

THE KEDDIE MURDERS

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A remote cabin. A brutal crime. A case that has haunted investigators for over four decades. What really happened inside Cabin twenty eight in Keddie, California, on that fateful night in April, nineteen eighty one? Join us as we unravel one of America's most chilling murders: The Keddie Murders.

INTRODUCTION:

Nestled deep in the Sierra Nevada mountains, Keddie, California, was the kind of quiet, tucked-away town where people came to start over. It was a place where towering pines lined narrow roads, where cabins stood in clusters like relics of a simpler time. In the early nineteen eighties, Keddie wasn't much more than a former railroad town trying to stay afloat. It was small, isolated, and, for the most part, peaceful.

For thirty-six-year-old Glenna "Sue" Sharp, this remote town seemed like the perfect place to rebuild. She had recently left her troubled marriage behind, seeking a fresh start for herself and her five children. Though money was tight, Sue was determined to give her kids a better life. They moved into Cabin twenty eight, a modest rental in the Keddie Resort, where other struggling families had also made their home.

By all accounts, the Sharps were a normal family. The kids made friends, Sue worked hard to make ends meet, and life in Keddie carried on as usual. But on the night of April eleventh, nineteen eighty one, something truly unthinkable happened.

By morning, Cabin twenty eight would become a house of horrors. Three people were found brutally killed inside. Blood was smeared across the floors and walls, the crime scene so grotesque and violent that even seasoned investigators were left shaken. To make matters worse, one child was missing—vanished without a trace.

What happened in Cabin twenty eight was more than just a crime. It was an act of pure savagery, a night of unimaginable terror that still haunts this small town to this day.

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ABOUT THE FAMILY

In nineteen seventy nine, Glenna "Sue" Sharp packed up what little she had and set out for a new life. With five children in tow, she left Connecticut behind, determined to escape a troubled marriage that had drained her for years. Her husband, James Sharp, was a military man—strict, sometimes controlling, and increasingly volatile. Their marriage had been marked by tension, and Sue had finally had enough. She wanted something better for her children, even if that meant starting from scratch with barely any financial support.

Her journey led her across the country, eventually settling in Keddie, California—a tiny, secluded town nestled in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Keddie had once been a thriving railroad resort, but by nineteen eighty one, it had become a modest, quiet community, offering affordable housing for struggling families. To Sue, it seemed like the perfect place to start fresh.

She moved her children into Cabin twenty eight, a small, unassuming wooden structure with peeling paint and creaky floors. It wasn't much, but it was theirs. Sue did her best to create a warm home despite the hardships. She was a devoted mother—strong, resourceful, and fiercely protective. Raising five children alone wasn't easy, but she managed. She stretched every dollar, took odd jobs, and received assistance from the government when necessary.

Her children—John (fifteen), Sheila (fourteen), Tina (twelve), Rick (ten), and Greg (five)—were adjusting to life in Keddie. John Sharp, the eldest son, was a typical teenager—sometimes rebellious, but deeply caring toward his siblings. He looked out for his younger brothers, often stepping in as a father figure. Sheila, the oldest daughter, was responsible and mature beyond her years, helping her mother with household chores and watching over her siblings. Tina, at twelve, was quiet and shy but had a creative side. Rick and Greg, the youngest, were still too young to fully grasp the struggles their mother faced, but they loved their new home and the adventures that came with living in the woods.

Despite their financial struggles, the Sharps were a tight-knit family, doing their best to build a life in Keddie. The kids made friends in the neighborhood, and Sue had even grown close to some of the other local parents. But beneath the surface, there were warning signs—small, unsettling moments that hinted at something dark approaching.

Sue had been receiving unwanted attention from certain men in town—particularly from Martin Smartt, a local man with a violent past. He made her uncomfortable, but she

brushed it off. After all, she had dealt with worse before. She wasn't the type to let fear control her.

But the walls of Cabin twenty eight would soon witness something far worse than financial hardship or unwanted advances.

On the night of April eleventh, nineteen eighty one, the Sharps went about their evening as usual, completely unaware that their home was about to become the scene of one of the most brutal and perplexing crimes in American history.

At seven forty five a.m., Sheila Sharp, the eldest daughter, returned home after spending the night at a friend's house. She had no reason to expect anything unusual. In fact, she had been looking forward to a quiet morning, maybe even sneaking in a little extra sleep. But as she pushed open the front door, her world came to a screeching halt.

The scene before her was something ripped straight from a nightmare.

Her mother, Sue Sharp, lay sprawled on the floor of the small living room, her lifeless body covered in blood. Nearby, her brother John Sharp, just fifteen years old, had been killed in a similarly brutal fashion. His best friend, Dana Wingate (seventeen), lay next to him, equally unrecognizable from the sheer savagery of the attack.

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The living room, once filled with warmth and laughter, was now a grisly crime scene. Blood splattered the walls and pooled on the floor. The furniture had been knocked over in what must have been a violent struggle. The air was thick with the metallic scent of blood, and the silence that hung over the cabin was suffocating.

Sheila's breath caught in her throat. She wanted to scream, but the shock had taken hold of her body, rendering her frozen. Her eyes darted across the room, scanning the horror before her, trying to make sense of it.

Sue Sharp's body was found near the couch, bound with electrical tape and medical tape. She had been gagged with a blue bandana and her own underwear, secured tightly with tape. Her throat had been slashed, nearly to the point of decapitation. Deep stab wounds covered her chest and body. A claw hammer had been used to bludgeon her face beyond recognition.

John had suffered a similar fate—stab wounds, blunt force trauma. His body showed signs of a struggle, evidence that he had fought back. But against what? Against who?

Dana Wingate, the outsider among them, had also been bound and beaten. His injuries were severe—he had been strangled, possibly with a cord, and his head had been bashed in with such force that it left behind gruesome imprints of the crime weapon.

It was then that Sheila noticed something equally disturbing.

The back bedroom door creaked open. Inside, her younger brothers, Rick (ten) and Greg (five), along with their friend Justin Smartt (twelve), were alive—completely unharmed. The boys had slept through the entire ordeal, unaware that just feet away, their mother and older brother had been brutally slaughtered.

But there was one person missing. Tina Sharp, who was just twelve years old.

She wasn't among the bodies in the living room, nor was she in the bedroom with the younger boys. The only sign of her was an odd, empty space in the cabin—as if something, or someone, had been taken.

Panic set in. Sheila turned and ran, sprinting to the neighbor's cabin for help. What followed was a small-town tragedy unfolding in real time. The sheriff's department was called, neighbors began gathering outside, and within minutes, the quiet town of Keddie was plunged into chaos.

THE INVESTIGATION:

The moment deputies from the Plumas County Sheriff's Office stepped inside Cabin twenty eight, they were struck by the overpowering stench of blood. The small, dimly lit living room had been transformed into a grotesque slaughterhouse. The bodies of Sue Sharp, John Sharp, and Dana Wingate lay lifeless, bound with medical tape and electrical cords. The brutality was beyond comprehension—this wasn't just a crime scene. It was a statement.

Investigators noted blood spatter on the walls, the floor, and even the ceiling. The sheer amount of force used suggested a sustained attack, one that lasted minutes, if not longer. One of the knives was bent at a disturbing ninety-degree angle, a clear sign that whoever wielded it had stabbed with such force that the blade gave out before they did.

Sue's lifeless body was positioned on her side, her hands bound tightly with medical tape. Blood had soaked through her clothing, forming a dark, ominous pool beneath her. But there was something even more unsettling—she had been partially undressed, suggesting the possibility of a sexual component to the crime. Despite this, there was no definitive evidence of sexual assault.

John and Dana, meanwhile, lay side by side, their bodies mutilated beyond recognition. Dana's head was caved in, likely from repeated blows with the claw hammer. John's throat had been slashed so deeply that it nearly severed his windpipe.

And yet, through all this horror, the most haunting mystery remained—why had Tina Sharp vanished?

Detectives quickly realized that the scene inside Cabin twenty eight defied logic. The level of violence, precision, and sadistic overkill was unlike anything they had encountered before.

But then a chilling detail emerged—the bindings on the victims suggested multiple attackers. The knots were inconsistent, some neatly tied, others sloppy and rushed. It was as if different people had restrained them at different times, each with varying levels of skill.

Forensics painted a grisly picture of what may have happened that night. Blood spatter analysis indicated that John and Dana had been killed near the front door, their bodies later dragged to where they were found. Sue, however, appeared to have been the primary target, suffering the most extreme violence.

And then there was the tape recording.

Investigators discovered that someone had attempted to muffle the sounds of the attack. A section of the cabin's walls had been stripped down to expose the insulation, possibly to absorb sound. But most chilling of all, a small piece of medical tape, similar to the one used to bind Sue, was found with bloodied fibers stuck to it—as if a gag had been ripped from someone's mouth mid-scream.

Whoever committed these heinous acts had not acted in a blind rage—this was controlled, methodical, and disturbingly ritualistic.

In the chaos of the crime scene, one detail stood out above all the horror—Tina Sharp was missing.

Her small bed in the back room was undisturbed, her belongings untouched. Unlike her brothers, who had been left alive in the house, Tina had been taken.

But why?

The timeline of events became even more twisted when neighbors reported hearing muffled screams around one thirty a.m., yet no one called the police. Was it fear? Apathy? Or had the killers ensured no one would intervene?

In the days that followed, search efforts focused on finding Tina. Helicopters scoured the forests. Volunteers combed the nearby roads, creeks, and abandoned train cars. Police even considered the possibility of a ransom demand, but none came. Tina had disappeared without a trace.

Forensic evidence hinted that she had been alive when she left the cabin—but for how long? And what had her abductors intended for her?

The weeks turned to months, then years. Until finally, in nineteen eighty four, investigators received the call that shattered any lingering hope.

A skull fragment, along with a decayed blouse, had been found hundred miles away in the Feather Falls area. Dental records confirmed what investigators had feared—it was Tina.

Her remains had been left exposed to the elements, her body dumped like an afterthought.

But there was one final, terrifying clue.

Not far from where Tina's bones were found, a tiny strip of medical tape lay buried in the dirt. The same kind used to bind Sue Sharp.

Tina had been kept alive for an unknown amount of time after the murders—then disposed of when she was no longer needed.

But needed for what?

Despite the brutality of the crime, no one in Keddie seemed willing to talk. Witness statements were inconsistent, leads vanished, and possible suspects either evaded questioning or provided alibis that felt too convenient.

Rumors swirled about the involvement of locals—people who had lived in Keddie before and after the killings, blending seamlessly into the small-town fabric.

The two primary suspects were Martin Smartt, Justin's stepfather, and his friend "Bo" Boubede—both of whom had been at the local bar the night of the murders.

Martin had a history of domestic violence, and just days after the crime, his wife filed for divorce, citing fear for her life. Even more chilling, he had allegedly told his therapist he had killed Sue Sharp—yet no arrest was ever made.

Then there was the mysterious call.

In nineteen eighty four, when Tina's remains were discovered, an anonymous caller contacted the police and gave them the location before the news had been made public.

How had they known?

More importantly, why did no one follow up on the call?

The case lingered in limbo, an open wound in the town of Keddie. Evidence was misplaced, records were lost, and key witnesses faded into obscurity.

For decades, it seemed like the truth of what happened inside Cabin twenty eight would die with time.

Among the gruesome details of the Keddie Murders, two objects stood out as silent witnesses to the crime—a claw hammer and a steak knife bent at an almost ninety-degree angle.

These weren't just crime weapons; they were symbols of the sheer brutality inflicted on the victims. But even more chilling? One of them disappeared for decades.

When investigators first processed the crime scene, they noted that a claw hammer had been used to bludgeon the victims. However, one hammer that should have been there—a distinctive blue-handled hammer known to belong to Marty Smartt—was missing.

Marty himself even made an odd statement to police, claiming that his hammer had been stolen before the killings. This strange detail would only gain significance years later.

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In two thousand and sixteen, more than three decades after the crime, a man scavenging in a dried-up pond just a few miles from Cabin twenty eight stumbled upon a rusted hammer.

It was the same make and model as the one missing from the crime scene.

Investigators immediately suspected that it had been deliberately thrown into the water to hide evidence. But with so much time passed, any forensic traces of blood or DNA were long gone.

Another eerie detail was the steak knife found at the scene. It had been used with such force that it was bent nearly ninety degrees. This suggested one of two things:

1. The killer was stabbing with uncontrollable rage, exerting more force than necessary.
2. The victim fought back fiercely, causing the knife to bend in the struggle.

Either way, this was not the work of someone who simply wanted to kill and escape—this was personal, sadistic, and prolonged.

Adding to the mystery, another knife—potentially an even deadlier blade—was never found. Some investigators believe it was taken from the scene by the killer as a trophy or to further cover up evidence.

As investigators pieced together the gruesome crime scene at Cabin twenty eight, one question loomed over everything—who could have committed such an unspeakable act?

There were no signs of forced entry, and nothing valuable had been taken, which meant this was not a random break-in or robbery gone wrong. The sheer brutality and overkill suggested deep personal rage, and whoever carried out the act of killing wanted the victims to suffer. But why? And why was Tina Sharp missing?

In the weeks that followed, investigators interviewed locals, neighbors, and family members in search of anyone with a motive. Very quickly, they honed in on two men—Martin “Marty” Smartt and John “Bo” Boubede.

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Marty Smartt lived just a few cabins away from the Sharps and was known for his violent temper. He had a reputation for abusing his wife, Marilyn, and often clashed with Sue Sharp.

Sue had reportedly been counseling Marilyn, urging her to leave Marty, which could have made him resentful. Marilyn later revealed that Marty despised Sue, calling her a “bitch” and blaming her for interfering in his marriage.

On the night of the murders, Marty and his friend Bo Boubede had been at the local bar. Marty’s wife later stated that he came home that night with strange behavior, burning a pair of bloodstained shoes in their fireplace.

Even more suspicious was a later confession Marty allegedly made to his therapist, where he admitted to killing Sue Sharp but claimed he had nothing to do with the children. However, despite this chilling statement, law enforcement took no immediate action.

John “Bo” Boubede was a former Chicago mobster with a shady past. He had arrived in Keddie shortly before the crime was committed and was living with Marty Smartt. The two had an odd friendship, with Bo frequently egging Marty on when he was angry.

Bo had no known connection to the Sharp family, which made his involvement less obvious. But his criminal background and close relationship with Marty made him a strong suspect.

However, no solid evidence ever linked Bo to the crime, and he later left town without a trace.

Despite these strong leads, the investigation quickly fell apart.

- Key pieces of evidence mysteriously vanished. The tape recordings of Marty’s confession? Gone.
- Crime scene photos disappeared from police records.
- No fingerprints, no DNA analysis—nothing that could definitely tie a suspect to the crime.

Many locals believed there was a cover-up. It was rumored that Marty Smartt had connections to law enforcement, which might explain why he was never charged, even after his confession.

Years later, new investigators reviewed the case and found that crucial witness statements had been ignored. There were rumors that Tina Sharp had been taken as a living target, possibly for human trafficking or ritualistic purposes, but nothing was proven.

No one was ever convicted for the Keddie Murders.

Marty Smartt died in two thousand and six, taking whatever secrets he had to the grave. Bo Boubede died in nineteen eighty eight without ever facing trial.

The case remains officially unsolved, though new evidence continues to emerge. In two thousand and sixteen, investigators found a hammer in a dried-up pond that matched the murder weapon missing from the crime scene.

Many believe that law enforcement corruption and incompetence allowed the killers to walk free.

Even today, the Keddie Murders remain one of America’s most haunting unsolved crimes.

Video Sources:

<https://youtu.be/eG8u1p7T5PQ?si=GqVFkTiwlOvJGPJQ>

<https://youtu.be/xNvC4xCPhbg?si=kaFQA7zN3i5c07Rh>

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<https://allthatsinteresting.com/keddie-cabin-murders> (the link has great image stock for you to use as well)