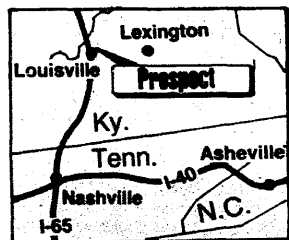


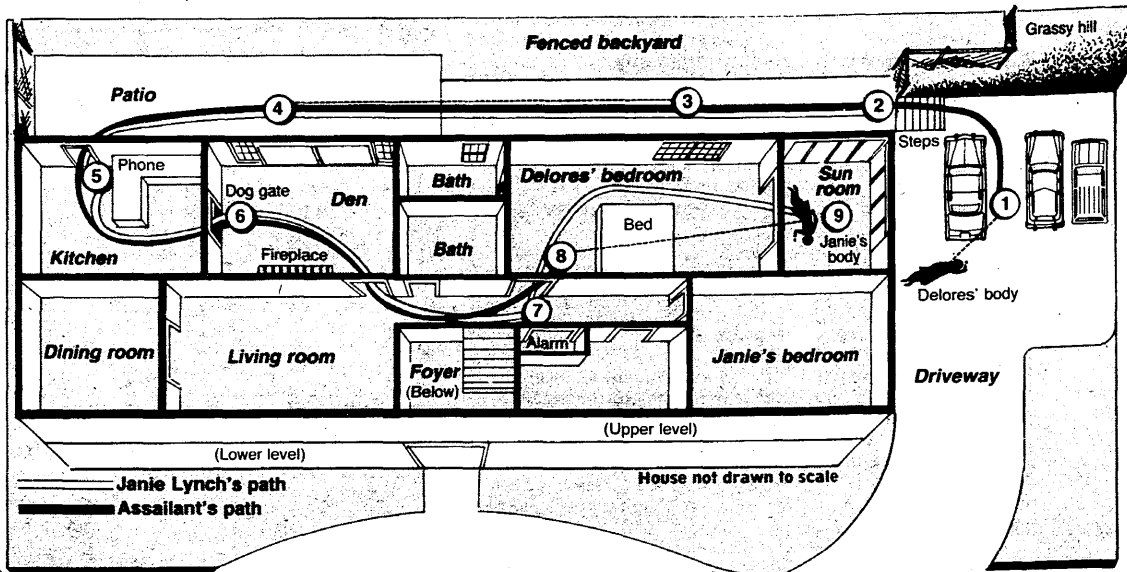
Prospect, Ky.



Murderer stalked his victims at Lynch house



1. Spot from which assailant guns down Delores Lynch
2. Janie Lynch sees assailant and flees
3. Approximate position from which assailant fires at Janie
4. Janie is shot in the back and wounded
5. Janie stops and tries to use phone, then flees
6. Janie crosses dog gate
7. Janie tries to trigger alarm in closet
8. Spot from which assailant fires fatal shot
9. Janie crouches in sun room and is fatally wounded



Keith Simmons/News & Record

Not until she pulled in the drive did she see the body

(From A1)

Covered Bridge Road, narrow, curvy and hilly, was lined with big farms and expensive homes on large tracts.

Delores and her late husband, Charles, had built their house nearly 13 years earlier, modeling it after one they'd had to leave in Chicago. A ranch-style brick house, it had white shutters and ornate wrought iron decorating the small front porch and overhead balcony. It was two stories high but built into a hillside so the second floor was on ground level in the back.

From the road, an asphalt driveway lined with tall trees led downhill across a meandering creek and uphill to the house, where it looped back on itself in front. An offshoot led to a large parking area on the east side of the house. At that end, the first floor was a two-car garage.

As Susan drove up the hill to the house, she saw three cars parked beside it — Delores' blue Oldsmobile Cutlass, Charles' gray Volkswagen Dasher and Janie's tan Chevrolet Nova. But she didn't notice the rivulet of blood that had trickled more than 30 feet down the driveway.

Not until she pulled into the parking area did she see the body lying beside the garage.

Horrified, she put her car into reverse and backed quickly down to the front of the house. Later, she wouldn't remember driving the four miles back along Covered Bridge Road to her office at Interstate 71, but her fellow employees would never forget the look on her face when she ran inside. She was shaking so much that her teeth clattered. She hardly could describe the awful sight she'd seen — a sight that would keep her awake nights for months and haunt her forever. One of the other sales agents called the police.

Chief Steve Nobles of the Oldham County Police was the first officer to arrive at the Lynch house that afternoon. He found Delores lying on her side on the pavement. She was wearing a light dress, flowery blue, and red shoes — her church clothes. Beside her were her purse, the white sweater she was carrying and the Sunday edition of the Louisville Courier-Journal she had picked up at the end of the driveway.

She had been shot once through the back. The top of her head and the side of her face had been blown away. Pieces of her skull and her shattered glasses were 15 feet from her body. The garage door she had been trying to enter was splattered with blood.

Sgt. Tom Swinney of the Oldham County Police soon arrived. Swinney and Chief Nobles entered the house. Penned in the kitchen, they found Delores' two Yorkshire terriers, Puky and Poppie, hungry and thirsty and barking excitedly.

In a sun room above the garage and overlooking the parking area, they found the body of Delores' daughter, Jane, who was 39.

She was wearing black jogging shorts and a black and white striped tank top. She was barefoot, and her hair was in curlers. She had been shot once in the back and once in the neck at the base of the skull. A plastic hair curler had been driven inside her head by the shot.

An energetic penny-pincher

All who knew Delores Lynch would agree on one thing about her: she was a character.

She was 100 pounds of energy packed into 4 feet, 11 inches. For 10 years, she had acted in plays at the Little Colonel Playhouse in Peewee Valley. She was a volunteer worker at the Actors Theater in Louisville. She monitored classes at local colleges, took piano lessons and played all too eagerly and badly.

She loved to work outside and spent hours dressed in bib overalls, tending her big yard. Age didn't seem to slow her down. At 68, she kept the four acres immaculately mowed. A fallen limb barely could touch ground before she had it burning in a big barrel. In summer, when the creek sometimes dried up, she'd haul buckets of water down to the surviving pools to keep the minnows and crawfish alive. She provided for birds at a feeder at her kitchen window.

The house occupied much of her time. It was as immaculate as her lawn. The wood floors gleamed with polish, and few people were allowed to walk on them wearing shoes. She kept shoe trees by entrance doors for family and guests to deposit their footwear. Big signs let it be known that no smoking was allowed.

Delores had trained as a nurse before she met Charles Lynch, an engineering graduate of the University of Pittsburgh. Both had been reared in Pittsburgh. Chuck had served in the Navy during World War II, then returned to work as an executive for General Electric. After their two children, Tom and Jane, were born, the family moved every few years as Chuck was transferred throughout the country. They spent four years in Washington and six in Chicago before making their final move to Louisville while Tom, the youngest child, was off at college in North Carolina.

Chuck, who retired at 62, died of a heart attack in November 1983 while watching Notre Dame and the University of Pittsburgh play football on television. He was 66. He and Delores had not gotten along in years, and they lived separate lives — he downstairs, where he drank and secretly smoked in his own room; she upstairs with her dogs.

Chuck's death left Delores with an estate estimated at \$2.5 million. But nobody who met her was apt to think that she had money. She shopped at K mart and discount supermarkets. She would drive a mile to save a nickel. She spent hours clipping cents-off coupons at a table in her sun room. The table was stacked a foot high with coupon books. She never missed a rebate offer.

For 14 years, Delores had a maid, Helen Stewart, who came in once a week. Helen had become a close friend. She went shopping with Delores and even took trips with her. But a few months earlier, when Helen asked for a \$5-a-week raise, Delores let her go.

Delores' life was centered around her dogs and her

children. Her dogs were her constant companions. She had birthday parties for them and bought them decorated cakes. They often feasted on steak. She had taught Puky to yip "Mama" and made tapes of him doing it.

Delores was a blunt and outspoken woman who didn't hesitate to tell people what she thought. Overbearing, many thought. She often caused scenes when irritated. When controversy about an updated prayer book erupted in her church, St. James Episcopal in Peewee Valley, she led a division of the congregation. She eventually began going to Grace Episcopal in Louisville, more than 20 miles away, where she still could use the old, more traditional prayer book.

Some who knew Delores thought she wanted to tell others how to live and meddled in her children's lives. She involved herself in Tom's custody fight over his children, and she had been pleased four years earlier when, at her urging, Janie came back from California to enroll in the dental school at the University of Louisville.

Janie was vivacious, fun-loving and attractive, always positive and popular. She had been engaged five times but had never gone through with marriage. She looked far younger than her 39 years.

In high school, she had been a cheerleader and dance student. She majored in education at Bradley University in Peoria, Ill., and got her master's degree in special education at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. She studied speech pathology at Kentucky, worked for the Fayette County schools, then moved to California seeking fun and adventure. She settled on the beach at Santa Monica, where she worked as a speech therapist for children.

She often worked with dentists in her job. That, along with her brother's career, prompted her mid-life decision to go to dental school. Back in Louisville, she lived in a small university-owned apartment for dental and medical students and was an honor student all four years.

She had graduated in May but remained at the school several weeks to finish her lab work. She hadn't decided yet where she wanted to practice, so she planned to stay at her mother's house until she decided. For three weeks, she'd been moving things from her apartment to the house. She'd just moved the last things into the house the previous Thursday.

Big man with a mountain drawl

Let Dan Davidson of the Kentucky State Police heard about the murders on Covered Bridge Road about 15 minutes after the first call came. The scene was only a few miles from his post in La Grange. A half-dozen police cars already were there when he arrived. He conferred with Chief Nobles of Oldham County, and they decided Davidson would take charge of the investigation.

Davidson, a big man who spoke with a mountain drawl and moved deliberately, had been with the state police for 29 years. His daddy was sheriff of Clay County in mountainous eastern Kentucky, and Dan had grown up imagining himself a deputy. He'd started as a dispatcher at 17. At 21, he became a state trooper in Harlan County, where he worked for 13 years.

For the past 16 years, 15 in La Grange, he'd been a detective. The work had left him taking Tagamet tablets for ulcers and chewing antacids.

Davidson assigned Sherman Childers, a state police detective who'd worked with him for the past 15 years, to the case. Chief Nobles assigned his brother, Lynn.

Lynn Nobles was 30 and cockily confident. He'd been a police officer for seven years, working for three different departments. He'd made detective just the week before. This would be his first homicide.

The officers quickly established several things. The murders had taken place Sunday morning as Delores was returning from an 8:30 a.m. church service. The assailant had crouched behind one of the parked cars and shot her in the back with a high-powered weapon as she tried to open the door between the two garage doors. The shot to the head came as she was falling.

Janie had been in the the house or the back yard when she heard the shots and came to investigate. The assailant apparently spotted her when she came to a chain-link gate at the top of a stone staircase leading from the back of the house to the parking area.

Janie fled past the back of the house toward the kitchen door at the far end, but the assailant shot her in the back before she got there. The bullet passed through her lung, nicked the brick wall and went through a gutter drain. From there the detectives had only to follow her blood.

She made it inside the kitchen and paused for a moment, trying to use the telephone, but her assailant was too close. She fled around the counter, over the dog gate into the den and down the hallway, where she tried to open a closet door to set off a panic alarm. Again she failed. She ran into her mother's bedroom, around the bed and through the French doors into the sun room. She had nowhere else to run. She was crouching when the assailant, standing in her mother's bedroom door, shot her through the neck, killing her instantly.

The bullet passed through her and imbedded in the aluminum frame of the floor-to-ceiling sliding windows, shattering the glass but not breaking it. Officers dug the bullet out of the frame and decided it was from a .223 shell, the kind used in military assault rifles. But they could find no empty shells. The killer had been careful to pick them up.

Delores' jewelry box filled with costume jewelry was found on her bed. In Janie's room, a jewelry box had been dumped onto the bed and her purse rifled. But this looked like no robbery.

Too many valuables had been left. Televisions, tape recorders and other electronic gadgetry, including Delores' police scanner, were untouched. In the formal

dining room, the silver service sat in full view. And Delores' prized Persian rugs, valued at more than \$50,000 each, remained on the floor.

To Dan Davidson, the murders looked like a hit by a professional assassin, but officers told reporters it appeared to be a robbery attempt. Davidson couldn't discount that. He never discounted anything.

Suspects: Exiles to cult members

Tom Lynch had planned to fly to Louisville with his family on Friday, July 27, so his sons could visit their grandmother, whom they rarely got to see. Instead, he arrived a day early with a friend, Steve Mahieu, to attend to his mother's and sister's funerals.

He was met at the airport by Sgt. Tom Swinney and Mike Gibbins, the volunteer chaplain of the Oldham County Police. They delivered him to Dan Davidson's office in La Grange, where Davidson immediately advised him of his rights.

Tom stood to gain a fortune and had to be considered a suspect. But within minutes, Davidson's instincts told him that Tom had nothing to do with the murders. Tom agreed to a lie-detector test, then went with the officers to his mother's house to see if he could tell if anything was missing.

As he walked through the house, Tom couldn't help but think that his mother would have been furious at all the officers who'd been tramping through in their shoes and spreading powder about in their futile search for helpful fingerprints. She'd have given them a piece of her mind.

In the coming weeks, Dan Davidson would dig thoroughly into Tom's background. He ran an FBI check and had police departments in every town where Tom had lived investigate him. Plainclothes officers trailed him after he returned home from the funerals, making Tom afraid that assassins might be gunning for him.

All the investigations found Tom clean: no gambling, no drugs, no criminal associations, nothing illegal in his past. Five weeks after the murders, when Tom passed a second lie-detector test, Davidson turned to other suspects. Tom had posted a \$10,000 reward, which he later raised to \$15,000, and there was no shortage of suspects.

Soon after the news of the murders broke, an anonymous caller said two brothers were the killers. The detectives spent weeks investigating them, including constant surveillance for nearly a month. Other calls came when the rewards were announced, many from people angry at someone and wanting to get even.

A group of Cubans, expelled by Fidel Castro and bragging about being killers, surfaced at a nearby horse farm. More weeks were spent on them.

Every person who'd ever done any work at the

Lynch house, including meter readers, garbage collectors and newspaper carriers, was checked. All of Janie's old boyfriends and most members of her graduating class at the dental school were questioned.

Davidson got a list of all inmates released from Kentucky prisons in the past year and methodically reviewed all who'd been involved in violence or robbery. A prisoner in Louisville reported hearing other prisoners talking about the Lynches being murdered in a cocaine deal, and long hours went to that.

A devil-worshipping cult was discovered holding

rituals in Sleepy Hollow, not far from the Lynch house, and attention was diverted to them.

Weeks stretched into months, as one after another the suspects were eliminated. It was the most brain-racking and frustrating case Davidson had ever worked on. After 10 months, he had begun to despair that the murders ever would be solved when something happened in North Carolina that gave him the break he'd been searching for.

Finally, the end seemed near

Rob and Alice Newsom were worried.

Rob's parents were due home mid-afternoon Sunday, May 19, 1985. As usual, they had been spending the weekend with his grandmother near Winston-Salem. Rob's and Alice's daughter, Page, was in Winston-Salem visiting Alice's parents. Rob's parents were supposed to pick up Page and bring her home.

At 5, Alice's mother called. The Newsoms hadn't arrived to get Page. Was something wrong? Should they feed Page?

Yes, feed her, Alice said. They'd try to find out what happened. They tried to call Rob's grandmother, Hattie Newsom — Nana to the family. No answer.

Thinking maybe his father had forgotten Page, Rob drove to downtown Greensboro to see if his father might have gone to his office before coming home.

Rob's father, Robert Newsom Jr., called Bob, was a consulting engineer. Rob's mother, Florence, had been working with her husband since she retired from teaching at Rutledge College five months earlier in December.

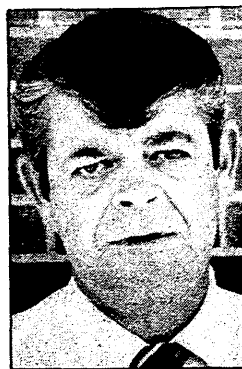
Nobody was at the office.

Rob kept trying to call his grandmother. Still no answer. Maybe they were working in the yard, he thought, or had gone visiting or to a church supper. Maybe the phone was out of order.

At 8 p.m., Rob and Alice drove to Kernersville, met her parents at Suzie's Diner and picked up Page. Back at home, they settled in to watch a special TV movie about Columbus, but they had trouble concentrating. They kept calling Nana's house without results.

At about 10, Rob stood up and said, "I'm going over there."

Alice called her parents once more, and they suggested calling the Suttons, family friends who lived only a few miles from Nana.



Dan Davidson



Lynn Nobles

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Homer Sutton had been the Newsom family doctor for 30 years. He'd seen Nana only a few days earlier, when he sent her to a cardiology clinic for a test. At 85, she had an irregular heartbeat, and he liked to keep close tabs on it. He was lying in bed reading when Rob called.

Dr. Sutton and his wife Katy drove to Nana's house at 3239 Valley Road near Old Town, northwest of Winston-Salem. The big brick house with black shutters sat back from the road under huge oaks. A low chain-link fence separated the yard from the road.

A walkway once led from the road to the front door, but it had long since been overtaken by the boxwoods that lined it. An asphalt driveway with a gate by the road led to a parking area at the northwest side of the house and looped back on itself.

The core of the house had been built before the Civil War. It was once a way station. When Robert Newsom Sr., Paw-Paw to his family, bought it in the '30s as a getaway, it was a frame house with a big front porch and stately white columns.

Paw-Paw was born in Winston-Salem and only went to school through the fifth grade. As a young man, he held a variety of jobs, including delivering groceries. In 1919, he married Hattie Carter. She was Moravian, he was Presbyterian. All their lives they would go their separate ways to church. After marriage, Paw-Paw worked in a cigarette plant of the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., but he decided he wanted to be his own boss. He became a tobacco auctioneer, like his father, and gradually bought his way into the tobacco warehouse business.

A mischievous, humorous man, Paw-Paw loved teasing and playing tricks, especially with his grandchildren. Nana often scolded him for the outlandish stories he told. When he wasn't working, he enjoyed making furniture for family members.

In 1973, he sold out his partnership in the Carolina-Star Warehouse and retired. He still went to the warehouse every year during tobacco sales time, and almost every day he'd drive into downtown Winston-Salem to hang out with his cronies at W.D. White's old-time grocery. Paw-Paw died in 1980 at 82, proud that he had left his family financially secure.

When Paw-Paw bought the house on Valley Road, it sat on six acres in the country. Now subdivisions snuggled up to it. Down the hill, behind the woods at the back of the house, traffic whizzed by day and night on busy Reynolda Road, which had claimed two acres of Paw-Paw's land. Still, with its lush growth, the Newsom place remained a serene oasis untouched by the encroaching city life.

Paw-Paw had remodeled the house extensively before he and Nana moved in permanently in 1943. He removed the porch and big white columns, bricked the main part and added a garage and breezeway to the northwest side. On the back, he put a two-story, frame addition housing a kitchen, family room and upstairs bedroom. He put a big porch on the back, where he could sit and watch the chipmunks, rabbits and squirrels at play. Over the years, he and Nana filled the house with antiques and bric-a-brac.

Now the house was being remodeled again.

Bob and Florence had decided Nana was at an age that she shouldn't be living alone. They were planning to move in with her, and the construction was in preparation for that. The whole back side of the house was under renovation. A new kitchen and dining room were being built. The back porch was being enclosed with floor-to-ceiling sliding windows. A new bath had been added upstairs.

The construction had been going on since November, and Nana was impatient. She'd been told it would be finished much earlier. Her house was a mess. Furniture was piled in different rooms. Dust covered every-

(Continued on A15)