

NEWS

# DID MURDERER KILL JANINE - AND OVER 25 OTHER WOMEN?

## Jailed monster could be man behind brutal death of Midland prostitute

MIKE LOCKLEY  
Sunday Mercury Writer

**T**HIS is the gaunt dead-eyed face of one of Britain's worst serial killers, a former police intelligence officer believes - and his victims include Wolverhampton vice girl Janine Downes.

Christopher Halliwell is currently serving life - a sentence that will see him die in prison - for the murders of Sian O'Callaghan and Rebecca Godden.

But Chris Clark believes as many as 26 women died at the hands of the former taxi driver.

And on his list is Claudia Lawrence, a 35-year-old chef who went missing in 2009. Police are currently searching a flooded quarry on the outskirts of York for her remains.

Chris and co-author Bethan True-man place Halliwell, now 57, in the frame for a string of unsolved murders and missing persons investigations in his latest book, *The New Millennium Serial Killer*, released on Wednesday.

And the name of sex worker Janine Downes stands out.

The 22-year-old - just five foot tall and weighing less than eight stone - was strangled and sexually assaulted. Plucked from Wolverhampton's red light district, her semi-naked body was discovered on a cold February, 1991, morning hidden beneath hedges close to Shifnal, Shropshire.

Chris says the murderer's *raison d'être* fits Halliwell - a man who extensively travelled the country's red light zones - like a glove.

He trawled known street worker haunts in the West Midlands. As a keen angler and canal enthusiast - Halliwell owned his own longboat - he extensively travelled the country. He spent time in Liverpool, Northampton, Huddersfield...

Janine, like Halliwell's victims, was taken from one police boundary, the West Midlands, and dumped in another, the West Mercia force's patch.

The body was also hidden in remote countryside.

And Janine - very small, very petite - fits the physical profile of Halliwell's. She even posed in schoolgirl uniform for punters.

Others including former senior detectives, have linked lorry driver Alun Kyte, jailed in 2000 for the murders of Birmingham vice girls Samo



Wolverhampton prostitute Janine Downes, who was discovered dead near Shifnal in February 1991



Martin Freeman as Steve Fulcher and Joe Absolom as Halliwell in drama *The Confession*

**“The man who gravitated from antiques burglar to murderer had a young family, friends and the gift of the gab.”**

Chris believes a drawing of Janine's last resting place will be in that book. Wiltshire Police have stated they know nothing about its existence.

Halliwell owned a staggering 80 motor vehicles from 1988 to his arrest in 2011. "That is an extraordinary number of vehicles to amass," said Chris. "The conclusion must be he got rid of them because of concerns about forensic evidence."

Chris added: "Despite only being convicted of these two crimes, we are convinced of Halliwell's guilt in relation to a number of other murder cases that span over 20 years. Whilst he will never be released from prison and is therefore no longer a risk to society, this doesn't stop us from wanting to investigate further."

"There are numerous families who long for answers about what happened to the mother, daughter, sister, auntie or friend that they have lost. We have spent time investigating because we want these cases to be solved, to allow the missing woman to be found and allowed a proper burial, and we long for closure and justice for their families."

"One of the key things that Halliwell has said which points to him being a serial killer, or at least to the idea that he was inspired by such offenders, is that whilst he was in Dartmoor Prison he asked a fellow inmate how many people you need to kill to be classed as a serial killer."

"The cellmate told how Halliwell was obsessed with Moors murderer Myra Hindley, saying: 'He used to ask me about killing. He said, 'How many people do you need to kill before you become a serial killer?' He just had a thing about them. He wanted people to be proud of him or an area to be afraid of him. Don't ask me why, but that's what he wanted to be. He used to get this magazine called *True Detective* with stories about people getting knocked off."

"This was many years before Halliwell abducted and murdered Becky. Had Christopher Halliwell already killed by then? We believe that yes, he had."

■ *The New Millennium Serial Killer* is available from publishers Crime Publishing Network or from Amazon.

Paul and Tracey Turner to the grisly crime.

"Alun Kyte was a strong candidate," Chris, who lives in County Durham admitted, "but when someone murders everything is dumped on their door."

Halliwell's ex-wife told police he would become sexually excited while playing computer game *Grand Theft Auto*, although Chris doesn't believe he burned with hatred for prostitutes. "They were more readily available and were easy prey to get into his car."

Two years ago, Halliwell's crimes were re-visited in award winning ITV drama *A Confession*, starring Martin Freeman.

It merely scratched the surface of his reign of terror, Chris insists.

Halliwell's profile is far from the simmering, socially clumsy outsider who vents his rage through blood-letting. The man who gravitated from antiques burglar to murderer had a young family, a circle of friends and had the gift of the gab.

"He could be charismatic, the same as Peter Sutcliffe," said Chris. "He had been a construction worker and a taxi driver, communication is a large part of both jobs."

But he shared the traits of a serial killer. "He was very cold, calculating," said Chris, "forensically aware, no empathy for victims and their families. At the age of 15, he trained to be a butcher and was very adept with knives at that stage. I think he had a hatred for his mother. As a child, he delighted in cruelty to animals and

insects. He clearly had sexual hang-ups. He had all the markings of a serial killer."

During two years of painstaking research, the author has uncovered chilling details, which point to more bodies. Many more bodies.

A collection of 60 items of women's clothing - including Sian O'Callaghan's boot and what is believed to be Becky Godden's cardigan - were discovered buried on the banks of a lake in Ramsbury, Wiltshire. Among the collection - were neatly folded underwear and a shirt.

The bundle is a clear indication

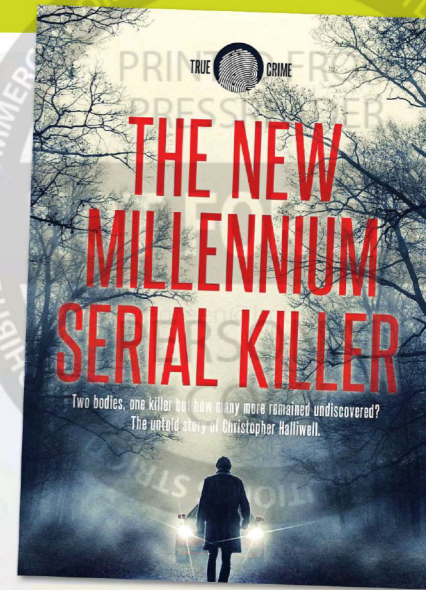
Mr Fulcher has also revealed Halliwell possessed a macabre sketchbook of what he believes are other burial sites. The crude pencil drawings were seized from his home.

"There were a good dozen or so sketches that I saw and they were all of remote locations. One of my lines of inquiry was obviously to try to identify where these places were," said the ex-detective.

Claudia Lawrence, who went missing in 2009.

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■ Christopher Halliwell is known to have killed two women - but is suspected of many more murders



### Police appeal to find Janine's murderer three decades later

JANINE Downes was dumped like unwanted litter. The murder deprived three young children of their mother.

The killing came just five months after her former friend Gail Whitehouse, also a Wolverhampton sex worker, had been murdered.

On the night of her death, waif-like Janine had told friends in the Harp Pub that she intended to travel to London. This year, police issued a 30th anniversary appeal to find the person responsible.

Detective Inspector Lee Holehouse said: "To date, despite a continuous and full investigation and several arrests being made, nobody has been

charged with her murder and I desperately want to change that.

"Janine's body was found dumped in a lay-by on the A464 just outside of Shifnal near Hatton. She had been dragged a short distance and concealed in a hedge.

"We are still unclear as to what happened to Janine in the hours and days before her death. We are unclear as to whether it's likely that Janine was killed by a stranger or someone known to her."

He added: "Somebody somewhere knows what happened. Janine's family have lived without closure for far too long. If you know what happened or have any information which may help, please help us."

## CONTROVERSIAL CASE ENDED TOP DETECTIVE'S CAREER



Sian O'Callaghan, who was murdered by Halliwell in 2011

MUCH has been written over the actions of detective Steve Fulcher in the Halliwell case.

Personal assistant Sian O'Callaghan, just 22, was last seen leaving a Swindon nightclub and walking to her flat, less than half-a-mile away. Her body was found in a shallow grave in Savernake Forest - 12 miles away - on March 24, 2011.

Mr Fulcher suspected taxi driver Halliwell and arrested him at an Asda supermarket. It was at that moment the detective superintendent made a decision that would ultimately solve not only this case but that of murdered Becky Godden. It was a decision that would end his career.

If Halliwell had been taken to the Gablecross police station

in Swindon, he would have had access to a solicitor before he was formally questioned.

Instead, Mr Fulcher - who believed Sian was still alive - told officers to take Halliwell to Barbury Castle. The Iron Age hill fort was where the detective chose to question Halliwell.

The killer finally cracked and agreed to take police to where he had dumped Sian's body. While the body was recovered, Mr Fulcher sat on the tail of the chalk horse, known as the White Horse, in nearby Uffington, Oxfordshire.

As the two men talked, Halliwell offered up another victim - Becky Godden - Edwards, a sex worker who had disappeared from her hometown of Swindon in 2003.

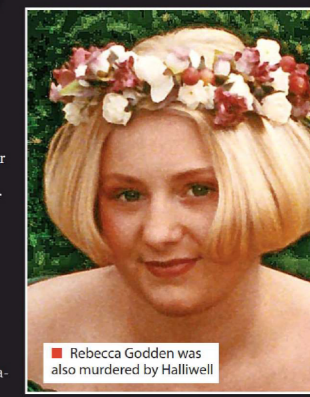
He asked the top cop: "Do you want another one?" He then led the team to Becky's shallow grave.

But his confession was deemed inadmissible as evidence because Mr Fulcher had failed to caution him.

That failure was punished with a final written warning for gross misconduct by the detective. He resigned in 2014. It was not until 2016 that Halliwell was convicted of Becky's murder.

Throughout the ordeal, Becky's family supported Mr Fulcher.

Her mother said: "Had he have followed the guidelines, then Becky would never have been found, she would have never have come into the equation."



Rebecca Godden was also murdered by Halliwell