



Hollywood hunk in Lord Lucan murder mystery

When nanny Sandra Rivett was battered to death in the home of the Earl and Countess of Lucan – Lord Lucan’s conviction for her savage murder sent shock waves through London’s aristocracy. Did an upper class conspiracy keep a murderer hidden? Despite a worldwide manhunt, Lord Lucan has never been seen since.

But what really happened that night in the bloodstained basement of 46 Lower Belgrave Street? A Crime writer (xxxx xxxx) (I have withheld name for legal reasons) has uncovered startling secret revelations and made a dramatic discovery – ‘I believe that the real murderer is still at large – he is now rich, respectable and a famous Hollywood Film Star - Lord Lucan did not kill Sandra Rivett!’



There are some crimes you can never forget. When a prominent member of the English aristocracy was accused of the savage murder of his wife's nanny, in 1974, the whole sordid story hit the headlines. Massive gambling debts, a broken marriage, threatened bankruptcy, mistaken identity - Lord Lucan's luck had finally run out.

I'd been as intrigued by this sensational story as everyone else. What really happened that Friday night in Soho? Lord Lucan was a 'chancer', not afraid to bend the rules. He had a lot of powerful friends, pals with serious money and the right connections. But he wasn't known to be violent, so what had tipped him over the edge?



Did he really have it in him to beat Sandra Rivett over the head and stuff her blood stained body into a mail sack?

It was common knowledge that Lord and Lady Lucan were in the middle of a messy divorce. She'd been suffering from postnatal depression after the birth of her children, George, Francis and Camilla. He was addicted to the passion of his life - the gaming tables at London clubs. He'd begun gambling at Eton and after joining the Coldstream Guards; he spent all his off-duty time playing poker. He'd joined a Merchant Bank after leaving the army but his nights at the casinos were still his first priority. His circle of posh friends, including Patrick Marnham, James Ruddick and Bill Shand Kydd, were better able to afford the lifestyle. 'Lucky' Lord Lucan's nickname didn't hold up and by the summer of 1974 he had massive gambling bills and was so deeply in debt there was no way out. Greville Howard told the police that he'd had a conversation with his friend the week before the crime. Lucan had

told him that he couldn't stand the public humiliation of going bankrupt. He was still hoping to gain custody of his children, but the obstacle was his wife, who refused to give them up. Even though he was a Peer of the Realm, the Court ordered that they stay with their mother.

By November 1974, he was facing ruin. But I still didn't know whether this 'blue blood' member of the English Aristocracy was desperate enough to resort to murder? Could he really have been responsible for the carnage at 46 Lower Belgrave Street? When the police forced open the front door of the Lucan home they found walls splashed with blood, a pool of blood on the floor with footprints trailing through it and near the door, a bloodstained mail sack containing the body of Sandra Rivett. She had been battered to death. Lady Lucan had also been attacked but had survived to run out of the house to give the alarm. The children were in their bedrooms and unharmed.

I'd read the reports of the trial by media - Lord Lucan had been found guilty but he'd disappeared. Here we had one of the biggest mysteries of the century. How could such a flamboyant, easily recognised bloke vanish into thin air? Since that night, 7th November 1974, he has never been seen again. Was it suicide and a watery grave? Did he really do the decent thing and take a boat out into the English Channel and jump overboard? Or is he still alive? Did his powerful chums spirit him away to a private clinic and a plastic surgeon who could keep his mouth shut? Maybe Richard John Bingham, the 7th Earl of Lucan is still out there somewhere, South America or Mozambique, sipping his marguerites and dealing yet another losing hand of poker?

Over the last 36 years there have been hundreds of sightings from Amsterdam to Australia, Paris to Patagonia, but the worldwide police hunt stopped when Lord Lucan was presumed dead on 11th December,

1992. That was it, all over. Or was it?

I'd always believed there was a lot more to the case than had come to light, so when I heard a whisper on the underworld grapevine that there was a bloke who knew the truth and what really had happened in that basement kitchen all those years ago, I couldn't rest till I'd found out more. I have to admit that I was a bit sceptical. The case had been raked over enough times, what else was there to know? But the man who tipped me off was a gangster from London's underworld and not anyone who would exaggerate or try to kid me. He'd nothing to gain. He wouldn't want me to print his name in an article, so I'll call him Mr. Smith. He'd been completely frank. "Trust me XXXX, this bloke isn't a messer, he's a straight up guy. And he was there. He knows what he's talking about. Believe me, what he knows - it'll blow the Lucan case wide open." 'Mr. Smith' was convinced that the truth had never been revealed.

"So, come on, is Lord Lucan still alive?" I wanted desperately to know. I'm a crime writer and the chance to track him down would be the scoop of a lifetime. 'Mr. Smith' shook his head. "I'm not saying anything else. Go meet this geezer, listen to what he has to say, and see what you make of it."

Mr. Smith set up the meeting for the following week. It was cloak and dagger stuff, I felt as though I was taking part in a James Bond movie. The man we were to going to see was very cautious. My partner (XXX) and I eventually found the out of the way pub in a village on the outskirts of Oxford. It was a small country inn by the river, with oak beams and stone-flagged floors. I'd been told to carry a copy of the Mail on Sunday and I felt a bit conspicuous until I spotted a weird looking guy sitting in a corner on his own. He had hair that looked like a wig, dark

glasses and there was a copy of the Daily Mail on the table in front of him. It had to be our man. He stood up as we went over and I introduced myself, we shook hands. He told me his name was Clive. He seemed nervous so I suggested that we go outside on to the terrace. We had it all to ourselves and we sat at a table overlooking the water. It was a lovely setting for what turned out to be one of the most macabre, horrific and bizarre stories I have ever heard.

Clive began by talking about the events of the fateful night of the murder, 7th November 1974. It was obvious from the start that he had an intimate knowledge of the crime. It was almost as though he was re-living it.

“The first thing that happens is that Lady Lucan goes into the Plumbers Arms, New Belgrave Square. She has cuts on her head, there’s blood everywhere, her husband’s just tried to murder her.” (XXX) had fetched some drinks and as I sipped my sparkling water, I was listening intently. Clive went on talking in a matter-of-fact voice. “The police were called, they went round to the house and found the nanny’s body.”

“That was Sandra Rivett?”

“Yes. She’d been beaten to death and she was stuffed into a U.S. mail bag.”

My ears pricked up. “That’s U.S. as in United States of America? Are you sure?” Clive nodded. “No doubt about it. And the murder weapon was there, in the hallway.”

“What was it?”

“A lead pipe, covered in sticky tape. It was actually pink elastoplast.”

“Was that the old fashioned stuff on a reel?”

“That’s it.” Clive paused and took a swig of his pale ale. “Now there’s two things to remember – she’d suffered three blows to the head.

Each one of them could have killed her. They were heavy blows. The next thing is that apparently Lady Lucan said that her husband came upstairs and then tried to murder her. She said he'd hit her six times with the lead pipe. But all he'd caused was minor injuries."

"Lighter blows?"

Clive nodded. "Yes. Think about that. Right." He wiped his forehead with a handkerchief, he was sweating slightly. Telling his story was making him tense. He went on. "Now there were two top detectives on the case. They had dismissed all hint of a hit man, mainly because Lord Lucan was absolutely skint. He was deeply in debt, in a desperate state. He had no contacts with the underworld, no dodgy characters. There wasn't any money to pay anybody."

"Did they check that out?"

"Yes, they looked into it and didn't find anyone. And that was how it was left. So far as they were concerned he was the main man. They weren't looking for anyone else. He was found guilty of the murder of Sandra." Clive took another swig of his drink and looked out across the water. He seemed to be gathering his thoughts. Or was he plucking up courage to go on?

"So what happened next?" I asked.

"Well, you've got the facts of the case. Now let's go back to the mid nineteen sixties."

"O.k." I'd go anywhere if it got to the truth.

"Now around this time although I was working, I had an unofficial share in a garage, it was only a smallish business in Forest Gate."

"That's London?"

"Yes. You'll probably not know this (XXXX)(name withheld), but at that time for some reason or another, Forest Gate was a Mecca for weight lifting. There were clubs all over. There was one just down the road to

me. I used to see weight lifters going in and out. My mate joined the club, in fact I went once. It was all the rage at the time.”

“Muscle men?”

“People were trying to look big. Funnily enough, if you looked at any beach in the sixties the guys were skinny, not like today where they’re all regular build. But these fellas at the clubs stood out, they were big guys. Anyway, one day I was at the club, when a world champion class bodybuilder showed up. He’d come over from Europe after he’d won a title.”

“Like Mr. Universe?”

Clive shuffled. “Something like that. I think it was in the paper. They were all going in for competitions; it was all the rage at the time. There was a big article saying ‘Champion Weight Lifter arrives in Forest Gate.’”

“What was his name?”

Clive shook his head. “I’m coming to that. He was famous even then. You’ll know it. Everyone does. Anyway I used to see him walking about wearing a duffle coat. They all dressed like that – it was the fashion at the time and he used to carry a duffle bag, they all did, they carried their kit in it.”

“What sort of kit?”

“It was their dressing gown, body oil, powder for the weights – elastoplast - anything they needed for weightlifting or for a photo shoot – they were always posing, people taking pictures. But this guy I’m telling you about had a duffle bag that was a bit different.”

“Why?”

Clive took off his glasses and looked me straight in the eye. “Because it was a U.S. mail bag.”

I took a deep breath. “Was that unusual?”

“Very.” Clive paused and took a long drink. I waited for him to go on. “Now, coming back to the murder. In some of the reports it says that her body was stuffed into a canvas bag. That isn’t quite accurate, in the police reports it says that she was put in a U.S. mailbag. The police said it was unusual. They didn’t know how it had got into the country and they tried to trace it. But they couldn’t.”

“And you’d seen this famous weight lifter around with a U.S. mail bag?”

“Right. He lived in Forest Gate in a Victorian house just across the road from Princess Alice. The house was owned by one of the owners of the club. The weight lifter was lodging with the owner and his wife. He stayed there for eighteen months. And during that time he never worked.”

“How did he make a living?” Clive’s story was getting more intriguing by the minute.

“Now that’s a bit of a mystery. He never had a job. No girl friends. A lot of these body builders used to let rich geezers take pictures of them. They made money this way. And he spent a lot of time going to the club and pumping iron.”

“Did he make money from competitions?” Were there big money prizes?

“No. Not in those days. There was no prize money to speak of; it was peanuts if there was. He was just bumming around. No one knew what he was doing at first.”

“But then you found out?”

Clive nodded. “Yeah. I sussed it out. He was collecting money. Bad debts. And he had an old transit van and he used to go round collecting money in for people. Wages, that sort of thing.

Anytime they wanted money shifting, they used to fetch him in to

do it. It was safe. Nobody was going to tackle this guy.

“Like running a security firm?”

“Yes, but security firms hadn’t got going in those days. They used him say, when they were wanting to pay wages, they were getting the cash from the bank and he was taking it for them to where the bosses put it in wages packets and paid the wages.”

“Like riding shotgun?”

Clive nodded. “This famous bodybuilder and his pal – they were the heavies. They stood out, they were big men.”

I looked at Clive more closely. He was probably in his sixties. About 5ft 11ins tall. Still broad shouldered. And there was something about him that I recognised. An air of authority. A professional attitude.

I glanced at his shoes; they were black and well polished. I began to wonder. Was Clive a retired policeman?

He went on telling me about life in Forest Gate. There was no stopping him. It seemed to me that he’d been waiting to tell someone this for a long time; it was something he wanted to get off his chest.

“Well, we used to see this guy and this blue transit running about all over the place. It always looked as though the tyres were flat. That was because there was a big heavy steel box inside.”

“That was for the money?”

“That’s right XXXX. When you looked in the front of the cab, which I often did because I used to live round there and I walked by it, you would see crash helmets, truncheons and lead pipe wrapped up in elastoplast.”

My mind raced. The pieces of the puzzle were fitting into place. I wanted to ask a million questions. I sensed that Clive wanted to tell me everything but he was still worried about spilling the beans. I had to let him take his own time. “Pink elastoplast?” I asked.

“That’s right. They put these things on the dash so people could see them. It was done on purpose. So you could see they were serious guys. There was no messing with them.”

I still didn’t understand about the elastoplast. Clive explained.

“The reason was because lead piping gets very slippery. It was for grip. They used to put socks on top as well. It was so when they bashed someone it would be like a truncheon.”

“And these were always in the van?”

“Yes. They put the crash helmets on so people wouldn’t recognise their faces. There was nothing illegal about this. They were going around moving money and getting paid for it.”

“So this is how the famous weightlifter was earning his living?”

Clive nodded. “It was a little sideline when he wasn’t working out. The other sideline he had was collecting money from the gambling clubs in the West End. Gambling was legal. I think it was made legit in the mid sixties.”

“Did you gamble?” I didn’t think he looked the type.

“No. I used to go up the clubs sometimes, to the Embassy or the Congress Club.”

“Not to the Clermont?” I knew that was where Lord Lucan hung out.

“That was way above me. The ones I went to were more like nightclubs. He went to the Astor, that was where he dealt the cards.”

“So back to the weightlifter and the transit van.”

Clive was doing a lot of talking, XXX fetched him another half pint.

“Well, it wasn’t all bad debts, a lot of them were just slow payers. The gambling club owners sent him around to get the money in. You

see this massive guy come to your door, you see what's on the dashboard in his van – are you going to argue with him?”

“I shouldn't think so.”

“That's it. They didn't. In those days there wasn't any cash on the gaming tables, it was all i.o.u.'s and the next day they had to pay up. They needed someone to go round and get the money in. Let's face it, the gambling situation at that time meant that everyone had to keep their nose clean or else they'd be closed down.

They weren't using gangsters to collect debts – that would have been too risky. They were just using big blokes; it was the obvious thing to do. Nothing wrong with it. Solicitors used big blokes as well for deliveries, that sort of thing.”

“So this is what he was doing to earn money?”

“Yes.”

I couldn't wait any longer. “Are you going to tell me his name?”

Clive shifted uncomfortably. “Hear me out. I'm taking a chance even talking to you about this.”

I couldn't press him. He wanted to get it off his chest but he was nervous. I didn't want him to clam up.

“Did the gambling bosses get their debt collectors from anywhere else?”

“No, it was all Forest Gate. That was the centre of the weightlifting and bodybuilding scene in London at that time. These guys suited them. They weren't naughty boys...”

I interrupted. “Gangsters?”

“They weren't gangsters. These were tough guys, hard blokes but they weren't into heavy crime. Don't get me wrong; they were always looking for money, to earn a bob or two. But they were obsessed with what they did. I'd heard one or two of the lads talking and they used to

say that this guy we're talking about would do anything to get a title. They used to say he'd eat a ton of shit, if that was what it took. There'd never been anyone like him for ambition and aggression. And he was souped up on steroids. They stepped out of his way believe me."

"He was mad about bodybuilding?"

"Competitions and titles. And he did it. He made it. He's rich and famous now. But he wasn't in those days. He was skint. And..." Clive paused "And he was in close proximity with Lord Lucan."

"They moved in the same circles?" I could see where this was leading.

Clive nodded. "Of course they knew each other. Lord Lucan had gambling debts. The man I'm telling you about collected for the clubs. And something else you have to know about this man...."

"What's that?"

"He was desperate for money. He had to go to America to promote his career. And it was £200 a time. The other thing I found out at the time was that this man wanted one thing more than anything else."

"What was that?"

"A green card. So that he could live in America. He was ambitious. He wasn't going to get any further unless he could work in the states. He couldn't do this without a green card."

"How did he get one?"

Clive tapped his fingers on the table. "With great difficulty. You had to have a sponsor. And a certain amount of money. And you had to be squeaky clean. Immigration didn't allow anyone in with any misdemeanours. At that time it was almost impossible to get in. Now this man I'm telling you about was known even then as a violent, determined man. He's since written books and he admits it in them. He's beaten people up and been in jail. He's been discharged from the

army.”

“So on the face of it, he’d no chance of getting a green card?”

“That’s right. But he did get his green card and he’s still living in America today.”

I exchanged glances with XXX. I could feel myself frowning.

“So what is this to do with Lord Lucan?”

Clive fumbled in his pockets. “Sometimes I wish I hadn’t given up smoking,” he muttered. Now we were coming to it. He went on.

“During the war, Lord Lucan lived in America, he was staying with one of his best chums who was a Senator. His family had always been well connected. They were top drawer, knew everyone who mattered. Lord Lucan had already tried to take the children to America. This Senator was on his side absolutely. He was his best friend.”

I was beginning to see where this was leading. Clive knew the background, the key players. It was all falling into place. He was speaking slowly now, deliberately.

“Now here we have two desperate men. The ambitious bodybuilder wants a green card. He wants to live in America and become world famous. He doesn’t want to spend his life in a battered transit in Forest Gate. Lord Lucan wants to get rid of his wife. He wants his house back and to pay his debts. He wants custody of his children. When these two came together it was fate. They knew each other through the gambling debts. They were both in a fix. But when they joined forces, they could do something for each other that neither could achieve on their own.”

Clive was watching my expression. “This so far is all factual. It has been documented and proven over and over again. Lord Lucan had said that he was desperate to get rid of his wife – his friends have made statements testifying to this. The bodybuilder did get his green card and go on to be one of the most well known guys in America.”

“He still lives there?”

“Yes.”

“So we’ve got these two desperate men talking to each other. What is it that you’re saying?”

“I’m saying that the bodybuilder asked Lord Lucan to get him a green card.”

“And Lord Lucan agreed?”

“He used his influence. Spoke to his friend the Senator. Fixed it all up.” Clive took a long drink. “What we come to next, is what the bodybuilder can do for Lord Lucan.”

“You’re saying that in return he was going to get rid of his wife?”

Clive nodded. “That’s it. It was nothing to him. He was a strong man. He’d been using steroids from an early age. That’s been admitted since. They all did it in those days. And they make people feel invincible. This guy crossed over from being a bodybuilder cum debt collector, to being a hit man.

He probably was on Lord Lucan’s side anyway. Lady Lucan was thwarting him and the way they saw it, she was keeping the kids away from him, the divorce was messy and he was going to lose everything.”

I agreed, it was a difficult situation. Clive went on.

“Just to show you how desperate Lord Lucan felt, his friends later admitted that he’d talked to them about getting rid of his wife.”

“He was at the end of his tether.”

“And then along comes this big tough guy who wants a work permit, a green card, to go and live in America. Lord Lucan has high level chums there; he can fix this for him. This bodybuilder who has now become a potential hit man, can sort his problems out in return.”

“That’s how it all started?”

“Yes, but like the best laid plans of mice and men it all went

