|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Betty Lou Beets *“Texas Black Widow”* | | |  |
| Information researched and summarized by  *Derek Beaber, Manuel Gomez, and Lauren Barber*  Department of Psychology  Radford University  Radford, VA 24142-6946 | | | |
| **Date** | **Age** | **Life Event** | |
| 03/12/1937 | 0 | Born in Roxboro, North Carolina | |
| 1940 | 3 | Got measles and lost her hearing | |
| 1942 | 5 | Raped by father | |
| 1942 | 5 | Moved to Danville Virginia | |
| 1945 | 8 | Her brother Jimmy was born | |
| 1947 | 10 | Her sister Jackie was born | |
| 1949 | 12 | Began taking care of her little brother and sister because her mother was institutionalized (did not return to school) | |
| 1951 | 14 | Her mother had a psychotic break | |
| 07/18/1952 | 15 | Married Robert Franklin Branson after finishing 9th grade | |
| 1953 | 16 | Had her first child Faye | |
| 1953 | 16 | Had a six month separation from her husband | |
| 1953 | 16 | Attempted suicide | |
| 1953 | 16 | Reconciled with her husband | |
| 1954 | 17 | Had second child Connie | |
| 1954 | 17 | Moved to Mesquite Texas | |
| 02/1959 | 22 | Had third child Shirley | |
| 1962 | 25 | Had fourth child Phyllis | |
| 1964 | 27 | Had fifth child Robert Franklin Branson II | |
| 1966 | 29 | Had sixth child Bobby | |
| 1969 | 31 | Divorced Robert Franklin Branson (Started drinking) | |
| 07/28/1970 | 33 | Married Billy York Lane | |
| 10/281970 | 33 | Got restraining order against Billy | |
| 1970 | 33 | Divorced Billy Lane | |
| 06/1971 | 34 | Billy broke Betty’s nose | |
| 01/17/1972 | 34 | Billy Lane threatened to kill Betty | |
| 01/18/1972 | 34 | Betty shot Billy Lane | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1972 | 35 | Betty was to be tried for attempted murder but Billy Lane signed affidavit saying he threatened Betty’s life so charges were dropped to aggravated assault | |
| 1972 | 35 | Remarried Billy Lane after trial, marriage lasted for one month | |
| 11/1973 | 36 | Met Ronnie Threlkold | |
| 02/16/1978 | 41 | Married Ronnie C. Threlkold in Dallas County, Texas | |
| 1978 | 41 | Betty tries to run Ronnie over with her car | |
| 08/27/1979 | 42 | Betty began topless dancing | |
| 1979 | 42 | Charged with public lewdness while working at topless bar (spent thirty days in jail) | |
| 1979 | 42 | Divorced Ronnie Threlkold | |
| 10/03/1979 | 42 | Marries Doyle Wayne Barker (separated 7 weeks later) | |
| 01/1980 | 42 | Betty was in a serious car accident and suffered major head injuries | |
| 07/22/1980 | 42 | Betty and Doyle divorce. | |
| 10/1981 | 44 | Betty kills Doyle Wayne Barker and buries him in the front yard | |
| 08/19//1982 | 45 | Marries Jimmy Don Beets | |
| 08/06/1983 | 45 | Kills Jimmy Don Beets (WM, 46) | |
| 1984 | 47 | Betty burns down Jimmy Don Beets’ lake house | |
| 2/1985 | 48 | Betty files for Jimmy Don Beets’ death certificate | |
| 06/08/1985 | 48 | Betty is arrested | |
| 07/11/1985 | 48 | Grand Jury indicts Betty for the murder of Jimmy Don Beets. | |
| 1985 | 48 | Betty goes to trial | |
| 10/11/1985 | 48 | Betty is found guilty of murder | |
| 10/14/1985 | 48 | Sentenced to death penalty | |
| 09/21/1988 | 51 | Conviction was reinstated after appeals | |
| 1993 | 56 | Betty’s mother dies | |
| 1993 | 56 | Betty’s son Bobby died | |
| 2/24/2000 | 62 | Betty is executed at 6:18 p.m. | |
| **General Information** | | | |
| Sex | | | Female |
| Race | | | White |
| Number of victims | | | Suspected of 2, Confessed to 0, convicted of 1. |
| Country where killing occurred | | | United States |
| States where killing occurred | | | Texas |
| Cities where killing occurred | | | Henderson County |
| Type of killer | | | Black widow |
| Height | | |  |
| **Childhood Information** | | | |
| Date of birth | | | 03/27/1937 |
| Location | | | Roxboro North Carolina |
| Birth order | | | 2 |
| Number of siblings | | | 3, 1 older brother, 1 younger brother and 1 younger sister |
| XYY? | | | N/A |
| Raised by | | | Mother and father |
| Birth category | | | Middle born |
| Parent’s marital status | | | Together |
| Family event | | | Mom was institutionalized |
| Age of family event | | | 12, when mom was sent to mental institution and she was left in care of family. |
| Problems in school? | | | Yes |
| Teased while in school? | | | Yes |
| Physically attractive? | | | Yes |
| Physical defect? | | | Hearing loss |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Speech defect? | Physical disability that contributes to speech disorder |
| Head injury? | Yes, during car accident |
| Physically abused? | Yes, raped by her father at age 5 and abused by most of her husbands |
| Psychologically abused? | Yes |
| Sexually abused? | Yes, raped by her father and claims to have been raped by her husbands. |
| Father’s occupation | Farmer |
| Age of first sexual experience | 5 years old |
| Age when first had intercourse | 5 years old |
| Mother’s occupation | Farmer |
| Father abused drugs/alcohol | Alcohol |
| Mother abused drugs/alcohol | Alcohol |
| **Cognitive Ability** | |
| Highest grade in school | When she was 12 years old, 7th grade |
| Highest degree | None |
| Grades in school | Low |
| **IQ** | Unable to locate |
| **Source of IQ information** |  |
| **Work History** | |
| Served in the military? | No |
| Branch | N/A |
| Type of discharge | N/A |
| Saw combat duty | N/A |
| Killed enemy during service? | N/A |
| Applied for job as a cop? | No |
| Worked in law enforcement? | No |
| Fired from jobs? | No, but was arrested on the job for public lewdness |
| Types of jobs worked | Waitress, cashier and topless dancer |
| Employment status during series | Stayed at home, occasionally was a waitress |
| **Relationships** |  |
| Sexual preference | Heterosexual |
| Marital status | Married and divorced five times |
| Number of children | 6 |
| Lives with her children | Yes |
| Living with | During the murders lived with her son Robby |
| **Triad** | |
| Animal torture | No |
| Fire setting | No |
| Bed wetting | No |
| **Killer Psychological Information** | |
| Abused drugs? | No |
| Abused alcohol? | Yes |
| Been to a psychologist? | No |
| Time in forensic hospital? | No |
| Diagnosis | Battered Women’s Syndrome, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder |
| **Killer Criminal History** | |
| Committed previous crimes? | Yes. Aggravated assault (shot 2nd husband) |
| Spend time in jail? | Yes |
| Spend time in prison? | Yes, after she was convicted of the murders |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Killed prior to series? Age? | No |
| **Serial Killing** | |
| Number of victims | 2 |
| Victim type | Husbands |
| Killer age at start of series | 44 |
| Date of first kill in series | 10/1981 |
| Date of final kill in series | 08/06/1983 |
| Gender of victims | Male |
| Race of victims | White |
| Age of victims | Late 40s |
|  |  |
| Method of killing | Shooting with a handgun |
| Weapon | Hand gun |
| Was gun used? | Yes |
| Type | Colt revolver .38 |
| Did killer have a partner? | Not in killings, but used son and daughter in disposal of bodies. |
| Name of partner | Shirley and Robby (her son and daughter) |
| Sex of partner | Female and Male |
| Type of serial killer | Black Widow |
| How close did killer live? | Same home |
| Location of first contact | Bar (met most husbands at bars). |
| Location of killing | Bedroom |
| Killing occurred in home of victim? | Yes |
| Killing occurred in home of killer? | Yes |
| Victim abducted or killed at contact? | No |
| Behavior During Crimes | |
| Rape? | No |
| Tortured victims? | No |
| Stalked victims? | No |
| Overkill? | No (didn’t shoot more than three times) |
| Quick & efficient? | Yes |
| Used blindfold? | No |
| Bound the victims? | No |
| After Death Behavior | |
| Sex with the body? | No |
| Ate part of the body? | No |
| Drank victim’s blood? | No |
| Posed the body? | No |
| Took totem – body part | No |
| Took totem – personal item | No |
| Robbed victim or location | No |
| Disposal of Body | |
| Left at scene, no attempt to hide | No |
| Left at scene, hidden | No |
| Left at scene, buried | Yes, in the yard of her house |
| Moved, no attempt to hide | No |
| Moved, buried | No |
| Cut-op and disposed of | No |
| Moved, too home | No |
| Sentencing |  |
| Date killer arrested | June 8th,1985 |
| Date convicted | October 11th, 1985 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sentence | Sentenced to death |
| Killer executed? | Yes |
| Did killer plead NGRI? | No |
| Was the NGRI plea successful? | N/A |
| Name and state of prison | Texas, Huntsville/ Huntsville State Prison |
| Killer committed suicide? | No |
| Killer killed in prison? | Yes, when she was executed |
| Date of death | Feb 24, 2000 |
| **References**  http://www.answers.com/topic/betty-lou-beets. Retrieved March 12, 2007.  http://www.ccadp.org/bettiebeets.htm. Retrieved March 19, 2007.  http://www.cromezzz.net/serialkillers/B/BEETS\_betty\_lou.php  http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/death/US/beets616.htm. Retrieved March 12, 2007.  Pence, Irene. (2001). *Buried Memories: The Chilling True Story of The Texas Black*   *Widow*. New York, New York: Kensington Publishing Co.  http://www.txexecutions.org/reports/208.asp. Retrieved March 19, 2007.  http://www.wsws.org/articles/2000/feb2000/exec-f26.shtml | |