

Belle Guinness
“The Lady Bluebeard”



Information researched and summarized by
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| Date | Age | Life Event |
|-------------|-----|---|
| 11/11/1859 | 0 | Born as Brynhild Paulsdatter Størseth in Selbu, Norway. She was the youngest of eight children. |
| 1876 | 17 | Pregnant, beaten by baby’s father and miscarries. This causes a change in personality. Baby’s father dies a month later. This may have been her first murder. |
| 1883 | 24 | Sailed to America to be with her sister. |
| 1884 | 25 | Moves to Chicago and meets Mads Sorenson, the two marry. |
| | | Belle opens a confectionary store that is not successful. A year later it burns down and Belle and Mads collect the insurance. |
| | | Belle and Mads have four children - Caroline, Axel, Myrtle, and Lucy |
| 1896 | 37 | Caroline dies supposedly of acute colitis, same symptoms as poisoning, insurance company paid off life insurance. |
| 1898 | 39 | Axel dies supposedly of acute colitis, same symptoms as poisoning, insurance company paid off life insurance. |
| 07/30/1900 | 41 | Mads dies from undetermined causes, later found to be Strychnine poisoning |
| | | Collected life insurance policy of \$8,000 |
| 1902 | | Belle moves to LaPorte, Indiana and meets Peter Guinness. |
| 04/01/1902 | 42 | Marries Peter Guinness. One week later his son dies of a virus. |
| Dec, 1902 | 43 | Peter dies when a meat grinder fell from a shelf onto his head. |
| | | Belle placed a ad in the paper seeking men who could take care of her. She had several suitors over the next few years. |
| | | Suitor John Moo brings \$1,000 to Belle. He disappears from her farm within a week. Several other suitors including Peter Carlson and Ole Budsburg met the same fate. |
| Spring 1903 | 44 | Son Philip is born |
| | | Belle has several suitors over the next few years. |
| 1906 | 47 | Foster daughter Jennie “supposedly” goes to school in Los Angeles and is never heard |

| | | |
|--------------|----------------|---|
| | | from again, her body is later found in the yard. |
| Spring 1907 | 48 | Meets Ray Lamphere and gives him work. |
| Winter 1907 | 48 or 49 | Purchased wedding ring with a new man who disappears shortly after |
| | | Meets Andrew Helgelein and becomes engaged. |
| January 1908 | 49 | Andrew withdraws savings with Belle and he disappears |
| | | Hires Joe Maxson. |
| 4/27/1908 | 49 | Belle writes last will and testament. |
| 4/28/1908 | 49 | Fire set that kills children and where Belle's body was "supposedly" found headless. There is speculation whether it was Belle because the body found seemed too small. |

General Information

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sex | Female |
| Race | White |
| Number of victims | 16 further plus 12 possible equals 28 |
| Country where killing occurred | United States |
| States where killing occurred | Indiana |
| Cities where killing occurred | LaPorte |
| Type of killer | Black Widow |
| Height | 6' |

Childhood Information

| | |
|--|---|
| Date of birth | November-11-1859 |
| Location | Selbu, Norway |
| Birth order | Unknown |
| Number of siblings | 2 known |
| XYY? | No |
| Raised by | Both parents |
| Birth category | Youngest |
| Parent's marital status | Married |
| Did serial killer spend time in an orphanage? | No |
| Did serial killer spend time in a foster home? | No |
| Was serial killer ever raised by a relative? | No |
| Did serial killer live with a step-parent? | No |
| Family event | |
| Age of family event | |
| Problems in school? | |
| Teased while in school? | |
| Physically attractive? | No |
| Physical defect? | No |
| Speech defect? | No |
| Head injury? | No |
| Physically abused? | Kicked in the stomach, which caused miscarriage |
| Psychologically abused? | No |
| Sexually abused? | No |
| Father's occupation | Stonemason |
| Age of first sexual experience | Unknown, but pregnant by 17 |
| Age when first had intercourse | Unknown, but pregnant by 17 |
| Mother's occupation | N/A |
| Father abused drugs/alcohol | No |
| Mother abused drugs/alcohol | No |

Cognitive Ability

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Highest grade in school | N/A |
|-------------------------|-----|

| | |
|---|---|
| Highest degree | N/A |
| Grades in school | N/A |
| IQ | N/A |
| Source of IQ information | N/A |
| Work History | |
| Served in the military? | No |
| Branch | |
| Type of discharge | |
| Saw combat duty | |
| Killed enemy during service? | |
| Applied for job as a cop? | No |
| Worked in law enforcement? | No |
| Fired from jobs? | No |
| Types of jobs worked | Farm girl, owned a confectionary store |
| Employment status during series | Worked on her farm and collected insurance |
| Relationships | |
| Sexual preference | Heterosexual |
| Marital status | Married twice, widowed twice |
| Number of children | 3 - Lucy and Myrtle Sorensen and Phillip Gunness, 1 foster child Jennie Olsen, 2 Caroline and Axel that died in infancy |
| Lives with her children | Yes before their deaths |
| Living with | Children, husbands before their deaths, multiple lovers before their deaths |
| Triad | |
| Animal torture | No |
| Fire setting | Yes |
| Bed wetting | No |
| Killer Psychological Information | |
| Abused drugs? | No |
| Abused alcohol? | No |
| Been to a psychologist (prior to killing)? | No |
| Time in forensic hospital (prior to killing)? | No |
| Diagnosis | |
| Killer Criminal History | |
| Committed previous crimes? | Arson, never charged |
| Spend time in jail? | No |
| Spend time in prison? | No |
| Killed prior to series? Age? | 17 suspected of killing child's father |
| Serial Killing | |
| Number of victims | 16 further plus 12 possible equals 28 |
| Victim type | Family, lovers |
| Killer age at start of series | Possibly 37 |
| Date of first kill in series | Possibly 1896 |
| Date of final kill in series | Possibly April 28, 1908 |
| Gender of victims | Both, mostly men |
| Race of victims | White |
| Age of victims | Infants, 5, 9, 11, 18, middle-aged men |
| Type of victim | Family, lovers |
| Method of killing | Poisoning, bludgeoning |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Weapon | Found at the scene |
| Was gun used? | No |
| Type | N/A |
| Did killer have a partner? | Possibly assisted in disposal of bodies |
| Name of partner | Ray Lamphere |
| Sex of partner | Male |
| Relationship of partner | Former lover/farmhand |
| Type of serial killer | Black Widow |
| How close did killer live? | Lived at scene of crime |
| Location of first contact | Killer's home |
| Location of killing | Killer's home |
| Killing occurred in home of victim? | No |
| Killing occurred in home of killer? | Yes |
| Victim abducted or killed at contact? | Killed while staying at her home |
| Behavior During Crimes | |
| Rape? | No |
| Tortured victims? | No |
| Stalked victims? | Wrote letters to beg them to come |
| Overkill? | No |
| Quick & efficient? | Yes |
| Used blindfold? | No |
| Bound the victims? | No |
| After Death Behavior | |
| Sex with the body? | No |
| Mutilated body? | Dismembered |
| Ate part of the body? | No |
| Drank victim's blood? | No |
| Posed the body? | No |
| Took totem – body part | No |
| Took totem – personal item | No |
| Robbed victim or location | Took their money |
| Disposal of Body | |
| Left at scene, no attempt to hide | No |
| Left at scene, hidden | No |
| Left at scene, buried | No |
| Moved, no attempt to hide | No |
| Moved, buried | Yes, in the yard |
| Cut-up and disposed of | Dismembered and buried in the yard |
| Moved, too home | No |
| Sentencing | |
| Date killer arrested | |
| Date convicted | |
| Sentence | |
| Killer executed? | No |
| Did killer plead NGRI? | No |
| Was the NGRI plea successful? | |
| Did serial killer confess? | No |
| Name and state of prison | |
| Killer committed suicide? | No |
| Killer killed in prison? | No |
| Date of death | Supposedly April 28, 1908 but unknown for sure |

References

- 1) <http://usersites.horrorfind.com/home/horror/bedlambound/library/gunness.html>
- 2) http://www.trutv.com/library/crime/serial_killers/history/gunness/luck_2.html
- 3) Sheppard, S. (2001). *The Mistress of Murder Hill: The Serial Killings of Belle Gunness*. Indiana: 1st Books Library.
- 4) Langlois, J. L. (1985). *Belle Gunness: The Lady Bluebeard*. Bloomington, Indiana: University Press