

## A POSSIBLY UNIQUE CASE OF PSYCHIC DETECTION

by GUY LYON PLAYFAIR and MONTAGUE KEEN

## ABSTRACT

"Medium catches killer and proves life after death" was the memorable headline of the 27th October 2001 issue of *Psychic News*, referring to a then recent trial after which it emerged that a young woman named Christine Holohan had provided the police with a wealth of accurate, detailed and specific information about a murder a few days after the event, ostensibly received directly from the deceased victim. A more detailed account of the case was given by one of the detectives involved in the murder inquiry in the journal of the Police Federation (Batters, 2001). With his and Holohan's full cooperation, we have examined the case in some detail and conclude that it could at least be said that "Medium provides key information that helps lead to the conviction of a murderer and is highly suggestive of discarnate survival".

## INTRODUCTION

On the evening of Friday, 11th February 1983, Jacqueline Poole, aged 25, a shop assistant and part-time barmaid, was murdered in her council flat in the West London suburb of Ruislip. The first police officer on the scene was Detective Constable Tony Batters, who entered the premises on Sunday 13th and remained there for five hours, during which time he took notes on every detail of the murder scene and the victim. One or two days later, Batters and another detective, Det. Con. Andrew Smith (each of whom has read and approved a draft of this article; see their declaration included at the end of our paper) were told to visit Christine Holohan, an Irish woman in her early twenties who was working part-time at RAF Northolt while training to become a professional medium, as which she has now practised for the past sixteen years or so. She had called the police to say she had some information about the murder. By then, the police had issued appeals for anyone who had known Poole to contact them. One of those who had done so was a young man named Anthony Ruark, who, despite having a criminal record (but no history of violence), was not initially treated as the prime suspect.

Holohan, however, had not known Poole, at least not while she was alive. As soon as the police officers arrived at her home in Ruislip Gardens (some three miles from Poole's, not "less than 10 minutes' walk", as stated in *Psychic News*), she announced that she had been troubled by 'psychic experiences' since her childhood in Ireland, and had had another of these on Monday evening—the day after the discovery of Poole's body. As she described it in an interview on the Irish television (RTE) programme *The Late Late Show* (23rd November 2001), of which we have obtained a copy, she went to bed at about midnight, after having had "a really bad feeling" all the weekend following the murder, and having "gone cold" when told about it on Monday in a local shop.

That evening, she continued, she was trying to go to sleep when "all of a sudden I had a strong sense of presence, as if someone was in my room, and I felt someone pulling my bedclothes. So I thought, let's see what's going on here, and I took a chance and said 'Jacqui, is that you?' and the lights went on

and off.”<sup>1</sup> She then had a vision of a woman who gave her name not as Jacqui Poole but Jacqui Hunt. This was in fact Poole’s maiden name, which had not been made public at that time. The apparition confirmed that she was indeed the victim, and she wanted Holohan to help her get justice done, to which Holohan replied to the effect that she couldn’t go to the police unless she had some concrete evidence for them. Otherwise, she said, they would think she had read about the case in the papers or heard the details from friends. ‘Jacqui’, however, “just went away” after saying a few things about the murderer “which I can’t repeat on air”. The following evening she was back again, this time with a good deal of detail about the crime scene, so Holohan decided to call the police.

In a tape-recorded interview with us on 30th October 2002, she provided further details of her vision, which she remembered vividly after nearly twenty years and which clearly had made a strong impression on her. She had not actually seen Poole as she would have looked in the flesh, but remembered “the white outline of a person” and “white energy of light”, together with “a clear voice” in her ear. She confirmed that she had first been aware of an unexpected “presence” before she had heard about the murder. She was unable to describe this in any further detail.

In a tape-recorded interview with us in his home on 6th October 2002, Tony Batters told us how he felt when Holohan began to talk about angels and spirits:—

I was at that time completely sceptical and did not wish to pursue the interview, but as a courtesy we sat down in her lounge and she started saying things which immediately shook me. I was writing them down; at a very early stage she went into what I would describe as a trance, although I’m not familiar with a trance, but her eyelids fluttered and closed and she spoke, in a normal voice, a series of very short sentences, and I produced a verbatim transcript from the original notes of that meeting which I still hold.

Batters showed us his original notes (see Figure 1) and gave us copies of his typed transcript of 131 separate statements (see Appendix for details). Holohan described how Poole had been supposed to go to work on the night of the murder, two men having called for her, but she had decided not to go as she was not feeling well. She had then had a visit from a man she knew, a friend of a friend whom she had never liked. She let him in, thinking he might have a message from her boyfriend, who was in detention and whom she had visited two weeks previously. Holohan gave a good description of the man’s appearance and said he was a local man whom the police had already seen. He had an unusual nickname.

She described Poole’s flat exactly as Batters had first seen it, noting such details as the two coffee cups in the kitchen, one of which had been washed up while the other still had some coffee in it, a black address book, a letter and a prescription. She described the attack, struggle and murder in considerable and graphic detail, saying that it had begun in the bathroom and Poole was then dragged into the lounge, where her body was found. She noted that only two of Poole’s many rings remained on her fingers. When the murderer was

---

<sup>1</sup> Holohan has assured us that she does not recall ever having met or even heard of Poole or any of her friends, or her murderer. Detectives interviewed every known acquaintance of Poole, and Holohan was not among them. Nor was she listed in Poole’s telephone book.

<sup>A</sup> CHRISTINE & HOLIHAN GO TREV C XRG  
Christine Holihan Go Trent NCG

SHE'S SURE "JACQUELINE HUNT"  
SAYING SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN THERE  
WASN'T + WELL PASTORATION  
MURDERED LATE SAT NIGHT  
KNOWS SOCIALLY NOT X-  
KNOWS GO WITH BOYFRIEND FRIENDS OF FRIENDS  
KEY TO THE HOUSE OF FRIENDS

EALY 20's  
PILLY 20's  
THEIR GOING TWO DIVORCED  
THEY GAY AND OLIVER

PERSON RESPONSIBLE NOT A PROCA  
WHEN HE WAS IN THE M27 or prope  
JOB. IT'S SKIN  
KNOWN ABOUT 6 MONTHS  
PART OF GRAND OF PHOTOS  
NOT A FRIEND FRIEND OF FRIEND  
TATTOO. SNAKE ON ARM. + ROSE  
TALKER GUY ON CAR. + ROSE  
NOT SURE ABOUT GETTING HIM IN  
NOT ONE ABOUT LUTHER

SHE'S SHOWING ME A CHAIN.  
AND THEY ARE - BOAR CHAIN  
HALLWAY. FIVE CUPBOARDS  
HALLWAY. Lots of hand  
STAINED KNOW WHAT LOOKING FOR  
HUNDRED KNOW WHAT LOOKING FOR

AFTER SPENT 10 MINES LOOKING AROUND  
AFTER SPENT 10 MINES LOOKING AROUND

*Figure 1. First page of Batters' notes taken at his 1983 interview with Christine Holohan. He added the lines in capital letters soon afterwards for the benefit of the police typist. (Courtesy of Tony Batters)*

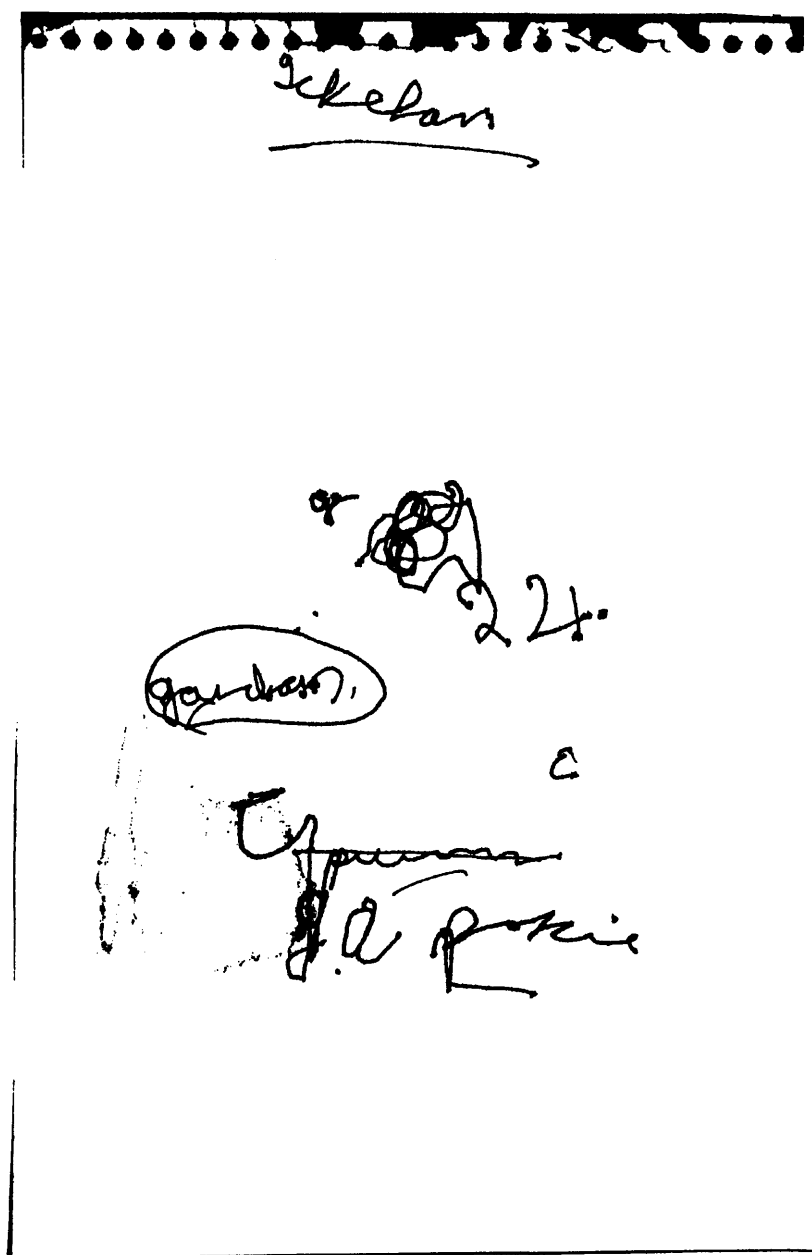


Figure 2. Page from Christine Holohan's notepad on which, at the detectives' request, she wrote the nickname of the man later convicted for murder, and what may be a reference to the hiding place of the stolen jewellery. (Courtesy of Christine Holohan)

caught, she said, his friends would be surprised, not believing him to be capable of such a crime.

Holohan mentioned five names in addition to that of Jacqui Hunt: Betty, Sylvia, Terry (whom she mentioned six times), Barbara Stone, and Tony. She also mentioned "someone living in a flat over a newspaper shop" and finally named the murderer, as described below. Terry was the name of one of Poole's brothers, to whom she was especially close. Her mother's name was Betty and the boyfriend's mother was called Sylvia. Poole's best friend, Gloria, lived in a flat above a newsagent. It is interesting to note that while Batters was in Poole's flat after discovering the body, he answered the telephone three times. The callers were Betty, Sylvia and Gloria. As for Barbara Stone, the name meant nothing at the time to the detectives and did not turn up during their investigations. It was not until 2001 that she was identified as a close friend of Poole's.

Holohan had yet more to offer. She couldn't quite get the murderer's nickname, she said, but would see if she could get it through automatic writing, which she had used successfully with her clients. The detectives asked if 'Jacqui' could also give them some clues about the stolen jewellery. Holohan then made some squiggles and marks on a sheet of her notepad, and wrote the number 221, an illegible word, and the words 'Ickeham' [*sic*], 'garden' and 'Pokie' (see Figure 2). The significance of the number and the first two words is discussed below. Pokie was immediately recognised by one of the detectives as the somewhat unusual nickname of Anthony Ruark, who was also known to some as Tony.

With hindsight, the reader might think that the detectives should have promptly arrested Ruark and charged him with murder. He was in fact detained and interrogated at some length, but had to be released for lack of evidence. According to Batters, he was not a major suspect (of which there were about thirty at the time), for he had no record of violence, but he had already been interviewed by police after voluntarily coming forward with his girlfriend as an acquaintance of Poole's. Evidence of the kind provided by Holohan amounted to no more than hearsay, however intriguing, and would not have been accepted in any court. Much of what she said was either unverified at that stage or did not seem relevant to the investigation. Moreover, Holohan had produced her statements in no particular order and they sounded less compelling at the time than they did when Batters arranged them later into groups as described in the Appendix. At an early stage in the interview, the officers also suspected that Holohan might have obtained her information quite normally, perhaps from people who were using her as a front to convey information, true or false, to the police. We should emphasise that no evidence has emerged that this was the case. Holohan then produced what was, for the detectives, the best demonstration yet of her abilities. Batters described it to us as follows:—

We were probing—"Where did you get this information? Surely you have been speaking to relatives? Do you know somebody in the murder squad?" And she said "Well look, from those questions I think you don't believe me. I'd like to do something, and Jacqui is telling me to do this, and that is if one of you will give me something that's personal to you, I will try to demonstrate something." Now, what she then did

didn't mean a great deal to me until we got out of the front door, where Andy [Smith] had turned white and was literally shaking. It had an enormous impact on him.

What Holohan did, according to both her and Batters, was hold Smith's bunch of keys and make three very clear and specific statements. She said he had recently received a letter about essential electrical work, as indeed he had, from a Building Society telling him that he would have to get the house he hoped to buy rewired if he wanted a mortgage. She said he was about to be transferred to another station, which he thought very unlikely—until he was informed of his pending transfer only days later. Firstly, however, she made a remark which must have been unnervingly accurate. Batters told us that “to my dying day I could not disclose what she said. It was quite extraordinary with detail.” Holohan described Smith as “gobsmacked”. Following this interview, the police decided to take a closer look at Ruark, who was interrogated at length by the chief of police at Ruislip station, Detective-Superintendent Tony Lundy (now retired and, we were informed, not available for interview), who was proud of the fact that he had never failed to secure a conviction on a murder case. Again, Ruark had to be released for lack of evidence, and for 18 years the Poole case remained unsolved.

#### THE CASE IS REOPENED

As part of their routine enquiries in 1983, Murder Squad detectives had removed a pullover belonging to Ruark from a rubbish bag which the Superintendent ordered to be stored as possible evidence together with other items from ‘cold’ or unsolved cases. In 2000 the case was finally solved—not by a voice from the spirit world but thanks to recent advances in LCN (Low Copy Number) DNA technology, whereby matches can be made between the tiniest samples. The case was reopened in 2000 because an informant named somebody (not Ruark) as the murderer. A laboratory technician then examined some items including Ruark's pullover using the new LCN-DNA technology, and as Batters (2001) recalled:—

The findings were completely conclusive, identifying numerous exchanges of body fluids, skin cells and clothing fibres between the victim and her killer, Pokie Ruark. The chances of error were quoted in the court as less than one in one billion.

There were 46 such matches, and in 2002 Batters gave us further details which indicate the thoroughness with which forensic experts had done their work in 1983, more than a decade before LCN technology became available to them. (At his request, we are omitting all material here concerning the actual murder out of respect for the many surviving relatives and friends of Jacqueline Poole.)

Ruark was arrested, charged with Poole's murder, convicted at the Old Bailey in August 2001 and jailed for life. The jury's verdict was unanimous. According to *The Times* (25 August 2001), the conviction was obtained “as the result of advances in forensic science”.<sup>2</sup> Although no mention was made at

---

<sup>2</sup> Batters told us in July 2003 that “Without Christine's information, we would not have (a) retrieved the pullover; (b) interviewed and taken statements from everyone with whom Ruark came into contact after [the evening of the murder] and (c) checked and verified all his movements during the previous fortnight. These three elements were vital to combat potential (and actual) defences, which I believe would have raised sufficient doubt as to lead to a Not Guilty verdict.” We consider therefore that it cannot be denied that Holohan played a significant, albeit anonymous, part in Ruark's conviction.

the trial of Holohan's part in the case, Batters told us in 2002 that "Without Christine's information, we might have failed to procure the most conclusive evidence" [i.e. the pullover]. He also told us that it was only in 2001 that he had learned (from Poole's brother Terry) who Barbara Stone was. She turned out to have been Poole's best friend, who had been killed in a road accident a couple of years before Poole's death.

Holohan made one or two non-specific statements such as "They knew where they were" and "Looking at window ledge"; she mentioned half a dozen details that she could have read in the local press; she made some statements more than once (which makes an exact count difficult), and she made only one direct miss by implying that the murder had taken place on Saturday instead of Friday. Naturally, it is impossible to say how many of her unverifiable statements were true or false, but none was inconsistent with ascertained facts. Overall, however, her success rate was remarkable and, we believe, unprecedented. Batters (2001) estimates that "of some 130 specific points Christine made, more than 120 now seem to have been proved absolutely correct". We know of no other case remotely comparable to this one in terms of accurate and verified evidence, and, were we able to disclose the confidential items, the case in support of Holohan's claim that her information came directly from the deceased Poole would be still further strengthened.

#### THE CACHE?

After the trial, Batters decided of his own accord to look into the names and number that Holohan had written on the page of her notepad that luckily he had kept, together with his own notes, and had stored in his attic. The words that still puzzled him were 'garden' and 'Ickeham' (clearly a misspelling of Ickenham, the suburb between Uxbridge, where Ruark lived, and Ruislip), and their relation, if any, to the number 221. Two gardens, Poole's and one near Ruark's flat, had been dug up by police, and Batters wondered if the jewellery might have been hidden in another garden. Ruark would not have taken the stolen items to his usual fence, who knew Poole and could well have recognised them, and for the same reason he also would not have taken them home, where he is known to have been soon after the murder, because his girlfriend also knew Poole. The most likely scenario would have him hiding them somewhere between Poole's flat and his.

Looking at a map of the area, Batters traced the route Ruark claimed to have taken to get home (he admitted at his trial to having visited Poole on the night of the murder) and noticed that only one road or street, Swakeleys Road, had a number 221—or rather, it had a number 219 and some higher numbers, but where 221 should have been was an open space used as a public garden easily accessible from the road. Batters told us what he thought and did when he went to the site:—

If I was a thief, where would I hide things? Here is foliage and trees next to 219, and I go and look in the undergrowth, and there are rocks protruding. I clear that away and remove the rocks, and there is a hole about six inches wide and seven inches deep, but it's empty. It's now totally inconclusive, but I believe, yes, that would have been the ideal place to hide stuff on the way [home]. I would think, having run the route, that it is the first communally accessible point where you could do it unobserved, because it's not in view of any houses.

It is of course possible that the hole was made after 1983, perhaps by children playing, yet it must be granted that it is quite a coincidence to find an ideal hiding place for a handful of rings and bracelets at what may well once have been the garden of No.221 on the only road in the area in question with that many house numbers.

#### PRECEDENTS

"Discounting fabrications and confabulations by psychics and their biographers, media distortions, and cases of outright fraud, there remains a considerable body of documented cases in which psychic sleuths have scored impressive and seemingly inexplicable successes" (Lyons & Truzzi, 1991, p.155). This was the conclusion of the authors of a detailed and highly critical study of psychic detection. However, it is not always certain that such successes were due to the exercise of any psi faculty, although it may well be that 'intuition' sometimes (perhaps always?) has a psi component. For example, in a widely publicised 1977 case in Chicago, Allan Showery was convicted of the murder of a Filipino woman named Teresita Basa following the claim by another Filipino woman, Remibias Chua, that she had communicated with Basa's spirit in their native Tagalog, and had been told about the theft of a ring in addition to the murder. Confronted with this evidence, Showery (who had already been interviewed by police) confessed and the ring was recovered. Lyons and Truzzi (1991, pp. 59, 245-6) note that since Chua had known both Basa and Showery, she might have suspected the latter was guilty and made up her psychic story to incriminate him. (It is not clear, however, how she could have known about the ring.)

A more clear-cut case is described by medium Dixie Yeterian (1984, pp.49-56). She was visited one morning by a young man who asked her to help find his missing father and left some of his father's belongings with her to psychometrise. Yeterian immediately 'saw' that the man had in fact murdered his father, and promptly called the police. They detained the man and secured a confession and a conviction. The detective in charge told Lyons and Truzzi (1991, p.2) that it was an 'outstanding case' and admitted that he had worked with Dixie on previous occasions. An interesting detail of Yeterian's account is her experience of what she calls a 'psychic split' in which "at times I viewed the situation from the son's point of view, and at other times I moved into the perceptions of the murdered man" (Yeterian, 1984, p.52). Holohan seems to have experienced a similar 'split', in her case into three—Batters, Poole and Ruark.

Impressive as these two cases seem, in each of them the medium either knew or at least had met the murderer and could well have picked up important clues by normal means, such as reading body language or noting suspicious remarks or behaviour. A case in which this could not apply is that of the murder of author and parapsychologist D. Scott Rogo in 1990, in which a group of mediums headed by Rogo's friend Betty Bandy provided the Los Angeles police with accurate information which, though not used to reopen the case, "certainly would have been, had not the re-examination already been under way", according to the detective in charge (Smith, 1992).

Lyons and Truzzi (1991) and Bardens (1965, ch.4) cite numerous other cases



in which mediums have given impressive displays of clairvoyance and have produced evidence that was helpful to the police. Such reports date back several centuries, although in his erudite survey of "Ghosts Before the Law", Lang (1894, pp.248-273) can cite only one case remotely comparable to that of Poole. This took place in 1631 and was summarised in detail by Surtees (1816-1840, II, 146-149), and involved a miller named James Graham who claimed that the fully materialised spirit of a local murder victim named Anne Walker had appeared to him, giving full details of her death and location of her body, and naming her two murderers. These were duly hanged, following the discovery of the body in the place Graham indicated, although there was no other evidence against them or in support of Graham's vision. There were suspicions that Graham had done the deed himself and made up the ghost story, which was wholly uncorroborated and does not ring very true to us, although we should note that while Graham apparently had no motive for the murder, one of the men hanged allegedly had a very strong one.

After a careful investigation of the widely publicised 19th-century case of the alleged identification of the mass-murderer known as Jack the Ripper by the medium Robert Lees, West (1949) found the claim "not supported by the known facts". To return to the present, Ahsan (2003) describes her investigation into the use of psychics by British and Irish police, and cites a statement from a Garda Detective Inspector that a medium named Diane Lloyd Hughes was employed to help on a 1999 murder case in Ireland and "was able to outline the details of the murderer, description, etc., and her assistance greatly enhanced our investigation. I look forward to working with her in the future." A somewhat more fulsome testimony was presented in a video clip during *The Ultimate Psychic Challenge* programme on Channel 4 on 23rd August 2003, when a number of senior officers of Philadelphia Police praised the role which a UK medium, Keith Charles, had played helping them to trace missing persons or objects. We suspect that the collaboration of mediums and police may be greater than the latter are generally willing to admit, and may even improve as a result of the Poole case. Batters has told us that he received none of the 'flak' he expected following the publication of his 2001 article, and that much of the reaction from his colleagues was very favourable.

As for Holohan, who is now living in Ireland and working as a professional medium, she has told us that she has never had an experience similar to her supposed encounter with Poole, although Batters (2003) has stated that on a recent case "she gave the police very pertinent information re location of the murder victim's body, verified when found in Hampshire, Sept. 2001". After a brief private sitting following our interview with her in October 2002, the wife of one of us (Keen) can testify that Holohan spontaneously gave her striking veridical and specific information about a very private family matter beyond Holohan's normal knowledge.

## DISCUSSION

Bearing in mind the maxim that any psi phenomenon that appears to be unique is therefore suspect until proved true, we now examine ways in which the information produced by Holohan could have been obtained from any source other than the discarnate Poole. These might have been either normal,

or paranormal but not involving spirit communication. Normal explanations seem hard to find in view of the absence of any indication that Holohan knew anyone connected with the case or had learned anything about it from the local media that could account for more than perhaps half a dozen of the statements listed in the Appendix, and none at all of those which we have withheld.

Batters recalls that he and two colleagues monitored every available local and national newspaper for several days after the murder, finding only two or three very brief articles (e.g. in the *Uxbridge News* and the *Ruislip Echo* of February 18th and one longer one in the *Uxbridge Gazette* of February 17th), all of which we have seen. It can be said with near certainty that all Holohan could have learned from the media was Poole's name (but not her maiden name), address, cause of death and loss of jewellery; that there had been no sign of forced entry and that Poole had separated from her husband seven months previously.

One paranormal explanation might be that she had been reading Batters' mind, as he himself at first suspected, since, as he told us, much of what Holohan described to him was exactly as he had seen it. This included such details as the two coffee cups in the kitchen of which only one had been washed up, the pile of unread newspapers, the envelope and letter, and the two rings remaining on the victim's fingers, in addition to an accurate description of the body's position, clothes and injuries. This explanation can also be ruled out for the simple reason that Holohan also provided information that neither she nor Batters could have known at the time, notably the description of the murderer (not to mention his unusual nickname), his previous activities and the reaction of his friends to the question of whether he was capable of violence. Indeed, as Batters has repeatedly told us, the only possible single source for all the information is Jacqueline Poole. The mind-reading hypothesis has to account for the fact that Holohan was reading three minds, those of Batters, Ruark and the deceased Poole, and moreover was obtaining information (e.g. the reference to Barbara Stone) that was not to be known to anybody directly concerned for eighteen years. We consider that this case adds considerable weight to the credibility scales of general or super-psi versus discarnate survival and communication on the side of the latter. As Gauld (1977, p.589) points out in a discussion of 'drop-in' communicators, or communicators not known to their contactees:—

It is obvious that cases of verified communications from drop-in communicators rule out the theory of telepathy from the sitters. If, further, the correct information communicated could not have been acquired telepathically or clairvoyantly from any single source but must rather have been assembled from a diversity of sources, even the super-ESP theory becomes somewhat stretched.

What needs explaining by proponents of the super-ESP or super-psi hypothesis is, Gauld adds, the question of how the medium selects from the infinite mass of material theoretically available just those items that are relevant to the drop-in communicator concerned. Furthermore, we might add, Holohan did not provide any specific information at all that was not eventually found to be relevant, directly or indirectly, to the Poole murder; she did not give any incorrect information apart from the day of the murder, and she did not mention any names other than those listed here, all of whom have been

identified as closely connected to the victim. The strongest argument against a super-psi explanation and in favour of a survivalist one must surely be that a great deal of the information given by Holohan could only have come from a person who, at the time of communication, was unquestionably dead.

#### CONCLUSION

Common criticisms of cases of psychic detection are that they are self-reported, sometimes long after the event; they are not corroborated by the police; evidence is selected to focus on the hits (or lucky guesses) while suppressing numerous misses; and that sweeping or unspecified statements are made that could apply to almost anything. ("I am being shown water" or "Is the letter A significant?"). Wiseman, West and Stemman (1996) review a number of cases in which these criticisms seem justified. Would-be psychic detectives can also be completely wrong. Batters (2001) recalled that "during the course of the [Poole] investigation, we received several calls from people offering their services as psychics, but they talked nonsense".

It has been suggested that some of the information might have been gleaned from Poole's relatives or friends. Yet we are not aware of any evidence from any of Poole's friends or relatives that they knew Holohan. Moreover, the only person apart from police officials allowed into the flat from the moment of entry was Poole's boyfriend's father, who entered via the lounge window to identify the body, remaining for a matter of seconds. He had no means of knowing what injuries had been sustained, what changes of dress had taken place, what the kitchen or the bathroom looked like—indeed a score of details reported by the medium. Nor was any member of the family allowed into the flat. The first to enter it was Poole's estranged husband a week later, well after Holohan's call to the police and subsequent interview. Even if—as a still more tenuous hypothesis—Holohan did know Ruark or some of his friends, this would not have helped to account for more than a fraction of the information she imparted, even if it is suggested that Ruark promptly gave Holohan a detailed description of the way in which he had just murdered Mrs Poole. Moreover, had there been any evidence that Holohan patronised the same pubs as Poole, notably the Windmill, where Ruark and many of his associates principally drank, the police would have picked this up immediately. In fact Holohan's only contact with public houses was on the two occasions she helped out at a different pub, the Tally-Ho. But however many of Poole's friends she mixed with, or pubs she is supposed to have frequented, it could have no relevance to the wealth of accurate detail she supplied.

None of the above criticisms, however, can be justly applied to the Poole case, in which the evidence, much of it highly specific, was recorded within a few days of the murder by the first police officer to visit the crime scene, and all of it is reported here except as already indicated. There has been no selection or suppression except where clearly stated. Moreover, the suppressed material, which we have been shown, adds much to the strength of this case. No case of this kind will probably ever be perfect, given the impossibility of proving a negative. However, on the television programme mentioned above, Tony Batters stated that "I've accepted the fact that Jacqui communicated with Christine", as, he has told us, have all his police colleagues with whom

he has discussed the case. We can find no plausible alternative explanation of how the information communicated was gathered. If any readers have one, we would be very glad to hear it.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are most grateful to Tony Batters and Christine Holohan for giving us so much of their time and full cooperation, to Andrew Smith for reading and approving our submitted draft; to Canon Michael Perry for his library research into the Walker case, and to Professor Chris French and Dr Adrian Parker for originally bringing the Poole case to our attention. We are also grateful for the comments and suggestions of the Editors (current and previous) and three anonymous referees.

7 Earls Court Square  
London SW5 9BY

GUY LYON PLAYFAIR

72 Southway  
London N20 8DB

MONTAGUE KEEN

#### REFERENCES

- Ahsan, T. (2003) Psychics solve crime. *Prediction* 69 (5), 18–22.
- Bardens, D. (1965) *Ghosts and Hauntings*. London: The Zeus Press.
- Batters, A. (2001) But ghosts can't testify? *Police* December, 23–27.
- Batters, A. (2003) Personal communication to Keen, 16th April.
- Gauld, A. (1977) Discarnate survival. In Wolman, B. B. (ed.) *Handbook of Parapsychology*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Lang, A. (1894) *Cock Lane and Common-Sense*. London: Longman, Green & Co.
- Lyons, A. and Truzzi, M. (1991) *The Blue Sense: Psychic Detectives and Crime*. New York: Warner Books.
- Smith, S. S. (1992) Leaving the body: the life and death of D. Scott Rogo. *Fate* November, 62–69.
- Surtees, R. (1816–40) *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham* (4 vols). London: J. B. Nichols & Son.
- West, D. J. (1949) The identity of 'Jack the Ripper'. *JSPR* 35, 76–80.
- Wiseman, R., West, D. and Stemman, R. (1996) An experimental test of psychic detection. *JSPR* 61, 34–45.
- Yeterian, D. (1984) *Casebook of a Psychic Detective*. Briarcliff Manor: Stein & Day.

## APPENDIX

Christine Holohan's 1983 statement to Batters and Smith was made in a series of short sentences which Batters wrote down, filling 199 lines of his A5 notepad. The statements were in no immediately recognisable order, and Holohan frequently changed the subject, occasionally repeating herself. We give below all of her statements (except the sensitive material regarding the actual murder, non-specific statements such as those mentioned above, and repetitions) as written down by Batters (left-hand column), together with his comments (right-hand column), to which we have added further details supplied by him in writing at our 2002 interview. Our comments are in square brackets. Some repetitions have been omitted and the order of the statements altered to give the reader a more coherent account of their contents.

## 1. Background Details

<p>"Since Sun[day]. Jacqui Hunt. Saying shouldn't have been there. Supposed to have been going to work. Two men came for her earlier. She didn't want to go. Wasn't feeling well. She had this experience about 9 o'clock. Saturday night."</p>	<p>On the night of the murder (Friday February 11th, 1983) Jacqueline Poole (JP) was due to start a new job as a barmaid. Two members of the bar staff called at her flat at 7:45 p.m. to take her to work. She had told friends shortly before then that she felt too ill to go out, and so stayed at home. The murder took place between 8:45 and 9:15 p.m. on the Friday, not Saturday. This is the only incorrect statement Christine Holohan (CH) made. [JP's maiden name, Hunt, had not been made public at the time of the interview.]</p>
<p>"She is showing me a chain. Door chain. Not sure about letting him in. She thought he had a message. That's why she let him in."</p>	<p>A friend had visited her in connection with her planned visit to his son (her then current boyfriend), who was in a detention centre. The friend left at 8:05 p.m. and confirmed that JP had attached her door chain as he left. JP knew that Ruark also knew her boyfriend and might be bringing a genuine message from or concerning him.</p>
<p>"She knows him socially, the man responsible. Not an ex-boyfriend. Friend of a friend — part of a group of friends. Known about 6 months. She never liked this bloke. He was becoming a pest. He's visited her at work. She says jealousy was a lot of it. Told him she would tell someone else."</p>	<p>For several months JP and her boyfriend had visited the pub at which Ruark was a regular. She definitely knew him, but had rejected his attempts to flirt with her. A man of his description was seen to visit JP at the shop where she worked on the day of the murder, also on another day earlier that week. Her boyfriend's father said she had wanted to tell him something on his last visit to her, but she had changed her mind.</p>
<p>"The link is with the nick. Both had the same friend who was in nick. Not nick, she says, 'bird'. She went to visit him two weeks before."</p>	<p>Her boyfriend was in a Detention Centre ('bird') and not a police station or prison ('nick'). CH did not understand the difference. JP's last visit to her boyfriend was 12 days before the murder and exactly two weeks before her body was found.</p>

<p>"She's talking about robbery. Jewellery. She's showing me a St Christopher. Chunky bracelet. Her granny gave her something. Her mother gave her something for Xmas. Very nice. She had some stolen, some left. Was there another ring apart from these two? She's saying Terry, she's asking for Terry."</p>	<p>JP always wore several chains, bracelets and rings, some given her by her family. The items mentioned were all stolen; only two rings of the twelve or so she had worn earlier that day remaining on her fingers, being too tight to remove. Terry was one of her three brothers, to whom she was very close. CH named him six times.</p>
<p>"She had fits of depression. Taking pills. Still had a prescription for some. She's going through a divorce. Thinking about her husband."</p>	<p>JP was taking medicine for stress and depression brought on by personal problems. A new prescription was found in her handbag. She had been separated from her husband for several months and a divorce was imminent.</p>
<p>"She wanted her personal life kept quiet. With the wrong people in the past. Going to break with the past. Going for another job. Got an interview. She did bar work. Three pubs. Says Hillingdon area. Drinking more than she should. Knew a lot of people. She's asking for Terry again. I'm getting the name Barbara — Barbara Stone."</p>	<p>Nearly all these statements were correct or highly likely, except that there was no record of a pending interview. Although JP had no criminal record, she certainly mixed in criminal circles and had told a friend the day before the murder that she wanted to break with the past. She was considered a social rather than a habitual drinker, but may have felt or been told she was drinking more than she should. All JP's known contacts were traced during the 14-month investigation, but nobody mentioned Barbara Stone. [It was not until the 2001 trial that Batters learned from JP's brother Terry who she was.]</p>

## 2. The Crime Scene

<p>"Now she's showing me where she lives. Two lots of flats. Name of road starts with 'L'. Something 'Close'. He's parked on the corner. There's a car park. Been there before. Done something, a job for her in the past. She didn't want to let him in. He said he had a message."</p>	<p>JP lived in a house divided into just two flats, in Lakeside Close. (CH could have seen the name in newspaper reports.) There are parking bays in the street, but not a normal park. There is a bend in the road but no corner, which could refer to the corner of the building. Ruark had visited JP's flat four months before the murder to switch on her mains, which her boyfriend had switched off after a row, leaving JP in the dark, of which he knew she was scared. Ruark also turned the mains off on the evening of the murder. This might be relevant to the way CH's attention was originally drawn to JP when her bedroom lights were turned on and off. It is very likely that JP would have let Ruark in if he said he had a message from her boyfriend, whom he knew.</p>
<p>"I'm in a hallway. Newspapers not read. There's a cupboard."</p>	<p>True, but easily guessed. There were several newspapers on JP's mat [when Batters first entered the flat, which did have a hall cupboard].</p>

<p><b>"Two cups in kitchen. One washed up. She made a cup of coffee."</b></p>	<p>Again true, but less easily guessed. The kitchen was very tidy; the only items not stored away being one upturned washed cup on the draining board and another cup half full of coffee.</p>
<p><b>"She keeps drawing me to the bathroom. She was attacked in the bathroom."</b></p>	<p>JP's body was found in the lounge, but there was a recently damaged towel rail in the bathroom, also a disarranged rug.</p>
<p><b>"Now living room. She couldn't get to the phone."</b></p>	<p>A friend had rung JP when Ruark may have been in the flat. She had sounded frightened and asked him to call back in 15 minutes. He called 30 minutes later but got no answer.</p>
<p><b>"There was an envelope and a letter. Just come. A black address book. Small room, nice, compact. You found it different. Furniture was rearranged. Settee cushions moved. Out of place. Come in front a bit. She's wearing jeans, a jumper. I changed my clothes twice, she says."</b></p>	<p>A recently delivered letter was found, also a black address book. (CH did not mention a red address book also found). The lounge was compact, well decorated and tidy except for settee cushions on the floor. The fact that JP had changed clothes twice was verified at the 2001 trial.</p>

### 3. The Murder

[CH made 58 statements about the murder of which only one (the day of it) was incorrect. These are omitted here for reasons already stated. CH described every stage of the attack in detail, and from Batters' written comments it is clear that while many statements were inevitably unverifiable, the great majority were either correct, probable, or consistent with his observations or deductions at the crime scene.]

### 4. The Murderer

As recalled by Batters, in notes typed in 2002 and given to us at our October interview:—  
*Christine's eyelids fluttered. She returned to normal state.*

*"I'm so sorry. I have to stop."*

*"How are you feeling?"*

*"Very tired. It takes it out of you."*

*"Will you be able to carry on?"*

*"What do you need to know? I don't know where we're at. Was it helpful?"*

*"Extremely interesting. But we need more on the murderer. Is there more?"*

*"I'll try again in a few minutes. Have you got the name yet? I've never been able to understand what she calls him. Would you like a drink? Then I'll try again."*

*During coffees, questions were asked re possible sources of Christine's information, e.g. victim's family, friends, police, and about her written notes and personal life. [CH had mentioned that she sometimes produced information by automatic writing when she could not get it in her usual way].*

*After coffees: Returned to trance as before, but more quickly. After wait (approx. 30 seconds):—*

<p>"The chap responsible. She's sending out pictures. Five foot eightish, not much more. Dark skin, coloured, Afro-wavy hair. Early 20s. 22. She knows him. April-May birthday. He's Taurus. Tattoos on his arms. Sword? Snake? Rose? I get a name, Tony. He has a nickname, not a proper name. I can't understand what she's saying. A funny name, like the name of a thing."</p>	<p>A good and detailed description of Anthony Ruark, as to his mixed-race complexion, hair and height (5'9"). He was born in April 1959, and was aged 23 at the time of the murder. He had numerous tattoos on his arms. [We assume he was known to some as Tony, and that JP did not know his exact age and was guessing.] Pokie is Australian slang for a gaming machine. Ruark played them constantly.</p>
<p>"He's been working recently, like painting or decorating. Doesn't have a regular job, not a proper job. He's cool, sly, got into places before. And he's clever with cars. Grease monkey, she calls it. He would have done jobs on a friend's car."</p>	<p>He was an active criminal involved in burglary and car theft. His only legitimate trade, learned in prison, was as a plasterer. He had worked as one for two days in the week before the murder. He was a DIY car mechanic, although the term 'grease monkey' did not arise during the investigation.</p>
<p>"He's a local man. Police have seen him already. The guy lives on an estate. A council house or flat. He likes to drink. He's still around, drinking with friends. He was drinking with a group of friends the night before."</p>	<p>Ruark was one of two dozen or so who had already made statements as friends or acquaintances of JP. He lived in a flat on a small council estate in Uxbridge. He was a regular drinker—six to eight pints of lager a day and had spent the evening before in a pub with its regular customers.</p>
<p>"He's got a girlfriend. She knew Jacqui. She's dark-haired, small, pretty. Got a C in her initials. You have got the right group. You are close."</p>	<p>He had a regular girlfriend, a petite and good-looking brunette whose surname began with C. [Batters wonders why the source only gave one initial, since JP knew the woman well.] Ruark was about to be engaged to her two days after the murder and urgently needed money for a ring. When detained three days after the murder, he had £400 in his possession for which he could not account.</p>
<p>"He spent ten minutes looking around. He's looking at a clock. And in a mirror."</p>	<p>These statements were not verified, and if true suggest that JP retained some form of consciousness immediately after death [assuming that she died instantaneously, as seems almost certain].</p>
<p>"Look at his alibi."</p>	<p>This was of course an instruction rather than a statement, and the police did look at Ruark's alibis (he produced two), testing them thoroughly, disproving one and failing to corroborate the other. Numerous other suspects also had uncorroborated alibis and there was no evidence to link Ruark to the murder at the time of it.</p>
<p>"Did anyone see him leave? Lady across the road might, lady with dog. He was cool—he had no feelings when he walked away. When you find him, his friends will be surprised. They won't believe he could do this."</p>	<p>A woman neighbour did walk her dog every evening but was unable to help. After going home to change, Ruark spent the rest of evening at a club with friends, who later described him as completely normal and relaxed. All who knew him thought him incapable of violent crime.</p>



"There's something about an insurance claim. Check an insurance claim. I'm getting the name Sylvia. She's afraid to say something. She's saying Betty. Her mother's friend? Something about her mother. There's someone living in a flat over a shop, a friend. A newspaper shop. Keep in the direction you're going."

Ruark was later found to have made a fraudulent insurance claim after selling some of his own belongings and claiming they had been stolen. The only Sylvia to come to light during the investigation was the mother of JP's boyfriend. JP's mother was named Betty, and she had a friend of that name. JP's close friend Gloria lived in a flat above a newsagent. [As Batters noted at the time, all three of these women telephoned while he was in the flat after finding JP's body, and there were no other callers in the five hours he spent there.]

Of the statements CH made about the murderer, three or four were unverifiable and none was incorrect.

#### 4. Naming the Murderer

Batters recalled in his notes mentioned above:—

*Christine resumed from trance to normal, as before.*

*"I know you want a name. I couldn't get it. She's not making sense. I can try to write it."*

*"How will you do that if you can't understand it?"*

*"I'll just hold the pen. I'm hoping Jacqui will do the writing. I've done it before for relatives."*

*We asked her to try also for information about the jewellery.*

*[CH then took her notepad, picked up a ballpoint pen and said out loud:—]*

*"Jacqui, they need to know his name. His name. And what happened to your jewellery."*

*She returned to trance as previously. She held the pen loosely, half way up the barrel. After about 30 seconds the pen began to shake, scribbling in one area of the paper. It then moved to another part of the sheet, and wrote one word very slowly and jerkily. Christine's eyes were closed, but she could have been in control. The pen then moved to another point, started to write, then stopped. It restarted at the same point after a few seconds, and wrote a word. This pattern recurred several times.*

In this way, CH wrote 'Ickeham' [sic], '221', 'garden' and 'Pokie'. As already described, this information led to Ruark's arrest and Batters' discovery of a possible hiding place on land adjoining a No. 219.

#### Declaration

I confirm that the above account agrees with my recollection of my interview with Christine Holohan and with my knowledge of the case.

(Signed) Anthony Paul Batters. Metropolitan Police Warrant No. 153617. 27.11.2002

(Signed) Andrew Smith, Detective Sergeant. Metropolitan Police Warrant No. 91/167901. 27.11.2002

#### DEDICATION

I deeply regret to report the deaths of Tony Batters, on 30 December 2003, and Monty Keen, on 15 January 2004, and would like to dedicate this paper to their memory.

GLP