

Theresa Cross Knorr



FAMILY PHOTO

Information researched and summarized by
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Date	Age	Life Event
03/14/1946	0	Born in Sacramento, California to James Cross and Swannie Gay
Late 1950's		Father became disabled and couldn't work because he became stricken with Parkinson's Disease
03/02/1961	15	Mother died of a heart attack in a grocery store and died in Theresa's arms
09/29/1962	16	Married Clifford Sanders
07/16/1963	17	Gave birth to Howard Sanders
07/06/1964	18	She shoots and kills her husband Clifford (claims it was self-defense)
09/10/1964	18	Verdict of not guilty by reason of self defense in the killing of Clifford Sanders
03/13/1965	18	Gave birth to Sheila Gay Sanders
07/09/1966	20	Married Robert Wallace Knorr
09/27/1966	20	Gave birth to Suesan Marlene Knorr
09/15/1967	21	Gave birth to William Robert Knorr
12/31/1968	22	Gave birth to Robert Wallace Knorr Jr.
08/05/1970	24	Gave birth to Theresa (Terry) Knorr
End of 1970's		Divorces Robert Wallace Knorr
03/27/1971	25	Marries Ronald Pulliam
09/27/1972	26	Divorces Ronald Pulliam
08/23/1976	30	Met and married Chester Harris, age 59
12/17/1976	30	Divorces Chester Harris
Late 1970's		Began severely beating her children and enlisted Howard to help her in the abuse.
1981	35	Daughter Suesan told the police about the abuse and they didn't believe her story and her mother regained custody.
1983	37	Theresa starts force feeding Suesan.
June 1983	37	Theresa shoots Suesan in the chest and the bullet gets lodged in her back. She then puts her in the bathtub and leaves her there for nearly a month while nursing her back to health.
1984	38	Theresa threw a pair of scissors which lodged into Suesan's back.

Spring 1984	38	Theresa forces Sheila and Suesan into prostitution to provide money for the family.
07/05/1984	38	Theresa makes Suesan drink half a bottle of liquor to anesthetize her. She then makes her lay on the kitchen floor and removes the bullet from her back. Her health continues to deteriorate and Theresa leaves her on the kitchen floor without providing any care.
07/16/1984	38	Theresa took all of the children (except for Terry) in the car with her and transported Suesan's unconscious body to the woods and lit her and her belongings on fire. She left her there to die.
05/1985	39	Theresa locks Sheila in a 2x2 foot closet. She refused her food and the temperature inside the closet was so hot that she couldn't wear any clothes.
06/1985	39	Sheila's dead body was removed from the closet and Theresa and her sons put her body in a box and left the box in nearby woods.
06/21/1985	39	Sheila's body was found by Elmer and Hazel Barber.
09/29/1986	40	Theresa forces Terry to set the apartment they were living in on fire.
1986	40	Terry finally gets angry enough to leave her mother, and develops a drug problem.
1990	44	Theresa moves by herself to Salt Lake City and enrolls in night school to become a certified nurse's aide.
09/05/1990	44	Terry goes to the police and reports the atrocities committed by her mother. The investigators don't believe her.
10/28/1993	47	Terry tells another investigator about the death of her sisters and they finally believe her.
11/10/1993	47	Theresa Knorr is arrested in Salt Lake City where she is working as an in-home care nurse.
10/17/1995	49	Theresa Cross Knorr pleads guilty and is convicted to two consecutive life terms.

General Information

Sex	Female
Race	White
Number of victims	3
Country where killing occurred	United States
States where killing occurred	California
Cities where killing occurred	Sacramento
Type of killer	Missionary
Height	5'4"

Childhood Information

Date of birth	March 14, 1946
Location	Sacramento, California
Birth order	Youngest
Number of siblings	Two
XYX?	No
Raised by	Jim Cross (father) and Swannie Gay Cross (mother)
Birth category	Youngest
Parent's marital status	Married
Family event	Death of mother
Age of family event	Theresa was 15
Problems in school?	
Teased while in school?	
Physically attractive?	Attractive as a young woman
Physical defect?	No
Speech defect?	No
Head injury?	No
Physically abused?	She claimed that she was beaten by stepmothers, but this cannot be proven.

Psychologically abused?	No
Sexually abused?	No
Father's occupation	He worked as a cheese maker at a dairy
Age of first sexual experience	Unknown, but she talked about sex as a young girl.
Age when first had intercourse	16
Mother's occupation	Essex Lumber Company, as a pencil maker
Father abused drugs/alcohol	N/A
Mother abused drugs/alcohol	N/A
Cognitive Ability	
Highest grade in school	Unknown
Highest degree	Certified nurse's aide (completed this at night school)
Grades in school	N/A
IQ	N/A
Source of IQ information	N/A
Work History	
Served in the military?	No
Branch	N/A
Type of discharge	N/A
Saw combat duty	N/A
Killed enemy during service?	N/A
Applied for job as a cop?	N/A
Worked in law enforcement?	N/A
Fired from jobs?	Yes
Types of jobs worked	In-home care nurse
Employment status during series	Unemployed
Relationships	
Sexual preference	Heterosexual
Marital status	Married, Widowed, Divorced, Remarried
Number of children	6
Lives with his children	Yes
Living with	Spouse, Children, Father
Triad	
Animal torture	No
Fire setting	No
Bed wetting	No
Killer Psychological Information	
Abused drugs?	Yes
Abused alcohol?	Yes
Been to a psychologist?	No
Time in forensic hospital?	No
Diagnosis	N/A
Killer Criminal History	
Committed previous crimes?	No
Spend time in jail?	No
Spend time in prison?	No
Killed prior to series? Age?	Yes – 18 when she killed her first husband
Serial Killing	
Number of victims	3
Victim type	Husband and two daughters
Killer age at start of series	38

Date of first kill in series	July 16, 1984
Date of final kill in series	June 21, 1985
Gender of victims	Female
Race of victims	Caucasian
Age of victims	17, 20
Type of victim	Children
Method of killing	Burned alive, starved to death
Weapon	N/A
Was gun used?	No
Type	N/A
Did killer have a partner?	Yes
Name of partner	Sons, Robert and William
Sex of partner	Male
Type of serial killer	Missionary – she believed her daughters practiced Witchcraft
How close did killer live?	Lived together
Location of first contact	Home
Location of killing	Home, in the woods near the highway
Killing occurred in home of victim?	Yes
Killing occurred in home of killer?	Yes
Victim abducted or killed at contact?	No
Behavior During Crimes	
Rape?	No
Tortured victims?	Yes
Stalked victims?	No
Overkill?	Yes
Quick & efficient?	No
Used blindfold?	No
Bound the victims?	Yes
After Death Behavior	
Sex with the body?	No
Mutilated body?	No
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	No
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	Yes, concealed one body in a box. The other victim was lit on fire.
Moved, buried	No
Cut-up and disposed of	No
Moved, too home	No
Sentencing	
Date killer arrested	November 10, 1993
Date convicted	October 17, 1995
Sentence	Two consecutive life terms
Killer executed?	No
Did killer plead NGRI?	No
Was the NGRI plea successful?	N/A
Name and state of prison	State Prison for Women in Chow Chilla, California

Killer committed suicide?	No
Killer killed in prison?	No
Date of death	N/A

References

Clarkson, Wensley (1995). *Whatever mothers says: A true story of a mother, madness, and murder*. NY: St. Martins.

McDougal, Dennis (1995). *Mother's day*. NY: Fawcett Publishing.

<http://reclusivedescent.tripod.com/macabremusings/id13.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theresa_Knorr