

Eye Know Investigations, LLC

Private Investigator

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 66
Frederick, MD 21701

Filed December 11, 1984

I, Matthew Yates, was hired by Harriett Gillard to investigate the disappearance of her husband, Robert Gillard, into the woods surrounding the town of Burkittsville, MD. As part of my investigation, I traveled to Burkittsville to meet Mrs. Gillard, visit Robert's last known location, and interview his colleagues, friends, and family.

I spoke with Mrs. Gillard at their residence on December 5, 1984. According to her, on the day her husband disappeared--November 19, 1984--he left home around 5:45 am to report to his workplace, a radio station on the edge of the Black Hills Forest. Robert was normally tasked with bringing the tower back to a fully operational state early each morning, since the facility would remain closed with power reduced during the night. Mrs. Gillard informed me that, on this particular day, her husband never returned from his shift.

I asked whether Mrs. Gillard had noticed any changes in her husband's behavior or schedule during the weeks before his disappearance. She mentioned that until recently, he always came home well before sundown. As the winter sunset came earlier and earlier, he began to return later and later after dark.

During the interview, Mrs. Gillard appeared to be overly cautious of someone surveilling her. She'd constructed an improvised Faraday cage inside her house; her walls were covered in a foil that she claimed would prevent "outside forces" from hearing us. Every window on the far side of the first floor, facing the forest, had a plank of plywood screwed in to block the line of sight. She explained that her husband had always been a cautious person; she told me he grew up in Burkittsville and knew "the stories" about a local figure called the Blair Witch. Mrs. Gillard made several statements telegraphing her own belief in a witch or some other "restless entity" in the woods, imploring me not to venture into the woods at night for my own safety. When I expressed confidence in my abilities, she proceeded to blame everything from the massacre of a search party to a known serial killer on the alleged witch's influence, and made me promise her I would do no such thing. It is unclear whether Harriett's views stem from mere superstition, eccentricity, or some sort of pathology, but for her sanity I promised, and I kept my word.

Mrs. Gillard gave me the names of Robert's co-workers, his closest relatives in town, and the deputy who initially responded to her call.

INTERVIEW WITH DEPUTY EMMETT LANNING (SUMMARY):

On December 6, I went to the police department to speak with Deputy Emmett Lanning. He confirmed Mrs. Gillard's version of events but offered no further information. When asked about her preoccupation with the Blair Witch, he refused to comment.

INTERVIEWS WITH WAYLON BRADLEY AND MARIA SCOTT (SUMMARY):

Later that same day, I visited the radio tower where Robert worked with two others--Waylon Bradley and Maria Scott. The tower itself was in a great state of disrepair. Most notably, the ceiling in the control room had developed some sort of leak (not of water, but a strange, unidentifiable mucus) that threatened to collapse on top of the electrical equipment. Due to humidity from the leak, the control room smelled heavily of mold, and several plants were growing in cracks in the walls.

As Waylon gave me a tour of the building, I asked him about the work environment and how well the three co-workers got along. Waylon explained that when he first started working there, Robert was an enthusiastic--albeit strange--man who would always look out for him. He recalled how he and Maria would poke fun at Robert's "eccentricities" but still share a laugh with him on the job. However, several weeks before Robert's disappearance, these eccentricities appeared to take an ominous turn.

Waylon explained some of the bizarre precautions Robert instated at the tower. These measures included leaving certain lights on or off for extended periods, replacing parts long before they needed repair, and checking the windows on the northwest side three or more times a day. In recent weeks, Robert had threatened both Waylon and Maria when they failed to perform these tasks to Robert's increasingly exacting standards.

Robert also began building small piles of rocks throughout the control room, which he demanded Maria and Waylon leave intact. However, despite Robert's warnings to his co-workers, he would frequently take them apart himself--only to rebuild them again a few hours later. This cycle seemed to continue without end.

According to Waylon, on the evening of Robert's disappearance, Robert sent Waylon home early--around 4:40 pm--after accusing him of altering one of these rock structures. Maria remained at the tower with Robert. "They'd been staying late together a lot recently," Waylon informed me.

I attempted to get Maria's side of the situation, but it was very challenging to keep her focus. As we spoke, her eyes seemed to gaze through me. She often stared out of the window towards the woods and occasionally muttered answers to questions I had not yet asked. When I asked about her relationship with Robert and how frequently they stayed at the tower after work, she seemed on the verge of tears. "He walked into the woods and went straight to her," she said. When I asked Maria to clarify this statement, she became inconsolable and refused to speak to me any further.

INTERVIEW WITH RONDA GILLARD (SUMMARY):

On my third day in Burkittsville, I reached out to Ronda Gillard, Robert's younger cousin, who lives on the outskirts of town. She mentioned that Robert had been considered an "odd duck" by the rest of the family, and that "the honeymoon must've been over" with Harriett. Besides these generalities, she did not have anything to add to the investigation.

The next morning, I learned that Maria Scott had not returned home from work after speaking to me at the radio tower.

INTERVIEW WITH EZRA SCOTT (SUMMARY):

I visited Maria's husband, Ezra, immediately upon learning of her disappearance. Mirroring Mrs. Gillard's statement, he described Maria spending more time at the radio tower over the past several weeks. When I brought up her strange mannerisms during her interview, Ezra seemed surprised. "She never acted like that at home," he said.

After hearing of Maria's odd behavior on the day of her disappearance, Ezra seemed convinced that his wife had fallen victim to the supposed Blair Witch. He became uncooperative and was reluctant to answer any more questions, speaking at length about his certainty that Maria had been "snatched up by that thing in the woods." Before I left the Scott residence, I did, however, confirm with Ezra that Maria had arrived home at 5:02 pm the day Robert went missing--roughly 20 minutes after Waylon left the tower. This short window makes it unlikely she was somehow involved in his disappearance.

In the following weeks, searches of the woods for signs of either Maria or Robert proved unfruitful, according to the Burkittsville Sheriff's Department.

CONCLUSION:

It is my suspicion that Robert Gillard and Maria Scott are both alive and well, having eloped after being engaged in an extramarital affair. The results of this investigation suggest that Robert disappeared into the woods of his own free will, after which Maria joined him on the day I interviewed her. It is unclear as to whether it is a coincidence or prudent planning that the spouses left behind both largely blame their disappearances on a local legend. Although the prospect may be surprising to those who know them best, it is highly likely Maria and Robert are living together in another city while their distressed spouses grieve in Burkittsville.