand jury.
- John and Patsy Ramsey offered to testify before the grand jury, but were never subpoenaed. The Ramseys asked to meet with the governor and his advisory council. The request went unanswered.

Still Under Suspicion

Late in March of 2000, Governor Bill Owens appeared on ABC's *Good Morning America* and announced that there was new evidence in the Ramsey case but refused to divulge any details, saying he was bound by the rules of evidence to keep the information secret.

"There was substantial new evidence in October, and there's even some new evidence in the last couple of weeks. I've had the opportunity to look at virtually all the evidence in the case," he said. A somewhat confused Police Chief Mark Beckner later said he believed that the governor was referring to the ongoing laboratory tests of evidence being conducted by the FBI, but stressed that evidence could not be considered as being a breakthrough. "This case will not come together on one piece of evidence," Beckner told reporters, "It will be a totality of all the evidence together."

Owens also told ABC's Barbara Walters that there was "very good reason" that John and Patsy Ramsey are under suspicion, and called her prior interview with the couple on the *20/20* program "easy journalism." Owens criticized Walters for being too soft on the issue, a move that would later win him renewed support across the nation and arouse additional suspicion against the Ramseys.

Walters then showed him a portion of the interview during which John Ramsey makes a statement directed at Owens saying, "You've spent three years investigating my family. What are you going to do to find the killer of my daughter?"

Owens was then asked whether, in his personal belief, John or Patsy Ramsey, or both, were responsible for the death of their child.

Owens, after agreeing that the question was a fair one, refused to answer it directly.

Three days after Owens' television appearance, Police Chief Mark Beckner announced that his department would probably accept the Ramseys' offer to take a lie-detector test in regards to JonBenet's murder.

Beckner said he had originally viewed the Ramseys' offer with skepticism, but admitted that after discussions with prosecutor Michael Kane and DA Alex Hunter, it could be a good idea. However, at the end of March, Hunter appeared on CNN's *Larry King Live* and told King that he didn't want John or Patsy Ramsey to take a polygraph test.

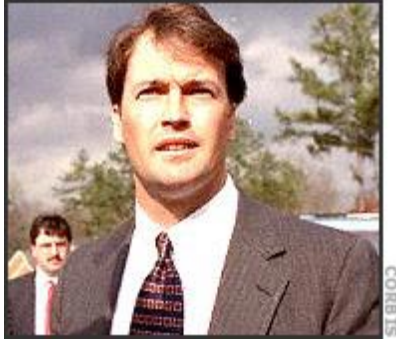
"The problem is reliability," he said, stating that various factors, including medications, could affect heart rate, blood pressure and perspiration, creating a false reading. Hunter also disputed claims by the Ramseys that they'd never been asked to take a polygraph. "They were asked, both of them, if they wanted to take a polygraph," he said. "There may be some confusion about semantics, but the human eye would lead you to believe they were asked."

While Hunter was forthcoming on most issues, there were some that he refused to comment on such as:

- Whether a grand jury that investigated the case wanted to issue an indictment.
- What were the results of the DNA examination of JonBenet's fingernails and her underwear.
- Whether there was any evidence indicating JonBenet had been sexually molested.

He would only say that work was continuing on the case, work which included new analysis techniques being applied to the ransom note, and indicated that it was the most important piece of evidence they had.

The Other Book



Steve Thomas, a former lead detective in the Ramsey case

On April 9, Steve Thomas, one of the former lead detectives in the Ramsey case, also stepped into the media arena when he appeared on ABC's *Good Morning America*, saying he believed that Patsy Ramsey wrote the ransom note. Thomas, who had previously resigned in protest to what he called the "lack of aggressive prosecution of the case," was appearing on the show to promote his own book on the case called *JonBenet: Inside the Ramsey Murder Investigation*.

During the interview, Thomas described how out of 73 suspects whose writing samples were analyzed by experts in comparison with the note, Patsy Ramsey was the only one who could not be excluded as its author. He also accused Patsy Ramsey of changing her handwriting after the murder. "In the ransom note, almost exclusively the lowercase manuscript a was used, I think, 98 percent of the time," he said. "What was telling was that after the Ramseys were given a copy of the ransom note, the lowercase manuscript a almost disappeared entirely from Patsy's post-homicide writing. Writing samples from Ramseys' personal letters and notes she wrote before the killing contain 732 manuscript a's that look like the lowercase typewritten a, but they are written by hand. She switched to a cursive a after the murder."

Another point that Thomas made was that the ransom note was signed "S.B.T.C." which allegedly stands for what the note described as "a small foreign faction" that had kidnapped JonBenet for a \$118,000 ransom. Thomas indicated that this fact also pointed to Patsy Ramsey, as she often used acronyms. He cited a Christmas note to a friend that was signed "P.P.R.B.S.J.," which she said stood for "Patsy Paugh Ramsey, Bachelor of Science in Journalism." He also said the tear pattern of the ransom-note paper matched Patsy Ramsey's personal note pad, and the felt-tip pen used to write the note matched a pen found in a cup in the Ramseys' kitchen.

Another point of suspicion, Thomas felt, was when Ramsey said she found the note on the back stairs when police had found it on the hardwood floor.

Thomas bases his views on an analysis made of the ransom note by Donald Foster, a linguistics scholar who, it was later revealed, had previously offered his services to the Ramseys on June 18, 1997, because of his "strong belief in Patsy Ramsey's innocence." In a letter personally addressed to Patsy Ramsey, Foster wrote: "I know that you are innocent, know it, absolutely and unequivocally, I would stake my professional reputation on it, indeed, my faith in humanity. I believe you were an ideal mother, wise, protective, caring and truly devoted," before offering his services to help prove her innocence. Foster also describes the note and offers a theory as to its author: "It appears to have been written by a young adult with an adolescent imagination overheated by true crime literature and Hollywood thrillers." His offer of help was rejected.

A Startling Revelation



JonBenet Ramsey's headstone

Another startling revelation that Thomas offered in his book was that Boulder police detectives had broken into an Atlanta cemetery and bugged JonBenet Ramsey's grave. It happened seven months into the investigation, when police became frustrated at the lack of developments in the case and recruited a patrolman from Georgia State Police to break into St. James Episcopal Cemetery. He tells how Boulder detectives planted a hidden microphone and camera a few feet from JonBenet's grave and monitored them for three days, hoping to catch a mourner's confession. He also admitted that John and Patsy Ramsey, who were the primary targets of the stakeout, did not visit the grave during that time.

Four months later, the detectives returned to the cemetery with a fake tombstone they had commissioned from a special-effects company to hide the equipment. The plan was foiled, however, when a child discovered the fake tombstone and announced loudly that it was made of wood.

The book also describes how Boulder detectives were planning to have a technical specialist break into the Ramsey's Atlanta home and install listening devices. The plan was eventually abandoned when their supervisors rejected the idea.

Throughout the book, Thomas, a narcotics detective with no experience investigating homicides, expounds his theory that Patsy Ramsey accidentally killed JonBenet in a late-night rage over a bed-wetting incident and then covered it up as a botched kidnapping.

In the wake of these and other allegations made in Thomas' book, Patsy Ramsey agreed to provide investigators with a fourth sample of her handwriting, using both hands. The Ramseys later announced through their attorney that they were considering suing Thomas for the allegations he made in his book.

Testing Time

Finally, after changing their minds several times, Boulder police announced that they would take John and Patsy Ramsey up on their offer to take polygraph tests, and agreed to the Ramseys' terms that the tests be conducted by an independent expert in Atlanta and have the results made public.

The planned tests later stalled when the BPD accused the Ramseys of changing the criteria for the tests when they refused to allow an FBI polygraph examiner to conduct them, as they did not consider them as "independent experts" under the terms of the agreement, and believed that the agency's involvement in the case precluded them from conducting an impartial examination. They also raised concerns that the Boulder police had not agreed to the public release of the test results. That stipulation was later removed.

The disagreements over the tests continued into May, with John and Patsy Ramsey appearing on CNN's *Burden of Proof* program to describe how they had "come up with some names of individuals that are pre-eminent in their field of polygraphy" and had submitted them to Boulder police, only to have the police reject them all in favor of an FBI examiner.

The Ramseys later proposed that Edward Gelb, a Los Angeles-based polygraph expert, conduct their lie detector tests because he had "earned a national reputation for fairness," but the Boulder police continued to insist on the FBI. The Ramseys selected Gelb, a past president of the American Polygraph Association, from 2,400 other examiners because he was the most experienced, having conducted more than 30,000 lie detector tests in the previous 30 years and had been an instructor to both the FBI and the Department of Defense. The Boulder police again rejected the proposal.

Several days later, Richard Keifer, the chairman of the American Polygraph Association, announced that the group was willing to provide a qualified examiner and expert to administer the test with the same kind of quality control used by the FBI. Keifer said a lie detector test conducted by his group would be fair to both sides. "If they agree to take the polygraph and have us administer it, we will administer it in an independent fashion and make the final decision of who the examiner will be," he said. "We'll give consideration to both sides."

The Ramseys' attorney agreed, saying: "The Ramseys would do it if it would help move the investigation forward, not because they felt they had a responsibility to prove their innocence but if Beckner doesn't sign on, they're taking all the risk and receiving no benefit." He added that in his opinion, the Boulder police were insisting on using the FBI to give the agency a chance to grill the Ramseys. Keifer, who once headed the FBI polygraph unit, confirmed that the FBI interrogates people who flunk the test. "They get a lot of confessions," he said. On May 16, Boulder police officially rejected Keifer's offer.

The Ramseys Pass

Within days of rejecting the offer, the Boulder police announced that they had found no evidence to support a California woman's theory that JonBenet Ramsey was killed by a child sex ring. "We concluded there is no evidence to support her claims," said Boulder Police Chief Mark Beckner. "We looked at her allegations to see if there was any connection at all to the Ramsey case, and we could not find any."

He said Boulder detectives had spent 11 weeks investigating the claims and conducted 22 interviews, including interviews with the woman. They also reviewed medical and psychological records, examined photographs, consulted a forensic psychiatrist and compared the claims against the physical evidence they had collected from the scene. He added that all the information the woman provided about the operation of a child sex ring had been forwarded to the FBI. Special Prosecutor Michael Kane later backed up Beckner's statement, saying there was "no credible evidence to link anything she alleges to the death of JonBenet."

On May 24, John and Patsy Ramsey underwent lie-detector tests conducted by Ed Gelb, and announced that the findings had cleared them of any involvement in their daughter's death. The Boulder police immediately countered, calling the tests a "publicity campaign," reiterating that only a law enforcement agency could give a reliable result, as an independent examiner would have to review the thousands of pages of evidence and interviews in the case file to be able to conduct a valid test. This would be difficult, as much of that information, including results of evidentiary testing, still remains secret.

The Ramseys replied by offering to allow the police or District Attorney Alex Hunter to question the Ramseys' examiner about the testing procedures and his examination of them. They did not receive a response.

Gelb's findings were later reviewed and confirmed by Cleve Baxter, founder of the Central Intelligence Agency's polygraph unit and creator of polygraph scoring techniques which are considered industry standards. The Ramseys were given what are known as "single-issue examinations," where all questions in a test are designed to mean the same thing. Each test took two to three hours. Gelb insists that the results cannot be affected by drugs, so no screening was done. Robert Lee, the director of operations for Axciton Systems, which makes the computerized polygraph instrument used by Gelb, also attested to the tests accuracy, rating them as 97-98 percent accurate.

In the first test the Ramseys were asked the following:

- Did you inflict any of the injuries that caused the death of JonBenet?
- Regarding JonBenet, did you inflict any of the injuries that caused her death?
- Were those injuries that resulted in JonBenet's death inflicted by you?

In the second test they were asked:

- Do you know for sure who killed JonBenet?
- Regarding JonBenet, do you know for sure who killed her?
- Are you concealing the identity of the person who killed JonBenet?

Patsy Ramsey was also given an additional test specifically about the ransom note:

- Did you write the ransom note that was found in your house?
- Regarding the ransom note, did you write it?
- Is that your handwriting on the ransom note found in your house?

The examiner's final conclusion:

"Based on extensive polygraph examination, neither John nor Patsy Ramsey were attempting deception when they gave answers to the relevant questions."

The official police response? - "The findings of the tests are not valid as they were not conducted by the FBI."

The Media Circus

In June 2000, in what can only be described as the main event of what had become a media circus, the Ramseys challenged Steve Thomas to face them on national television and make his accusations in person. Thomas agreed and appeared alongside the Ramseys on CNN's *Larry King Live*.

It was the first time they had been face-to-face since Thomas, then a Boulder police officer, questioned them about their daughter's death. The meeting quickly disintegrated into a verbal shouting match, with Thomas exchanging accusations with the Ramseys as King struggled to maintain control. Finally, Thomas challenged the Ramseys on their offer to meet with Boulder investigators.

John Ramsey said they would be willing to go along with their investigators to share their findings and also ask their questions and asked, "Why do we have to prove our innocence?"

Thomas answered that evidence existed that pointed to them.

"Tell me one piece of evidence that's admissible in the court of law?" John Ramsey asked.

Thomas countered by telling Patsy Ramsey that there was enough evidence to arrest her for murder.

Patsy replied, "I wish I had," explaining that if she had been arrested, then she could have been exonerated in a trial.

Several days after the show, Lin Wood announced that John and Patsy Ramsey had agreed to meet with Boulder police only if detectives were willing to take a new approach to the probe of their daughter's slaying and not interrogate them. "If they are looking to interrogate John and Patsy, that will not happen. Those days are over," Wood said. "John and Patsy are ready and willing to meet with Boulder police if they are truly interested in a new approach...to clear the air and exchange information in the investigation of their daughter's murder."

To this day, John and Patsy Ramsey have lived up to their promise and continue to search for their daughter's killer. They have posted a composite sketch of a suspect compiled by the late psychic, Dorothy Allison, on their Internet site, with the attached message:

"Have you seen this man? This man may have been in the Boulder area in December 1996. ... We firmly believe that this most horrible of killers will be caught based on information provided by people who care about right and wrong. ... Please help, so another innocent child will not be a victim and another family will not suffer unbearable grief."

Allison, who claimed to have assisted police investigations, came up with her vision of the suspect during an April 1998 appearance on a network television show. She died on December 3, 1999. Boulder Police Chief Mark Beckner declined to comment on the late psychic's work.

A public opinion poll then conducted by a local newspaper suggested that only one in eight Colorado residents believed that the results of recent polygraph tests showed that John and Patsy were not involved in the December 1996 death of JonBenet.



Psychic sketch



JonBenet Ramsey

In answer to the results of that poll, Ramsey attorney Lin Wood commented that the poll accurately reflects the "anti-Ramsey" campaign that has been waged by the media since the day that JonBenet died.

But through it all, one important fact has been pushed further and further into the background: an innocent little girl was killed in a brutal manner and her killer is still at large.

The Interviews

On August 28, 2000, CNN reported that the long awaited "Ramsey interviews" with Boulder police finally came to fruition when Patsy Ramsey met with investigators for the first time in over 2 years. The meetings, conducted over two days, saw Patsy interviewed for a total of seven hours while the interview with John ran for just over two.

At the conclusion of the meetings, Ramsey attorney Lin Wood said his clients felt that "the line of questioning by the seven-member team was fair and pertinent to the case."

Prior to the meeting, Boulder police chief Mark Beckner had indicated that questioning "would focus on evidence developed over the last two years, some of which came from forensic testing conducted after the grand jury disbanded, and statements the Ramseys made in their book (*The Death of Innocence*)."

As before, when questioned if the Ramseys were the main focus of the investigation he would only say that they were "under suspicion."

The following day, via a faxed statement to CNN and other media, Beckner stated that the meetings between Boulder investigators and the Ramseys produced "less than we had hoped for." It is believed Beckner was referring to attorney Wood's intervention during the Patsy Ramsey interview, when he called the line of questioning by special prosecutor Michael Kane "overzealous" and "obsessive."

Beckner said his office had originally intended to explain to the Ramseys "what evidence we believed put them under suspicion, and explore whether they had any explanations for some of that evidence," but changed their minds when arguments between the respective attorneys broke out over questions concerning the couple's son, Burke.

Wood later told CNN that he had directed Patsy to answer all of the questions she was asked, except for the question about Burke, which he believed was irrelevant to the investigation calling it "the disgusting tactic of an overzealous prosecutor."

Chief Beckner countered, saying that Wood insisted on seeing the lab reports relating to forensic evidence before he would allow his clients to answer questions about them. At the time, Beckner refused, as he believed it "wasn't in the best interests of the investigation to release any further police reports on the crime."

He also disagreed with Wood's decision to release portions of the interview tapes to the media, stating, "It is not in the best interests of the investigation to release any portion of videotaped interviews or their transcripts," Beckner said. "In fact, it potentially harms our ability to find justice for JonBenet."

According to Wood, Patsy Ramsey felt the interview process produced nothing that would lift the "umbrella of suspicion" she and husband John have been under since JonBenet's death. John Ramsey commented that he and Patsy could "never clear our names, after what's been done to us." He added that he felt no animosity towards the authorities and was thankful that they were still pursuing the case. "The last thing I want is for this to go into a file drawer," he said.

Attorney Wood told CNN that the Ramseys were cooperating with the police and had handed over "significant information" as a direct result of having their own investigator working on the case full time. "We have given them leads. They'll have to determine if those people are viable suspects. That's a determination for the police, not this family," he said.

Wood also dismissed the suggestion that the meeting was just a publicity stunt, saying that the Ramseys had readily agreed to be questioned in the hope that they could help the police investigation. "Only a fool would subject themselves to questioning by seven investigators as some sort of publicity stunt," Wood said, "And my clients are not fools."

Put Up or Shut Up

On August 31, 2001, CNN reported that Patsy Ramsey had issued a challenge to the Boulder police, via her attorney, that urged them to "file charges against her if they think they can prove that she killed her daughter."

Following the challenge, Patsy told *USA Today*, "I'm beyond being hurt or embarrassed, if you think I did it, let's have a trial and get it over with."

Ramsey attorney Lin Wood followed up on CNN's *Larry King Live*, when he demanded that Boulder County special prosecutor Michael Kane "explain why a grand jury did not indict either of the Ramseys after a 13-month investigation."

He added that Kane should either "put up or shut up" about charging the Ramseys.

Kane countered, saying, "I'm not going to be dictated, nor is the Boulder Police Department going to be dictated, by a demand by Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey or anybody else to put up or shut up. That's not how the criminal justice system works," he said.

He further stated that he "could not release any information about the grand jury proceedings without the court's permission."

During the King interview on CNN, attorney Wood and prosecutor Kane agreed to release the complete videotape of the interview and to seek the release of the grand jury transcripts, with Kane telling Wood, "I'll tell you what: If you will go to court with me, and ask the presiding judge to authorize a release of that information, I will release it."

Wood replied, "I will walk into that courtroom with you."

In another CNN report on September 1, 2000, however, the offer was recanted when Boulder prosecutors stated they would not be releasing the grand jury investigation transcripts. Boulder County District Attorney Alex Hunter later told CNN, "Colorado law prevents his office from releasing the information. The rule clearly states that grand jury proceedings are secret and shall remain that way until either an indictment is returned or a report is issued, and neither event has occurred," he said.

The following November, attorney Wood told CNN that he "hopes that newly elected Boulder district attorney, Mary Keenan, would publicly admit that there is no case against the Ramseys."

Keenan, who replaced District Attorney Alex Hunter after his retirement in January 2001, is a specialist in sex-related crimes and a 15-year veteran of the Boulder County District Attorney's Office.

In his statement, Wood fell short of asking for his clients to be officially cleared, but stressed that he would like "a public statement that the investigative efforts have been exhausted and there is insufficient evidence to bring charges."

In answer to Wood's request, Beckner said, "That's not something we would do."

Keenan was not available for comment.

The Confession

On September 10, 2001, the case leapt back into news when *The Daily Camera* reported that an email dated August 8 had been sent to Boulder Police Chief Mark Beckner from an informant, stating that an AOL subscriber had allegedly posted a message on an Internet bulletin board claiming to have witnessed the 1996 slaying of JonBenet Ramsey.

In response, the Boulder authorities contacted the Loudoun County police in Virginia, where AOL's Internet service is based, and requested that a search warrant be filed to "seek information that may lead to the identity of the subscriber."

AOL spokesman Nicholas Graham confirmed that the warrant had been served and complied with within days of the request.

After extensive investigations, the Boulder police later announced that the supposed "confession" was nothing more than a hoax, the work of a 14-year-old Ohio girl.

Boulder detectives, who had traveled to the girl's home to investigate the claim, told CNN that she and her parents had been "cooperative" and no charges would be laid.

Police Chief Mark Beckner later told the media, "We never thought that this was legitimate because what was being reported didn't match the evidence."

The "informant," Susan Bennett, was the same woman who sent two DNA samples of "possible murder suspects" to Boulder authorities earlier this year. Bennett manages a web site devoted to the Ramsey case.

Bennett claimed she had an online conversation with the girl, who told her "she had been abducted by three men after she overheard their plan to murder JonBenet. The men then forced her to go inside the Ramsey home and watch as they undressed JonBenet, assaulted her, then dressed her."

A Blocking Move

On October 17, 2001, *The Daily Camera* reported that attorneys for former Boulder detective Steve Thomas, who was involved in the Ramsey murder investigation, had moved to "block a deposition from a related case from becoming public."

The newspaper report stated, "The deposition is part of a lawsuit filed by former Boulder County journalist Chris Wolf against the Ramseys. In their book about the 1996 murder of their daughter, John and Patsy Ramsey named Wolf and a former housekeeper, Linda Hoffman-Pugh, as suspects in the case."

Ramsey attorney Lin Wood called Thomas's move to keep the deposition private "the height of hypocrisy: This is a man who has written a book accusing my clients of murder. Steve Thomas does not want the public to know the truth. When truth comes out, the people who were attacking the Ramseys want to run from the truth." Wood said that the Ramseys wanted "everything put on the table and the murder file made public."

Following those instructions, Wood subpoenaed files held by Thomas that related to the investigation, including police reports.

Attorneys for Thomas assert that "their client's deposition is confidential based on sections of the confidentiality order entered by U.S. District Court Judge Julie E. Carnes in Atlanta."

Attorney Wood later told *The Daily Camera*, "It is my clear belief that when the public learns about his testimony, they will realize Steve Thomas ... would have been fired in 1997, probably prosecuted, without question disgraced and would not have been in a position to write a book and make hundreds of thousand of dollars."

On October 26, 2001, Court TV news reported that Fleet White, the former Ramsey friend and neighbor who was present when John Ramsey found his daughter's body in the basement of their home in 1996, had ignored subpoenas to appear in court for a bribery case related to JonBenet's death. As a consequence, White was charged with contempt of court and given a 30-day jail sentence.

The subpoenas related to the trial of attorney Thomas Miller, who was charged with commercial bribery after one of his clients attempted to buy a copy of the JonBenet ransom note.

Miller was later acquitted.

In his defense, Fleet White told the court that he had "ignored subpoenas in the best interest of the unsolved murder investigation, the justice system and his family."

Smit's Investigative Analysis



Patsy and John Ramsey

2002 did not begin well for the Ramseys when in February, Patsy Ramsey learned that her ovarian cancer had returned after 8 years. "It's been a tough blow to learn that it has recurred," Ramsey attorney L. Lin Wood said.

In an excellent piece of investigative analysis, retired detective Lou Smit presented his evidence on why he believed that JonBenet was killed by an intruder.

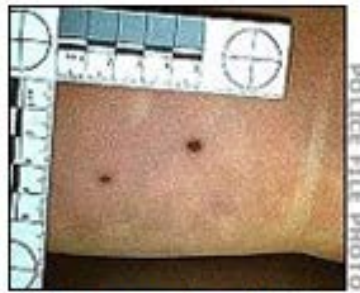
Smit had a number of key points to make:

- The Ramseys are loving parents with no motive for killing their child and no history of criminal or abusive behavior.
- Lovely JonBenet was a "pedophile's dream" and her visibility in the community made her a target. Likewise, the Ramseys' wealth and high profile made them potential targets of a kidnapper.
- Three suspicious events point to an intruder: unknown vehicles parked outside the Ramseys' home near the time of the crime; JonBenet's comment to people that she was going to get a "special visit from Santa," even though Patsy never heard JonBenet say anything about a visit from Santa.
- Police statements about there being no footprints in the snow were misleading as there was no snow around most of the perimeter of the house.
- The open basement window, movement of the window well grate and the presence of leaves and debris in the basement below the open window and a number of other clues point to the window being the entry point for the intruder.
- Pieces of debris from the window well were found in the wine cellar where JonBenet's body was discovered.



Train room with the suitcase by the window

- The suitcase below the open window, which was moved there by someone other than the Ramseys, appeared to be the way an intruder boosted himself up to the open window to exit the house.
- Many hairs and fibers connected to the crime do not belong to the Ramseys or any other family member.



Stun gun marks on the body

- Marks on JonBenet's body are consistent with the use of a stun gun which would have kept her quiet while she was removed from her bedroom.
- Fresh unidentified footprints which were visible in the mold on the wine cellar floor did not belong to any family member.
- Tests showed that a scream reported by a neighbor could have come from the basement without the Ramseys hearing it.
- The expertly constructed garrote used on JonBenet indicates an experienced sexual sadist.
- JonBenet's vicious injuries occurred before her death and were not part of some post-mortem staging.
- Unknown male DNA was found under JonBenet's fingernails and other unknown DNA was found on her body and her panties.
- The ransom note was almost certainly written before JonBenet died by a brutal, calm and deliberate person.
- Experts concluded that John Ramsey did not write the ransom note and it cannot be concluded that Patsy did.



The garrote

On November 19, 2002, *The Rocky Mountain News* reported the unknown male DNA recovered from JonBenet's panties could have been left on the garment at the time the clothing was manufactured. "In exploring that theory, investigators obtained unopened 'control' samples of identical underwear manufactured in the plant in Southeast Asia, tested them and found human DNA in some of those new, unused panties."

Police now claim that the unidentified DNA found under both of JonBenet's fingernails has been contaminated and is of limited value.

At the end of 2002, the Boulder Police Department announced that it will no longer investigate the case, despite new leads and new information. The Boulder investigators have transferred the investigation to the district attorney's office.

The Denver Post wrote on January 8, 2003, that the Ramseys settled their defamation suit against the *New York Post*. Terms were not disclosed, but the Ramseys had sought \$4 million in damages against the paper.

Vindications at Last



JonBenet Ramsey

For years, the mainstream media and tabloids put John and Patsy Ramsey on trial in the press for the murder of their daughter. Evidence of their involvement in JonBenet's death was not really necessary, the thinking went; any parent who would promote her daughter's participation in something as politically incorrect as a beauty contest was capable of well, anything.

Rumor and innuendo snowballed, becoming increasingly absurd as the media frenzy fed upon the story: The Ramseys must be guilty because they had a lawyer advising them. Patsy's "motive" for killing her daughter was that she wet the bed. JonBenet had been sexually abused. The behavior of the Boulder law enforcement community did nothing to inject common sense into that runaway news story. They steadfastly kept the Ramseys "under the umbrella of suspicion" and insisted that there had been no intruder in the Ramsey household. In 1999, Colorado Governor Bill Owens claimed the Ramseys were hiding behind their lawyers.

Finally, after years of grieving over the loss of their child and then suffering demonization of themselves in the media, the Ramseys are finding the vindication that they sought from day one. An Atlanta judge and the Boulder district attorney agreed that the Ramseys may have been right all along and that the weight of evidence supports the belief that an intruder was responsible for JonBenet's death. Furthermore, the district judge criticized police and the FBI for what she said was a media campaign aimed at making the family look guilty.

ABC News.com reported on April 9, 2003 that U.S. District Judge Julie Carnes dismissed a defamation "lawsuit by former Boulder freelance journalist, Chris Wolf, who was named as a suspect in a book the Ramseys wrote."

Wolf had argued in the lawsuit that Patsy Ramsey killed her daughter and tried to cover it up.

The judge said that the Ramseys had defamed Wolf, but to win his case, Wolf would have had to put the Ramseys on trial for murder.



John & Patsy Ramsey

"In short, plaintiff's success in this litigation requires him to prove, by clear and convincing evidence, that defendants killed their child," the judge wrote. She said she dismissed the suit "because there is virtually no evidence to support plaintiff's theory that they murdered their child."

District Attorney Mary Keenan took over the Ramsey case in December, 2002. She raised eyebrows in the Boulder law enforcement community by publicly disagreeing with the entrenched police viewpoint. "I agree with the court's conclusion that 'the weight of the evidence is more consistent with the theory that an intruder murdered JonBenet than it is with the theory that Mrs. Ramsey did it,'" she stated in April 2003.

There is significant unexplained evidence to support the intruder theory, ABC reports: "a mysterious boot print outside the house; DNA of an unknown male on JonBenet and her underpants; marks on her body that could have been made by a stun gun; and signs that someone may have entered the house through a basement window."



Dr. Henry Lee

The Denver area media is still reluctant to let the Ramseys off. *The Rocky Mountain News* wrote on April 26, 2003, that Dr. Henry Lee, "the most prominent criminologist to work on the JonBenet Ramsey case remains unsure whether the child was murdered or died in what started as an accident."

Dr. Lee had not been consulted by the new D.A. and he acknowledged that there "may be significant new evidence in the cases since his last involvement."

"I respect her," Dr. Lee said of Keenan. "She is a very competent attorney."

L. Lin Wood, the Ramseys' attorney, believes that the case can still be solved because of the DNA, which is not too contaminated to be useful.

"Still, the horror the Ramseys have lived through the past six years will never completely fade," Wood said. "They lost their child and they lost their privacy."

The DNA Evidence

It took a mere seven years for the Boulder law enforcement community to send the FBI the DNA sample that was found in JonBenet's underpants. It was determined a long time ago that this DNA sample did not belong to anyone in the Ramsey family.

Boulder Police Department explained that the quality of the DNA had not been of sufficient quality to have been put into the law enforcement data banks. However, in late December of 2003, the Ramseys' attorney indicated that one part of the sample, taken from blood on JonBenet's undergarments, was determined by the FBI to be of sufficient quality to be put into the DNA Index System.

The DNA will be compared with other samples from the databank to see if there is any match with DNA samples from other violent crimes or criminals.

With a new District Attorney, Mary Keenan, in charge, there are hopes that more objectivity will attend the famous murder investigation.

Also in December of 2003, the Ramseys filed a \$12 million defamation lawsuit against Fox News Network. In December of 2002, Fox News aired a story on the case with points of view that the Ramseys felt were incorrect.

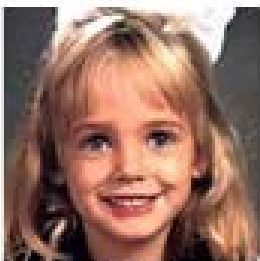
In October of 2003, the Ramsey case found its way into court again when Ramseys former nanny, Linda Hoffmann-Pugh, asked the U.S. Supreme Court to permit her grand jury testimony to be used in her upcoming book called *The Death of an Innocent*.

John Mark Karr

It appears as though the confirmation of John Mark Karr as a reasonable suspect in the murder of JonBenet Ramsey is still up in the air. While DNA samples were supposedly taken from him while he was in custody in Thailand, the results are not yet available.

It now appears that the arrest is currently based solely on Karr's alleged confession via emails to Michael Tracey and a recent press conference in Thailand, in which he told the media that he was with JonBenet when she died and that it was an accidental death.

Michael Tracey, a journalism professor at the University of Colorado, who made several documentaries on the case and who allegedly is publishing a book on the case, has been the primary contact with Karr via email. Several weeks ago, Tracey became very concerned about the content of Karr's messages and brought them to the attention of Boulder law enforcement.



JonBenet Ramsey

Already, John Mark Karr has made some unusual statements that conflict with the autopsy of JonBenet. Karr told the media that he had drugged JonBenet Ramsey, although there was no evidence in the autopsy that corroborates any use of drugs.

Then he told the media that he had picked JonBenet up from school, although school was not in session, as it was during Christmas vacation that she was murdered.

When asked how he got into the Ramsey house, Karr refused comment.

Though Karr's name is on record with the Colorado's Department of Education, there is no record that that man ever sought a teaching license in the state. The only record of a Karr in the department's database is a file that was started in 2001, after Karr, then a substitute teacher in California, was charged with possession of child pornography. Karr fled the country to avoid the charges, and information about the allegations was forwarded by a national database to school officials in all 50 states, a spokeswoman for the Colorado Department of Education told Crime Library. Boulder District Attorney Mary Lacy told the media that when John Karr was arrested in Bangkok, he had been teaching in several schools in that city.

Lacy said that several months were spent identifying and locating John Karr from his emails, but that much more investigation must be done. She said that she would have preferred that the investigation could have been conducted without media scrutiny, but that was not possible. Karr's arrest was made before the investigation, including the results of DNA tests, could be completed. The concern was that the suspect would flee as he did in California when convicted of possessing child pornography.

Lacy took very few questions at the press conference and those that she took were not really answered except with "I'm sorry, I can't answer that question." It was hard to say why Lacy even scheduled a press conference, since so little information was divulged.

The doubts that have been raised already about this particular suspect deepened after the press conference. It looks again like the Boulder law enforcement community is setting itself up for embarrassment in this high-profile case.

Hasty Investigation



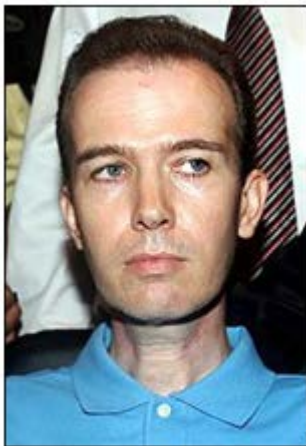
JonBenet Ramsey

In 1996, the Boulder Police Department and their entire criminal justice organization botched the investigation of the bizarre murder of JonBenet Ramsey, starting with the destruction of the crime scene, the tunnel vision focused entirely on the family, the unprofessional leaks to the media, and the disregard for evidence that did not fit their preconceived notions of who killed the child. Only much later, after a grand jury looked at the case and after some changes in personnel, did the blame for this brutal crime shift from John and Patsy Ramsey. Of course by then, the trail of the real killer was very cold.

Now once again the case is in the spotlight as John Mark Karr, an American citizen in his early forties, has been arrested in Thailand after allegedly confessing to the killing of JonBenet. Boulder District Attorney Mary Lacy, according to the *Denver Post*, was contacted by Michael Tracey, a University of Colorado journalism professor who had been communicating via email with Karr for at least two years. Several weeks ago, Tracey became very concerned about the content of Karr's messages and brought them to the attention of Boulder law enforcement.



Boulder District Attorney Mary Lacy



John Mark Karr

Colorado Bureau of Investigation determined that Karr had a conviction in California for possession of child pornography and had been fired from his teaching position in that state.

To validate John Mark Karr as a legitimate suspect in the murder of JonBenet, a few very critical questions need to be answered: First, can it be proven that Karr was in Boulder, Colorado, around Christmas of 1996 when JonBenet was murdered? Karr's ex-wife reportedly told the media he was in Alabama with their children for the entire holiday season.

Second, since there was DNA found in JonBenet's panties and under her fingernails that did not match any individuals known to be connected to the case, does Karr's DNA match that sample? Results of Karr's DNA test in Thailand have not yet been made available.

Third, the amount of John Ramsey's bonus was the same as the money demanded in the ransom note. How did Karr learn that information? Has Karr's handwriting been compared with the handwriting on the ransom note?

Fourth, how did John Mark Karr learn about JonBenet and how to get access to the house and her bedroom?

There is reason to believe that none of these critical questions had been answered in advance of detaining Karr in Thailand.

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