



**Claims
Department**

This one is going to be two-sided: one about LISK, the Long Island Serial Killer, and one about the music of REM.

It's gonna be a ride.

The arrest of Rex Heuerman was the start for this one, but really, I'd been writing to write about this case.

I've always wanted to do a bit of a deep-dive into REM because, hey, REM.

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**The Long Island
Serial Killer:
LISK: Part 1**

Monday, July 17, Kauai Coffee Garden Isle blend

His name is Rex Heuermann. He was arrested for the murders of three of the four women found on Gilgo Beach on Long Island in 2010. This was the start of the hunt for the Long Island Serial Killer, but more than that, it was the start of the search, maddening at times, for a killer of four women, the potential killer of a dozen more, and a long fight which ended up bringing down a Sheriff and involving the FBI.

It also ended in an arrest of a suspect who seems really good for it and should have been brought in ages ago.

There's a lot here, and it all starts with Shannan Gilbert.

In May of 2010, an escort made a call to 9-1-1 saying that "they're trying to kill me." She had been working as an escort, and had gone on a call to a gated community in Oak Beach. After things took a deadly turn, she ran and made a 9-1-1 call that lasted more than 20 minutes. The call ended, and she wasn't heard from again.

That summer, a search was launched with an officer and a cadaver dog. It didn't yield anything and it was stopped, but that December the search was launched anew, this time closer to the road. The dog hit upon a scent, and a body was found.

Three days later, they found another.

And another.

And another.

It was on Gilgo Beach that four young women were discovered, each wrapped in camouflage burlap. They'd been dead a while, and it's possible they'd been in that exact location for a while, too,

how long no one knows, but likely a while. The condition of the remains were variable, indicating that they'd not been killed at the same time. Melissa Barthelemy's body was the first discovered, but they would not be able to identify her for a month. She was 24, a sex worker and apparently found clients via Craigslist. She went missing in July, 2009.

But her cellphone was used to make calls to the family throughout the summer of 2009.

This is a huge part of the case. Taunting calls are not unusual for serial killers, the Golden State Killer made them for instance, but this is slightly different because the calls came from the victim's phone, adding the hope that she was alive to the sheer perverted audacity of the violation of the family. These calls came from Freeport, from Manhattan and Lindenhurst, and most importantly, from Massapequa.

Rex Heuermann lived in Massapequa, and worked in Manhattan. Freeport and Lindenhurst are just about equidistant from Gilgo Beach, maybe twenty minutes.

The call that gets brought up the most went to Barthelemy's sister; "do you think you'll ever see her again? You won't, I killed her."

And then he hung up.

In time, the police found that Barthelemy was likely the second victim of the four. The first was Maureen Brainard-Barnes.

In 2007, Maureen was last seen in July, 2007. She had lost her telemarketing job, so she turned to sex work, again using Craigslist to gather clients. She was seen in NYC, but then found in an advanced state of decay, wrapped in camouflage burlap, on Gilgo

Beach.

As far as I can see, there were no taunting phone calls, but the cellphone may have been less widely-used in 2007. It could also be that he simply didn't get the phone. Her cause of death was undetermined, she had been decomposing for three years, but there were no obvious signs of trauma such as a gunshot wound or blunt force trauma. It was later determined that she had been strangled, as had Barthelemy.

The third victim, Megan Waterman, was last seen in June, 2010, was also strangled. She was only 22, but was already a mother of one young child. She too had placed ads on Craigslist as an escort, though I've seen it said that she had been sex trafficked. She was also, by a good six inches, the tallest of the women found on Gilgo Beach.

The final victim, Amber Lynn Costello, had lived a hard life. Sexually abused as a child, she turned to drugs while in high school, and was a heroin addict. She disappeared in September of 2010, and her family thought that she was finally seeking rehab because she'd wanted to quit. Apparently, she had been doing sex work to fund her habit. She had been married twice, and at 27 was the oldest of the Gilgo Beach 4. She was strangled.

Other than strangulation, sex work, and being fairly young, there was another commonality: size. Three were under five feet tall, and the tallest, Waterman, was still fairly slight. They all appear to have gone out on calls, to motels, and that was the last they were heard from.

Rex Heuermann has been charged with the murders of Waterman, Costello, and Barthelemy, but not Brainard-Barnes. This is important for a few reasons.



Sophomore year and we built a Homecoming float.

The class had chosen my house to do the building of the thing, a truly monstrous thing, because we had space and my Mom was easily convinced. The garage was taken over and kids were staying over pretty much every night for two weeks. One of them, easily the most beautiful girl I had ever seen in person, brought over a couple of tapes. One of them was They Might Be Giants' *Flood*, and I'll say a lot more about that when the time comes, but the other was a band I had never heard of, but would quite literally intersect with just about every significant portion of my life through to today.

REM.

Now, I was fond of 1980s music at the time, it was just 1990 afterall, and you could still hear *Sowing the Seeds of Love* and *Wild Wild West* on the radio. I knew a lot about bands like The Talking Heads, but I must admit, I wasn't as much into the college radio scene, or Modern Rock as we called it in these parts. I remember taking the combo record-tape-cd-radio system into the garage and we'd blast the tapes she'd brought with her. *Flood* was great, but *Green*, that was relevatory.

The album was REM at their jangliest. It's an album that opens with the best example of REM at that moment when they were clearly about to explode, and moreover, that alternative was going to pop into the mainstream. It's clear when you listen to *Pop Song 89*, that they're making a play for mainstream radio play, while still commenting on the obliviousness of the music industry as a whole. They follow with *Get Up*, which is a song I never liked, that gives us a starker more segmented song. *You Are Everything* hits with mandolin, and it seems to be presaging their run from 1990 through their album *Monster*, but really, it's a lovely little song with lame lyrics.

I may be in the minority on that matter.

The song *Stand* hit the mainstream radio world, the second time they'd managed that feat after *It's the End of the World as We Knew it* a couple of years before, but this was a bigger hit.

The best song on the album, and possibly my favorite REM song is *Orange Crush*. It's one of the starkest, tensest songs REM ever put out, and it's a Vietnam song. The lyrics hit, and hammer, but really, when I re-listen, what I'm catching is REM being a tiered band, where they can't break away from the jangle, or the sometimes obtuse lyrics, but somehow it works better than anything from *Document*, including *The One I Love*, which is a great song that I only vaguely knew.

And that's the thing about REM in 1990, I ay have been aware of many of their songs, I did listen to Live 105 afterall, but I didn't know the band. They hit in a very different way when I finally had access to an album.

There's only one seriously flawed song, *Untitled* right at the end, when it's clear they wanna do a Smiths song, and can't.



LIISK—Part 2—Costa Rica Light Roast Blend from Jenna Sue’s

Those were not the only bodies.

The Gilgo Four set off a wild search for more potential victims on and around Gilgo Beach. Almost from the moment that Melissa Bathelémy was found, they’d been talking about a potential serial killer. Once the first four were found, it was clear from the way the bodies had been disposed of, the same method of execution, and the repeating pattern of victim type, that it was clearly the work of a serial killer, and likely that meant more victims would be found, likely in the same area, likely displaying the same MO.

They found several bodies, but it wasn’t so clear cut.

This was also not the first set of discoveries.

The search from December 2010 through May 2011 found seven more bodies, but they were clearly far older than those found

on Gilgo Beach in December.

On March 29th, 2011, remains of Jessica Taylor were found roughly a mile from the Gilgo Four. She had been murdered in July of 2003, and they'd found some of her remains on July 26th, 2003, near Manorville, about 35 miles away. That is interesting, because that would mean that the dumping of the body near to Gilgo Beach had to be done at a different time, and thus they would have had to be transported. In 2003, they'd found her torso in Manorville, placed on a piece of plastic. In 2011, they found her skull, hands, and a forearm were found near Gilgo Beach. This would indicate that the killer wanted to hide her identity, and it had worked; until they started scouring because of finding the Gilgo Beach 4, they'd had no clue who they'd found in Manorville. The Gilgo Beach 4 were not dismembered, nor was there any attempt to hide their identities. This felt fundamentally different.

On April 4, a head, right foot, and a pair of hands were found about a mile and a half from Jessica Taylor's. Back in 2000, her torso had been found in a garbage bag, also out in Manorville. At first, they thought this was a new person, but they eventually identified her as Valerie Mack. You'll still see her called Jane Doe #6 some times.

The same day, and not more than a hundred yards from Valerie Mack the bones of a toddler were found. While Mack's body had been dismembered, it doesn't appear that the toddler's was. There was no determination of the time elapsed between each being placed on the beach. They found some gold jewelry by the toddler. They determined that the toddler was not Mack's child.

She was the daughter of another woman who had been dismembered, and who has not been identified to this day. They refer

to her as Jane Doe #3, or more often as 'Peaches' and I'll have more on her later.

Then, there was Asian Male, though that might not be the case. On April 4th, they found a setoff remains between Taylor and the main Gilgo Four, and they were remains of a male, but wearing woman's clothing, which could indicate that they were trans, but it could also indicate a drag performer, or both. One thing that's certainly everywhere is that the killer may have hired them as a sex worker, and then when they discovered they had a penis, they beat them to death. This was a unique death among the victims, though determining the cause of death for the dismembered victims is very difficult.

There is one that is closely related to these, though not quite. Peaches' torso was found in a Rubbermade tote. This was 1997. She had been dead for about three days, but it wasn't until 2011, when they were scouring every inch of Ocean Parkway for remains, that they found her arms and legs, but not her head. She was the infant's mother, but had not been dumped in the same location. We can assume that they were killed at the same time, but not necessarily. If she was a sex worker, and there's no evidence of that, she may have brought her daughter with her, or had her wait in the car. The killer could have taken the kid with them. The fact that the child was found in a different location, but very near to another victim, would make it seem like they may have been dumped at different times.

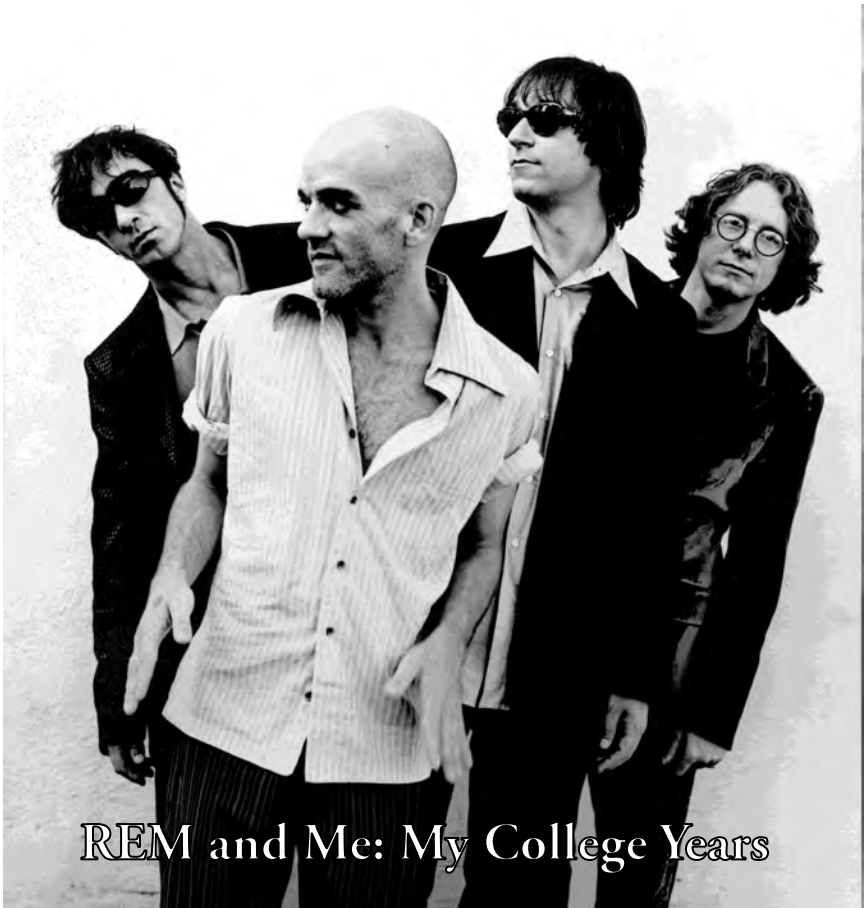
Those are the victims found near Gilgo Beach in addition to the original four. These victims fit in with each other for the most part. Two had been dismembered and were located in the same areas. One was related to another murder, where the victim had been dismembered. There was a male, but wearing woman's clothing. There were two that were known to be sex workers. Valerie Mack

was about 5 feet tall, and maybe 100 pounds. I believe that Jessica was 5'2. Asian Male was 5'6. While Peaches was a few miles west and south, they were found along the network of beaches, but her vital stats are unknown, though some have noted she was likely larger than the others.

But why would they have been separated from her daughter? Why would the killer have cut up Peaches, but not the kid? Why dump the kid so close to another body? Coincidence? Or, maybe, he'd taken the kid with them, then killed them later, dumped them elsewhere, and perhaps when they killed Taylor, they dumped her in the same area, perhaps because he had been experimenting on placement and found the location where he had dumped the child to be better. It could also be that they dumped the two bodies at the same time, going along the Ocean Parkway, dropping them separated by miles so that if one was found, the other would not necessarily be found. Perhaps he knew that the discovery of one of them would certainly lead to the discovery of the other, or at least the connection between the two. That took more than a decade.

So, is this one or two serial killers?

Time-wise, there's a much wider spread of the victims who were not among the Gilgo Beach four. The MO in most of them is the same, though 'Asian Male' is different in a lot of ways, especially if they were not a sex worker. While Forensic Genealogy has identified one of them, Peaches remains unidentified, as well as her child. Solving their identities might help, but none of the other woman killed knew each other and it appears they are all victims of opportunity rather than purpose.



REM hit it big in 1991 with *Losing My Religion*.

Alternative Music broke huge following Nirvana and Pearl Jam and others breaking things wide open. This led to the *Out of Time* being one of the most lauded albums of 1991, and then in 1992 *Automatic for the People* came out and blew everything away.

I was listening to ska. And punk. And was dipping my toes into Jazz and classical. It was not unusual for me to go to Nuggets, or Mystery Train, or Newbury Comics, or any of a dozen other record stores and come out with five or six CDs or tapes. I spent a lot of time listening to music, and though Freshman year was rough for

me, I met the girl who would define much of my dating life forever—M.

M loved REM. She loved Morphine more, both the capital and lowercase versions, but she had everything REM ever put out, including bootlegs of concerts and unreleased tracks. She saw them at least a hundred times over the years, following them for a summer before I knew her. She had met the band more than once.

She once told me she would kill herself if they ever broke up. Luckily, she did not carry through with that threat in her later years.

She would play REM a lot when we were together. I remember cuddling up on her incredible couch for an incredibly cold winter's night, I think it was something like 12 degrees out, and her apartment at the time, maybe ten stories stories up, had a view of the Public Garden, covered in snow, the giant window frosting at the corners like some maudlin Christmas card. We sat there, snugglin' and snoggin' and I distinctly remember the song *Everybody Hurts* coming on.

And she started crying.

I mean bawling. Giant, heaping sobs. This happened from time to time, she had issues, but she seldom let anyone comfort her. She wanted to suffer, she'd say, but that night, she leaned into me, my arms around her, and cried and cried, and cried. The CD played all the way through, and she didn't stop. When it did, she said to throw on *Document*, and I got up and made her a drink, as I recall an Irish coffee as she always had a pot on the warmer, and settled back down on the couch.

To this day, I really can't listen to *Automatic for the People*.



LISK: And Still More

The searches continued.

A week after discovering the four bodies nearest the Gilgo Beach four, more remains were found, Peaches and Fire Island Doe. Peaches clearly shared an MO with the previous set of discoveries, but Fire Island Doe, still unidentified to this day, was slightly different. She had been dismembered, but they found her legs in 1996, and her skull on April 11, 2011. The torso was not found initially. She was found near Davis Park.

This could have meant that the legs had no identifying marks but the torso did. This was the earliest crime we know of, her legs had been found in 1996, and if that's the case, this could be a killer feeling out his MO. If the torso had a number of tattoos, that could have meant they needed to find a disposal method for it, possibly throwing it into the ocean, or simple burying it deeper.

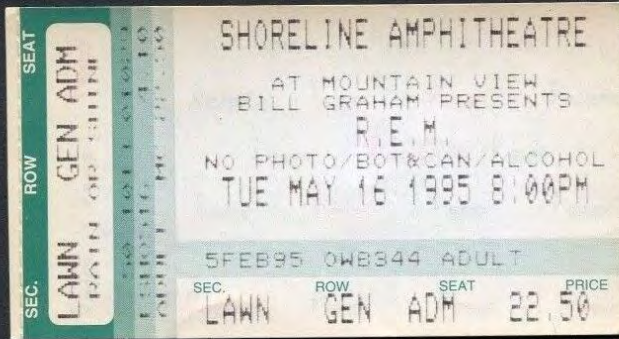
These seem to fit a single killer theory, but there are others that fit in some ways. Jacqueline Smith's torso was found in Rockaway Beach, Queens, in 2000, she had gone missing the previous year. Two years later, Andre Jamal, a drag queen who was 6'5. Jamal was the only victim we know of who was shot, in the temple. They found Jamal's torso, then his head, and then arms and legs between Nov. 2002 and January 2003. These were found on a beach in Queens.

Tanya Rush had taken up sex work at some point to fund a drugs habit. She was found dismembered in Bellmore, about 15 miles from Gilgo Beach. She was found in 2008 in a black suitcase.

Jamie Seymour disappeared in 2005. She was a sex worker, and she was small like the Gilgo Beach Four.

Cherries, the pseudonym used for an unidentified female with a tattoo of cherries on her right breast. Her torso was found March 3rd in Marmoranek, and her arms and legs later in the month in Oyster Bay. They may have been driven into the shore by storms. Another set of remains were found in 2012 in Lattingtown near Oyster Bay.

But what of Shannan Gilbert? The call she made had started it all and she had yet to be found.



REM and Me: The Random Woman

As an album, *Monster* is really good. It was a turn, a bit more like the stuff we were hearing from Weezer and The Afghan Whigs, which I loved. I'd argue this was power pop in their mold and I loved that.

They went on tour, but I missed them again. They came around in 1999 and I finally saw them, on the grass, at Shoreline. I only saw a couple of shows a year at Shoreline; tickets cost so much more than for the shows I tended to frequent at The Edge and The Cactus Club.

So, I got there early, and a gaggle of young women, all wearing Santa Clara University shorts, brought a blanket and spread it out not five feet from where I was sitting, waiting with a copy of *Tales of the City* as I remember it.

The show started, and three songs in, the song *Suspicion* started. At the very start of the song, one of the woman sitting near me walked over.

“Wanna dance?”

I said “Yes, yes I do.”

And we slow-danced.

We literally said nothing, just danced. We danced a couple of more times that night,

I never caught her name.

I shoulda got her phone number.



July 23rd, Don Francisco's Kona blend

The searches of Gilgo Beach started after Shannan Gilbert's 9-1-1 call.

Then why wasn't she found until Dec 2011, a full year after they'd located the Gilgo Four and so many others?

Part of it was that Gilbert was quite near where she had made her call from. They looked there, in Oak Beach, and did not find her there, but went broader.

The 9-1-1 call is fascinating, and some of the assumptions the police have made in the years since are at least somewhat justified based on the call. The story goes that Gilbert had been called for a high-paying gig out on Oak Beach by Joseph Brewer. He lived alone, and while he claims it wasn't for sex, Shannan's driver, Michael Pak, says otherwise. He drove her, but waited in the car. She'd asked him to go and get some lube and a deck of playing cards. Since Pak didn't know the area, he didn't go.

At some point, Brewer either tried to get her to go, or she called 9-1-1 because she felt threatened. Both could be easily be-

lieved. She said that ‘they were trying to kill me.’ and then it appears that after a long call, she left, running out. She pounded on a neighbor’s door, they called 9-1-1 and she hid beneath his boat in the driveway as an SUV drove by. She said people we’re trying to kill her. She then went to another neighbor’s house and pounded on the door. They called the cops too.

And then, Shannan Gilbert disappeared.

The cops listened to the recording and found that Gilbert had been non-responsive at times, that she might have been slurring her words, and at times largely oblivious to what the dispatcher was saying. Gilbert didn’t know where she was, not even mentioning the city, though since Pak drove, she may have had 0 clue.

Her body was found near Oak Beach, in a marsh not far from where she’d called. Both Pak and Brewer cooperated, and it seems like neither were the killer.

This does not mean they did not participate.

This is where the cops really show themselves—they ruled her death an accidental drowning.

Now, there’s several ways to go with that. Her remains, mostly skeletal I believe, were found on a bush. It’s highly possible that they were washed there. The larynx was missing, and the hyoid bone was not intact. That’s often seen in strangulation cases.

Now, many think that she had taken some drugs, she was a known user, and started freaking out, running out and eventually hiding in the marsh. That much makes sense. She could have drown, but during the call, she goes in and out of clarity, it seems, and that alone should be cause for question. Perhaps she called almost immediately after taking something and ended up being hit by

it in waves. That happens. It could be that she tripped and fell and couldn't get up. It could be she was caught and strangled by the killer.

Though, I think if that was the case, it would be someone new to the investigation.

Just leaving the body where it fell is clearly a different MO. I do feel this is related to at least one of the serial killers working on Long Island. In a way, I compare this to the murder of Elizabeth Stride by Jack the Ripper. He did not have time to do the mutilations, and thus he only managed to kill her with the slash before being interrupted and forced to flee. If the killer of Gilbert had managed to catch up to her, and strangle her to death, he may have known that the police had been called and would be looking for her. He could not let her go, she must have seen him, and thus had to kill her. He finds her, strangles her, and instead of taking her in his car, he may well be stopped on his way out, he simply leaves her body in the marsh.

It's not a perfect scenario, but it's sure a possible one.

Shannan Gilbert's body wasn't found for 18 months, but it was found, and it's another potential victim, at the same time as being a singleton no matter which set of murders you attribute it to. The Gilgo Beach murders were of petite, and Gilbert was 5'5. Similar in size to Warweman. She was found in Oak Beach, not far from where the others were, 7 miles or so, but she wasn't dismembered, or wrapped in burlap, or even hidden. This would make her different in the majority, but similar in the victim type.

I believe Gilbert was killed by one of the two serial killers who were responsible for the crimes—The Gilgo Beach Killer (almost certainly Rex Heuermann) and LISK, still unknown.



July 23rd, Don Francisco's Kona coffee blend.

I don't much listen to REM these days.

That's not entirely true, but truer than not. I have *Orange Crush*, *The One I love*, and *It's the End of the World as We Know It* on some playlists, but in the old days, I'd put on the albums and listen. Listen, and kinda hit that place that makes me think. I wrote a lot of early *Drink Tanks* the sound of *Green*. I wrote a lot of the first couple of years of *Journey Planet to Monster*. I used to write a lot while listening to music. Now, I listen to podcasts, or audiobooks.

Today, I listened to as much REM as I could, for the first time in ages.

I started with their first album and actually made it all the way through *Monster*. I heard the evolution, and for the first time in years, I found myself feeling the things I felt when I started listening to REM. There was a depth to the lyrics that I knew was there all along, but I hadn't grabbed on to them fully until I was able to appreciate the world beyond the music .



July 24th, Kauai Coffee Garden Isle blend.

James Burke was the Police Chief of Suffolk County, where several of the victims were found. Now, he is a convicted felon.

He hampered nearly every step made in investigating the case. As early as 2012, Burke was being looked into for frequenting sex workers, assault, and other violations. These were being looked into at the same time as the Gilgo Beach investigation, and there was no example more telling than that of Shannan Gilbert. Though there could easily be seen as a potential murder, the Suffolk County police refused to investigate it as such.

Why?

Well, Burke's interactions with sex workers may well have led him to not wanting the feds poking around in that area. If it was the case, he may have known more than he let get out.

Though, I think it's more self-preservation. I don't think Burke's one of Long Island Serial Killers. I also don't think he much cared if LISK(s) got caught.

Cops and sex workers have a difficult relationship. A lot of sex work is illegal, and that's obviously gonna stick in an officer's

crow. BUT, there are a lot of cops who frequent sex workers, and even some who see it that since they're breaking the law, they're the ones who should take the full brunt of their darker urges.

Burke was one of those kinds of cops, apparently.

The idea that the cops were looking the other way while they knew a serial killer was on the loose isn't entirely far-fetched, but I also don't quite think this is that. I think it's the rare combination of the victims seeming to be less dead (sex workers) and the higher-ups having skeletons in their closets that they did not want getting an airing.

Once the FBI took over, Burke was arrested for his crimes, and a task force was put together, there was movement. It was 2022 when a name was proposed, and a serious series of inquiries were made. The task force brought together all the cops—county, state, and federal investigators. This was made possible by a new police commissioner, only a year on the job, and likely the increased attention the murders had received over the previous year, especially with podcasts like *Unraveled*. It also probably helped that in 2020, they'd been able to identify Valerie Mack through genetic genealogy, showing it's clear usefulness in the case. They've used it a few times, and notably they've identified a line towards Peaches, though no conclusion to that line yet.

There was clearly increased movement on the case. One of the victims had been bound by belts, and one of the belts had a brand on it—either HM or WH. Now, most say that the 'H' would have been for 'Heuermann' and the W for whatever relative owned the belt. I tend to think it's for 'HeuerMann' but it may just be my love of internal capitals.

The task force eventually focused on Rex Heuermann.



July 25th, Kauai Coffee Garden Isle blend

They've got this fucker.

Honestly, if all they had was the publicly acknowledged evidence they're going to put this guy away for a long, long time.

There are several things that have been released, and some stuff that's been leaked. The first official release, that belt, could sure look like it's his. That's actually not nearly as damning as the DNA.

They managed to get some DNA off the burlap in the form of a hair. Advances over the last couple of years have allowed for much more definitive identification using hair as a DNA source even if it doesn't have the root. There may have been other DNA present, but we know one of his hairs was found and the DNA matched to his via a pizza crust he discarded in Manhattan while

they were following him.

Note: New York Pizza, as a whole, is worth throwing away.

Anyhoo, these were not the only hairs, as three of his wife's hairs were found on or near the victims. Since she was out of town (I believe in Iceland) during the times they were likely killed, it's likely that they were transferred to the tape used to bind the bodies from Heuermann's clothes, or perhaps she'd used the tape previously, or possibly he simply did the wrapping in a location where there's a lot of hair.

That alone is likely to lead to a conviction, but there's more.

Heuermann also drove a Chevy Avalanche. If you've ever seen one, you know that it's one of the ugliest cars ever seen. It's an extended cab pick-up, kinda like an old El Camino SUVed. A witness in the Amber Costello case, I believe the last person to see her alive, reported a first generation Chevy Avalanche. Any attempt of a defense attorney to claim it was any other kind of SUV would be easily wiped away as it's the ugliest car ever sold.

He often used burner phones, or phones he took from the women he killed. He even checked Brainard-Barnes' voicemails, though made no taunting, and ultimately damning, phone calls like he had to Melissa Barthelemy's family. Those calls came from places he frequented, mostly Manhattan and some from Freeport on Long Island. Waterman's phone traveled to Massapequa Park, near Heuermann's house. She had been contacted by a burner phone, though I haven't seen confirmation connecting that specific burner to Heuermann, though I know that can be difficult.

Amber Costello was killed after a scam. She had a guy pre-

tend to be her boyfriend and make off with the money Heuermann was going to pay her. All the contact between the two had been via burner phone, and he texted her “That was not nice so do credit for next time.”

He called again and wanted to buy her services, but this time at his own place. That was the last she was heard from.

Heuermann traveled at times with both burner phones that had been used to contact the victims and his own cellphone, often to areas where the victims’ cellphones had also pinged. He also bought minutes for a burner phone using cash in May, 2023. That even more clearly aligned him to the practice of burner phone usage.

His Google search history is disgusting, but in addition to the pedophilia and violent fantasy porn searches, he also obsessively searched for info on LISK. He had dozens of email addresses under several aliases, and Tinder accounts under a couple of them as well. He also still searched for sex workers and made calls to them using burner phones.

There are few gaps, and a good defense lawyer, which Heuermann can probably afford, will pick and pull at every thread trying to unravel the case. He might succeed on a couple of the counts, but the hair found with Costello’s body is pretty much iron-clad, and the cellphone pings put him everywhere.

I believe he’s the Gilgo Beach Killer.

But maybe not LISK.



5) *The One I Love*

A simple song with nearly identically-repeated stanzas, but it's such a powerfully brutal song. It could easily be applied in various situations and relationships, and at times it feels a little close to these old bones...

4) *Bang & Blame*

There's a sequence of lyrics in here that I count among the best I've ever heard.

If you could see yourself now, baby
The tables have turned, the whole world hinges on your swings
Your secret life of indiscreet discretions
I'd turn the screw and leave the screen

3) *Shiny Happy People*

I love the B-52s so Kate Pierson teaming up with REM is a good thing! This is one of their few truly joyful songs, without a hint of cynicism. Michael Stipe apparently used a translated Chinese phrase he saw posted by the government after Tianamen Square as the basis for a purely bubble gum pop song.

And apparently, Stipe does not want it to stand for the groups oeuvre.

2) *Nightswimming*

This is just about as gentle as REM gets, and it's got a set that really hits me hard.

Nightswimming deserves a quiet night
The photograph on the dashboard, taken years ago
Turned around backwards so the windshield shows
Every streetlight reveals the picture in reverse
Still, it's so much clearer
I forgot my shirt at the water's edge
The moon is low tonight

1) *Orange Crush*

These are impressive lyrics, and even when I was a kid and had no idea what they were about, I memorized them. I Knew this was a song in which war was a theme, though I doubt I could have articulated that fully. The "serve your conscious overseas" probably tipped me off, but it's all there.



LISK—The Dismemberer

July 25th—Don Francisco's Kona Blend

There had to be another.

If you look at how the Gilgo Beach killings were done, and how the separate and dismember killings were done, there are few similarities that aren't also shared with the other Long Island serial killer—Joel Rifkin. They murdered sex workers and they dumped their bodies near water, and several of their victims are unnamed.

These are different killers, almost certainly.

Now, is it unknown for a killer to change MOs? No, but it's rare that a killer is as fuzzy-edged as whoever killed the dismembered bodies found due to searching Gilgo and adjoining beaches. The timeframe potentially maps, Heuermann lived on Long Island the whole time, but there's a wider impact zone for the dismemberments.

In fact, there's a lot of things that make me think that there are two, and only two, killers at work for the discovered bodies.

Let's leave Shannan Gilbert aside. My guess is that if she's a victim of either, and I think she died by either the hands or threats of one, I'd say it was Heuerman. It's possible either way, though it's far different from the others. The dismembered bodies killings probably started with Fire Island Doe in 1996. That's a tough way to start, though it wouldn't be the first time a killer started with a dismemberment as their disposal MO. The Cleveland Torso Murders are likely in that category, as is the Camden Ripper in the UK. There wasn't a lot of skill taken to get the body apart. A lot of strength, true, but not skill. That's one reason why so many folks seem to point to the 'ogre' that is Heuermann.

But I don't think so.

Heuerman appears to have used his home as his killing floor, and then transported them to Gilgo Beach, and kinda bunched them up. It's as if they were his trophies, and he could even have visited them if he wanted to. The other bodies don't have the same sort of trophy-like care taken. He didn't even dump the parts of the victims in the same location. I really believe that the Gilgo Beach site is specific to those that Heuermann killed, and that since the earliest murders were not clustered, they were separate, and likely they were victims of a killer who did not need or want to see the bodies, and in fact was far more concerned about being caught. Gilgo Beach was not the dumping ground for a killer who was deeply concerned about being found out. Clustered like that, authorities would find one and then obviously find all.

Plus, there's a definite victim type for the Gilgo Beach 4, and even one if you add Gilbert.

And, I actually think that Peaches and her daughter, along with Fire Island Doe, and their actual identities may hold the key to the entire crime.

It's been theorized that Peaches was a sex worker who brought their kid with them, either into the room when Peaches plied her trade, or left in the car. There's no evidence that they were killed at the same time. There's also a large potential age window for the child. That could mean that Peaches died first, and the killer held on to the child, or that the child was killed first, but either way, they could have been separated not as a way to issue some final humiliation to Peaches, which is a popular theory, but as a way to prevent identification. Separating them makes it less likely to tie them together, and any killer who has any sort of knowledge would know that DNA was making it easier and easier to identify people as related. Separating them gives distance.

And that would be important if they were deeply tied to the killer.

The popular theory here is that Peaches was the killers baby-mama, or slightly less popular, their pimp. My theory is the latter. In the prior, he may not have known that there was a kid and when he found out he killed them both. Possible. I tend to think another possibility might be punishment for Peaches for some transgression in the killer's eyes, and eventually Peaches met the same fate. Controlling a woman by threatening or even beating or murdering their kid would be something a pimp might do. Then, when time to hide the identifying bits of Valerie Mack, he either just randomly figured this spot near the kid was good since no one had found the other remains. Or, it could just have been an easy area to dump.

This leads me to think if the killer was Peaches' pimp, were

they also pimp of any of the others?

Or could they have been a rival pimp, killing those who either chose not to be a part of their stable, or encroaching on claimed territory?

These are all possibilities, but really, it's pretty clear that these killings were not the same as the Gilgo Beach Four.

These were not strangulations. That's another big one. These appear to use weapons of different kinds, perhaps opportunistic in nature. That's not to say they found a weapon in a location and used it, but that it was only whatever they had at hand. With the Gilgo Beach 4, it appears that the strangulation may have been a part of the ritual; he wanted to be close to the victims, to feel them die, and then have them viewable after, reminding him of his handiwork.

The variety of victim types for the dismemberment killings, plus the variations, makes me think this is not a killer who was killing for the personal satisfaction; this was a killer who was working. The victim clustering on the Gilgo Beach Four was so much closer than those of the dismembered victims. That's incredibly different from a killer who killed between 1996 and 2007. Now, we have 2007, when Cherries was killed and dismembered, and Maureen Brainard-Barnes was killed by the Gilgo Beach Killer. In a short few months, we can see the difference between the two styles.

Fire Island Doe could be a key. An early victim often holds the secret to why the killings began. If it was found out that she had run afoul of her pimp, that's a solid starting point. It would seem like identifying Peaches or Cherries might be possible, and the position of the tattoo on each might be a commonality and clue.

There are two of them, and apparently, only one is caught.



Enough of that!

Anyhoo, I went to Stanford to do some more Saroyan research, and I stopped by the Anderson Collection and Cantor Arts Center. I'll write more about that next time, because how could I not?

I did get to see some really fun video art, but I mostly found myself enjoying a walk where I got to see some familiar friends.

Because I've been to both museums a LOT!

I've been thinking about 2020 a lot lately. It was a great year for me as well as being incredibly stressful, terrifying, sad, and really

damn hard. I worked from home, which was good, as it let me have a ton of time for fanac and working at off hours and still getting to cook, have some time with the kids, watch a lot of TV and movies, and most importantly, enjoy the comforts of no commute. I also got to connect with a lot of folks I never get to see via Zoom and I podcasted a lot more, and I even 'met' new friends. It was a crazy beautiful terrible time.

Though, honestly, it was one of the best years of my adult life. I have so much to show for it! *Short Story Short Podcast* is clearly the longest-lasting piece of that.

2021 was OK, though difficult. We were still dealing with getting back into the house after the fire for the first few months. Things were rough with the kids. Money was tight, but not too tight. I lost my job, but I also got this new job which is fantastic! SO it was a wash. Year ended with me getting offered a bookdeal I didn't even have to work towards getting.

2022? I wrote the book! I did the zines! I podcasted some, I couldn't really paint much. I wrote a lot of zines, I did a lot of layout, I traveled to LA a couple of times, Palm Springs, and Chicago for WorldCon. It was a fun year..

...except for the health issues, notably my three days in hospital for critically low sodium. Diabetes was new (well, not new, and that was really the problem...) but it didn't take too much to get that fairly well under control.

2023? Pretty great. Maui and WrestleMania weekend in LA. Going to see the New Japan wrestling show in San Jose was up there, as was getting to go to SFMoMA a couple of times, watch a lot of Cinequest movies, and generally wait for July 29th when my book hits the street in the UK. So, hits the streetes???

All in all, I'm really lucky. I know it; I've always known it. I have led a life I'm proud of, for a fair portion, and can't say that I would change much. I far more regret the things that I've done than the things that I've passed up. FAR MORE.

Next time, it'll probably be a more normal issue, but with me, who knows? There were UFO hearings in Congress, and hopefully, we'll have another Trump indictment to talk about.

And, of course, my book will be out in the UK...



