

**HISTORY: MURDER AND INTRIGUE IN SUBURBIA**

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New York financier and former U.S. Ambassador to Denmark under the Reagan Administration, confirmed that his mother was upset over divorce proceedings with her husband, Jeffrey.

It was later revealed that on Sunday, March 3, 1996, Meta would take an Amtrak train from Durham, NC to Philadelphia. Once in Philadelphia, she rented a car and drove to Westfield, arriving sometime on Monday. As she parked the rental car in the southside lot of the train station, it was clear she had retaliation on her mind.

According to employees who witnessed the murder/suicide, Meta arrived in disguise at the weekly newspaper's office on Elm Street shortly after 4:30 p.m. Jeffrey had stepped out of the office, but Meta was told he was to return shortly. She decided to wait.

Upon his return, the couple went into the back offices to talk and approximately 20 minutes later Meta emerged. Employees would later tell authorities they heard no

fighting or screaming.

So, when Meta pulled out the .357-caliber Magnum and pumped three bullets into her husband's chest and head, employees, who were nearby in horror, were as surprised as the victim. She then put the gun in her mouth and pulled the trigger a fourth and final time.



**POLICE CHIEF ANTHONY SCUTTI WESTFIELD 1996**

Two 911 calls were received almost immediately. Upon arrival, the police and paramedics pronounced both Jeffrey and Meta dead at the scene.

Although authorities would soon recover a suicide note along with binoculars and ammunition in her rental car, it was evident the crime was premeditated. "D-N-R," a universal medical term for Do Not Resuscitate was written

on Meta's stomach in blue ink. It was clear she had come to Westfield with the intention of killing her husband, as well as herself.

A 1965 graduate of Westfield High School, Jeffrey had the reputation of being "a gym rat and great athlete" said Westfield Councilman James Hely.

Amazingly, only three days after the murder/suicide, *The Leader* published its Thursday edition. It made no mention of the tragic demise of its publisher. Katherine Bauer chose to let the other papers focus on the negative side of her son's death. The March 7, 1996 edition featured a tribute to the life of both her sons. She died on Mother's Day, one year later.

Carmelo Montalbano, co-owner of *The Leader*, moved out of town within the year.

By June, 1996, Horace Corbin, a businessman and chemical engineer, bought *The Leader*. He has been publisher for almost 10 years now. The office of 60 years was moved, one block away – far enough he says from the curse of the Bauers and all links to John List.

Every a little town has a dark side to its history, Westfield not excluded – and does history tend to repeat itself? Children might know this answer all too well as Halloween approaches. When they walk down Gallows Hills Road, though too dark to see, the stout fall breeze carries whispers – they're sure it's from the souls of those who were hung there and buried in Fairview Cemetery.

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