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## **27. Brief summary of the case of the Florence Monster**

### **1. Premise**

The crimes of the Florence Monster are generally considered the work of a maniac or several maniacs (this is not certain, or at least there are differing opinions about it), responsible for the double murder of eight couples in the province of Florence, between 1968 and 1985. For convenience we use the term "Monster of Florence", even if there could have been multiple assailants and, moreover, we simplify it with the acronym MdF. These crimes are still a real mystery today because, despite the convictions that were handed out in the year of 2000 to the two official defendants (Mario Vanni and Giancarlo Lotti), the most common impression, both inside and outside the judicial world, is that the assailant could have been someone else, or even that there was more than one assailant.

Each double murder has characteristics that vary from one episode to the next, with the only component common to all of the criminal acts is the gun that actually resulted in the death of the victims, probably a Beretta pistol belonging to the series 70, that fires Winchester H-series bullets. Actually, a bit of uncertainty surrounds even in these elements. Some speculated that two different Beretta 22 caliber models were used: in the first two murders, a 70 model with an eight-shot magazine; in the following ones, a 73 or 74 model with a ten-shot magazine. Others claim that the ten-shot magazine could also be used on the gun originally designed to receive a single eight-shot magazine.

The eight double homicides are accompanied in four of the eight cases by the removal of the pubis and/or the left breast from the female victim. Here is the chronology:

- 1. Wednesday, 21 August 1968: murder of Antonio Lo Bianco and Barbara Locci, lovers, killed on a path between fields in Signa (in the locality of Castelletti), near the Vingone River

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- 2. Saturday, 14 September 1974: murder of Pasquale Gentilcore and Stefania Pettini, engaged, killed in a field, in Borgo San Lorenzo (in the locality of Rabatta), near the Sieve River
- 3. Saturday, 6 June 1981: murder of Giovanni Foggi and Carmela De Nuccio, engaged, killed on a trail between fields in Scandicci (in the locality of Mosciano), near the Vingone River
- 4. Thursday, 22 October 1981: murder of Stefano Baldi and Susanna Cambi, engaged, killed on a country road in Calenzano (in the locality of Travalle), near the La Marina River
- 5. Saturday, 19 June 1982: murder of Paolo Mainardi and Antonella Migliorini, engaged, killed in Montespertoli (in the locality of Baccaiano), on the edge of an asphalt road, near the Vingone River
- 6. Friday, 9 September 1983: murder of Uwe Rush and Horst Meyer, friends, killed on a grassy pitch in Scandicci (in the locality of Giogoli)
- 7. Sunday 29 July 1984: murder of Claudio Stefanacci and Pia Rontini, engaged, killed on a country path in Vicchio (in the locality of Boschetta), near the Sieve River
- 8. between Friday 6 and Sunday 8 September 1985 (exact date unknown): murder of Jean-Michel Kraveichvili and Nadine Giselle Mauriot, cohabitants, killed in a wooded area (in the locality of Scopeti) near the road to San Casciano; on the following 10 September, a part of the mutilated body of the female victim is sent, as a gesture of defiance, by mail in a closed envelope, to a female magistrate in Florence who had previously played an active role in the investigations.

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## **2. Pietro Pacciani**

The investigation starts from the assumption that the crimes are committed by a single murderer, then leads to the thesis of the involvement of several people. The common factor seems to be Pietro Pacciani. For several years, the Florentine investigators are convinced that he is the MdF, a peasant already sentenced to prison for the cruel murder of a man committed in 1951. Found guilty in the first instance in November 1994 for seven of the eight double murders, then acquitted on appeal in February 1996, while he was waiting for a new appeal judgment following the annulment of the acquittal sentence by the Supreme Court in December 1996, he died in February 1998, before his case could be discussed again.

After Pacciani's first-degree conviction, long considered a lone killer, investigators developed a second inquiry, which would lead them to believe that he was just one of a group of murderers and voyeurs, the so-called "snack companions".

Returning to the figure of Pacciani, from the beginning, he immediately embodied the character of the perfect Monster. In 1951, the 26-year-old Pacciani discovers his girlfriend, Miranda Bugli, a 17-year-old girl, in the woods of Vicchio flirting with a salesman named Severino Bonini. He observes them for a moment then, when Miranda reveals her left breast in an act of lust, overwhelmed by rapture, he throws himself on the man, kills him with nineteen stabs and numerous blows with a stone before having sexual intercourse with Bugli, next to the corpse of his rival. Arrested by the Carabinieri a few days later, he was sentenced to eighteen years in prison before being released in 1964.

Pacciani returned to Vicchio and did several jobs, mainly as a cobbler and generic worker, although his true passion was to work the land. In the meantime, he met a girl with a mental illness, and after dating her for a while, he eventually married her and had two daughters with her.

In 1969, he moved first to La Rufina, then to Montefiridolfi, near San Casciano, and then to Mercatale, which was his last residence

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until the day of his death. In 1987, he was again arrested and sentenced to four years and three months in prison for the continual sexual abuse of his two daughters.

Pacciani is truly a violent man, an ignorant peasant, a despicable figure without any moral sense and is therefore certainly perfect for taking on the role of the culprit. He has the nickname "Vampa" because in local feasts he often plays the role of the fire-eater, but also because he is often red in the face, for the unexpected blasts of angers that strike him when he argues with someone.

In 1989, his name stands out in all the files that collect the data of people detained in Tuscany when the MdF did not strike, but who were free when he struck, plus those with a history of sexual offences. The examination of his life story by Commissioner Perugini, head of S.A.M (the police unit specially designed to study and identify the murderer of couples since 1985), increases the suspicion of investigators and brings investigations on him to a convergent focus. Pietro Pacciani officially joined the MdF crime investigation on 29 October 1991, when he received the guarantee notice for seven of the eight double murders (the first, that of 1968, is excluded just for the moment). On 15 January 1994, he was charged with all eight murders.

One of the most serious clues against the Mercatale peasant is obtained by the judicial police during the maxi-search which begins on 27 April and ends on 10 May 1992. In a cement pile in Pacciani's garden, there is an unexploded 22 Winchester cartridge with an H on the bottom: the examination carried out by experts appointed by the judge states that the cartridge bears particular streaks, similar to those present on the surface of shell casings ejected by the automatic gun which were found at the scene of the double murders.

The first-degree verdict came on 1 November 1994 when he was found guilty of seven double homicides, but acquitted of the murder in 1968. This will be one of the weak points designated to be exploited in the appeal process: how could Pietro Pacciani come

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into possession of the Beretta 22, even though he has no obvious connection with the members of the Sardinian clan, considered responsible for the first double murder? On appeal, Pacciani is totally acquitted of all the charges of being the MdF.

Nevertheless, the General Attorney's Office, who originally asked for the annulment of the conviction of the first degree, appeals: afterwards the acquittal is overturned by the Supreme Court, but Pacciani suddenly dies some months later (according to some he was assassinated, so that he would not speak), before the new judgement is held.

### **3. The Sardinian trail**

The first double murder, which took place in 1968, was supposed to have been committed by the victim's husband, Stefano Mele, who had confessed to having killed his wife, Barbara Locci, caught with her lover, Antonio Lo Bianco, but then he changed his story, accusing alternatively some lovers of the woman, the brothers Salvatore and Francesco Vinci and also a third person, all of Sardinian origin. Then he changed his version again, until he returned to accuse only Francesco Vinci. Although the weapon used was not found, Stefano Mele was convicted of murder and slander.

In 1982, when everyone was still thinking that the first double murder of the series was that which took place on September 14, 1974, the connection with the 1968 crime suddenly showed up. An anonymous report or the perceptive memory of a Carabiniere, we are not sure which of the two hypotheses is true, led the investigators to check the file of the trial with the shell casings and projectiles, still attached to the ballistics report of the time. On the basis of a new report, it was found that they were of the same type as those used by the MdF and it was therefore deduced that the weapon used in 1982 (victims Mainardi- Migliorini) was the same one that caused not only the previous three double murders (1974, 1981 June, 1981 October) but also the first, committed in 1968.

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According to some people, this has been a positive turning point in the course of the investigation. According to others, the connection with the 1968 crime is the result of a false misdirection. As a matter of fact, the investigations focused on people related to the community of Sardinians who had settled or lived in Tuscany. Hence the name of this investigation, called the «Sardinian trail». Basically, the first double murder attributed to the MdF would have been that which took place in 1968.

In 1982, the investigations were again directed towards Francesco Vinci, who had already been accused in 1968 by Stefano Mele. Vinci had been Barbara Locci's lover and had abandoned his family to live with her. The investigators arrested him, but while he was in prison, there was a new double murder, the one in 1983, and he was apparently considered stranger to that allegation, although he was not completely released until the following year. From that moment on, the attention of the investigators focused for many years on the other brother, Salvatore Vinci, but even this case remained without any concrete results.

The investigation into the "Sardinian trail" ended in 1989 with the forced acquittal of all the suspects, due to a lack of any serious evidence.

#### **4. The "snack companions": Pacciani, Vanni, Lotti**

Shortly after Pacciani's conviction in the first degree, a new chapter of this story had already begun in 1995, as Pacciani can no longer be accused of being a lone serial killer, and is considered just one of the "snack companions." This line of investigation, largely due to the initiative given by the new head of the Mobile team, Commissioner Michele Giuttari, is based on four key witnesses that the Prosecutor's Office of Florence wants, without success, to be heard on the eve of the judgment of the appeal against Pacciani (who, it has been said, was eventually acquitted). The names of the witnesses are hidden behind a code name consisting of Greek letters: Fernando Pucci (Alfa), Giancarlo Lotti (Beta), Norberto Galli

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(Delta) and Gabriella Ghiribelli (Gamma). The Court of Assizes, in February 1996, refuses to hear them, Pacciani is acquitted as a consequence, but the investigation develops anyway on the new front.

From the repeated interrogations of Giancarlo Lotti, his good friendship with Mario Vanni is revealed, a man who introduced him to Pacciani in the late seventies in San Casciano: with him he would sometimes go to have snacks in taverns or grocery stores in the region and, on a few occasions, he had fun drinking and chatting at Pacciani's place. Over time, Lotti gradually admits his co-responsibility in the murders committed in 1982, 1983 and 1984. In particular, as for the 1983 murder, Lotti says that he even fired shots in the van belonging to the two Germans; although this cannot be true, the same judges who don't believe him on this point trusted him with the rest. With regard to the murder on 22 October 1981 committed in Calenzano, Lotti repeatedly pleads his innocence and that he knew, through his knowledge of Pacciani and Vanni, that the crime was committed by them. Besides, Lotti admits that he remained involved in these tragic events because he was subjected to blackmail and was threatened by Vanni and especially by Pacciani, by whom he was psychologically dominated. The reason for the blackmail was that Vanni and Pacciani had seen Lotti having an intimate relationship with a man. Regarding to the motive for the double murders, Lotti says that Vanni and Pacciani "loved to kill." Investigators conclude that Giancarlo Lotti's confession is reliable. In the "snack-companion" dynamic, roles were thus established: Lotti pointed out the couples to the others and served as a lookout, so that the accomplices could act without being disturbed. Vanni and Pacciani were the material executioners: Vanni killed with the knife, Pacciani with the gun. It remains to be seen whether the murders, given the mutilations carried out on the bodies of the girls, were executed on the orders of someone interested in these fetish details. In support of this hypothesis, there would be the abnormal financial situation of the «snack

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companions», in particular that of Pietro Pacciani, in reality much discussed and still today not yet well clarified.

Lotti had also reported to investigators that Pacciani was in contact with a doctor, whom he had seen once in San Casciano while he was speaking with Vanni. It was the doctor who gave Pacciani money in exchange for the parts of the corpses that were taken from the girls who were killed. Lotti's accusations should be also confirmed by his friend, a certain Fernando Pucci, a witness to these crimes but also an oligophrenic with low mental ability.

In the end, the Courts of Assizes, both in the first (1998) and second degree (1999), and at last the Supreme Court (2000) too, justify the discordant statements of Lotti who at the same time is self-accusing, but also accuses Vanni (as well as Pacciani, who had passed away in the meantime) and condemn them both.

In early 2000, the investigations continue by identifying certain elements that pave the way for the hypothesis of the investigation called the "esoteric trail". The "snack companions" have all died over the years.

## **5. The esoteric trail and Francesco Narducci**

The new line of investigation links Florence to Perugia and begins with the re-examination of the death of a gastroenterologist from Perugia, Francesco Narducci, found dead on October 13, 1985 in the waters of Lake Trasimeno, just a month after the double murder of the two French tourists. At first, the death of the doctor is classified as a simple drowning, the consequence of a tragic accident or a suicidal will. Later, the hypothesis that Narducci was murdered is taken into consideration, because he was part of a masonic esoteric sect that could have ordered the murders of couples to get the fetishes. The turning point that opens the new line of investigation takes place in 2002. While the police are investigating on some subjects that practice usury, the magistrates of Perugia intercept a phone call from some loan sharks who threaten a victim with the words: «If you do not pay, we will make

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you end up like the famous Prof. Narducci, the doctor of Trasimeno». Prosecutor Giuliano Mignini is suspicious and recalls that the only doctor found dead in Trasimeno is Francesco Narducci, who died in 1985, officially classified as an accidental drowning. The body is exhumed for an autopsy and it turns out that - during the initial superficial examination, the corpse of Narducci does not have the characteristics of a death from drowning. The autopsy, in turn, shows that the neck is broken and that «death is due to asphyxiation by strangulation». By comparing the corpse in the coffin with the photographs of the corpse recovered from the lake, it turns out that the body of the man extracted from the water has a height of 172 cm, while Narducci measured 180 cm.

So, Francesco Narducci would have been killed and someone took the trouble to replace the bodies because he didn't want the truth to be discovered. New details that corroborate the conclusion that Narducci was murdered would emerge from the testimony of five people found by the Perugian Prosecutor's Office, who claim that the body of the doctor was found on October 9, 1985, the day after his disappearance, and not on October 13, as the official reports show. The last person to see Narducci alive was the keeper of the stinger who described him as "pale and upset."

For the crime of concealment of a body, the former police prefect of Perugia, the commander of the Carabinieri, some doctors, as well as the father and brother of Narducci, all become persons under investigation. At the same time, it is claimed that there would be a political intervention from above to prevent the autopsy of the body recovered from the lake in 1985. The magistrates' investigations assume that Francesco Narducci was the guardian of the pubis and breasts taken from the victims, kept in his Florentine apartment. A month after the last official murder attributed to the Monster, that of the French couple that occurred between September 6 and 8, 1985, witnesses recount having seen Dr. Narducci leaving the hospital of Perugia, where he worked, in a state of clear upheaval, right after he got a call. Even these investigations lead to nothing.

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Narducci is dead and cannot be accused of anything. The suspicions and hypotheses of Dr. Mignini run up against the decisions of the Judicial Authority which twice absolves in the phase of the preliminary hearing all the alleged perpetrators of the plot, which would have been hatched by the doctor's family for not being involved in a scandal and, in particular, being subjected to major claims for damages. Over the years, many people have been investigated in the area of the esoteric trail followed by the Public Prosecutor of Perugia, but all the defendants were definitively acquitted and the death of Francesco Narducci was classified forever as a "probable murder committed by unknown people".

## **6. The esoteric trail and Francesco Calamandrei**

The first name compared to that of Narducci, in Tuscany, is that of Francesco Calamandrei, the owner of a pharmacy in San Casciano over the past few years and, according to the Prosecutor of Florence, a good friend of Narducci who, on several occasions, would have been invited to his home. Calamandrei was formally accused by the Prosecutor of Florence of having ordered the crimes to get the fetishes on behalf of a satanic sect. At the basis of all of this, some official statements and also a memorandum from his ex-wife, Mariella Ciulli, accuse him of having held a Beretta gun and conserved in the refrigerator of the house the fetishes torn from the victims of the double murders attributed to the "Monster of Florence". Checks and searches carried out didn't lead to anything, but the investigation went on anyway regardless for many years. In the summer of 2003, during the investigation against him, a new twist occurred which strengthens the hypothesis that, among the pharmacist's acquaintances bound to the sect, there was also the murderer of the couples. Investigators had in fact intercepted conversations in prison between Mario Vanni, the only survivor of the «snack companions», and a visiting friend, according to which the killer of the couples would be Mario Robert Parker, a stylist of color born in New Jersey in 1954, to an American father and an

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Italian mother, who died of AIDS in 1996, already a resident in Florence, seen in San Casciano, frequenting the same satanic sect and known as Ulysses. Parker certainly knew Francesco Narducci and maybe also Francesco Calamandrei, but no evidence was found of his possible role in the murders.

Two years later Calamandrei was also investigated (and then filed in 2008) by the Prosecutor's Office of Perugia for complicity in the murder of gastroenterologist Francesco Narducci, in particular as one, alongside the journalist Mario Spezi, of the instigators of the killing of the doctor, commissioned by the sect to assure himself and his accomplices with impunity from the crimes of the Monster.

On 21 May 2008, at the end of a trial decided on the basis of the simple acts of investigation and by renouncing listening to witnesses (that is, technically speaking, the "abbreviated judgement"), Calamandrei, accused of being the instigator of the MdF's crimes, was acquitted "because the evidence does not exist". Francesco Calamandrei died on 1 May 2012 at the age of 71.

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