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Family Still Grieving 20 Years After Young Mother's Shocking Murder

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The family of Lucy Hargreaves, a young mother shot and burned in her home in 2005, has spoken out on the 20th anniversary of her death, saying they have “never truly come to terms with” their loss. Despite decades of investigation and renewed police interest, no one has ever been convicted over the brutal killing.

Lucy Hargreaves, 22, was murdered inside her Walton home in the early hours of August 3, 2005. Three armed men entered the house on Lambourne Avenue while she slept on the sofa. She was shot three times with a sawn-off shotgun before the attackers set fire to the

room. Her partner and their two-year-old daughter managed to escape through an upstairs window as the fire spread.

The horrifying nature of the attack and the lack of justice over two decades have continued to haunt her family. Speaking publicly on the anniversary, they released a previously unseen photo of Lucy taken while she was attending a local college, the same site now home to Merseyside Police headquarters in Everton.

In the image, Lucy expressed her dreams of working with computers and praised the nearby creche for supporting her as a single mother. Her family described her as a “strong woman” and said, “The way we lost Lucy is not something families can ever truly come to terms with; it is still incredibly difficult and painful to think about.”

Over the years, Merseyside Police have arrested 21 people in connection with the murder. However, none have faced conviction. The main suspect, Kevin Parle, remains at large. He is also wanted in connection with the killing of 16-year-old Liam Kelly in Dingle in 2004.

New Leads

Two decades later, investigators are focusing on new information that has emerged. Merseyside Police relaunched a review into the case two years ago, focusing on a stolen mobile phone and vehicles linked to the attack. Lucy's family revealed that the car used in the murder was stolen a week prior, alongside a mobile phone. That device contacted multiple individuals, some of whom may hold crucial information.

The family appealed directly to those who received the calls: “The people who received those calls, along with others, could have information which could be crucial in achieving justice for Lucy, her parents, sister, children, and all her extended family and friends. We appeal directly to them to please come forward. Now is the time.”

Shortly after Lucy's murder, a gold Lexus with the registration NAD499, believed to have been used in the crime, was discovered burnt out on Richard Kelly Drive in Clubmoor. Witness accounts suggested several men abandoned the vehicle and fled toward Normandale Road. Detectives are still calling for information regarding the car's movements and those involved.

Detective Chief Inspector Howard Rubbery, who heads the serious case review unit, reaffirmed the force's commitment to solving the case. "It is now 20 years since Lucy was taken from her family in the most brutal of circumstances. After carrying out the killing, the offenders ignored the cries of a toddler upstairs as they poured petrol around the house and set fire to it. Their callous and reckless actions could have claimed the lives of two more people that night."

He added, "We are as determined as ever to get justice for Lucy, whose death robbed her family of a loving mother and daughter. As with any unsolved murder, time is no barrier to our pursuit of justice for Lucy."

It has long been suspected that Lucy was not the intended target. Reports at the time suggested that her partner, Gary Campbell, was the possible intended victim. Gang members had accused him of involvement in a hit-and-run that killed four-year-old Kevin Downes in Huyton in 1993. Campbell, who denied being in the vehicle at the time of the crash, said he had exited moments before the fatal incident. The driver, who was 14 years old, received a 12-month sentence.

In 2007, two men – Tony Downes, the brother of the crash victim, and Kirk Bradley – were tried for Lucy's murder but were acquitted mid-trial due to insufficient evidence. They have since been jailed for life for involvement in a separate violent gang conflict.

Parle, the suspected shooter, is believed to have left the country. The National Crime Agency continues to lead an international manhunt to bring him back to face charges.

Lucy's family acknowledged other victims of gun violence in Merseyside, noting the strength shown by their relatives. "We greatly admire the determination and guts of the families of those who have more recently been killed as a result of gun crime here in Merseyside," they said. "We want others to listen to these strong women and find the strength to come forward with any information that could help achieve justice for Lucy and Ellis."

Anyone with information relating to the murder of Lucy Hargreaves is urged to contact Merseyside Police or Crimestoppers anonymously.