



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



HAPPY BIRTHDAY
Geena Davis



Martha Beck

Murderer (1919–1951)

Martha Beck and her partner Raymond Fernandez, popularly known as the 'Lonely Hearts Killers,' were executed in 1949 for serial murder.

Synopsis

Born in Florida in 1919, Martha Beck was a troubled child who worked briefly as a nurse before turning to a life of crime with partner Raymond Fernandez. The couple, who became known as the 'Lonely Hearts Killers,' murdered and robbed victims who answered personal ads placed by Fernandez.

Profile

Murderer. Born Martha Jule Seabrook in 1919 in Milton, Florida. Martha Beck suffered from a glandular condition as a child that caused her to mature faster physically than other children, as well as making her overweight throughout her life. The victim of incest and an overbearing mother, she was lonely and depressed for most of her childhood. She studied to become a nurse, eventually being promoted to supervisor at Pensacola Hospital in Florida.

While her professional life soared, Beck's personal life continued to suffer. After a one-night stand with a soldier in California, she gave birth to a daughter, Willa Dean, in 1944. The father was never heard from again. Her marriage to Alfred Beck was due to a second pregnancy, and they divorced six months later. After placing an ad in a lonely heart's column, Martha Beck met New York businessman Raymond Fernandez.

The two began a letter-writing courtship. He asked for a lock of her hair, which was later revealed as a totem in his voodoo ritual. 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.

NAME

Martha Beck

OCCUPATION

Murderer

BIRTH DATE

1919

DEATH DATE

March 8, 1951

PLACE OF BIRTH

Milton, Florida

PLACE OF DEATH

Ossining, New York

ORIGINALLY

Martha Jule Seabrook

Fernandez then revealed that he had been scamming dozens of women through lonely hearts correspondence over the years. He even admitted to marrying some of them in addition 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. They became partners in crime, with Beck posing as Fernandez's sister or sister-in-law. Usually they stole money and looted the homes of their victims, who were too embarrassed to press charges.

Before long, the game turned deadly. 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 them guilty of first-degree murder, and on August 22, 1949, they were sentenced to die in the electric chair. Martha Beck died by electrocution at Sing Sing prison in Ossining, New York on March 8, 1951.

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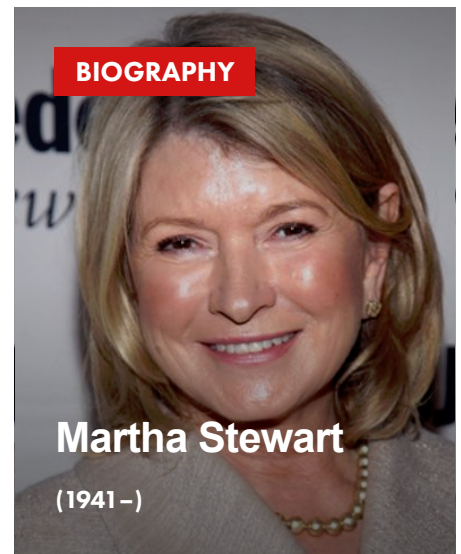
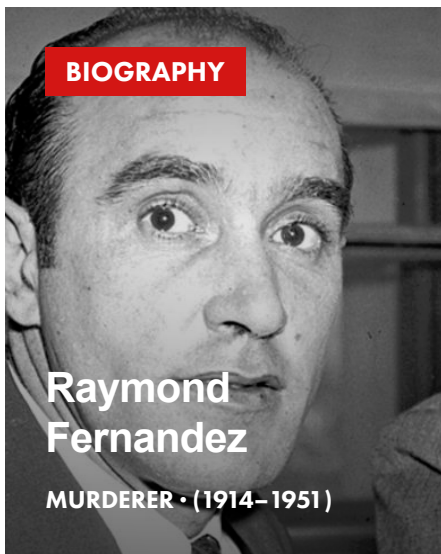
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