

On January 22nd, 1992 at approximately 12:35 am, under bright florescent lights, the first in a series of three chemicals began to flow through the long clear IV tube into the arm of Mark Hopkinson. (Daily Times, Jan. 30th 1992) Forty two year old Hopkinson was sentenced to death for ordering the torturous murder of Jeff Green. Green's body was found on May 20th 1979 at a rest area near Fort Bridger along I-80 with more than 100 cigarette burns and a gun shot wound to the neck. (Huseas, 2006) Green was a witness set to testify against Mark for the 1977 bombing of attorney Vincent Vehar's home. Mark, who at the time of Green's murder was in prison in Lompoc California, was later charged and convicted of ordering the bombing of Vincent Vehar's home in which Vincent, his wife Beverly and their son John all lost their lives.

It was said that the conflict between Mark Hopkinson and Vincent Vehar stemmed from a battle between Mark and the Fort Bridger Sewer board, for which Vehar served as the attorney. Mark owned a mobile home park and wanted to hook up the entire mobile home park to local sewer lines for the price of one hook up, to which the Fort Bridger Sewer Board said no. (Huseas, 2006) From this seemingly mild disagreement about sewer lines, stemmed one of the most incredibly complicated and twisted stories Wyoming has ever seen.

By most accounts Mark Hopkinson was a charismatic and good looking man who was athletic and never had a problem with the ladies. Beneath that façade, nearly anyone who had dealings with Mark would vow that he had a short temper and vindictive nature; no one dared cross him. While most kept a distance from Mark, the youth of Bridger Valley were drawn to his charming personality, wild lifestyle and perceived power over others. Unfortunately Mark was able to convince three young men by the names of Jeff Green, Mike Hickey and Jamey Hysell to consistently "handle" his dirty work. Of all the crimes the four men were involved in; it was Mike Hickey who bombed the Vehar's home at Mark's insistence. Mike Hickey, a young man with a drinking problem and a vicious criminal history of his own, testified against Mark, and in exchange was not prosecuted for the Vehar murders.

During the Grand Jury hearing just days before he was set to testify, the body of Jeff Green was found. Prosecution, believing that Mark had ordered Jeff's murder to keep him from testifying, convinced the Grand Jury to combine the cases and try Mark for all four murders in one trial. (Daily Times, Jan. 23rd 1992) Special prosecutor, Gerry Spence was appointed (Spence was a longtime friend of the Vehar family) and a change of venue was granted, placing the trial in Jackson WY. The trail of Mark Hopkinson began September 4th 1979. The prosecution presented 27 witness and over 300 pieces of evidence (Huseas, 2006), however when it came time for the defense to present their case, they rested. When asked by the judge if Mark had made the decision not to present a defense Mark replied "It was to the fact simply that I felt the State hasn't proved anything... (My decision) was voluntary. I thought the whole situation over and it was my own conclusion." (Huseas, 2006) On September 25th 1979, the jury having only deliberated for seven and a half hours came back with a verdict of guilty on all counts.

On September 27th after deliberating for nine and a half hours the jury delivered the sentences. Mark received three life sentences, one for each member of the Vehar family, and the death penalty for the murder of Jeff Green. (Huseas, 2006)

What unsettled even those who were satisfied with Mark's sentence were that the actual murderer's of Jeff Green were never apprehended. At the time, Mark was the only man in the in the history of Wyoming to receive the death penalty in a case where the actual murderers were never captured (Casper Star-Tribune March 20th 2004), and the only man in the US since 1976 to receive the death penalty for a crime at which he was not present (New York Times, Jan. 23rd 1992) To this day, there is no record of charges having been filed against the two men who actually abducted, tortured and ultimately killed Jeff Green. (Daily Times, Jan 18th, 1992)

At 12:30 am, 5 minutes before the lethal injection of Mark Hopkinson was carried out, he issued the following statement. (Daily Times, Jan. 23rd 1992)

"I would like this to serve as a dying declaration. Nobody I called from the Lompoc Prison other than Jim Taylor (an acquaintance) had any involvement whatsoever in Jeff Green's Death."

"Gerry Spence is a lying manipulating piece of shit."

"The governor could have proved this case against me was a lie."

"The Attorney General's office will continue to try and justify their lie."

Thank you,

Mark 1/22/92

"P.S. I feel sorry for the Vehar family, but you got the wrong man."

"Forgive them for they know not what they do" (Huseas, 2006)

Sources

Legacy of Fear by Marion McMillan Huseas published 2006

Newspaper Articles from;

Rawlins Daily Times published; Thursday Jan. 23rd 1992, Thursday Jan. 30th 1992

New York Times published Thursday Jan. 23rd 1992

Casper Star-Tribune published Saturday March 20th 2004