

□ Part 3: Analysis of the Richard Crafts Case (approximately 2 hours to complete)

Read the [Lead Case, State v. Richard Crafts](#), then watch "[Crime Stories - The Wood Chipper Wife Killer](#)" to learn more about the case.

After completing the reading and viewing the video, answer the following questions.

1. Based on the Crime Stories dramatization, what motive did Richard Crafts have to murder his wife, Helle? Explain your reasoning. (15 points)

Based on the Crime Stories dramatization, the motive that Richard Crafts had to murder his wife was that his wife had wanted to get a divorce and Helle had suspected Richard was having an affair. Helle had given Richard the divorce papers right before she disappeared which meant that the divorce most likely had Richard tip over the line and crossed it which would have ultimately caused him to murder his wife.

2. In your opinion, whose testimony was the most significant in opening up the case? Explain your choice. (25 points)

I would think that the nanny had the most significance in opening up the case testimony as she had reported having seen the stains on the carpet which Richard Crafts had then removed. Due to the testimony the police had been able to find out that Richard got rid of the carpet and tossed it to a landfill which a private investigator had eventually found. The private investigator had recovered the carpet that had the stains, which was then taken to the forensic lab to be analyzed. The stains wasn't that big of an evidence to be able to trace back at Helle or Richard, it granted the suspicions of Keith Mayo, he had then insisted that Richard Crafts had something to do with Helle's disappearance. The private investigator was the main reason that the case stayed open; which wouldn't have occurred without the testimony of the nanny which had spiraled to the suspicions of Keith Mayo, which would probably not have led to Richard getting caught.

3. Essay (60 points) Give several reasons why the murder case and conviction of Richard Crafts for the murder of Helle Crafts was so unusual and significant. In your answer describe the role of Forensic Science in changing this from a missing person case to a murder case. Give examples.

On January 13, 1987, there was a Connecticut man named Richard Crafts, he was arrested and charged for the murder of his wife Helle Crafts. Helle Crafts was a Pan Am flight attendant who went missing on November 18, 1986. Helle's Friends would try to contact her but all had failed, her husband had given different stories to where she was, to everyone who had asked. The private investigator Keith Mayo was hired by Helle in order to gather evidence on her husband's affairs; he had insisted that Richard Crafts was the reason Helle had disappeared. Around the 25th of December, the police had gotten a search warrant to be able to search the Crafts' premises. Dr. Henry Lee had set a goal to identify and gather as many pieces of evidence to prove that a murder had occurred. Using forensic science, the investigators had gathered

enough proof to prove that Richard Crafts was responsible for the murder of his wife, Helle Crafts. The murder case and also the conviction of Richard Crafts for the murder of his wife was seen as unusual and significant as the body was never found and the case heavily relied on forensic science to solve the case.

In the beginning the disappearance of Helle Crafts was seen by many as a simple missing person case, however there were still many questions as to her disappearance but with the lack of any evidence it was just a missing person. Everything changed when Keith May kept saying that Richard Craft was involved and had a part in the disappearance of Helle Craft. Due to Dr. Lee. At Christmas time, police had been able to acquire a search warrant to search the Craft's home which had occurred when Richard and his family had gone for vacation. Forensic science played a vital role in identifying, gathering, and analyzing evidence found at the Crafts home. With the help of Forensics Science, the investigators looked at the hair strands found in a hair brush that belonged to Helle Craft and would use that to compare it to the hair found at the river. Through the analysis of the bone fragments, DNA typing, blood grouping, hair comparison, and handwriting analysis, the police were able to gather enough evidence to turn the case from a missing person with not that many leads to a homicide case with the perp being caught for the crime.

In conclusion, the woodchipper case is a very significant case for forensic science as methods used were heavily relied upon in order to crack the case as the body was never actually found. With the disappearance of Helle Crafters, it raised many questions, Keith Mayo had tremendously helped the case by turning this into a whole new different direction. Dr. Henry Lee had made an investigation on Helle Crafters' disappearance. Even with forensic science not being as advanced as it is today, this case had heavily relied on its methods in order to solve this mystery which helped this case very significantly. Which had resulted in the evidence gathered and were analyzed enough to be able to persecute and find Richard Crafters to be guilty after a second trial.