

The many theories about a "murder"

Detective Superintendent Jim Stephen, who led the inquiry, told The Telegraph. "From early on, all we all felt that this was not a missing persons inquiry - it was a murder. But because we couldn't find the body, there was no crime scene and no forensic evidence. All we had to go on was some circumstantial hints."

The indictment was remarkable for the times the word "unknown" appeared. The accused had acted with others unknown, Mrs Fraser had been murdered by means unknown, her body had been dismembered at a location unknown and concealed at another place unknown.

<http://news.scotsman.com/arlenefrasermurder/If-only-he-d-kept-his.2397829.jp>

Mrs Fraser's estranged husband, Nat Fraser, 43, and two other men, Hector Dick, 46, and Glenn Lucas, 51, are due to stand trial at the High Court in Edinburgh on 6 January next year.

They are said to have plotted to kill her and to have dismembered the body and hidden it in an unknown location.

<http://news.scotsman.com/arlenefrasermurder/New-charges-over-Fraser-killing.2379503.jp>

MURDERED Scots mother Arlene Fraser was killed with chloroform and her body wrapped in plastic before being dumped, it was claimed last night.

A close friend of Nat Fraser - Arlene's former husband, who has been convicted of murdering her - told a newspaper the body was hidden in a wardrobe in her own home before disposal.

<http://news.scotsman.com/arlenefrasermurder/Friend-tells-of-Frasers-murder.2777272.jp>

"I asked what had happened. He said she was dead. He said he had paid somebody to do it' HECTOR DICK "

THE estranged husband of missing housewife Arlene Fraser paid a hired killer to murder her and burned her body before scattering the ground-down remains, a jury was told yesterday.

Nat Fraser bragged afterwards that he "outmanoeuvred" the police officers tailing him by disposing of the body, it was claimed.

In statements allegedly made by Fraser, 43, after the murder, he said his wife had been strangled by a contract killer and that someone who had arrived at the house almost became a second victim.

"Thank f*** it was not the kids who came home from school or they would have got it as well," Fraser is said to have told a friend.

The body was stored in the Elgin, Moray, area for about a fortnight, a jury heard, before Fraser eluded

observation by the police and burned it. He ground up and scattered the remains so there could be no identification, it was alleged.

"He said he had disposed of the body by burning. He said he had ground her remains up, including her teeth, so there could be no identification.

"He said he had scattered them (the ground-up remains)."

Mr Dick described himself as being "shocked" and to settle him down, Fraser had said that Mrs Fraser could never be found, so there would be no problems.

Fraser allegedly elaborated his account by saying he had given a key to the hired killer who had strangled Mrs Fraser in the house. Fraser had had £15,000 which the police knew nothing about, but he did not say clearly how much he had paid for the killing.

Someone had arrived at the house and "almost come a cropper too". Fraser had said he was glad it was not his children who had arrived home.

He had added that the children would soon get over their mother's disappearance, the court heard.

The body had been hidden close to Elgin for about two weeks and he was "totally surprised" that it had not been found by the police.

"He had been under police surveillance. He said he had outmanoeuvred them by disposing of the body," Mr Dick told the jury.

"He said the night she went missing, he went to the house and tidied up cleaned up and wiped up." The advocate-depute, Alan Turnbull, QC, asked if Fraser had said why he arranged for the murder of his wife.

"So he did not have to pay her separation money," replied Mr Dick.

The Moray farmer admitted he had lied to the police on a number of occasions about the car and about getting it for Fraser.

He said the lies had led to his being jailed for 12 months in 2001 for attempting to pervert the course of justice.

While on bail awaiting his court appearance, he had asked Fraser if he would "come clean about the car".

Mr Dick continued: "He told me there was no chance, and it was my own fault I had got myself involved with it, and I was in the real world now.

"He said he had got himself an alibi and he was not budging.

"I was devastated. It was the first time we had fallen out about it. I was in tears."

Asked why he had not told the police the truth, Mr Dick said: "I was already trapped." Mr McBride, for Fraser, wondered how many lies Mr Dick had told to the authorities in the last five years.

"Quite a few," Mr Dick conceded.

Mr McBride: "You have had plenty of practice."

Mr Dick: "I have had a bit, yes.

Mr McBride: "More than a bit... you are a practised, consummate and habitual liar."

Mr Dick: "No."

<http://news.scotsman.com/arlenefrasermurder/Court-told-Arlene-strangled-by.2395225.jp>

The intrigue became all the deeper when you consider that the house looked the perfect picture of ordinariness, right down to the vacuum and her hair-drier left plugged in to wall sockets. There was not the slightest sign of a struggle. A painstaking forensic examination produced not a single clue as to what might have happened.

Then, enter Mr Dick to turn the trial on its head. He decided that after all these years, now was the time to play his "get out of jail" card, the one he had been holding in reserve until he could no longer remain loyal to Fraser. He had to save his own skin.

After court rose for the day at the start of the second week, he offered a statement to the police. It ran to 40 pages, and was given over seven hours. The result was that the wafer-thin case against Fraser was beefed up and the charges against Mr Dick and Mr Lucas dropped immediately. Thus Mr Dick became the Crown's star witness.

Fraser told him he gave the killer a key to their home and she was strangled there and her body hidden in the Elgin area for about two weeks.

He ground up the remains, including the teeth, and scattered them to ensure there could be no identification.

<http://news.scotsman.com/arlenefrasermurder/if-only-hed-kept-his.2397829.jp>

In his closing speech, Mr Turnbull said the Crown recognised that Fraser could not have been at the family home on the morning that Mrs Fraser, 33, went missing. However, he had arranged for her to be killed, Mr Turnbull claimed, and was as guilty of the crime of murder as the person who physically had taken her. Mr Turnbull submitted that the jury, without taking Hector Dick into consideration, could convict Fraser on the circumstantial evidence. Simple facts, such as Fraser being the only person with any reason to want his wife dead [to avoid a divorce settlement], did not on their own mean he was responsible. But taken together, they built up relentlessly to show the true picture of her life.

Mrs Fraser's engagement, wedding and eternity rings had been noted to be missing from the house in the initial days of the police inquiry. They were later found under a soap dish in the bathroom.

Mr Turnbull argued that Fraser had returned the rings, and it showed that he had had access to the body.

"He has been caught by that mistake. These are the rings he gave to his young wife and the mother of his children. How ironic these tokens of love, permanence and fidelity should end up being his undoing...the undoing of a husband who became consumed by jealousy and greed," said Mr Turnbull.

"These rings tell us as eloquently and powerfully as any witness who saw what happened that Nat Fraser killed Arlene. There is perhaps something inherently just in the way that, after death, something of Arlene's can reach back and ensnare the man who took her life just because it no longer suited his purposes."

The defence contended that Mr Dick's allegations that Fraser hired a hit-man to strangle his wife were lies.

Mr McBride said that if Mr Dick had remained an accused, the prosecution would "have had a field day with him".

Some people just could not stop telling lies, and it was almost an illness, he added.

If the jury wanted to know what the face of a murderer looked like, suggested Mr McBride, they should not look in the dock at Fraser.

"He passed through that witness box. To attempt to seek a conviction against Nat Fraser, the Crown has jumped into bed with him (Hector Dick) and they are having to persuade you that he is not a liar, not a perjurer, not a murderer. If they had kept him sitting in the dock, that is exactly what they would have said he was," added Mr McBride.

<http://news.scotsman.com/arlenefrasermurder/Fraser-ensnared-by-discovery-of.2397603.jp>