

COMMENTS

A FEW INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS

1. First the skeletonized remains were found on Sunday, Sept 20, 1987. 13 days before had been labor day (7 Sept 87) Meaning a long weekend from Friday, (4 Sept 87) to Tue (8 Sept 87). This is important for reasons which will soon become apparent.

2. I suspect, as someone in another posting mentioned the Georgia Pacific company was a Union outfit. Thus, it was likely closed for the entire long labor day weekend.

3. The information provided by this story (1) indicates "the victim was described as a 20- to 40-year-old male;"

The information provided by the story (1) also indicates, "the skeleton was likely male due to pelvic measurements. Officials estimated the body had been inside the chimney for a few days. . ." 3. The same source (1) also states, "He was between 5 feet 8 to 9 inches tall, and weighed somewhere between 130 and 155 pounds. The victim had small feet, probably wearing a size 8 shoe, and exhibited good dental work, including a number of fillings and evidence of a root canal." and "Although tissue remained, the skeleton was badly burned due to extreme temperatures in the chimney, Jensen says."

4. A differing article, (#2) gives this: "The victim wore a lightweight shirt, jeans, a denim-like jacket, and about size-8 sneakers, not hard-toe shoes that workers often wear. It appeared the victim tried to remove his pants, the jacket was found underneath the body, and the shirt was wrapped around a leg, all perhaps to buffer the heat and to bind injuries. The victim had put his socks on his hands, and marks on the inside wall suggest he tried to climb to freedom."

5. From the same article: "Prank gone bad: Another possible explanation came to the attention of police after a 2006 Bellingham Herald story about the case. A former employee of Mt. Baker Plywood told Detective Jensen that he had chatted with someone who was visiting the Bellingham plant in 1987, after the skeleton had been discovered. The visitor mentioned that he and some friends would enter G-P and CLIMB TOWERS FOR FUN. The visitor said a member of the group WORKED at G-P and helped them gain access to the mill AFTER HOURS. If a climber feared detection, he would blow a whistle and they would meet at a pre-arranged place. The visitor said a newer member of the group was a man from New York, and on a recent outing the New Yorker did not show up at the pre-arranged location."

6. Also from the second article, "Police concluded the victim entered from the top, because the nuts on the hatch bolts were rusty (it took police nearly two hours to open the hatch) and the hatch could not be secured from the inside." AND ". . . Looking down, Harris saw human remains, described later in an autopsy report as "partially skeletonized, extensively carbonized," on a grid of 11 parallel pipes about 17 FEET BELOW.

7. The boiler was fired intermittently in the months before the skeleton's discovery, including for 34 hours over Sept. 17-18, (Thursday and Friday) a few (2 days) days before the skeleton was found. (Source 2.)

8. "I remember 4 tours of GP that I have taken over the years. They used to offer tours during summer months at regular times. I showed up for one in the late 1970s and got a souvenir box of tissue products. In the 1980s, there was a computer club called "Bellingham User's Group." BUG for short. We toured GP and looked at the computers. . . . Later in the 1980s a friend of mine worked as a tour guide. I took his tour. Eventually tours were not offered anymore, except under special circumstances. " (Source 5)

Given the last sentence in item 3 above states, "Although tissue remained, the skeleton was badly burned due to extreme temperatures in the chimney, Jensen says." It does seem to indicate the body had not been there long enough for all soft tissue to have disintegrated. This would lead one to believe that the body had not been there very long. It was discovered on Tuesday the 20th. It would seem at temps approaching 370 degrees, (hotter than a typical oven) and with intermittent firing of boiler 9. It would not take long to dessicate and then incinerate a body.

If we consider the possibility of Urban exploration/infiltration, item 5 above is indeed a possibility. Although "Urban Exploration" did not come into vogue roughly with a 2006 film by the same name. (3) Documented cases of individuals exploring former industrial sites and locations are certainly not unknown. I remember reading information online about similar accidents in 2007. See #4 (article about a 27 year old man who fell to his death, while exploring an abandoned power generation plant while alone "Authorities determined the man had fallen to his death from a beam five stories above the ground between 5:30 pm and 10pm.")

This would fit well with several facts in this case. The age and sex of the victim are consistent as are the risk taking behaviors. Also of note are items the victim was wearing. . Denim jacket, pants, "and about size-8 sneakers, not hard-toe shoes that workers often wear." Also consistent with items such a person would likely wear.

It also goes without saying that someone could be familiar with the plant without working there. Reading #8 above from the slowlane blog, indicates that tours were frequent during the 70's and 80's. Someone could have taken a tour several times in fact. Worse, if someone had a friend who worked at the mill and was complicit in granting unauthorized persons access, such actions would engender criminal liability. A good reason to keep one's mouth shut. Perhaps the missing "New Yorker" has a element of truth, perhaps the person who could not be located was but one of several unrelated groups or persons "exploring" the largely empty factory over labor day weekend. Perhaps the mysterious tour girl* had been with the victim when he fell 17 feet into the stack and broke a leg. 17 feet would effectively entrap someone, especially if they broke a leg during the fall. Without a ladder or a rope, escape would have been impossible. It is not hard to imagine companions (if any) would flee out of fear.

If you look at the picture a 1:44, (The body in Boiler stack 9) it is easy to see how a curious searcher might have taken a fatal jump to see what was in the stack or walk the top of it. It certainly seems logical that someone could have fallen and gravely injured themselves while alone and died of thirst, injuries, blood loss and SHOCK before the boiler was fired. . Then again, it seems logical that someone in the area DOES know something and has been keeping quiet about it. Likely, the person was between 20 and 40, as was the man in reference #4. Likely, he was a loner and adventure seeker. Likely it cost him his life.

*I will also add an important distinction. The issue of ROBERT SEVERSON (now deceased) and the young lady who wanted the tour. It is important to note that Severson DID NOT WORK at GP. The incident he discusses happened at the Western Washington University, NOT GP. There are some police notes (I will reference later) that indicate early investigations did not feel the woman was in any way related to the incident.

It is also of note that the following people associated have passed on

-Roy Harris -employee at GP Waterfront mill responded to Smoke alarm on 20 Sept 87 at 05:21

-Dr. Robert Gibb -Whatcom County deputy medical examiner.

-Richard Severson -Steam engineer at WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

*****REFERENCES*****

1. Restless Bones: Bellingham's 20-year Cold Case

By Lisa Harvey

<http://klipsun.wvu.edu/archives/w07a/story.php?name=restlessbones>

2. After 30 years, the mystery of the G-P smokestack skeleton continues

BY DEAN KAHN FOR THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

<http://www.bellinghamherald.com/news/local/article173627656.html>

3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_Explorers:_Into_the_Darkness

4. SIMILAR CHIMNEY SPECIFIC INCIDENCE

-See also: Man who was trapped on Dixon's Chimney in Carlisle has died, Cumbria Police confirm - CNN Video

<https://www.cnn.com/videos/world/2019/10/28/dixons-chimney-death-carlisle-vpx.cumbria-police>

-See also: Man dies after falling down smokestack of downtown Chicago hotel

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-man-dies/man-dies-after-falling-down-smokestack-of-downtown-chicago-hotel-idUSBRE8BD00P20121214>

-See also: Daredevil couple climb Europe's tallest chimney | Daily Mail Online

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4775554/Daredevil-couple-climb-Europe-s-tallest-chimney.html>

-See also:

<http://www.startribune.com/woman-falls-to-her-death-in-abandoned-minneapolis-grain-elevator/306414971/>

-and: http://gothamist.com/2016/01/29/connor_cummings_fall_death.php

-and:

<http://www.westword.com/news/urban-explorers-still-drawn-to-abandoned-gates-factory-despite-tragic-accidents-5850158>

5. INFO REGARDING TOURS IN PAST

http://www.theslowlane.org/search/label/bellingham_waterfront (dated Dec 16, 2008)

6. FORENSIC INFO REGARDING ID OF BURNT REMAINS

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13244-018-0633-2>

-See also:

<https://www.dovepress.com/forensic-investigation-of-burnt-human-remains-peer-reviewed-fulltext-article-RRFMS>

7. FORENSIC INFO REGARDING DENTAL ID

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0379073808000996>

8. FORENSIC ID OF BURNT REMAINS <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/237966.pdf>

9. WEATHER CONDITIONS 4-20 SEPT 1987

https://www.wunderground.com/history/airport/KBLI/1987/9/10/DailyHistory.html?req_city=&req_state=&req_statename=&reqdb.zip=&reqdb.magic=&reqdb.wmo=

10. See: J Forensic Sci. 1979 Jul;24(3):543-53. "Paradoxical undressing" in fatal hypothermia. "Paradoxical undressing" in fatal hypothermia. - PubMed - NCBI

See also (Non technical) Why Freezing to Death Makes You Want To Get Naked

<https://io9.gizmodo.com/why-freezing-to-death-makes-you-want-to-get-naked-1688151366>

Websluth discussion here:

<https://www.websleuths.com/forums/threads/wa-bellingham-whtmale-862umwa-27-37-in-georgia-pacific-chimney-sep87.124804/>

Doe network discussion here:

<http://www.doenetwork.org/cases/cases/862umwa.html>