

VIP

The Strange Case of the Red Wallet

By Maxine Cheshire

WXPost

The plane crash which killed Mrs. E. Howard Hunt in Chicago last December has now been officially ruled an accident but there is one bizarre coincidence which may never be explained.

In her red wallet at the time of her death she carried a slip of paper with the name of a suburban Washington psychiatrist, Dr. Gary Morris.

Dr. Morris had vanished under mysterious circumstances, nine months earlier, in March, 1972, while vacationing on the island of Saint Lucia in the Caribbean.

He disappeared along with his wife and an experienced hotel boatman, after setting out on a snorkeling picnic to another island only four minutes away.

No trace was ever found of the 15-foot motor boat or its three occupants, despite searches by the U.S. and British coast guards and a private investigation conducted by relatives.

At that time, three months before the Watergate break-in, no one connected with the Morrises had ever heard of Dorothy Hunt or her husband. There was

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nothing then, or later, to link them to Dr. Morris except the discovery of his name in Mrs. Hunt's billfold the following December.

Dr. Morris' records and files are now in the possession of a brother-in-law, Stuart Knudsen, a builder, who lives in Ellicott City, Md.

A careful check by Knudsen has failed to turn up anything suggesting that either of the Hunts had ever consulted Dr. Morris on a professional basis under their own name. Knudsen did not know until last week about the piece of paper in Mrs. Hunt's billfold.

He has already satisfied himself that there was only one possible explanation for what happened to his sister and her husband.

It was a calm day when the Morrises set out with a local waterman, Mervin Augustin, from the Halcyon Beach Club Hotel for Pigeon Island three miles away.

He reasons that their boat, which had no life-saving

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equipment, may have lost power en route and drifted out to sea. The party left at 11 a.m. and no rescue effort was launched until 4 p.m.

"If a storm had come up, they could have gone down quickly," says Knudsen. "The local authorities told me that had happened once before, 10 years ago."

Knudsen conducted his own search and followed one rumor which took him to the coast of Venezuela, where a couple and a boatman had put in for gas that day. It turned out to be someone else.

The Morrises, who left three children, were presumed lost at sea. His office at 4501 Connecticut Ave. was closed.

There were three other psychiatrists sharing that suite. Since learning that Mrs. Hunt was carrying around Dr. Morris' name, they have made discreet inquiries of their own. But they have failed to turn up an link.

One possible explanation is that Mrs. Hunt had been referred to Dr. Morris by someone who did not know that he was missing.

This is the theory held by another Washington physician whose name also appeared in Mrs. Hunt's wallet.

Dr. Marvin Korengold, a neurologist, says that Mrs. Hunt had never been a patient of his either. He did not know Dr. Morris, but learned from other medical sources recently that the psychiatrist had used hypnosis as one of his tools for therapy.

He says: "If Mrs. Hunt, or some member of her family had suffered migraines, for instance, it is conceivable that she could have been referred to both a neurologist and a hypnotist. If we could locate Mrs. Hunt's family doctor, he might clear up the mystery, but so far we haven't been able to do so."

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