

The City Parks Strangler

This particular set of cases is controversial, mostly because there's a serious disconnect between how the police are officially treating the situation, and how most of the populace is. To the police, the City Parks Strangler is a serial killer who has murdered at least seven people that they know of, in a ritualistic and macabre fashion. To the populace, the Strangler is a admittedly murderous and probably insane vigilante who has still single-handedly chased all of the drug dealers out of the parks. The difference of opinion here has not made it any easier to catch the Strangler.

Some background is in order. The city in question had previously decided to handle a perennial abandoned property problem in inner city neighborhoods by allowing local groups to clear the lots, and repurpose them as small parklands. The project worked extremely well: street crime went down, quality of life went up, people got out and interacted with their neighbors more. Unfortunately, one local drug gang with no sense of even local civics soon decided that the new green spaces would be perfect for their drug transactions. This led to controversy, and heightened tension in the parks.

And then the murders began.

The victims have all been known members and associates of the gang in question; the police have yet to find one who doesn't -- didn't -- have a long rap sheet for either selling or manufacturing drugs. The police believe that the victims could not possibly have been murdered at the scene, mostly because the cause of death appears to be 'head squeezed by a hydraulic press.' Victims are also invariably found with recently-fired firearms and contused hands; many also show broken toes, presumably gotten during the struggle. There's a surprising lack of blood in the area, which gives credence to the 'murdered somewhere else' theory; there's an even more surprising amount of drugs and money on the victims. Whatever else the City Park Strangler is after, it's not cash or narcotics.

The cases are often cold from the start. No fingerprints, no DNA, no eyewitness reports -- it's hard to get residents to even admit that they heard gunfire from the parks -- and very little in the way of a profile. The gang being targeted is currently sending out their drug dealers with a bodyguard, which has only led to there starting to be two victims at the scene of the crime, not one. The City Parks

Strangler only strikes when there are no innocent bystanders around; in one case, he (they think it's a 'he') apparently passed by an unconscious junkie on his way to kill a drug dealer. And the Strangler doesn't seem to care about anything *but* the parks, either.

All in all, the police are getting to be officially baffled. It's even gotten to the point where they might be ready to believe that one drunk who swears that he saw one victim get killed by something that came out of a **sunflower** (very useful in cleaning up urban pollution, sunflowers). Obviously, that's not what *really* happened -- but maybe it's a start?

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