



Monday, Dec. 22, 1975

Murder in Philadelphia

John Shivery Knight III was a young man with a future. At 30, he was special-projects editor of an afternoon tabloid, the Philadelphia Daily News. He had a \$1,050-a-month apartment in a large building on Philadelphia's fashionable Rittenhouse Square and an art collection worth about \$100,000. As a respected reporter for the Detroit Free Press, he had won an American Bar Association award. Most important, he was the millionaire grandson and a presumed heir of John S. Knight, 81, founder of the Knight-Rider Newspapers Inc., the chain that includes some 35 daily papers, such as the Detroit Free Press, the Miami Herald and the morning Philadelphia Inquirer, as well as the News. Unknown to most of his friends, the chunky bachelor was also a homosexual who frequented the nearby "merry-go-round" area of the city, where he sought out male prostitutes and dropped in at leather bars. Apparently, last week this secret life led to his murder.

On the evening of his death, Knight arranged a stylish pheasant dinner (he had shot the birds himself) at a local French restaurant for two house guests, his former Harvard roommate, Dr. John McKinnon, 29, a psychiatrist, and McKinnon's wife Rosemary, 27. Knight brought along Ellen Roche, an assistant manager of a bank, as well as the News' managing editor, Paul Janensch, and his wife. Shortly after midnight, the Janensches and Ellen Roche departed. Knight and the McKinnons returned to his apartment to drink brandy and talk.

Around 3 a.m., Knight received a phone call, then strongly suggested that everybody go to bed. The McKinnons retired to their guest room. Later three men entered Knight's apartment. At about 4 a.m., neighbors on the floor below heard loud noises and complained twice to the front desk. Finally, a doorman knocked at Knight's apartment. A man answered, saying they were practicing karate. Around 4:30 a.m., the three strangers, one with a pistol, woke Rosemary but were unable to rouse her husband. The men ordered Rosemary—who was undressed—to help them search for a wall safe. When she reached the master bedroom, she saw Knight lying tie up on the floor and moaning. Soon two of the men departed with some loose money and silverware, leaving Rosemary bound with neckties on a couch.

Rosemary was struggling to free herself when she saw the third man standing over her with a .22-cal. rifle and a spearfishing gun. The thin, nervous young man told her that his partners had left him behind, and he was worried about Knight. Rosemary talked him into relaxing his guard. When he untied her, she leaped at him and wrestled the rifle away.

Gay Hustler. She ran into her bedroom and thrust the gun into the hands of her startled husband. McKinnon, finally awake, covered the stranger, sending his wife downstairs to call the police. McKinnon then discovered tha

Knight had died of multiple stab wounds. He and the intruder grappled, and the man ran into the hallway and jumped into the elevator with Rosemary. The man threw Rosemary to the floor and flailed at her with a knife. She fought for her life by kicking up at him. Although she suffered two wounds, she was able to run off the elevator when it jolted to a stop. By the time the police arrived, her attacker had escaped.

The news of the dead Knight's homosexuality was fully reported in the family papers. Later a sallow, sometime student, William Sage, 20, who is married, told Philadelphia police that he had carried on a five-year liaison with Knight in Detroit. Sage led police to a chest in Knight's apartment containing tape recordings of homosexual encounters, pictures of naked boys and Knight's diary—which ironically recorded the fact that as a result of analysis, Knight was beginning to like women.

Philadelphia police rapidly identified three suspects—two were known toughs who preyed on homosexuals. By week's end one of the men had been found shot to death, and another had given himself up. The third remained on the loose: Salvatore Soli, 37, a mustachioed, tattooed thug described by detectives as a drug pusher, car thief, armed robber and gay hustler.

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