

Crime Guy's Penny Bell Dossier

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Family & Friends

(Ruth) Penny Bell, adopted as a child. Married to Jon Hayes and Alistair Bell. Her son Matthew was John's child.

Alistair Bell, married to Penny at the time of her death and father of Lauren. He has been ruled out of any involvement.

Matthew Bell, Penny's eldest son. Alistair was driving Matthew to school on the morning of Penny's death, leaving Penny with the builders.

Lauren Bell, Penny's only daughter with Alistair. She was at school at the time of her mother's death.

Vicky Bird, the Bell family nanny at Bakers Wood. She was very closely involved in the daily life of the family.

John Richmond, a builder and former neighbour when the Bells lived in Harrow. He moved to Pinner, where he lived at the time of Penny's death. He was interviewed (perhaps twice) in connection with the murder. He also made suspicious and lurid allegations to The Sun newspaper, and his fingerprints were found in Penny's car.

Jon Hayes, Penny's former husband, has been ruled out as the killer.

Michael Flynn was Penny's business partner. He has been ruled out of involvement.

Police

Brian Edwards, Detective Superintendent, Met Police, was also involved in Suzy Lamplugh and Jill Dando.

David Little, Detective Chief Inspector, Met Police.

Adam Manley, Detective Sergeant, Met Police.

Susan Stansfield, Detective Sergeant, Met Police.

Journalists and Broadcasters

Sue Cook, BBC Crimewatch.

Timeline

| Date | Time | Information / Claim | Source | Disputed? |
|----------|-------|--|------------|-----------|
| 03.06.91 | ? | Penny withdraws £8,500 from her joint account held with her husband. | Crimewatch | N |
| 05.06.91 | Night | Was Penny anxious or withdrawn on the evening before her death? Friends and family say yes. | Family | N |
| 06.06.91 | 08:30 | Alistair Bell drives son Matthew to school from the Bell home in Denham. | Crimewatch | N |
| | 08:50 | Penny discusses various matters with the builders in her home | Crimewatch | N |
| | 09:10 | Further discussions with the builders. Penny is impatient and keeps saying she must be quick. She seems polite but anxious. | Crimewatch | N |
| | 09:40 | Penny Bell leaves the house in her powder blue Jaguar XJS (1988) for an 'appointment' at 09:50 | Crimewatch | N |
| | 09:45 | Possible/likely sighting of Penny's car in Fulmer Common Road, Black Park, a few miles from home. She stops to pick up a man in a layby. It appears he came in his own bronze/brown/maroon car, a Peugeot Talbot. This man might have been in his late 40s. This witness was married to a police detective. | Crimewatch | Witness |
| | 10:30 | Van driver sees Penny's car with a male passenger. It is crawling at half the speed limit with the hazard lights on. Is it trying to park? As the van driver overtakes, he sees a man's hand on the steering wheel with a gold chain on his wrist. The car turns left into Ruislip Road East. The time might have been 'shortly before' 10:30. Other witnesses remembered others hooting at the slow Jaguar. | Crimewatch | Witness |
| | 10:45 | Smartly dressed man with no sports kit is seen leaving the car park. He is wearing a white shirt with no jacket. No blood stains are mentioned. | Crimewatch | Witness |
| | 10:45 | A nurse sees an erratically driven car trying to get past her own car aggressively on Ruislip Road East. The car is coming away from the direction of Gurnell Sports Centre. She is angry and distressed and pulls over to let him past. He turns left into Cuckoo Avenue. | Crimewatch | Witness |
| | 12:00 | Penny's body is found in her car. Her handbag and purse are present but not the £8,500. Police are called shortly after. Police are certain the murder occurred inside the Jaguar in the car park at the Gurnell. Penny died from stab wounds from a blade 3-4 inches in length administered first from the person in the passenger seat and subsequently from outside the car at the driver's side. | Crimewatch | N |

Open Questions

Q: What time did daughter Lauren go to school? Who took her? How did she get there? (We believe she walked home when nobody collected her that afternoon. Was her normal journey to walk to school every day?)

Q: Was a large amount of cash seen in Penny's purse or handbag on the morning of her death? If not, when and who was the last to notice it?

Q: Was the withdrawal of large amounts of cash typical? Some sources say yes, some say no. Cash was used more frequently in 1991.

Q: Some sources suggest Penny had a Nokia mobile phone in 1991. What model was it? Have the police fully investigated the call logs? Where is that phone now? Did she have the phone with her when she died?

Q: Was the man in Black Park the 'appointment' Penny was so anxious to keep? Or had she changed her plans? Was the 'appointment' some kind of cover for her to leave the house?

Q: What was Penny's normal daily routine? 09:40 is late for someone leaving to work in Kilburn, a half-hour drive away. Was this late start typical? Or unusual?

Q: What do we know about the other car in the layby? Was it a Peugeot Talbot? Was it bronze/brown/maroon? At what time was it removed from that layby? (Some sources suggest it was gone by midday.)

Q: If the killer was driven to the Gurnell by Penny, how did he leave? He did not have time to return to Black Park to collect his car unless he got a cab or a lift in a car. (We think public transport would not have been fast enough to collect the car by midday.)

Sources

TV: **BBC Crimewatch 1991**, the best general introduction to the case:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXxi_DG-OK8

TV: **BBC Crimewatch 2021**, including updates and footage from the time:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56KC32wvLn0>

TV: **Donal Macintyre Unsolved**, 2015

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IE_lqWIND5k

Podcast: **Murder Mile UK True Crime**, 3rd June 2021 has brilliant details:

<https://www.murdermiletours.com/blog/murder-mile-uk-true-crime-podcast-134-penny-bell-and-the-thirty-year-silence>

Podcast: **Sky News Daily**, 2nd June 2021

Podcast: **Let's Have a Chat About Murder**, 11th March 2021

Podcast: **Seeing Red**, 30th September 2020

Podcast: **The Trail Went Cold**, 17th May 2017