

The not-so-Smart death of a salesman, Part 2

By: R. Marc Kantrowitz June 4, 2020



It began innocently enough. At the start of the school year, Pamela “Pame” Smart worked on some programs with the students. She made an immediate impression. Many young males were smitten with the attractive instructor, especially Billy Flynn who quickly found ways to be with her, skipping lunch and study hall to visit in her office and volunteering to work on a lengthy school media project, which often required Saturday and after-school get-togethers. Among the topics, a mutual love of heavy metal music.

At the same time, another 15-year-old, Cecelia Pierce, also quickly grew enamored of the charismatic Pame, who to Cecelia possessed it all: intelligent, attractive, worldly, popular, confident and well-to-do. More importantly, when Cecelia — the slightly overweight teen from the wrong side of the economic tracks — spoke, Pame sympathetically listened. When Pame suggested an internship, Cecelia quickly accepted.

As Pame moved closer to her two favored students, she slowly drifted from her husband. Perhaps they married too young, or worked non-complementary hours. Or maybe it was their preference to party, and even vacation, apart. Or maybe it was Gregg’s drinking, which culminated in his spending the night with another woman shortly before Christmas. Or perhaps it was a drunken fight shortly thereafter in which Gregg either purposely or unintentionally struck Pame.

Greater trouble loomed as 1989 drew to a close.

Rather than keep two obviously bewitched young students at bay, Pame, like the drag of gravity, pulled the two into her orbit. Acting more their teen years than her own age, Pame became more than a close friend. One time, she drove with Billy to pick up

some pictures of herself scantily clad in a sexy two-piece outfit. Not liking what she saw, she offered the photos to Flynn, who eagerly accepted them. With Cecelia, she became a big sister and confidant. In a moment of blindness, Pame blurted out, "I think I'm in love with Bill."

An infatuation quickly turned physical.

The more people to whom a secret is revealed, the more likely it won't remain so. Especially when dealing with teenagers. Aside from the fact that Flynn shared his good fortune with others, Pame, too, was indiscreet, allowing herself to be seen with her lover outside of school.



A photo that Pamela Smart gave to Billy Flynn.

When she broached the subject of killing Gregg, Flynn and Pierce asked why divorce wasn't a better option. Pame explained that a divorce would be economically devastating and that Gregg would hound and harass her. No, murder was the only option, she explained, not so subtly hinting that if Flynn truly loved her, he would do as she asked.

Reluctantly, Flynn agreed and recruited some friends to go along: Patrick Pete Randall, Vance JR Lattime and Raymond Fowler. Although skeptical at first, they agreed to carry out the deed, perhaps out of loyalty to their friend — and the promise that they could keep what they stole, as well as Pame sharing some of the insurance money she would receive.

Flynn, armed with a gun taken from Lattime's father, and Randall entered the apartment through a door Pame left unlocked. Randall, preferring to stab Gregg, carried a knife. The other two boys stayed in the car. After scouring the apartment, they waited for Gregg, making sure, as per Pame's instructions, to put Hayley in the basement, away from danger. She also told them not to get blood on the couch.



Billy Flynn testifies.

Upon entering his home, Gregg was quickly accosted. As he tried to run, Randall grabbed him by his hair and slammed his head against the wall. Ordered to his knees, Gregg begged for his life. Flynn fired one shot into his head.

Rather than recede into the background, Pame didn't act the part of a sad widow, choosing instead to socialize, going to bars, having a good time, buying a new car, and granting so many interviews with the media that the police stopped sharing information with her, feeling she was jeopardizing the investigation. Her new apartment lacked a single picture of her late husband.

Meanwhile, the rumors were flying.

And when he heard one too many, Ralph Welch confronted his close friends Lattime and Randall.

The police were also hearing the word on the street. And then came an anonymous phone call about a young girl named Cecelia Pierce, who allegedly knew it all.

Arrested, the boys stood silent, secure in the knowledge that, as juveniles, their punishment would not be great. Meanwhile, Pame met and commiserated with her good friend Cecelia, who, after being confronted by the police, agreed to wear a wire.

Upon learning that they would be treated as adults on the murder charge, the bravado of the boys quickly melted.



Pamela Smart's booking photo.

When the police detective approached Pame, he told her, "Well, Pame, I have some good news and I have some bad news. The good news is that we've solved the murder of your husband. The bad news is that you're under arrest."

The most sensational trial in the history of New Hampshire led to an inevitable conclusion. In the end, Pame's incriminatory statements to Cecelia Pierce did her

in. Testifying on her own behalf, Pame explained that since the police were not providing her with any information, she suspected Cecelia was wearing a wire and knew more. Hoping to gain that knowledge, she misled Cecelia. Also, she asked, why would she have teenagers commit murder when divorce was an option?

The jury did not believe her.

Epilogue

The four teens all received hefty sentences. Flynn and Randall served 25 years; Lattime, 15; and Fowler, 12.

At one point early on, Pame said, "I want whoever murdered Gregg to go to jail for the rest of their life." She got her wish. She remains in jail to this day, insisting, as she did at trial, that she is innocent and praying that Billy Flynn, her obsessed lover, comes to his senses and tells the truth.

The above column was based on "Teach Me to Kill" by Stephen Sawicki and various internet sources. R. Marc Kantrowitz, a retired Appeals Court judge, can be contacted at Rmarckantrowitz@comcast.net.