

HAMILTON **THE** SPECTATOR

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LOCAL HISTORY

Flashbacks: The thrilling story of notorious Hamilton criminal Evelyn Dick told in new podcast

Crime is the focus of a new podcast division of the company that has released three instalments of a nine-part podcast series called “Where Are You Mrs. Dick?”

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One hundred years after the birth of the [infamous Evelyn Dick](#), it looks certain that she has taken her darkest secrets to the grave.

The [notorious Hamiltonian](#) from the 1940s, who was at the centre of one of Canada’s most sensational murder trials, was paroled from prison in 1958 and somehow managed to stay out of public view ever since.

Scores of reporters, biographers and curiosity seekers have tried to find out what happened to her, but she was able to lay low with a new identity that was a carefully guarded secret.

With her 100th birthday on Oct. 13, she most likely has died. But when, where and how?

Evelyn Dick poses for photographers in April 1946, a month after her husband's torso had been found.

And what about the mysteries surrounding the March, 1946 [Torso murder of her husband John Dick](#), whose dismembered body was found near Albion Falls? How was she involved? And what exactly happened with the death of her baby Peter David White, whose body was discovered encased in cement in a suitcase?

Evelyn was sentenced to hang for killing her husband but her conviction was overturned and she was acquitted at a second trial because of some clever legal defence work.

Evelyn Dick leaving court Oct. 8, 1946 during her trial.

Yet she was found guilty of killing her child, an infant she had previously claimed had been put up for adoption. She served 11 years for that crime.

The latest effort to find answers involves a Toronto production company called Big Coat Media that is known for its popular home improvement show “Love it or List It.” Crime is the focus of a new podcast division of the company that has released three instalments of a [nine-part podcast series called “Where Are You Mrs. Dick?”](#) I was among those interviewed for the series, talking about [stories I have written about the case for The Spectator](#).

Catherine Fogarty, the president and executive producer of Big Coat, hired a researcher and archivist to trace through government records to try to find out what happened to Dick after she was released. But like so many before, they found the road was blocked at every turn.

“I was hopeful that with Evelyn turning 100 this year that it would lead to the release of some archive records. But they still will not release them,” says Fogarty.

There are two major obstacles:

- Upon her release from Kingston Penitentiary for Women, Dick was given a new identity and records about the name change

are kept secret. Moreover, she would have likely changed her name a second time if she remarried, complicating the trail even further.

- Her government file remains sealed after she was granted a Royal Prerogative of Mercy in 1985, a special pardon that is awarded in exceptional cases of “substantial injustice or undue hardship” which would not seem to apply in Evelyn Dick’s case. Many believe she had friends in high places who helped her receive the pardon as part of a wider strategy to muzzle stories she might tell relating to her notorious black book of prominent people with whom she had sex.

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Fogarty says the researcher was able to collect correspondence from a parole board official about a parolee named “Betty” who had been relocated to Winnipeg around the time of Evelyn’s release. Fogarty believes “Betty” was really “Evelyn” and the official went to great lengths to re-establish her with a new identity.

Author Brian Vallée in his 2001 book, “Torso Murder: The Untold Story of Evelyn Dick” said he believed she married a wealthy man after her release and moved to the West Coast.

Closer to home, there have been numerous rumours of her living in various locations in Southwestern Ontario including London where she was reported to have been a local United Church parishioner for a period of time in the 1960s.

But in every case, no one has been able to present definitive proof or come forward with documentary evidence of Evelyn’s death.

This is highly unusual for an infamous or famous person. Lots of people try to keep a low profile. But virtually no one goes off to the great beyond without leaving a few basic details behind.

When someone dies, it almost always comes out somehow. Even the mystery of Jimmy Hoffa’s longtime disappearance was eventually revealed.

The only comparable case I can think of actually involves another Hamiltonian — the legendary bootlegger Rocco Perri. He complained about a headache one day in April 1944 and went for a walk. He was never seen again, either alive or dead.

I remember my late friend Margaret Houghton, who worked for many years as an archivist in the Local History and Archives section of the library, used to say the Evelyn Dick file was the most popular one in the collection. (Although Rocco Perri was high on the list as well.)

There is something enduring about the Evelyn Dick story that continues to attract attention.

Perhaps it's because she was involved in the two ultimate transgressions a wife and a mother could possibly commit. Nothing could be farther from tolerated behaviour than brutally murdering a spouse and baby and savagely disposing of the bodies. The fact that she was beautiful and promiscuous and no one knows exactly what happened — with the killings or where she ended up — makes it a subject of endless speculation.

TV tip

World-renowned architect and former Hamiltonian Raymond Moriyama, 90, will be the [subject of a documentary première on TVO Wednesday, Aug. 12 at 9 p.m.](#)

“Magical Imperfection — The Life and Architecture of Raymond Moriyama” tells the story of the brilliant architect who, as a boy during the Second World War, was cruelly sent to an internment camp in Western Canada with his family because of his Japanese heritage. After the war, they settled in Hamilton and he attended Westdale High School before moving on to the University of Toronto.

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