



THE FUNHOUSE BODIES

A Casefile for the Rivers of London RPG



A seaside sideshow has discovered that their fake mummy is really the corpse of a missing women. Players must find the secrets of her mysterious death in the beach town of Greater Yarmouth. Talk to a River God, deal with true crime podcasters, and confront a serial killer!

APRIL 7, 2023

BY PAUL FISHER

CONTACT: PAUL.JAMES.FISHER.94@GMAIL.COM

PURCHASE THE RIVERS OF LONDON RPG AT CHAOSIUM.COM

Organization

This casefile is organized in the following fashion. First, the background of the case and town are laid out. Then, details for specific locations and approaches are laid out in the rough order players will encounter them, along with suggestions for the likely resolution. Finally, the last portion includes various handouts and reference photos/links.

Licensing

You are free to use, share, and adapt this Casefile for personal non-commercial use. You cannot sell access to this casefile nor remove the licensing section. This Casefile uses trademarks and/or copyrights owned by Chaosium Inc/Moon Design Publications LLC, which are used under Chaosium Inc's Fan Material Policy. We are expressly prohibited from charging you to use or access this content. This Casefile is not published, endorsed, or specifically approved by Chaosium Inc. For more information about Chaosium Inc's products, please visit www.chaosium.com.

Table of Contents

Organization	2
Licensing.....	2
Background	4
Great Yarmouth	4
Scenes and Sources	4
Flow Chart of Scenes	4
Harry’s House of Horror	5
Old Case Files.....	6
Notion Medical Products.....	6
Autopsy	7
Dead Sexy Murder, the Podcast.....	7
Sara Jones.....	7
The Time and Tide Museum	8
River Yare	8
Little Crocodiles	8
Oxford	8
Ronald Westley.....	9
Resolution	10
Appendix A: Operation Fishbowl	11
Appendix B: Little Crocodiles	16
Appendix C: Oxford Team Photo	17

Background

Ronald Westley (b 1944) had a comfortable middle-class upbringing with a father who was an engineering manager and to a mother who stayed at home. He went to Magdalen College, Oxford receiving a first in Biology and became a Little Crocodile learning magic along with his friends. He became friends with Albert Woodville-Gentle and remained in contact with him thought his life. He took up a job at a medical technology company and spent his professional life working in the fields of prosthetics helping to design various implants to repair damaged jaws and similar items at Notion Medical Products, a firm that pioneered medical plastics in the UK. He married his wife Mary and they had a daughter Lucille (b 1972) who went by Lucy. A doting father, he lived for his daughter. Unfortunately, a car accident killed his wife and daughter in the fall of 1989 in southern England while on holiday. Angry with rage, he got his revenge on the drunk man killing him with a fireball. He then set out to replace his daughter by kidnapping girls near her age starting in 1990 and using the medical magic he learned from Woodville-Gentle to reshape them to resemble Lucy and control their minds. However, the magic failed killing the first three girls and mutilating their faces. To hide the bodies, he sealed them in wax mannequins at the Notion Medical Products factory and the mannequins were sold to Harry's House of Horror. He succeeded with the fourth girl using a mixture of *Seducere* and facial modification magic to make her resemble Lucy and believe she was his daughter. He then faked the murder-suicide of her parents to cover up the kidnapping. Now, he lives with Lucy in his old age.

During renovations of the funhouse, an accident has broken one of the wax figures revealing the body inside. The general weirdness of the case has led to the Folly getting called in. The party must locate Ronald and determine how to handle Lucy who has spent the past 40 years as a mind-controlled servant of Ronald.

Great Yarmouth

Great Yarmouth is a seaside town best known for being a holiday destination in the summer. The waterfront is lined with holiday homes, amusement attractions, and wide beaches for the 3 weeks of summer. It's about 3 hours by train from London and is located on the coast of East Anglia along the North Sea. The town has a history as a center for fishing, North Sea oil, and increasingly offshore wind power. Great Yarmouth and surrounding communities have a bit less than 100k people who are overwhelmingly Anglos with a smattering of Eastern Europeans, Africans, and Asians.

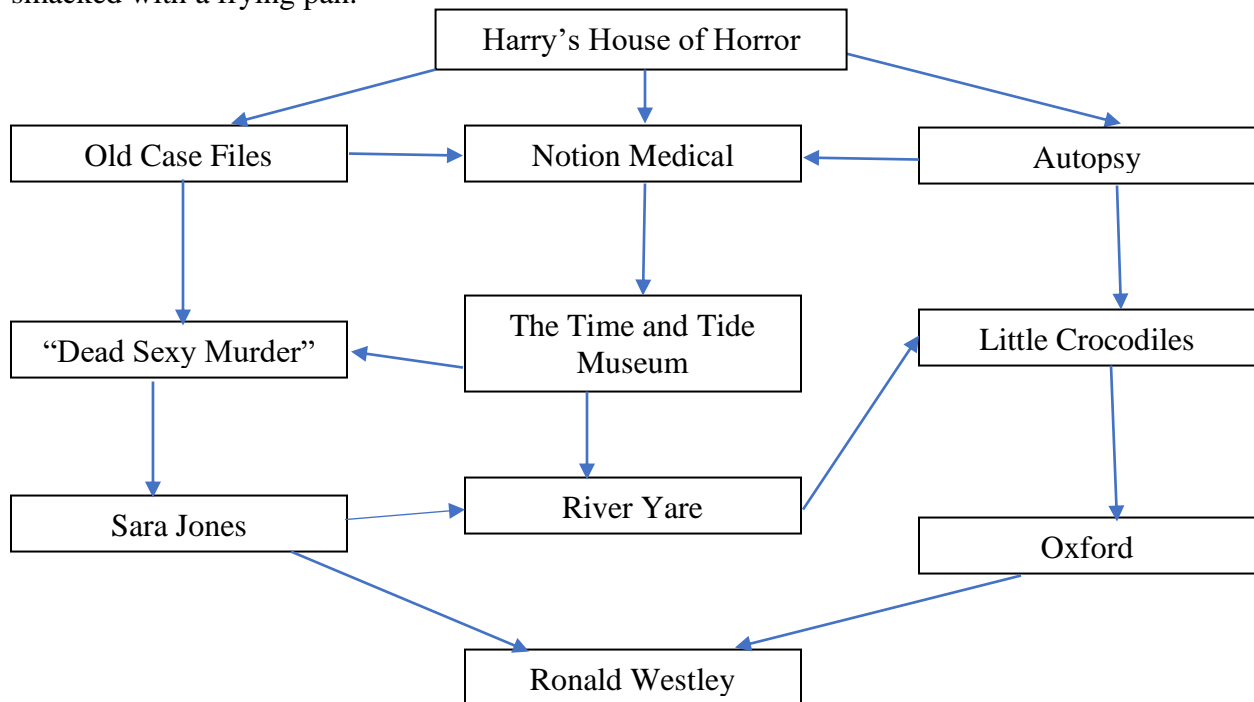
The party will work with DC David Chard based out of Great Yarmouth Police Station located in downtown Great Yarmouth. He can provide local color and support. The adventure begins with the investigators taking a train into Great Yarmouth in response to a request for specialized support.

Scenes

Flow Chart of Scenes

This chart lays out the basic connections between the scenes and sources listed in this case file. Players may move between scenes in a different order as they miss connections or make different

ones than anticipated. They may also peruse alternative lines of investigation that may require improvising on your part. The case starts at Harry’s House of Horror and can move down 3 separate paths. The first has the party following the police files, Dead Sexy Murders podcasters, and a new witness. The second leads through Notion Medical, a local museum, and to Yare of the River Yare. The third starts at the Autopsy and digs into the Little Crocodiles. All will end up at Ronald Westley and players can peruse multiple paths and move between them. For GMs wanting a longer case (2-3 sessions), encourage the players to explore all paths by delaying the availability of witness etc or for a shorter case (1-2 sessions) let them push straight through a line of investigation. In the end, players should suspect Ronald Westley and confront him. How well they have prepared will determine how it goes. Clever/lucky players can confront him when Lucy is not around to protect her while unprepared/unlucky players may find themselves getting smacked with a frying pan.



Harry’s House of Horror

Harry’s House of Horror is a funhouse near Britannia Pier in Great Yarmouth. It is over 70 years old and is a staple of the beach. It consists of a series of spooky rooms filled with spiderwebs, scary mannequins, and other effects to scare small children. They are currently undergoing repairs and maintenance in the lead up to the summer holidays. While working on repairs to lighting, a falling ladder damaged the mummy and Kobna Holdbrook-Smith, an electrician, noticed that the wax mummy appears to have real flesh inside of it. Police were called and a murder investigation began once it was confirmed that it was likely human.

Police spoke to Andrew Swearthmore, whose family have owned/run Harry’s for three generations, who confirmed the mummy was bought in 1991, along with 2 others mannequins. The other two were examined and the concealed bodies were found. At this point a major murder investigation kicked off. An officer in the Norfolk constabulary noticed an optional checklist for “Falcon Incidents”, filled it out and determined that they should contact the Special Assessment Unit.

Clues:

- All 3 bodies are similar looking women in late teens to early 20s. Each has a necklace of a heart with an embossed L.
- **Vestigia** check for the scrape of a razor and a crying man. Background is shrieking children.
- An officer will report that a possible match for the bodies was found. See Old Case Files.
- Wax mannequins were obtained from the closing sale from Notion Medical Products a former mannequin and prosthetic factory that closed in 1991.
- They can get a Dr. V up to assist with the autopsy or attend it themselves.

Old Case Files

The three bodies were identified as three women from a group of 4 missing young women in Great Yarmouth and the surrounding areas from 1990-1. Police have collected statements from various witness from the initial investigation and the following documents are available for review in [Appendix A](#).

- Victim profiles including age, circumstances of disappearances, and pictures.
- A report covering the murder suicide of the Jessica Thompson's parents.
- The gun used in the murder suicide and other trace evidence and belongings.
- They learn that a True Crime Podcaster ("Dead Sexy Murder") recently examined the files. They get the contact information of the podcasters.

Notion Medical Products

Notion Medical Products was formed during WWII to manufacture prosthetic limbs for the troops returning from the war. It expanded into the production of mannequins after adopting plastic limbs to more closely resemble human flesh. Through 1992, they maintained research, design, and manufacturing in Greater Yarmouth. In 1992, they shifted manufacturing to reunified Germany to reduce costs and closed the factory. The fake mannequins were sold off alongside real surplus ones to Harry Jr..

Investigators can talk to Ralph Norton, the retired CEO of the firm who will drone along and provide basic information to the party.

- The mannequin storage was broadly accessible to all employees.
- They had formaldehyde to preserve cadavers used for testing/product design and elevation.
- Julie Smith's parents worked in the plant.
- The old factory site is now a series of warehouses and a children's gymnastics center. Visiting will find the ghost of Julie.
- The old company newsletter is at The Time and Tide Museum.

Visiting the children's gymnastics center and checking for ghosts with werelight will find a ghost of Julie (Victim #2) who can provide the following information:

- She was kidnapped by a man about her father's age.
- He did something scary to change her face.
- Something went wrong. At which point she clutches her face and falls to the ground.
- With a hard **Sense Vestigia** roll, they can faintly detect the scrape of a razor and a crying man.

Autopsy

Examining the autopsy produced by the local coroner the party can learn the following facts.

- The bodies were well preserved in formaldehyde shortly after death. Age is consistent with early 1990s.
- All three women appeared to die from severe facial injuries involving multiple skull fractures, damage to the nose, and their jaw.
- No signs of sexual abuse or other injuries.

If the party brings Dr. Jennifer Vaughan she will find the following additional information.

- The damage to the face resembles those found on a murdered women found in Robert Weil's car.¹
- This is magical damage caused by a modified form of magical healing and flesh molding.
- Connects this to the Faceless Man, Little Crocodiles, and Lady Helena Linden-Limmer.

Lady Helen can be called and she will agree to meet for tea in Norfolk at the Imperial Tea House. She will provide background relating to the magical healing as described in the books.²

Dead Sexy Murder, the Podcast

Dead Sexy Murder is a rising star of the True Crime Podcasting industry on the backs of British accents, decent investigations, and being horny about murder(ers). The hosts Adam and Carly (married) trade snarky remarks while describing famous British murders and serial killers. They achieved some fame by finding the New Butcher of Brompton. They are very friendly, peppy, and creepily in love.

They set up camp (for their honeymoon) in Great Yarmouth to examine the “Pretty Girls Killer” as they believe the case was wrongly closed in 1991. They think the murder-suicide of the Thompson's was out of grief and Richard Thompson did not kill his daughter and the other girls. They have interviewed surviving witness and think he had a rock-tight alibi for the first killing and there was no physical evidence to connect him to the crime. They also found a witness, Sara Jones, in Brundall (a nearby town) who claims a man with brown hair tried to convince her to get in his car around the time of the murders. She never reported it because she was scared her parents would find out she had snuck out. She describes the man as having brown hair despite Mr. Thompson being bald.

Sara Jones

She describes the abduction attempt as occurring after school when she snuck out to see her boyfriend. The man approached her and tried to convince her to get into his car, a black German sedan. This occurred by the river and she away from the man where she was comforted by an old man who looked like a carny. She can't remember more details but has a picture of herself from then and she resembles the girls then. She can recognize Ronald out of a collection of photos. A group photo of Notion staff or Little Crocodiles will work.

¹ See start of Broken Homes.

² See The Hanging Tree.

The Time and Tide Museum

The Time and Tide Museum is a local museum dedicated to the local history, especially nautical, and includes the local historical society and newspaper archives. See their [website](#). You can speak to the saucy senior citizen Prue who runs the archives including the old newspaper archives that include details on the various crimes and old records about workers at Notion. Players will gain a copy of the picture in [Appendix C: Oxford Team Photo](#) if they look for Little Crocodiles. Prue will let them know about the podcasters in town and gives players their contact information. With a **Research** role for mystic information, they can find legends about the legendary “Man in the River” an old man who helps locals in and around the river. A failure with present only one story of your choice. More recent sightings indicate that he is old, and wears the brightly colored hat of a candy sales man/carny. They can also gain addition basic information about the crimes from the local news. Prue thinks he is an angel.

Stories:

- In ancient times, the celts would make offering of the heads of their enemies by throwing them into the river.
- In medieval times, a wicked priest was chasing a women with ill intent and when she reached the river it split open to let her pass before crashing down on the priest.
- In Victorian times, there are many stories of a mysterious man pulling drowning children out of the river.
- More modern claims of an old man who helps those in need or to protect them from dangerous situations.

River Yare

The Yare can be found by placing an offering alongside the river for him to collect. The usual items (booze) work as well as something connected to the seaside. A party that is lost can be approached by him instead. He is a wrinkled old man wearing a red and white striped suit jacket and matching hat. His voice cracks and he smells of sunscreen, the sea, and sweet treats. He cannot provide details of the crimes but he can tell the party two things. First, he remembers Sara running and notes he could smell a wizard nearby. Second, he had smelled a wizard around that time near the old Notion factory around the warehouses. They all smell the same of ambition.

Little Crocodiles

Calling Nightingale will get the party a briefing on the little crocodiles. He can communicate the basic facts from the books and that the Folly has a few lists of suspected Little Crocodiles.³ He also recommends that party meet with Prof Postmartin to go through the student and alumni records to identify protentional residents of Great Yarmouth.

Oxford

The party can request that Postmartin join the part in Great Yarmouth or take a train to Oxford. He provides an attached list of possible Little Crocodiles and some basic information about

³ See RoLRPG, page 263 for a summary.

them. Additionally, he can provide general background and details about a possible genius locus of the River Yare. See the stories in the [Time and Tide Entry](#).

Ronald Westley

Ronald lives in a detached home on Caister Rd. on the north end of town within Caister-on-sea. He lives with Lucy who cares for him and works part time at Forum Coffee House in downtown Great Yarmouth. They are relatively reclusive rarely entertaining visitors.

Lucy handles most of the household chores cooking and cleaning while working a few days at the Forum Coffee House. She dresses a bit old fashioned and conservatively. She is isolated with no real outside friends but is friendly with coworkers. She plays the part of dutiful housewife/doting daughter with her life revolving around her father. In practice, she has mostly forgotten her childhood due to the use *Seducere* and abuse on her when she was first kidnapped which manifests as foggy memories and a vague sense of unease when she is asked about her younger years. When questioned she can provide the following information.

- She explains that her father retired around when her mother died in a car accident (she was hurt) and he became a full-time parent. She never left home and
- takes care of her father because he has no other family.
- She has a few casual friends from work etc. but no close friends. She did have a boyfriend a decade ago but he broke things off pretty quickly. (Ronald scared the guy off.) She's been out a few times since but it worries her father so she doesn't bother much.
- She is generally content but lonely but puts up a good face for her father who she loves deeply. Revealed with **Read Person** check.
- If the party confronts her with evidence of her father's crimes, she will deny it and disbelieve it. A hard success on a **Social** check is needed to convince her of her father's crimes against her and

Ronald Westley, Little Crocodile				
STR	CON	DEX	INT	POW
30	40	20	65	60
DB 0	MOV	MP	Luck -	
	6	20		

Advantage: Magical

Skills
 Athletics 20%, Drive 60%, Navigate 30%, Observation 50%, Read Person 75%, Research 45%, Sense Vestigia 80%, Social 45%, Stealth 20%; Magic 60%, Fighting 15%, Firearms 5%.

Languages
 English 80%, Latin 45%, French 30%.

Spells
 Mastered: Werelight, Impello, Fireball, Seducere.
 Known: Impello Palma, Grasping Hand.

Lucy Westley (Jessica Thompson), kidnap victim				
STR	CON	DEX	INT	POW
40	50	50	45	60
DB 0	MOV	MP	Luck -	
	8	12		

Skills
 Athletics 40%, Drive 60%, Navigate 40%, Observation 50%, Read Person 65%, Research 55%, Sense Vestigia 10%, Social 35%, Stealth 40%; Magic 5%, Fighting 25%, Firearms 5%.

Languages
 English 80%, Latin 20%, French 30%.

others. If the party confronts her father, she will side with him in any fight unless she has already been convinced. Learning the truth about their past will lead to a breakdown on her part.

Ronald is balding with white hair and a face full of wrinkles. Ronald is old and ailing but is not disabled. He can still walk, drive etcetera but is more than happy to let Lucy dote on him. He spends his time reading books about the war and working in the garden. He remains obsessed with Lucy and will do anything to protect her from the outside world including the party. He will do anything to protect his secrets and would rather Lucy and him die before she is taken away. "If I can't have her, no one can have her." He will lie and deny if questioned and a hard success on a **Read Person** roll will be needed to catch him in a lie. If discovered and confronted, he will use his magical skills to fight the party and escape with Lucy. He owns a BMW 3 series and Lucy has an older VW Beetle at home.


Resolution


The party should eventually find Ronald. If needed, Sara Jones can back with one more thing to more closely point the party or a helpful police officer can pick up death certificate for Lucy and her continued existence. Likewise, Yare can provide clues or Ronald can take matters into his own hands by destroying evidence or attacking a party member.


In general, the most likely outcome is the party confronts Ronald and he is killed or seriously injured in the confrontation. If Lucy is present it is likely she will be injured as well by the party restraining her or by Ronald trying to take her with him.


The case will most likely most end, with the party filling out paperwork and returning to the Folly. You can add in a final message from Lucy as she struggles to recover from the aftermath of discovering the truth. In a longer campaign, she may move to London and could become a useful civilian consultant or recurring NPC.

Appendix A: Operation Fishbowl

	Name: Katharine Hodges-Filmore
	Born: 1974 (Age: 16)
	Hair: Blond, Long
	Eyes: Brown
	Date Missing: February 15, 1990 ~4:00 PM
Timeline of Events: ~4:00 Katharine leaves East Norfolk 6th Form College to take the bus home after meeting with her teachers. 5:15 Diane Filmore Calls East Norfolk 6th Form College inquiring about her daughter. 5:47 Diane Filmore contacts Great Yarmouth Police that her daughter is missing. PCs dispatched to make initial enquiries. 9:15 Situation updated to serious missing person case. February 16 th , public appeal and search parties dispatched. February 17 th , dredging the river conducted, no results. February 26 th , search called off. May 25, 1991: Closed with Richard Thompson presumed responsible. See operation Fishbowl.	
Suspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents: No motive identified; father has alibi. - Ex boyfriend: On school trip to France. - Nearby Sex Offenders: Eliminated - Other friends/family: Eliminated - Presumed Offender Richard Thompson (decs.) (Operation Fishbowl) 	
Status: Declared Dead, suspended with presumed culprit.	

	Name: Julie Smith
	Born: 1970 (Age: 20)
	Hair: Blond, medium
	Eyes: Brown
	Date Missing: May 7, 1990 11:00 PM
Timeline of Events: ~11:00 PM: Julie leaves The Oxford Arms pub afterwork. May 8 th , 6:00 AM: Boyfriend, Aaron Lu calls boss saying she didn't get home. 7:14 AM: Mr. Lu contacts Lowestoft Police after finding her car at work and her keys in a nearby shrub. 9:15 AM: MISPER Alert released. 12:00 PM: Public appeal and search parties dispatched. May 13 th : Search called off. September 14: Linked to Operation Fishbowl. May 25, 1991: Closed with Richard Thompson presumed responsible. See Operation Fishbowl.	
Suspects: - Boyfriend: No motive, no alibi. - Nearby Sex Offenders: Eliminated - Presumed Offender Richard Thompson (decs.) (Operation Fishbowl)	
Status: Declared Dead, suspended with presumed culprit.	

	Name: Rachael Katz
	Born: 1972 (Age: 18)
	Hair: Blond, Long
	Eyes: Brown
	Date Missing: September 13, 1990 ~4:00 PM
Timeline of Events: ~3:15: Rachael Katz arrives at Great Yarbrough station. 3:47: Jacob Katz (brother) arrives to pick her up. Does not find her and contacts British Transport police at 4:17 pm. 6:30: Initial appeal for information made. 9:15: Situation updated to serious missing person case. September 14: Operation Fishbowl formed, case linked with the disappearance of Julie Smith and Katharine Hodges-Filmore. May 25, 1991: Closed with Richard Thompson presumed responsible. See Operation Fishbowl.	
Suspects: - Family: No motive identified and alibis all around. - Ex boyfriend: On school trip to France. - Nearby Sex Offenders: Eliminated - Other friends/family: Eliminated - Presumed Offender Richard Thompson (decs.) (Operation Fishbowl)	
Status: Declared Dead, suspended with presumed culprit.	

	Name: Jessica Thompson
	Born: 1970 (Age: 21)
	Hair: Blond, medium
	Eyes: Green
	Date Missing: May 5, 1991 1 PM
Timeline of Events: ~11 am: Jessica leaves to walk to Morrison's from her parents house to pick up some groceries. 1 pm: Morrison's call Great Yarmouth police after Miss. Thompson searches the store worried about her daughter. 4:00 pm: Search parties launched and public appeal launched. Case linked to Operation Fishbowl. May 7: Police raid on Sam Espinosa locates no evidence. Tipster later admits to lying to police. May 23: Bodies of Richard Thompson (father) and Lily Thompson (mother) found dead with the handgun on the scene. May 25, 1991: Closed with Richard Thompson presumed responsible for all deaths. See Operation Fishbowl.	
Suspects: - Ex boyfriend: In Glasgow for stag weekend. - Nearby Sex Offenders: Eliminated - Other friends/family: Eliminated - Presumed Offender Richard Thompson (father, decs.) (Operation Fishbowl)	
Status: Declared Dead, suspended with presumed culprit.	

Operation Fishbowl

Norwich Constabulary, Great Yarmouth Station

Status: Closed, responsible parties dead

Starting in February of 1990, 4 young women disappeared in Great Yarmouth and nearby communities. Following the third disappearance, Operation Fishbowl was launched to investigate the possibility a serial killer, known in the press as the “Pretty Girl Killer”, was preying on local women. All cases connected to the operation featured a young blond woman from age 16-21 who disappeared while out and about. No witness of any of their disappearances were ever located nor were any trace of their bodies. Following the presumed murder suicide of Lily and Richard Thompson (father of the 4th victim) and the discovery of a suicide note implicating him in the crimes, the operation was determined to be resolved and a coroner’s court made a preliminary finding that he was the responsible party. Bodies were presumed to of been sunk far out at sea or buried in a far away field/wood.

The evidence tying Mr. Thompson to the case remains weak and solely rests on two facts: 1) his daughter was one of the victims, and 2) a signed confession in his handwriting was found near his and his wife’s bodies. Careful examination of his home, vehicle, and place of work revealed no trace evidence of the victims beyond what would be expected from his daughter living at home. Likewise, an investigation in his and his wife’s alibies at the time the four girls disappeared indicate that it would be very difficult but not impossible for him to of conducted most of the abductions. Consideration of the possibility of a second killer is highly plausible but no leads were developed. Interviews with friends and family of the Thompson’s provided no plausible accomplices nor a motive beyond insanity or improper motive.

It is with great regret that we must close Operation Fishbowl under these circumstances. We have a likely responsible party who escaped justice, 5 women are dead or presumed dead, and we have been unable to recover 4 of their bodies for their families to bury. We anticipate there will be a review of the actions taken in these cases to identify the reasons we were unsuccessful in this case.



Detective Inspector Robert Burrow

Appendix B: Little Crocodiles

Name	Confidence	Status
Albert Pryce	High	Living
Albert Woodville-Gentle	Confirmed	Dead
Alex Burghart	Medium	Living
Brandon Lewis	Low	Dead
Grant Shapps	Medium	Living
James Duddridge	Confirmed	Living
James Wild	Medium	Dead
Jason Dunlo	Medium	Living
Jeremy Beaumont-Jones	High	Living
Mark Francois	Low	Living
Martin Chorley	Confirmed	Dead
Oliver Dowden	Low	Living
Paul Bristow	High	Dead
Peter Aldous	High	Living
Richard Bacon	Medium	Living
Richard Lewis	Medium	Living
Richard Williams	Low	Dead
Robert Weil	High	Living
Ronald Westley	Medium	Living
Will Quince	High	Dead

Appendix C: Oxford Team Photo



Left to Right: John Clarkson, Thad Dorset, Robert Pierce, Tim Baldwin, Jack Jenkins, Sam Worthington-Firth, Ronald Westley, Harry Putnam, Rupert Grim.