



HISTORY &
CULTURE
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HAPPY BIRTHDAY
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Raymond Fernandez

Murderer (1914–1951)

Raymond Fernandez is a serial killer best known, along with his partner Martha Beck, as the Lonely Hearts Killers. The two were executed in 1949.

Synopsis

Raymond Fernandez sustained a head injury while serving in World War II, an accident that is suspected to contribute to his disturbed behavior. He placed personal ads in papers, seducing and robbing women that answered. He met Martha Beck in this manner and the two began scamming women together, eventually committing a number of murders. In 1949, they were sentenced to die in the electric chair. Fernandez and his partner in crime were both put to death on March 8, 1951, at New York's Sing Sing Prison.

NAME
Raymond Fernandez

OCCUPATION
Murderer

BIRTH DATE
December 17, 1914

DEATH DATE
March 8, 1951

PLACE OF BIRTH
Hawaii

PLACE OF DEATH
New York, New York

NICKNAME
The Lonely Hearts
Killers

Early Life

Murderer. Born Raymond Martinez Fernandez on December 17, 1914 in Hawaii. The son of Spaniards, Fernandez grew up in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and moved to Spain in 1932 to live and work on his uncle's farm. While there, he married a local woman named Encarnacion Robles, then left to served as a merchant marine during World War II. After the war, while traveling to America to find work, an accident aboard the ship caused a debilitating skull fracture. Fernandez remained in the hospital for three months and emerged a different man; the injury to his frontal lobe had caused a personality transformation.

Foray into Crime

Shortly after Fernandez's release from the hospital, a petty theft landed him in prison. One of his cellmates, a Haitian man, introduced Fernandez to the practice of voodoo and the dark world of the occult. Upon his release in 1946, believing he has mastered the voodoo craft of sexual enticement, Fernandez began writing dozens of letters to women in lonely hearts clubs. After gaining their trust, he would steal money, jewelry, and other items, and then disappear. The victims were often too embarrassed to report him to the police, and he was able to work the con again and again.

The game turned deadly when a whirlwind romance and marriage to Jane Lucilla Thompson ended with Thompson dead in her Spanish hotel room of unknown causes. With the victim's forged will in hand, Fernandez took possession of her apartment and all the furnishings.

Relationship with Martha Beck

In 1947, Fernandez began yet another letter-writing courtship, this time with Martha Beck, a 200-plus-pound nurse in Pensacola, Florida. They met for the first time in December 1947 in Florida, and then she visited him in New York. Fernandez tried to end the relationship, but after Beck was unexpectedly fired from her job, she showed up with her two children on Fernandez's doorstep. He agreed to allow her to stay if she got rid of her kids, so she abandoned them at the Salvation Army.

Fernandez then revealed his business of scamming women. He even admitted to marrying some of them and to having a legitimate wife and children in Spain. Despite these revelations, Beck, who had spent her life unloved and unwanted, was committed to him. Soon, they became partners in crime, with Beck posing as Fernandez's sister or sister-in-law. Usually they stole money and looted their victims' homes, and sent them on their way.

Murder Spree

But Beck couldn't handle sharing Fernandez with other women, no matter how fictitious the relationships were. Their first murder victim was Janet Fay and others followed, including the young infant daughter of one of the women. After a suspicious neighbor called the cops, Beck and Fernandez were called into questioning, where they signed a 73-page confession.

A jury found Martha Beck and Raymond Fernandez guilty of first-degree murder, and on August 22, 1949, they were sentenced to die in the electric chair. Fernandez died at age 36 by electrocution at Sing Sing prison in Ossining, New York on March 8, 1951.

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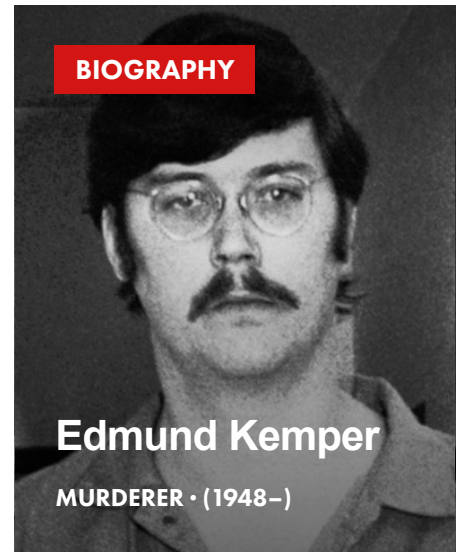
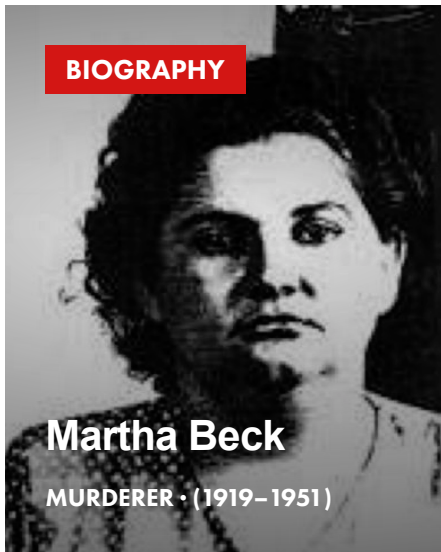
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