

Samuel L. Smithers



Information researched and summarized by
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Date	Age	Life Event
01/30/1953	0	Born in 1953 in Tennessee
06/1971	18	Graduated high school
09/1971	18	Attend junior college in Chattanooga Technical School until 1973
1973	20	Married his future wife, Sharon. She was 17.
1973 – 1977	20-24	He and His wife could not have kids because he had a low sperm count. He was made fun of by his brothers for not being masculine enough to have a child. They adopted a boy named Jonathan.
1979	26	Smithers became a full-fledged Deacon at his Southern Baptist Church.
01/09/1980	27	His church caught on fire. He just happened to be there and was able to put the fire out. The cause of the fire was kerosene found on a pillow. They thought it was purposefully placed there. There were two other people at the church, and all three of them were suspects.
01/09/1980	27	A second fire started two hours later in a classroom in the church – Samuel Smithers discovered it despite the fact the church was on lockdown. One of the firemen swore that he got an erection from the excitement. (No charges were brought against him at this time).
04/14/1980	28	Smithers knocked on Rose Bremmen’s door and told her to call the police because her car was on fire. He already had a fire extinguisher.
04/14/1980	28	He was arrested for the fire. He ended up confessing to all three fires. He did not say why he did it, but it was clear he loved being the hero.
06/1980	28	Court date for fires
10/31/1980	28	He was sentenced to 3-5 years in a state prison. He was suspended on good behavior and psychiatric counseling
Approximately 1982	Around 30	Smithers’ dad, Alvin, died.
1982	30	While working at a gas station for Sharon’s father, he was robbed and then hit in the head with the butt end of a shotgun

1982	30	After the robbery, the whole family moved to Florida. The parents moved to Plant City, and Sam and Sharon moved to Panama City.
1982	30	Smithers got a job at Eastern Marine, but the company went under and then got hired at Tampa Ship Yard
1995	43	Smithers started mowing the lawn for Marion Whitehurst in Plant City
2/1995	43	Sharon's mother died
3/1995	43	Sharon's father had a stroke
10/1995	43	Sharon's grandfather died
05/12/1996	44	Murdered Denise "New York" Roach at Marion Whitehurst's residence
95/28/1996	44	Murdered Christy Cowan at Marion Whitehurst's residence. Whitehurst came home and found him with an axe and a puddle of blood on the floor. He said he was chopping down some trees, and was unsure why there was blood on the floor, "perhaps a dead animal." He cleaned up the blood, and Marion called the police. By the time the police arrived the blood was cleaned up, but there were drag marks. He discovered Christy's body, and called for police divers. They then discovered Denise's body.
5/28/1996	44	Smithers was arrested and brought in for questioning. He requested that his wife accompany him. He was hooked up to a polygraph which indicated he was lying. They explained this to him, and he ended up confessing.
1996	44	Smithers was placed in Hillsborough County Jail
1996	44	An old rape case was reopened involving a prostitute. No conclusions were made but they suspect it was Smithers.
1997	45	The trial started. (It ended up stretching over a year and a half).
1997	45	Sharon remarried.
12/1998	46	Smithers called to the stand as the defense's star witness. He then denied killing them.
12/1998	46	The jury reached a verdict in an hour and 35 minutes. He was convicted of first degree murder for both murders.
4/05/1999	47	Smithers attended a hearing to determine what aggravating terms or mitigating factors applied to him.
6/25/1999	47	Smithers was sentenced to the death penalty
		Dr. Godwin stated he thinks Smithers killed more people and just dumped them in different places.
		After the case had been closed for sometime, Detectives Larry Lingo and Dorothy Flair came across an old file of an the unsolved Roslin Kruse case, and they thought Smithers might have killed her. In the file the detective sees that Kruse had been roommates with Cowan.

General Information

Sex	Male
Race	White
Number of victims	Two confirmed, Other possibilities
Country where killing occurred	United States
States where killing occurred	Florida
Cities where killing occurred	Plant City
Type of killer	Cognitive Objective Killer
Height	6'04"

Childhood Information

Date of birth	January 30, 1953
Location	Tennessee
Birth order	
Number of siblings	Two brothers
XYX?	
Raised by	Mom and Dad

Birth category	
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	Dad died in the early 1980's
Age of family event	Around 30
Problems in school?	
Teased while in school?	
Physically attractive?	
Physical defect?	
Speech defect?	
Head injury?	He fell out of his crib when he was an infant. He was robbed while working at a gas station and was hit in the head with the butt end of the shotgun.
Physically abused?	Yes, his mother beat him with a belt as a child
Psychologically abused?	Yes
Sexually abused?	No
Father's occupation (Alvin)	
Age of first sexual experience	
Age when first had intercourse	
Mother's occupation (Linnie)	
Father abused drugs/alcohol	
Mother abused drugs/alcohol	
Cognitive Ability	
Highest grade in school	14
Highest degree	Associate's degree in business
Grades in school	
IQ	
Source of IQ information	
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?	Probably – "It didn't work out"
Types of jobs worked	Groundskeeper, volunteer firemen, gas station, electronic, tech
Employment status during series	Lawn caretaker (groundskeeper)
Relationships	
Sexual preference	Heterosexual
Marital status	Married
Number of children	One (Adopted Son)
Lives with his children	Yes
Living with	Wife and Son
Triad	
Animal torture	
Fire setting	Yes (as an adult)

Bed wetting	
Killer Psychological Information	
Abused drugs?	
Abused alcohol?	
Been to a psychologist (prior to killing)?	
Time in forensic hospital (prior to killing)?	
Diagnosis	
Killer Criminal History	
Committed previous crimes?	Yes – Arson, slept with prostitutes
Spend time in jail?	Yes
Spend time in prison?	Yes – 3-5 years in state prison for Arson
Killed prior to series? Age?	Not that we know of for sure, but it is suspected
Serial Killing	
Number of victims	Two confirmed, Other possibilities
Victim type	
Killer age at start of series	43
Date of first kill in series	May 12, 1996
Date of final kill in series	May 28, 1996
Gender of victims	Female
Race of victims	One African American, One White
Age of victims	25, 31
Type of victim	
Method of killing	
Weapon	Blunt object; An Axe
Was gun used?	No
Type	
Did killer have a partner?	No
Name of partner	
Sex of partner	
Relationship of partner	
Type of serial killer	Disorganized
How close did killer live?	Relatively close
Location of first contact	Marion Whitehurst's Plant City home – 27 acres
Location of killing	Plant City
Killing occurred in home of victim?	No
Killing occurred in home of killer?	No
Victim abducted or killed at contact?	No
Behavior During Crimes	
Rape?	No
Tortured victims?	No
Stalked victims?	No
Overkill?	Yes
Quick & efficient?	No
Used blindfold?	No
Bound the victims?	No
After Death Behavior	
Sex with the body?	No
Mutilated body?	Yes
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	Yes – thrown in the pond
Left at scene, buried	No
Moved, no attempt to hide	No
Moved, buried	No
Cut-up and disposed of	No
Moved, too home	No
Sentencing	
Date killer arrested	May 28, 1996
Date convicted	June 25, 1999
Sentence	Death Penalty
Killer executed?	Still on Death Row
Did killer plead NGRI?	No
Was the NGRI plea successful?	N/A
Did serial killer confess?	No
Name and state of prison	Union C.I. in Florida
Killer committed suicide?	No
Killer killed in prison?	No
Date of death	N/A

References

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