

# COLD CASES

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## Colorado Cold Cases: Woman entwined in affair vanished after meeting lover's wife

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Before Beverly England met with the woman at a Salida park, she confided in a close friend about who she was going to meet and what it was about.

England, 32, was married to Salida High School teacher Dale England, worked at the Homestake Mine, was a member of the Temple Baptist Church and had two small children.

She also was having an affair with a man whose wife was pregnant, according to Leonard Post, who was at the time the chief of the Salida Police Department.



Beverly Lynn England, 32 (The Denver Post)

England told the friend that she was going to meet with her lover's wife at Riverside Park.

She left her 5-year-old daughter Bricia and 8-year-old son Cayl with Kathy Smith, a friend, at Alpine Park, according to a story in the Mountain Mail in Salida.

England, wearing blue pants and a blue and white blouse with spaghetti straps, walked to her car and drove away.

England parked a few hundred feet from the Arkansas River, which was flowing above flood levels. It was the morning of June 12, 1980.

She left her shoes and purse in her car.

England had some "personal issues" to discuss with the woman, Post said. He declined to name the woman, who was pregnant.

"There was a meeting between these two ladies about this affair," Post said.

After the meeting at Riverside Park, England was never seen alive again.



Beverly Lynn England, 32, photo courtesy Colorado Bureau of Investigation

That evening Dale Smith picked up his two children and started searching for his wife.

At 8 p.m. he called the police department.

After learning about the confrontation between England and the pregnant woman, a police officer went to the pregnant woman's house to ask her whether she had met with England earlier in the day.

The woman had injuries on her body.

"There was evidence of aggressiveness. We don't know if it was a fight or self-injury," Post said.

But the woman declined to speak with police. She requested legal counsel, he said.

The next morning, the pregnant woman was flown to Denver in a medical helicopter and was treated for injuries she later told authorities were linked to her pregnancy.

"The case was always suspicious. We presumed there was foul play right from the beginning," Post said.

No one believed that England would leave town and abandon her two children. But the trouble was that no one knew where she was.

"If you don't have a crime scene you don't have a starting point for a case," Post said.

Besides, England's car was found very close to the swollen Arkansas river.

England didn't know how to swim and if she slipped into the river it was very possible she drowned and that it was an accident.

Post said many searches were organized up and down the river for weeks and months. He spent many hours along the river.

Usually, the river gives up bodies after it gets hotter and the river subsides.

"There were a lot of man hours on that river," Post said. "We made many attempts."

He recalled stepping in and around willow trees and brush.

The pregnant woman who met with England moved out of town.

"Dale England was cleared. But the pregnant woman was not cleared at all," Post said.

The woman and her husband were and remain persons of interest in the disappearance, he said.

"Without evidence of foul play there was nothing we could do," Post said. "All we had was a missing person. At the time nobody knew where her remains were."

Twelve years passed.

England's children were 17 and 20 years of age.

The remains of a dead person were found on the side of Mount Shavano, about 10 miles northwest of Salida, in 1992.

The bones were about seven miles away as a crow flies from Riverside Park where she was headed when England was last seen. It is about 10 miles by winding road, Post said.

An anthropologist was called in to analyze the site where the bones were discovered and inspect them.

The scientist estimated that the bones were many decades old and likely had belonged to a pioneer. No connection was made to England.

The bones were transported to Colorado Springs where they were kept at a college in storage, said Chaffee County Sheriff John Spezze.

In 2015, Spezze reopened the case. New interest was focused on the bones found in 1992.

Sheriff's investigators retrieved the bones and sent them to the University of Northern Texas for possible identification. DNA from the remains were linked to DNA provided by England's children.

Chaffee County Coroner Randy Amettis has since confirmed that the bones belonged to Beverly England.

I recently called Spezze's cellular phone number and got him as he was searching for any possible evidence on the side of Mount Shavano. He declined to describe where the search was taking place.

"We're there right now. We can't afford to have people show up here looking for the site," Spezze said.

Spezze said he was trying to lug a table saw to his pickup truck at the site.

A task force including members of the Salida Police Department and the Chaffee County Sheriff's Office are following up leads in the case.

"The identification of Beverly's remains allowed us to reopen the investigation," Spezze said. "We've got a lot more leads. We've interviewed several people."

Spezze said persons of interest have been identified. He declined to identify them.

Although cold cases are difficult to solve because evidence is lost and witnesses die after 35 years. But he said he has high hopes that the task force will be able to solve the case.

One thing the identification of England's bones proved conclusively was that she hadn't accidentally fallen into the river and drowned.

"I hope the people who did this will be brought to justice," Post said.

Anyone with information that could help solve this case is asked to call the Salida Police Department at 719-539-6880.

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