

WOMENWHO KILL ARE RARE GROUP

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Author: JIMMY NESBITT, Courier & Press staff writer 464-7501 or nesbittj@courierpress.com

If the person who robbed and killed Georgia "Jean" Cook is a woman, she'll join a rare group of criminals – women who murder.

Between 1995 and 2003, women accounted for less than 8 percent of all murders committed in the United States, according to FBI statistics. Often, their victims were abusive or cheating husbands, estranged boyfriends or other relatives.

"I cannot think of a case in Southwest Indiana where a woman was committing a crime and then ended up killing somebody," said Indiana State Police Sgt. Todd Ringle.

Cook, 56, of Evansville was shot twice Oct. 6 during a robbery at the Busler's store on U.S. 41 and Old State Road. A man pumping gas saw a middle-aged woman leave the store moments after the shooting. The store had surveillance cameras, but Cook accidentally turned them off that morning.

The Vanderburgh County Sheriff's Department released a sketch of the woman based on witness interviews and has circulated it around the county. Sheriff Brad Ellsworth said the suspect could be a man in a wig, but police are still searching for a white woman with bushy gray hair, 45 to 60 years old and about 5 feet 6.

Police searched the region for women suspected in other violent crimes but found none.

The last time a woman was arrested on murder charges in Evansville was 1997. Sonya Hulfachor and Mark Duncan were each sentenced to 73 years in prison for the beating death of 46-year-old Steven Glaser of Indianapolis.

Hulfachor, a former exotic dancer, had a romantic relationship with Glaser. She said it became abusive. On Sept. 29, 1997, Hulfachor lured Glaser to an abandoned house in Evansville. Duncan beat Glaser with a hammer and left with Hulfachor in Glaser's truck. The two were arrested in Oklahoma a few days later.

The Sheriff's Department hasn't arrested a woman on murder charges since 1984. Donna Stites was sentenced to 50 years in prison for the murder of her stepfather, Ron Fulton. Another woman, Janice Fulton Chinn, was also charged with murder. Both women had drug addictions, said Lt. Steve Bequette.

The women conspired with Frank Dorsey, who beat Fulton to death. His body was found in a car in St. Louis.

Stites and Dorsey were later convicted of a second murder. Dorsey beat Edgar Dutell to death after he and Stites ripped Dutell off in a drug deal. Stites knew Dutell through a job she had at an Indianapolis restaurant.

Dorsey died in prison, Bequette said. Stites remains in the Rockville (Ind.) Correctional Facility. The earliest date for her release is March 2026.

Only 152 of the 7,523 people executed in U.S. prisons from 1973 to June 30, 2005, were women, according to the Death Penalty Information Center, a nonprofit research organization. Four were from Indiana, three from Kentucky and four from Illinois.

One of the most notorious female killers in recent history was Aileen Wuornos, a bisexual prostitute who shot and killed seven men in Florida. Wuornos was abused as a child, and investigators believe that may have caused her to seek revenge against the men she solicited.

Wuornos was executed. A movie, titled "Monster," was later made about the killings.

Bequette said women are committing more violent crimes because today because they "are more aggressive nowadays than they have been in the past."

But that still doesn't explain Cook's death. Cook didn't have any enemies, said her daughter, Bobbie Jo Cook. She worked at convenience stores throughout her life because she enjoyed chatting with customers, Bobbie Jo said.

She had a soft spot for the homeless. "When they stopped in that store, they never walked out hungry, cold, thirsty or without a smoke," Bobbie Jo said. "My mom looked out for people like that."

She looked out for her customers, too. Cook survived for several days after she was shot but never regained consciousness. While she was in the hospital, several people wrote her get-well letters. One was from a customer.

"I'm the lady you helped to put gas in my truck," she wrote. "I didn't know how to do it. I'm lost without you."

Caption: Photo

An artist's rendering of the suspect prepared by the Sheriff's Department

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