

Grand Jury to Probe Savage Slaying of

Swaggart Ministry Murder Bombshell

Jimmy Swaggart's ministry is at the center of a grand jury probe into the grisly murder of a 72-year-old invalid woman, says the district attorney investigating the case.

Officials had closed the book on the 1983 killing of Ida Lee Baugh, who shortly before her death had rewritten her will, leaving almost all of the \$800,000 estate she and her husband amassed to the Swaggart ministry. Mrs. Baugh's 19-year-old housekeeper was convicted of the murder.

But nagging doubts in the mind of the D.A. and the persistence of a local reporter — plus information uncovered by The ENQUIRER — have sparked a new investigation.

"I am starting a grand jury investigation into the circumstances surrounding the murder," declared McLennan County, Tex., District Attorney Vic Feazell.

"Based on information provided to me by The ENQUIRER, obviously we were not told the entire truth in our (original) investigation. I want to answer some serious unanswered questions. If necessary, I'll follow this trail all the way back to Jimmy Swaggart.

"I want to make it clear that there are no allegations that Jimmy Swaggart him-



D.A. VIC FEAZELL says he is opening a grand jury investigation.

self had any personal knowledge of anything, or was personally involved in anything."

The grim story began in McGregor, Tex., in 1983, according to testimony at the housekeeper's trial. Elderly Ida Lee Baugh and her husband Patrick asked their friend Mario Scorza to contact Swaggart's ministry. They wanted to rewrite their will and leave the bulk of their estate to the televangelist's work.

Testimony at the murder

trial later revealed that Scorza, who works as a job placement officer with the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, got in touch with Swaggart's Dallas area representative, Gerald Johnson, who assisted the couple in changing their will.

The will was to be signed on November 30, which also happened to be the day Mr. Baugh was going into the hospital for treatment of a serious heart condition. Scorza testified that both he and Johnson went to the Baugh home for the signing — bringing along young Jacqueline Warren, a woman Scorza had found, at Mr. Baugh's request, to care for Mrs. Baugh while her husband was hospitalized.

Little did Mrs. Baugh know that her new housekeeper was a convicted murderer — who just four years earlier had been sent to a juvenile detention center for the brutal slashing death of another old lady!

Authorities released the girl in the custody of her mother after she'd served less than two years.

Ten days after Jacqueline Warren arrived, and while Mr. Baugh was still in the hospital, Mrs. Baugh was murdered.

"I've viewed a lot of crime scenes in my career, but



SHOCKER: A Texas grand jury will try to determine if Jimmy Swaggart's church was involved in the murder of an old woman, who left his ministry a fortune.

none that made me as ill as this one," said D.A. Feazell. "There was not a place in Mrs. Baugh's bedroom that was not covered in blood. In addition to beating the crippled woman with the footrest of her wheelchair and picking her up and physically throwing her around the room, Jacqueline Warren slashed her face with scissors.

"She went berserk, smashing furniture and windows. It was like a scene from 'The Exorcist.'"

"Lying on the carpet, stained with blood, was a booklet written by Jimmy Swaggart: 'The Battle of Armageddon.'"

Jacqueline had run screaming from the house and stopped a passing motorist, who alerted police. Jacqueline told police two men had broken in and killed Mrs. Baugh. But she was arrested for the murder.

Just five days after his wife died, Mr. Baugh passed away at the hospital.

Warren pleaded not guilty at her trial, but the jury quickly found her guilty.

Almost immediately after the Baughs' deaths, their son Larry contested their new will — alleging that both Scorza and Johnson were responsible for hiring Warren, and that they set up a situation that would lead to his mother's early death. He said that even the briefest investigation of the housekeeper's past would have revealed her violent history.



FAMILY FRIEND Mario Scorza contacted Swaggart's ministry to rewrite the couple's will.

Crippled Woman Was Slashed and Beaten to Death By Housekeeper

Attorneys for Swaggart's organization disputed Larry Baugh's allegations and said that an in-house probe had cleared Johnson of any wrongdoing.

Despite his bitterness, Larry Baugh dropped his suit less than one month after he filed it. He reportedly received an out-of-court settlement.

District Attorney Feazell admitted that at the time of the murder, "There was speculation in my office and the sheriff's department

Woman Who Left TV Church a Fortune



CRIME SCENE: Murderer Jacqueline Warren is covered in her victim's blood as she stands in the kitchen of the Baughs' home in this police photo. Ida Baugh was the sav-
age killer's second victim.

that in some way this murder could have been set up, and whether there was any involvement by people representing the Jimmy Swaggart ministry.

"At that time we felt it was totally inconceivable that the Swaggart ministry could have been involved in anything as farfetched as this.

"But based on recent revelations regarding the conduct of that ministry, nothing is inconceivable. It's not so much a long shot anymore."

In addition, ever since the murder an investigative reporter familiar with the case kept hammering the D.A.'s office with questions — particularly concerning a possible Swaggart Ministries connection. That kept Feazell's interest in the case alive.

But a major breakthrough came when The ENQUIRER began probing the bizarre case, and spoke with Mario Scorza, who first put the Baughs in touch with Swaggart's representative.

Scorza told The ENQUIRER that he had expected compensation from Johnson in return for his in-

Family Friend Who Helped Change Will: Church Got All the Money

volvement with the will — even though he testified at Warren's trial that he was not in any way affiliated with the Swaggart Ministries.

"I called Jimmy Swaggart Ministries and set up meetings leading to Mr. and Mrs. Baugh leaving their money to the ministry," he told The ENQUIRER. "I was told I would be compensated for my help.

"Later, when the will was

challenged by Mr. and Mrs. Baugh's son, I was told I would get compensation after the trial.

"But I got nothing. They got all the money.

"When I tried to reach Johnson at Swaggart's office, he had disappeared."

In fact, The ENQUIRER reached Johnson at his home in Ft. Worth, Tex., and he said, "I was terminated in July of '84 because Jimmy Swaggart decided to do away



TRAGIC: Patrick Baugh and wife Ida Lee rewrote their will leaving most of their estate to Swaggart's ministry. He died five days after she was murdered.

with the department. Jimmy decided he could get more money on TV donations."

But when asked specifically about the Baugh case, Johnson said, "I don't recall that name at all."

Declared Scorza, "In this case, there was murder, deception and greed. It was like something out of a Hitchcock movie.

"I kept a daily diary of everything that happened, so I know exactly what I did."

When told by The ENQUIRER about Scorza's revelations about an expected payment and his secret diary, Feazell decided to start a grand jury investigation.

"That diary will be subpoenaed," he said. "I want to talk to Mario Scorza, Gerald Johnson and Jacqueline Warren. They'll all be appearing before a grand jury.

"I want to know what Mr. Scorza's financial agreement was with the Swaggart Ministries. I want to know what he knew about Jacqueline Warren.

"I want to know if he was

involved in any other fundraising activities with the Swaggart Ministries, and if so, what they were and how they came about, and if there was any violence in any of those transactions.

"I want a new investigation on what employees of Jimmy Swaggart's ministry, or people involved in drawing up the will, stood to profit from it."

Feazell is intrigued by yet another mysterious aspect of the case. In Larry Baugh's lawsuit to have his parents' will thrown out, he charged that "... at least one week prior to the time Mrs. Baugh was attacked ... (Swaggart Ministries representative) Gerald Johnson went to Cole Funeral Home in McGregor, Tex., to inquire about the cost of caskets, showing an interest in only the very cheapest caskets which the funeral home sold ..."

Said Feazell, "Why did a Swaggart representative visit a funeral home, checking out the price of coffins?"

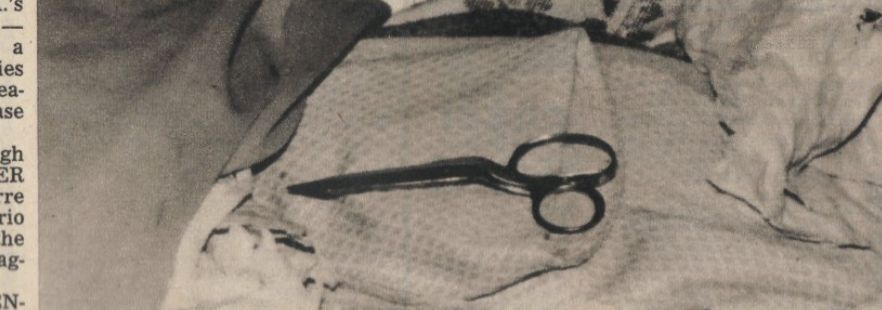
Ken Ables, the attorney who prosecuted Jacqueline Warren at her trial, told The ENQUIRER, "I would welcome any move to further probe the death of Ida Lee Baugh. There were just too many unanswered questions about the activities of people connected with Swaggart.

"One or two coincidences can be understandable. But there are just too many."

— JOHN SOUTH and CHARLES MONTGOMERY



MURDER WEAPON: Mrs. Baugh, 72, was clubbed with this bloodstained footrest taken from her own wheelchair. This police photo, taken at crime scene, shows a Swaggart ministry booklet (arrow) lying by the murder weapon.



POLICE PHOTO shows scissors that her wheelchair-bound victim. This photo was taken at the crime scene.

You may have to live in a crowd, but you do not have to live like it.
— Henry van Dyke