

The Stauf Files

return to
Morales' file
when finished.

PRESS

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The brutal murder of Grace Willet continues to leave Harley police stumped and the residents of the small town of Harley alarmed. Willet, a dedicated member of the South Hudson Presbyterian Church, was killed Monday last when returning for late choir practice.

The murder weapon, a hammer covered with blood, was found in nearby hedges. According to Police Chief Wallace Opsum, it appears that Miss Willet, who lives with her invalid sister, was attacked on a dark corner where South Street meets Bentley Road.

"The disturbing thing," Opsum told the Sentinel, "is the terrible brutality of this killing. Miss Willet was hit repeatedly with the hammer. And for what? The few dollars in her purse?" Despite the fact that the investigation has

not turned up any suspects, Opsum reassures the nervous residents of Harley that they have nothing to fear. "These are tough times," Opsum said. "There are a lot of desperate drifters out there. The madman who did this most likely has moved on to another river town...but he'll tip his hand. They all do."

But with each day making the trail colder, Harley residents wonder if it isn't already too late. The regulars who gather for coffee and donuts at Benny's Cafe seemed to agree on one thing. Hardware store owner Jack Muller spoke for them all: "No one will be getting much sleep until this killer is caught."

And do they have confidence in Chief Opsum and his men? Muller and the others laughed.

Announcing the Grand Opening of Wonderworld Toys and Puzzles!

Henry A. Stauf, Proprietor

Now, the amazing creations of Mr. Henry Stauf will be available for every occasion. Now, everyone will be able to acquire Stauf's incredibly life-like dolls, his ingenious games and puzzles of remarkable ingenuity, all backed by Toymaker Stauf's promise: "A Stauf Toy is a Toy for Life!"

The Man Behind the Toys

How does a man become a toymaker, achieving financial success by bringing joy to children? Ask Henry Stauf and you'll get a sly smile, as though the master toymaker isn't quite ready to share his secrets. Stauf's Wonderworld Toys has become an amazing phenomenon, drawing shoppers from as far away as Manhattan in search of Stauf's remarkable dolls, toys and especially his fiendishly difficult puzzles.

Some explanation for Stauf's success is certainly in order. Stauf—puzzling to the core—has little to say about his inspiration. "I was doing a bit of this, a bit off that," he told the Rotogravure, "when I got this idea for a doll."

Stauf's 'idea', as he so modestly put it, was to carve an incredibly life-like doll which a very hungry Stauf then took to a local bar and grill. The bar's owner spied the doll and he knew that his daughter would love it. He quickly offered Stauf food and it wasn't long before Stauf was carving dolls for the owners' friends. But then came the puzzles... Stauf smiles, recalling his first creation. "It was a simple wood puzzle, you only slide one way..." Again, Stauf doesn't know where the idea for the puzzle came from. "It just came to me..."

For a while, Stauf lived behind the bar and grill, in a garage that he converted to a workshop. But the

demand for his unique toy and puzzles soon outgrew the cramped quarters. And Stauf's success soon ended his financial problems.

Even in a depression, people still get their children birthday and Christmas presents. "I needed... wanted...my own shop," Stauf explains. "A place I could fill with my toys and puzzles.

"The opening of Stauf's Wonderworld Toys was a gala event in Harley, with families coming from up and down the Hudson Valley to the small shop on Harley's Main Street. With the launch of his mail order business, Stauf moved his first to an abandoned shop near the Train Station, and then to a more distant spot, the old Lumber Mill, where Stauf had all the room he needed.

This latest move has raised the specter that Stauf might eventually move Wonderworld of Toys, now employing over a dozen Harleyites, out of the village completely. "No—" Stauf says with a smile. "I don't think that's likely. I like it here, and besides..." His face clouds over, smirking at another secret, another puzzle, "I have even bigger plans for Harley."

What those plans are, though, remain to be seen. But there's one thing everyone in Harley knows. Having Henry A. Stauf as a resident has brought Harley nothing but good.

WONDERWORLD

TOYS & PUZZLES

Item 1007 - An original, hand-carved Stauf Doll! Each doll is unique, no two are alike. All of these classic wooden dolls are made under the direct supervision of Mr. Stauf himself. It's the doll that your child can't live without!

Price \$3.95

Item 1008 - Stauf's Amazing '15' Puzzle. Here's is Stauf's famous sliding block puzzle with his special feature—the blocks slide together to make two different pictures! One solution shows children playing, while the other shows... well, you tell us! What is it?

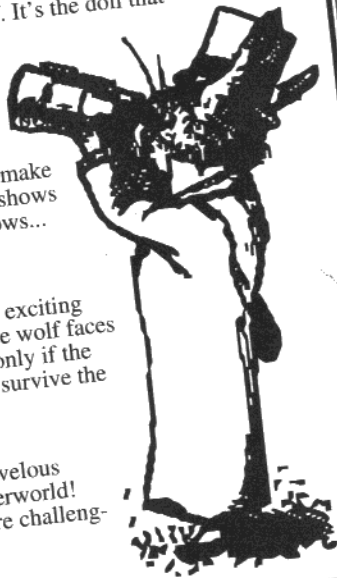
Price \$1.25

Item 1009 - Wolves and Goats, the exciting game of a trap and capture. A single wolf faces 12 goats on a checker board. And only if the poor goats work together can they survive the predatory wolf!

Price \$2.00

Item 1010 - Stauf's Book of Marvelous Mazes. A best-seller from Wonderworld! Over two dozen mazes, each more challenging than the other.

Price 75 cents



From a small shop, Henry Stauf has created a toy-making dynasty. Every child, from New York to California, wants a Stauf doll or puzzle. The Wonderworld Shop in Harley, his third since he started his business, is swamped each year with orders from around the world. Henry Stauf, the quiet genius behind the creations, came to his career late in his life.

Though reclusive—he takes no part in Harley community affairs or Church socials—Stauf is devoted to the small Hudson River Village of Harley. Recently, Stauf announced that he will be building a home in Harley, a mansion unlike any seen in that small town—or perhaps in the world. “It will be my greatest creation!” Stauf told Collier’s.

Though Stauf hasn’t revealed what he will do with his mansion, insiders close to the Village Building and Construction Committee say that Stauf’s plans for his mansion are, to put it mildly, unusual. One member of the Village Committee agreed to comment, with the promise of anonymity... “Henry Stauf has been very good for Harley. Still, there are building codes to be observed, plans that should be filed—and we have seen almost nothing. I wonder what he’s going to do with this house. We need Stauf and his Wonderworld Toys. Still, he should observe the codes as well as anyone else.”

Stauf—in the middle of the Christmas rush even though it was only October—told Collier’s that he hadn’t heard of any complaints from the Committee. “If there’s a problem, I’d certainly like to know it,” he said. “I’d be glad to work out any difficulties that we may have.”

As for his house, just what does Stauf have planned? It’s not a question he’s ready to answer. “Before I made my first puzzle,” Stauf said, raising his fist to the air to make his point, “I spoke to no one. Not until it was done. And that’s how it will be with my house.” Then the Master Toymaker relaxes, smiling. “But I assure you. It will, indeed, be very special.” Just as special, we are sure, as his toys.

VIRUS CLAIMS TWO MORE HARLEY CHILDREN

*Specialist from New York
Medical Center Issues Warning*

The deadly virus that has been claiming the lives of Harley's children continues unchecked, with another two children dying this week. Emily Boothe, aged six, and Thomas Horner, aged nine, died within hours of each other.

These new deaths occurred with a suddenness and violence that have shocked this small village. There has been no explanation as to why some children are getting the virus which produces a terrible fever from which the suffering children never recover.

The virus has claimed a dozen children and officials at the County Hospital have little help to offer terrified parents. Earlier this week, Dr. Frederick P. Wilson, a NY Medical Center immunology expert, visited the terror-stricken community. Though the world-famous doctor had no explanation for the virus

and why it appeared to be limited to Harley—he did offer a warning to parents. "Make sure that children wash their hands well, to keep themselves as germ-free as possible. Wash their playthings too and, in general, keep a high level of cleanliness."

Also important, the specialist added, "Parents should keep children away from any adults—other than family members. It's possible," Wilson said, "that adults can carry something that, while not deadly to them, will prove fatal to their children."

And what is it that Harley's parents are fighting? "I suspect that it's a form of the flu, some new strain that we haven't seen before." Wilson has asked to be kept informed of any new cases, promising to do what he can to understand this new disease.

Mr. Henry A. Stauf announces that his toy store, Wonderworld Toys and Puzzles, doing business in Harley, will cease operations effective Friday, October 17. There will be no liquidation of stock and there will be no further transactions carried out at the Wonderworld location. This location, and its accompanying stock, is not for sale, rent or lease. Any inquiries about such matters should be directed to Mr. Stauf's attorney, William Barstow, Esq. of New York. All of Mr. Stauf's remaining business affairs will be handled by his attorney.

THE HARLEY SENTINEL

OCTOBER 31, 1931

The closing of Wonderworld Toys, Henry A. Stauf's wildly successful enterprise, has stunned Harley residents. Wonderworld not only employed over 20 Harleyites, it also generated revenue from visitors who came to shop at the factory store.

Now Wonderworld is boarded and shut, like so many other businesses destroyed by the Depression. But Henry Stauf's toy-store wasn't destroyed by the terrible depression that grips this country. It was closed—for no apparent reason—by Stauf himself who has refused to comment to the press for his actions. All questions to Stauf are being handled by his lawyer, a Mr. Barstow in Manhattan.

The Sentinel now calls upon Mr. Stauf to reconsider his decision. His business was part of the lifeblood of the Harley community. With Wonderworld gone, Harley, already under siege of the flu-like illness striking down its children, has become a very gray place. As for Stauf, he remains a recluse in his odd mansion. We pray that he reconsider his rash decision.

Miss Martine Burden, former resident of Harley, returned to her home town from Manhattan this weekend.

Miss Burden, a former Miss Harley and a runner-up in the State Finals for Miss New York State, has been pursuing an acting career on Broadway. "I've done some Off-Broadway," Miss Burden told us, "and a few producers are very interested." Burden, who broke more than a few local-boy's hearts when she left, says that she still is, "quite unattached."

Of course, the 'Whirl' wanted to know why she has returned. "I've come back," Miss Burden revealed to the Sentinel, "to attend a very special party...at Henry Stauff's Mansion." What's this? A

Grand fete at Harley's most famous (and, dare we say, odd) landmark. It was news to us, so we pressed the breathless Miss Burden for details. "It's a very small party...only a handful of people."

Who else? We asked. But Miss Burden declined to reveal who was on the guest list or, for that matter, how she wrangled an invitation. We did ask if she was disturbed by the rumors of Mr. Stauff's eccentricities. "No," she answered quickly. She looked at her watch.

The life of a nearly-young ingenue must be very hectic. "Mr. Stauff is a genius, and he's entitled to his privacy." Indeed, he is. Nonetheless, your dedicated Whirl reporter would love to be a fly on the wall at this Saturday's gala event.

Excerpt from the Police Log filed
on Tuesday, November 3rd,

re: The events at the Mansion of Henry A. Stauf

Officer Tom Guilardi was summoned to the home of Henry A. Stauf shortly after midnight. Some neighbors anonymously reported disturbing sounds coming from the house. When Officer Guilardi arrived at the location, it was quiet and no one responded to his knocking. Officer Guilardi quickly inspected the perimeter of the apparently deserted home. There was no evidence of a 'party' in progress. On Monday next, though, Mary Wallace Stone, called the desk sergeant, Sgt. Keefer, to report that her son, Tad, had disappeared. The boy, the Mother claimed, had been near the Stauf mansion, playing with friends. Detective Cowell obtained a Search Warrant on Monday afternoon, and, with Officer Guilardi, they entered and searched the mansion. It was completely deserted, and there was no evidence of a party from the earlier night. The Harley Police were then contacted by Mr. Stauf's attorney, William Barstow who served the department with a Show Cause order, indicating that there was no grounds for entering and searching Mr. Stauf's house. Mr. Stauf, the department was told, is on an extended world tour. Mr., Barstow who is serving as both counselor and his representative said that the house is closed, and that he knew nothing of any party. "Mr. Stauf," Barstow told Detective Cowell, "has been out of the country for over two months." Mr. Barstow's Show Cause order was honored, but this file is to be kept open pending more information.

New reports of noises emanating from the Stauff house—screams and unearthly wails—have once again turned up nothing. The new Harley Police Chief James Mondello says that, “We’re used to hearing these reports...cheap pranks, really. It’s just kids wandering up to the house, getting spooked. They get the neighbors all rattled, so they call, us. Just pranks...” Mondello says.

Chief Mondello declined to comment on the reports of strange colored lights seen in the mansion’s windows, reports verified by over two dozen witnesses...“All I can say,” Mondello told the Sentinel, “is that I didn’t see them, nor did any of my men.”

The World Beyond

BY RANDALL NEWTON, MCNALLY AND SONS (1931)

HOUSES, HAUNTED (*continued from previous page*)

—to be avoided, especially by easily-upset homeowners. An unsettled house afflicted with paranormal events and ghostly phenomena is certainly evidence of “unfinished business.” Something holds the dead there, and there they will remain until they are set free.

While the form of such haunts can vary—depending on the history of the house—common effects include electrical phenomena, apparitions, psychokinetic effects, automatic writing or speaking (when a suggestible live subject is in the house).

Other highly disturbing effects include transformation of common objects, hallucinatory sequences, animated shadows, and erratic noises such as whispers, door slams, and footfalls. As mentioned, houses are haunted for a reason and unless that reason is dealt with, the house will remain haunted.

Many spirits are simply making their case in a harmless, if spooky, way. But there is no guarantee that the spirits could not use the above effects for a more malicious, and even deadly effect. For more information, see the entries on POLTERGEISTS, PSYCHOKINESIS, ASTRAL PLANE, and PSYCHIC PHENOMENA. Any such force may play a major role in our lives. ASTRAL PLANE - References to the Astral Plane can be found in the earliest writings of Plato and

Aristotle, who no doubt took much of their speculation from the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Though the legend of the Astral Plane varies, from culture to culture, there are a few constants whether the material is drawn from the Buddhist Bohdisatva, or the surviving fragments of the Atlantean Dialogues, the greatest of lost documents.

The texts suggest that there is another plane of reality coexisting with the ordinary earthly plane. This 'Astral' plane exists with its own set of laws and rules, side-by-side with normal life. In most cases, they do not mix. But there are tears in the wall that separate the two planes. Dreams have been interpreted, especially by the Greeks, to be a window into the Astral Plane—providing a vision of a dark world quite unlike the sun-drenched fields of Elysium. Professor Gustavus Holbrecht, the Dutch Parapsychologist, did early work with brain wave functioning.

He suggested that 'astral' travel was possible, to travel from one plane (ours) to this other. Initially, participants in Professor's Holbrecht's experiments used a rhythmic meter to induce the proper trance-like state. Most subjects said that they felt wonderfully 'charged' by their journey. Only later, did some of those same people report disturbing visions and terrifying nightmares.

Many of those early astral travellers later devolved into full-scale paranoiacs, and at least one turned into a homicidal maniac, claiming that he was following 'commands' received on this other plane. Professor Holbrecht soon discontinued all such experiments claiming that the journeys were too "distressing to the frail human psyche." But experiments by others continue. Desmond Fithugh's 1928 best seller 'The Other Realities' claimed that there are many other planes. Fithugh also argued that travelling to these planes brings many benefits. Unfortunately, Fithugh disappeared in 1930, disappointing his many followers.

It is the opinion of many Accredited Parapsychologists that Astral Travelling or any contact with the Astral Plane can be dangerous, despite the initial impression of good will and physical benefits. Further study is clearly indicated. (See also POLTERGEISTS.)



Martine Burden...

Young, attractive...In trouble in the Big Apple? Small Town girl returns home. What for? Rumors of her involvement with some business magnate. Was she hurt by him? Did she want to hurt back? And what was her connection to Stauf?



Julia Heine...

A classy woman, though a few of her old friends said she had slipped into the habit of sipping sherry in the afternoon...she certainly didn't belong at Stauf's fun house. Lived alone, in a small apartment in the center of town. A single woman living all alone...what could she want from a toymaker?



Edward and Elinor Knox...

An older couple. Not exactly party animals. Should have been home reading the paper and listening to Edgar Bergen. Bank records show that old Eddy was in deep trouble, way over his head and sinking in a sea of debt. Did Elinor know how bad things were? Why did the guy bring her to Stauf's? Did he think Stauf would bail him out? And what would be Stauf's price?



Brian Dutton...

Dutton lost his brother on the ice when they were both ice skating. Dutton saw his little brother slip under. Did he try to help—or did he just stand there? And how much did that haunt Dutton? And what's the reason he came to Stauf's 'party'?



Hamilton Temple...

Now here's someone who belonged. A second-rate magician. Performed at the 1902 World's Fair... high-point of his life? And what — downhill from there? Did he hope to learn some new tricks from Stauf? Or was he too old for that stuff?

Excerpt from

The Toyman

by Andrew Collins

So Steeple waited...

At night, he tossed and turned, expectant. Sometimes he dreamed of a place, some terrible place. It was grayish-green, overgrown with giant plants and vines curling everywhere. Wild things, living things, moved through the vines, crawling through the dark undergrowth.

Steeple felt them watching him, these creatures. With mouths that opened and dangled, hook-like arms, and eyeless, worm creatures that were all mouths and teeth.

Steeple had one thought.

They're waiting. Waiting for me. He knew this: If I do what they want, they won't touch me. He knew what they waited for.

Medical Report
New York Medical Center

Note: All Center Confidential Reports are issued only to certified physicians who have identified a clear need for such reports. A \$15 fee is required, in advance, to release the information. Also, additional fees may be charged for an X-Rays, charts, and copies of lab reports. Date of Original Report: March 15, 1972 This copy issued: January 5, 1993 Report On: Viral Material taken from Harley, October 1931. Nature of Contagion: Virus of Unknown Origin. Samples were taken from three subjects, two males aged 8 and 11, and one female aged 7, all of whom died during the first two weeks of October, 1931.

Physician's Report: The Original team of pathologists were unable to determine the nature of this 40 year-old viral infection. The team was also unable to learn how the disease worked and why it only affected immature subjects. The strange flu-like epidemic ended by winter of the same year, but not before claiming two dozen lives. Current evaluations: Blood and tissue samples, preserved in the Center's Specimens Lab, have been periodically examined—most recently in 1965 and 1971.

Though the presence of the active virus in the population seems to have disappeared, Dr. Stanley Chin, Chief of Pathology, concluded that the samples remained both "virulent" and "dangerous." But no explanation has been promoted to explain the deadly cell's functioning. Recommendation: Continue periodic examination, study and evaluation of the sample material as new technology becomes available. Update: (Affixed to the main report) The material from Harley was examined in the 1985-1986 Medical Center studies of all unknown and lethal viruses. Nothing new was learned at that time and the above recommendations remain in force.

**Newsclip, Channel 10 WHOL
NOT TO BE PUBLISHED IN ANY FORM**

Visual: Reporter standing a block away from the boarded up Stauf Mansion. He stands beside the police barricade. Officers with rifles stand nearby. Reporter: "Both state and local police have refused to explain why this street has been closed to traffic—and the reason for such heavily armed officers. One local resident did volunteer to speak—"

Visual: (*close-up*): Mr. Martin Sloan, 85 years old, speaking from his porch, looking to the distant Stauf house.

Sloan: "I've been waiting for this. We've all been waiting. That damned house is alive...alive, and cursed!"

Reporter: "What do you mean 'alive', Mr. Sloan?"

Sloan: No answer.

Reporter: "Mr. Sloan...what do you mean? Alive?"

Live Visual: The reporter at the barricades, once again.

Reporter: "One theory is that local authorities have found some connection between this old house—"

Visual: Zoom past reporter, tight on the house, surrounded by overgrown vines.

Voice/Over: "and the recent disappearances that have turned this midsummer into steamy days of terror. Our cameras have caught shots of the State Police Detectives entering the house—"

Roll File Tape: Detectives trudging up the wooden steps of the house and entering. Zoom tight on the front door.

Voice/Over: "But if the Detectives have found anyone...or anything inside this house they are—for now— keeping it to themselves. This house, the famed Stauf mansion, has been abandoned since the 1930s. It was sealed according to explicit instructions left by the mysterious and wealthy Mr. Henry Stauf. However, this is not the first time that police have entered it, searching for clues to a local disappearance.

Visual: (*Close-up*) On the reporter.

Reporter: "Some local residents think they know why they never find anything."

Visual: Two women on the sidewalk. Their faces pick up the glow of the police car lights.

First woman: "They won't find anything now..."

Second woman: "No. Not now. They should come back at night. Let them go in at night. That's when they should look."

Visual: Tight on the reporter.

Reporter: "A haunted house? Many Harleyites believe that that's exactly what they have here."

Visual: Pull back, for shot of barricades, house, and police.

Reporter: "The Police believe that the answer may lie in the direction of nearby Sing-Song prison, where the early release program may have endangered these Hudson River Towns." End of tape segment.

Staff Bio: Case Unsolved

Born in 1955, Robin Morales received her B.A. in Journalism from Princeton and worked as staffer on the Washington Post. She filed a number of important stories while at the Post, including her series following a homicide team for a week. Morales made her television debut as a reporter for the local Washington station, WMMC where she specialized in crime reporting.

In 1988, Morales was hired by Case Unsolved. Her investigative reporting has been largely responsible for the show's tremendous success. Morales recently signed a new contract which will have her continuing on the show well into the 1995 season.

The Harley Sentinel

January 23, 1993

Police dredge the river for the rest of Robin Morales' body.

Page 2 story:

Last night, Mildred Wakins was walking her Doberman by the Hudson River shore in Harley when she saw something floating near the surface. "At first I thought it was a log," Wakins told the News. "You know, the river is still so dirty. There's always garbage."

But as she stood there, watching the object float close by, her dog, King, started barking. "When I heard King's yapping, I knew something was wrong." Wakins nearly fainted when she finally saw that what was drifting close to the shore was an arm. "I couldn't move. I was frozen. King wanted to go sniff it, but I held the leash tight..."

But Wakins did finally move and the local police, followed by the State troopers, soon arrived. Fingerprints were taken from the puffy hand. VICAP (The FBI's Violent Criminal Apprehension program) produced a match, identifying the corpse as popular TV journalist, Robin Morales Jr. of Case Unsolved.

Most crime reporters have the prints on file with local and national authorities. Police boats searched through the night for the rest of Morales' body but—so far—nothing has been found. And the police have no explanation as to who may have killed Morales.

BOSCO'S
"On My Beat"
column

Who wanted Robin Morales dead? That's the question New York's reporters are asking themselves.

The extremely successful and likeable TV journalist made her share of enemies. Morales' *Case Unsolved* exposé of Mafia Don Luigi Cantena and her reports on shakedowns by the police gave her major problems on both side of the fence.

But Morales' current investigation seemed, if anything, very safe. She was looking into the old story of the Stauff mansion and the Missing Guests. It was a lightweight story by Morales' standards, nosing about the

old myths of the haunted house and the mysterious Mr. Stauff.

An innocent enough story, compared to cracking a big drug case or tracking a serial killer. Innocent enough, that is, unless Morales found out something. And if she did, well now she's become part of the legend and lore of the Stauff mansion.

All of Morales' notes—at least, what she wasn't carrying when she was killed, have been impounded by the New York City Police pending an examination of just what it is Morales may have learned.



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