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THE GRIM SLEEPER SERIAL KILLER

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Overview:

Lonnie David Franklin Jr, also given the nickname the Grim Sleeper, was held liable for more than 10 murders committed in California. It is believed that his killing spree was between the mid-80s till 2007. Due to large durations of time between his murders and underutilized DNA evidence found from the scene of the crime, it was nearly impossible to hunt down a suspect. Franklin was finally arrested in the year 2010 after forensic scientists used familial DNA searching to link the DNA evidence found at the crime scene to that of Franklin's relative. Through the following questions, we will try to understand this case in detail!



<https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/grim-sleeper-serial-killer-everything-you-need-to-know-252246/>

Why was he the terror of L.A?

Though he was held responsible for more than 10 murders, it is believed that he has murdered more than 25 women. After exactly 6 years, and three and a half months of trial he was sentenced to death on August 10th, 2016. His first victim was named Debra Jackson whom he shot 3 times in the chest with a .25 caliber gun. He used to take pictures of his victims and keep them in his home as souvenirs. There are various doubts raised as to why it took so long for LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department) to catch this man. Many had the theory that it went unnoticed with the fact that most of his victims were black women prostitutes and drug-addicted women.

What do we know about him?

Franklin was a sanitation worker and had access to various landfills and waste dumping grounds. During the investigation, several questions were asked to Franklin's neighbor, as to what he was like in person. Most of them said that he was "friendly and quiet". He used to talk to everyone and was quite social which does not fit the description of a serial killer. His murders were going unnoticed because at that time the use of drugs and related crimes were common in L.A. In addition to this, due to the racial discrimination practiced in America, most of these black women murders were being ignored. As a result, an association called the Black Coalition Fighting Back Serial Murders (1989) was formed. The main purpose of forming this association was to raise awareness about these murders taking place and to protect black women in South and Central L.A.

A not-so-simple question - How was he caught?

It is well known that no crime is perfect. Something is always left behind and if the investigation is carried out swiftly and strictly, it will be a lot easier to catch the perpetrator. Enietra Washington, the only survivor of these killings, testified against him. Her bullet wounds were matched with the previously collected evidence. Enietra was shot and raped in 1988. She went on to explain how he asked her to get into his car when she denied he shot her because she was being disrespectful.

Familial DNA testing was enough for Franklin to be charged with murder. The collected DNA evidence was matched with his relative's DNA present in the system, a person called Christopher (his son) who was arrested for felony weapons possession in 2009. Soon after obtaining the DNA, undercover cops followed him to a birthday party being held in L.A. They collected the plates and pizza leftovers which had enough DNA to land him behind the bars.

A shocking discovery!

After a thorough search of his house, investigators found nearly more than 1000 photos of black women and adolescent girls. Some of them were unconscious, naked while many were bleeding and seemed to be dead. At this discovery, the police wondered if there were more victims than they initially thought...

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DID YOU KNOW?

Even if you move a file to the trash on your computer, it remains in a hidden file that a digital forensic investigator can find.