

## Murder: Bloodstains found Iowa City house, garage

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Frances Bloomfield's body was found late that afternoon in the ditch along a highway about a mile outside of Rockford, Ill. The Winnebago County, Ill., medical examiner said Bloomfield had been dead for about two days. Neighbors told police they'd last seen Bloomfield outside her home late Sept. 20.

The body was wrapped in dark-colored plastic trash bags. The cause of death was strangulation by ligature — a cord or similar device.

The presumption is that Frances Bloomfield was killed in her home. Detectives found bloodstains in the house and on the floor of its attached garage.

On Nov. 25, an employee noticed a red Honda Accord with no license plates parked in the long-term lot at Newark International Airport in New Jersey. A check of the car's serial number confirmed it was Bloomfield's.

The Bloomfields' neighbors on Wakefield Court in Iowa City said they rarely saw the couple, who moved there in 1995. Instead, Frances Bloomfield stayed close to her friends in Minneapolis, where she is buried.

Christopherson says Iowa DCI agents were in the Twin Cities two weeks ago, interviewing friends of the Bloomfields.

"Everyone's still kind of looking for a little closure, and we're hoping this gets resolved," says Christopherson.

Closure is something Mary Cline of Cedar Rapids is hoping for, too.

"I've been in that condition for 15 years," she says.

Cline's brother, Ron Novak, 24, was found bludgeoned to death in his rural Center Point home Dec. 24, 1983. The murder remains unsolved.

"It's always there," said Cline. "Always. You're very much aware that the people are still out there."

The Rev. Wanda Henry-Jenkins says, "It's almost like having a hole in your heart and being told to live."

Jenkins' mother was murdered in Chicago in 1972. The case remains open.

"There's a sense you can't trust anyone because you don't know who did it," says Jenkins, who has written about her experience and now directs a counseling program out of the Philadelphia Medical Examiner's Office for families of murder victims. "Everybody is a suspect when you don't know who did it."

Jenkins and Cline say their loved ones' unsolved murders left them without a focus for their anger and suspicion.

"You have all of this anger that you have no face to put with," says Cline, an advocate for survivors of homicide victims for Linn County Family Services. "You're trying to make sense of something that absolutely doesn't make sense."

Says Jenkins: "You're mad at everybody, and you turn it on yourself instead of others."

Cline says she's "almost kind of jealous" of members of her support group whose relatives'

### Can you help solve murders?

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#### In The Gazette

□ **Sunday:** The death of Traci Evenson last June in Cedar Rapids: Police struggle with few tips.

□ **Today:** As investigators look for the killer of Frances Bloomfield of Iowa City, friends are looking for closure on the case. So are relatives of victims of other unsolved murders.

□ **Tuesday:** Despite an eyewitness, the fatal beating of Erin Miller Darnall at her Shellsburg home last September remains unsolved.

□ **Wednesday:** The fatal stabbing of Julie Bell Davis of Marion: Des Moines police admit their investigation is at a standstill.

#### On KCRG-TV9

□ **Sunday:** The 1988 death of Cedar Rapids cab driver Matthew Pusateri: a classic case that may never be solved.

□ **Today:** Investigators may know who killed Susan Kersten of Iowa City in 1995, but don't have enough evidence.

□ **Tuesday:** The 1978 murder of Lynda Manuel of Anamosa: How investigators solved a 17-year-old case.

□ **Wednesday:** Sheriff is determined to solve the 1992 slaying of Rhonda Knutson of rural New Hampton.

KCRG reports air at 10 p.m.

#### At FYIowa

Full reports online at [www.fyiowa.com/murders](http://www.fyiowa.com/murders)

## Tornado: Electricity restored throughout town

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tors who quickly took care of the couple's home. "The whole east side was gone (on Friday.)"

Next door, the home at the corner of East 15th Street and North Fourth Avenue didn't fare as well.

With the roof and front side gone, the house was opened like a dollhouse, with a clear view inside of the walls, empty hang-

ers and shelves. Still, the Millers noted the difference a day made in their neighborhood.

"There were piles of junk all over this morning," Alberta said, looking down the clean street. "We're just thankful for all the good help we've had from families, friends and strangers."

With electricity restored throughout the town by 8 last night, the Millers were one of the families who could move back home.

Red Cross volunteer Gene Hinman of Mount Vernon said many people were staying with friends and relatives.

"It's incredible how the town has opened up places for them," he said.

Hinman noted, however, that many people may eventually have to move out of Washington, unless the apartments and

other dwellings are rebuilt.

Despite the devastation, most of the people he talked to Sunday were in good spirits, Hinman said.

One young couple whose home was leveled found both their wedding rings as they scraped through the rubble, he said.

Red Cross job director Jerry Grant said at least 27 families were helped by the Red Cross on Sunday.

Since Friday, more than 600 meals had been served at the Army Reserve Center where the Red Cross set up its headquarters.

People like Cassie Beal, 22, found diapers, food and other necessities from the Red Cross.

Beal, who has two children, was one of the tenants displaced from low-income apartments that were destroyed on Washington's north side.

Items like a crib for her 5-month-old son and bed for her 2-year-old daughter still were needed Sunday, as well as a more permanent place to stay than her mother's home, Beal said.



**Merle Miller**  
"We were lucky"



**Alberta Miller**  
Contractor fixed house quickly

The Red Cross volunteers helped those in need of food, rent, clothing, car seats and other necessities, Grant said, mostly through store vouchers.

Clothing boxes of food and case upon case of soda pop lined a large garage area of the reserve center.

While Grant said the donations are well-intended, the facility does not have much storage room and the Red Cross system of vouchers can better assist tornado victims with their needs.

Between \$35,000 to \$50,000 was estimated needed to help people in the area get back on their feet, including providing the first month's rent for some victims. "The dollar bill goes quick and we can use it immediately," Grant said of the preferred cash donations. "People get exactly what they need."

About 36 Red Cross workers from across the state had volunteered.

"We haven't had to bring in anybody from other states," Grant said. "That's unusual for a disaster of this size."

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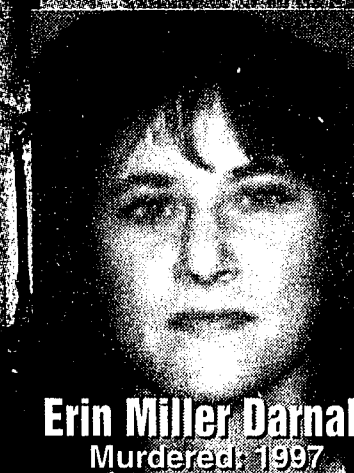
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**Traci Evenson**  
Murdered: 1997



**Frances Bloomfield**  
Murdered: 1997

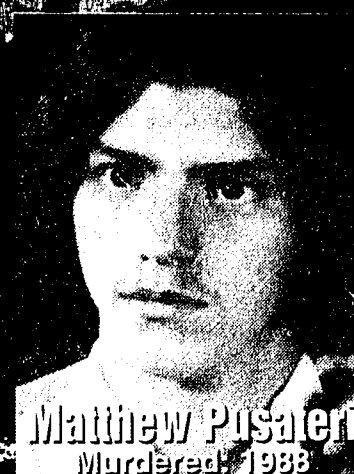


**Erin Miller Darnall**  
Murdered: 1997



**Julie Bell Davis**  
Murdered: 1997

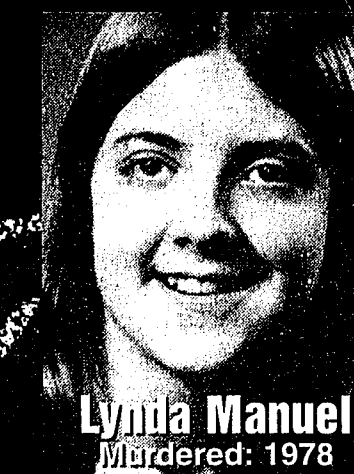
in The Gazette



**Matthew Pusateri**  
Murdered: 1988



**Susan Kersten**  
Murdered: 1995



**Lynda Manuel**  
Murdered: 1978



**Rhonda Knutson**  
Murdered: 1992

on KCRG TV9 News Nightcast at Ten

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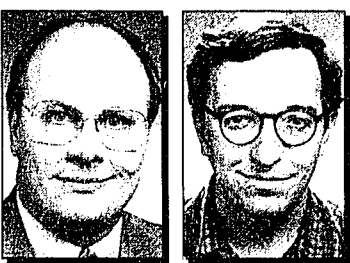
**The Gazette**

Read about these unsolved murder cases in The Gazette. Then see new information on KCRG TV9 News Nightcast at Ten. Find out how law enforcement officials handle murder cases. Meet the families who are dealing with the loss and learn how to protect yourself.

Can you help find the killers? If you have any information about these cases, please call the Unsolved Murders Hotline at 363-7000 or 337-7000, category CLUE (2583) or e-mail: [gazette@fyiowa.com](mailto:gazette@fyiowa.com).

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**KCRG-TV NEWS**



**Dave Franzman** has covered Cedar Rapids government for a number of years at KCRG-TV9. Before joining KCRG in 1978, he worked at stations in Alabama and Indiana. He lives in Robins with his wife and two children.

**Steve Gravelle** covers law enforcement for The Gazette. He joined The Gazette two years ago after working at newspapers in Minnesota. He lives in Cedar Rapids.



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