



HISTORY &
CULTURE
**The
Importance of
Being Audrey**



HAPPY BIRTHDAY
Geena Davis



Rosemary West

Murderer (1953–)

Serial killer Rosemary West murdered at least 10 young women. Most of them were dismembered and buried in the cellar of her home on Cromwell Street.

Synopsis

Rosemary West was born on November 29, 1953, in Devon, England. She married **Fred West** in 1972. Establishing a residence in Gloucester, the couple became two of the most horrific serial killers known to the U.K., responsible for the dismemberment and murder of women and young girls, including two members of their own family. With Fred West committing suicide in 1995, Rose was eventually found guilty of 10 separate counts of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Background

Rosemary "Rose" Letts was born in Devon on November 29, 1953, the result of a difficult pregnancy, with both of her parents suffering from mental illness. Electro-convulsive therapy, administered to her pregnant mother for deep depression, may have caused prenatal injury that contributed to Rose's poor school performance and bouts of aggression growing up. She also had a weight problem in adolescence

and developed an interest in older men.

The marriage of Rose's parents was a turbulent one. Her father was a paranoid schizophrenic prone to violent behavior, serving as a terrifying, dictatorial presence. Her mother, Daisy, eventually moved out of the family home, taking Rose with her. Rose, however, decided to move back in with her father again around the same time that she became intimate with a man named Fred West during her teens.

Her father objected strongly to her relationship, but to no avail. She was soon pregnant with West's child and found herself looking after his two children by Rena Costello when West was sent to prison on various petty theft and fine evasion charges. She gave birth to daughter Heather in 1970.

Marriage to Fred West

NAME

Rosemary West

OCCUPATION

Murderer

BIRTH DATE

November 29, 1953 (age 63)

PLACE OF BIRTH

Devon, England

AKA

Rose Letts
Rose West

BIRTH NAME

Rosemary Letts

ZODIAC SIGN

Sagittarius

It's thought that the pressure of caring for three children while still a child herself was a trigger for Rose's violent, erratic tendencies, and it's believed that she murdered 8-year-old Charmaine, West's eldest child, in 1971 during one of these outbursts. Whatever the true circumstances, Charmaine suddenly disappeared and, as West was in jail at the time, it is likely that her body was hidden by Rose until West's release. He was then thought to have moved the body, removing the fingers and toes. When West's first wife, Rena, came in search of her daughter, she too was strangled, dismembered and had her fingers and toes removed.

Fred and Rose West were married in Gloucester in January 1972, and their second daughter, named Mae, was born in June of the same year. By this time, Rose earned extra money as a prostitute and West committed acts of bondage and violent sex acts on underage girls. The cellar of their home at 25 Cromwell Street was a torture chamber, and his daughter, Anna Marie, became one of its first occupants, subjected to a horrifically brutal rape by her father while her stepmother held her down. This became a regular occurrence, and the child was threatened with beatings if she told anyone of her ordeal.

Serial Killings

Their behavior extended beyond the family circle when, in late 1972, they engaged 17-year-old Caroline Owens as a nanny. She was incarcerated, stripped and raped. Despite threats that she would be killed and buried in the cellar, Owens was able to make an escape and reported the Wests to the police. Charges were brought against them. Incredibly, despite his existing criminal record, West was able to convince a 1973 court magistrate that Owens had consented to the activities. Owens was too deeply traumatized over what she had survived to give testimony. The Wests both escaped with fines. Rose was pregnant at the time with their first son, Stephen, who was born in August.

Over the next several years Lynda Gough, Lucy Partington, Juanita Mott, Therese Siegenthaler, Alison Chambers, Shirley Robinson and 15-year-old schoolgirls Carol Ann Cooper and Shirley Hubbard all became victims of the Wests. After brutal sexual attacks, all were murdered, dismembered and buried in the cellar under 25 Cromwell Street.

Rape and Murder of Daughter

Rose had several more children, and daughter Louise was born in 1978. (Not all Rose's children were believed to be fathered by West.) Barry joined the brood in 1980, with Rosemary Junior following in 1982 and Lucyanna in 1983. The children were aware to some extent of the activities in the house, but West and Rose exercised strict control over them.

West's sexual interest in his own daughters didn't wane either, and when Anna Marie moved out to live with her boyfriend, he switched his attentions to younger siblings, Heather and Mae. Heather resisted his attentions and, in 1987, told a friend about the goings on in the house. The Wests responded by murdering and dismembering her, and burying her in the back garden of No. 25, where son Stephen was forced to assist with digging the hole.

Arrest and Life Imprisonment

Eventually their activities drew the attention of Detective Constable Hazel Savage, who oversaw a search at Cromwell Street in August of 1992 that led to their arrest. On December 13, 1994, West was charged on twelve counts of murder. He hung himself in his cell while awaiting trial. Rose went on trial on October 3, 1995. The jury unanimously found her guilty on 10 separate counts of murder on November 22, 1995. She was later sentenced to life in prison without parole.

Rose refused to accept her fate and launched appeals in 1996 and 2000, claiming variously that new evidence clearing her had come to light, and then that huge media interest had prevented her from receiving a fair trial. The 1996 appeal was rejected, and she dropped the later one. She remains incarcerated.

The Wests' home at 25 Cromwell Street, or the "House of Horrors," as it was dubbed by the media, was razed to the ground in October 1996. In its place is a pathway that leads to the town center.

Rose was again the focus of media attention in January 2003, when it was claimed that she was to marry Dave Glover, the bass player of rock group Slade, following a courtship via letters. Glover disputed that there was an engagement and said the media attention over his letters to Rose had cost him his position with the band.

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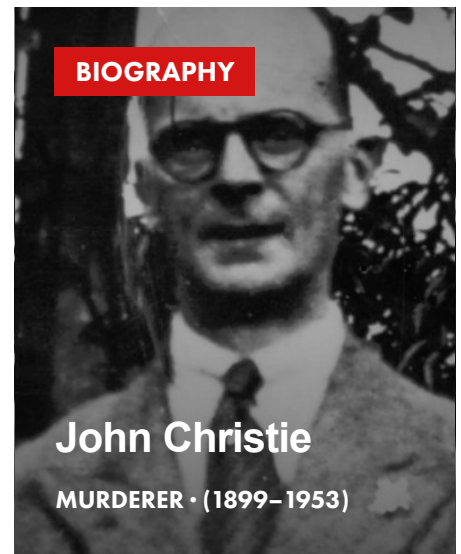
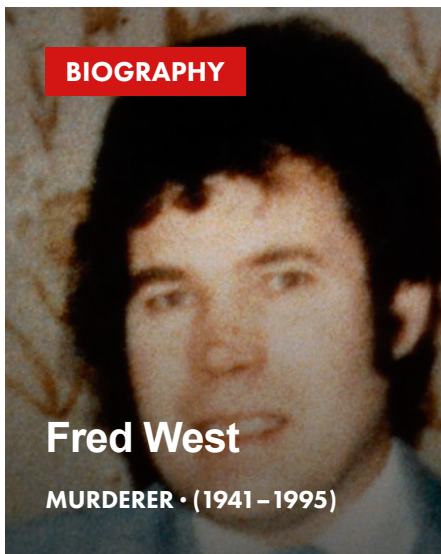
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