



Leading Edge Of the Law

[THE SKETCH ARTIST]

Drawing from Elusive Memory

Jeanne Boylan was working in a small Oregon sheriff's office in 1973 when she began to wonder why the police sketches she saw didn't match descriptions she had heard from the victims. There's a better way, she thought. And there was. Today Boylan, 47, is acclaimed for developing a technique so accurate that an FBI agent who has worked with her likens the results to "something drawn from a photograph." Among her creations: the iconic portrait of the Unabomber—a dead ringer for a young Ted Kaczynski, as well as the near mirror-image drawing of Polly Klaas' killer, Richard Allen Davis. Her secret? A diligent reading—and application—of memory science.

Most sketch artists ask witnesses to examine drawings or photographs meant to jog their memories. But that process can muddy fragile recollections. "Human memories are very malleable, especially at the height of emotion," she says. "Ask, 'Did he have a moustache?' Well, he does now, because you're implanting that image." Her interviews are long chats about other topics, with

only occasional questions related to the pad she holds just out of sight.

"The assumption is that this work is about art," says Boylan, "but it's about the complexity of memory." —By Sandy M. Fernández

SKETCHES: JEANNE BOYLAN; AP (2)

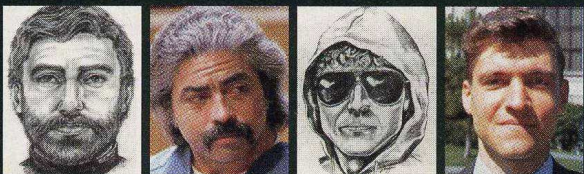
If justice is the most profound responsibility of public life, it is also the one we are least suited to fulfill. It's no mystery why this should be. We're human. Our byways are complicated. The institutions of law are infected with the same shortcomings—greed, dishonesty, weakness, indifference, anger—that give rise to injustice in the first place. On the everyday working level, criminal justice is like chemotherapy. We throw our little poisons at big ones.

This may be the most entertaining irony of human affairs. (Literally entertaining—we get any number of our movies, books and TV shows out of it.) In such an ancient predicament, can anything new ever happen? Sure it can. Proposing to tell God himself that he has no right to treat you unjustly was once a big advance (*see Book of Job*). So were trial by jury and the right to remain silent. So were fingerprinting and DNA evidence. So was the electric chair.

We want to be good. We want to be bad. Between these sides of ourselves, we construct the wall of the state, which is porous, since it's made of ourselves (*see Bill Clinton*). Assuming that you're in favor of justice, anything that makes it stronger is good news, right? We have good news. —By Richard Lacayo

JEANNE BOYLAN

The self-described "facial-identification specialist," whose self-portrait, at left, merges with a photograph, has drawn more than 7,000 visages in her career, helping police in their manhunts. "My ultimate dream of dreams," she says, "would be to see this job done by trained psychologists"



Boylan's best-known portraits: Richard Allen Davis, Polly Klaas' killer, and the disguised Ted Kaczynski

Dead Men Tell No Tales—but Bugs Do

Even to the most hardened investigators, the worst part of examining a decomposing corpse can be coping with its buzzing, wriggling, burrowing infestation of flies, maggots and other insects. Even coroners—not normally the queasiest of folk—can find themselves affected. But to Canadian Gail Anderson, 39, “it’s really just a science.” Professor Anderson is head of the forensic entomology laboratory at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. It is the first

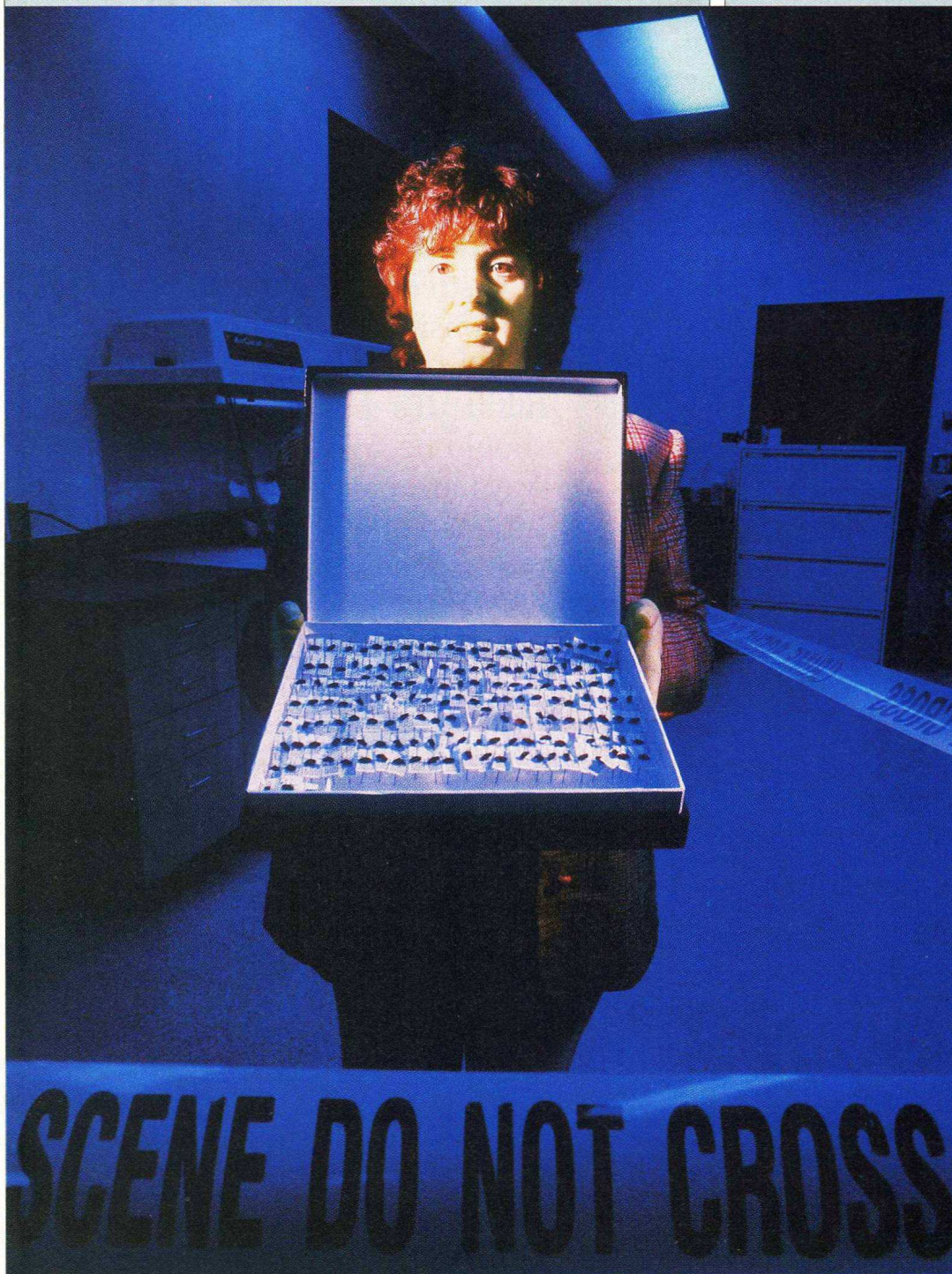
>>>“Let justice be done, though the

university lab in North America founded for the sole purpose of refining the ways in which insect biology can help solve crimes.

While a grad student, Anderson began her career when a professor recommended her as a source to police. In the 12 years since, she has assisted with more than 130 homicide probes, helping determine, among other things, the time and cause of death and whether a body has been moved. Insects can offer this information because they are so predictable: a species will tend to stick to certain foods and environments, and given the same weather conditions, its members will develop at the same pace. Comparisons with baseline data will quickly tell the age of a particular specimen—and thus the time of death—and whether it has been transferred from its normal habitat.

In one of Anderson’s cases, witnesses claimed that a murdered woman had been alive, shopping at the mall, days after two young men said they had seen her slain. With the jury unsure whom to believe, insect evidence led the way. “I was able to tell them, ‘No, she was very dead by then,’” says Anderson. Bugs can sometimes tell investigators what a corpse cannot. After body tissues have rotted away, insects that have been feeding on them can still be tested for drugs or poisons. Anderson does the analysis herself, but in most cases she depends on police to collect the specimens—which means training the officers to do it properly and thoroughly. “One maggot doesn’t help me,” she says. DNA technology promises greater advances in her field. Recently, the FBI matched a suspect to his dead rape victim by the blood contained in a single louse that had migrated from him to her. In 1998 Anderson and her students began compiling a nationwide database on the habits of flesh-eating insects native to Canada—the first time such a

WILLIAM MERCER/MCLEOD FOR TIME



GAIL ANDERSON

The head of Simon Fraser’s forensic entomology lab went to the university to study pest management but got hooked on murder investigations instead. Today she’s one of the few insect experts in the world who work regularly on legal cases

resource has been put together for any country. They are examining hundreds of insects that have never before been studied for forensic purposes. Anderson is also moving beyond bugs to other creatures. In October she submerged six pig carcasses in Howe Sound, hoping to develop basic guidelines for how saltwater animals like crabs and shrimp interact with corpses. Though oceans have always been a favorite dumping ground for bodies, this type of research hadn’t been conducted since the 1800s. Anderson’s biggest challenge now? Cash. “Most funders like their money to go toward studying live people,” she says. “I tell them the dead have rights too.”

—S.M.F.