

THE SEAWIND MURDERS

Lisa von Wiegen



Boat Bumpers from the sea wind still on Palmyra this image was taken in 2014.



Malcom and Eleanor Graham



Extended Preparation.



Stephanie Stearns



Wesley Walker (AKA
Buck)

Buck and Stephanie

- They buy a boat that had sunk and was raised from the harbor in Maui. The boat is wooden and they have it covered in fiberglass to prevent it from leaking. Despite this effort they are constantly pumping water from the leaky boat.
- They take about three months to stock the boat with limited funds from Stephanie's income. She stocks water, flour, sugar, and dog food.
- Buck steals the identity of Roy Allen and demands that he be called Roy from now on.
- They also decide to travel with three dogs. Two enormous guard dogs (one is 1/2 pitbull and the other a lab mix) and the Stephanie's small dog. Red nets.

- They begin the journey to Palmyra. It takes them 19 days and according to Stephanie, Buck is sea sick and so she handles all of the sailing. At night she ties the wheel to keep the boat on course and sleeps a few hours. The travel all 1000 miles without running lights on at night.
- Finally they make it to Palmyra and their motor is dead. So they try to sail around the mouth of the lagoon waiting for the right wind. Finally tries to get in the lagoon and ends up getting stuck on the reef.

- Mac and Muff spend a month or so in Hawaii making friends. Specifically, they end up befriending Curtis Shoemaker who is a ham operator and decides to talk to Mac twice a week.
- When Mac and Muff arrive in Palmyra the total number of boats is four.
- Unlike the other boats, Mac brings his boat into a cove separated from the main lagoon, where he then builds a dock that reaches from shore to his boat.

Buck's Behavior

- He moves off the Iola and puts up a tent. He is too tall to stay on the boat. He amasses chairs and other items from around the island. He has his crummy dogs with him.
- He would use a chainsaw and cut an entire palm tree down to get the coconuts.
- He used a gun to shot fish.
- He would row past other boats in the lagoon and stare at individuals on the deck but not speak or acknowledge them.

Dogs

- The fall out seems to occur when Muff is almost bitten by one of the dogs. Mac threatens to shoot the dog.
- The dogs end up biting another sailor that stops the night in Palmyra before continuing on.

There is some exchange of Information

- Stephanie has Mac contact their person in Hawaii to find out if they will be meeting up at the end of summer. This prompts them to decide to go to Faro islands. This is a very tough sail.
- For 5 days, Stephanie stocks the boat with coconuts and gets it ready to go. She charges batteries for 5 days using a generator. It seems excessive and unrealistically long.
- Also in the meantime that last person sails away from Palmyra leaving the Sea Wind and Iola alone. This was August 18th.

Timeline doesn't Make Sense.

- Buck and Stephanie are going to the Faoro islands and she spends 5 days, according to trial testimony and her journal charging batteries.

- Last contact with Curtis Shoemaker was on August 28.
- From here we know that Mac and Muff disappeared about that time. According to Stephanie Stearns they disappeared on August 30th when they went fishing.
- Curtis Shoemaker flies over the lagoon but no boats are at Palmyra on September 4th.

- Stephanie gave a jailhouse interview with she was awaiting prosecution in the first case and she is quoted as saying: Mac's last words to us were, Make yourselves at home until we get back. I'm sure he didn't expect to go out and die. But that is what we did we made the boat our home.
- The Sea Wind wanted to go around the world again, and I wanted to go with it.
- Stephanie was observed wearing Muff's clothes.
- She persisted in asserting that their boat, the Iola ran aground on the reef as they exited the lagoon.

Prosecuted for the Theft of the boat

- She goes first gets two years.
- He goes second gets 10.
- He escapes from prison.
- She is released and then a body is found in Palmyra.

Body Found

- It was Muff Graham. She was placed in a metal container that was clearly government issues. A wire was found near by. It was determined she was shot in the head and burned with a torch.

Trials 2

- The theory of the Prosecution is that Buck and Stephanie were desperate, running out of food, and they just saw an opportunity.
- Buck is convicted.
- Stephanie is found not guilty.

Defendant's Theory.

- Buck was hiding the murder from Stephanie. If they did it together they could have just buried the Grahams at sea and no one would know.

Interesting Details Legal

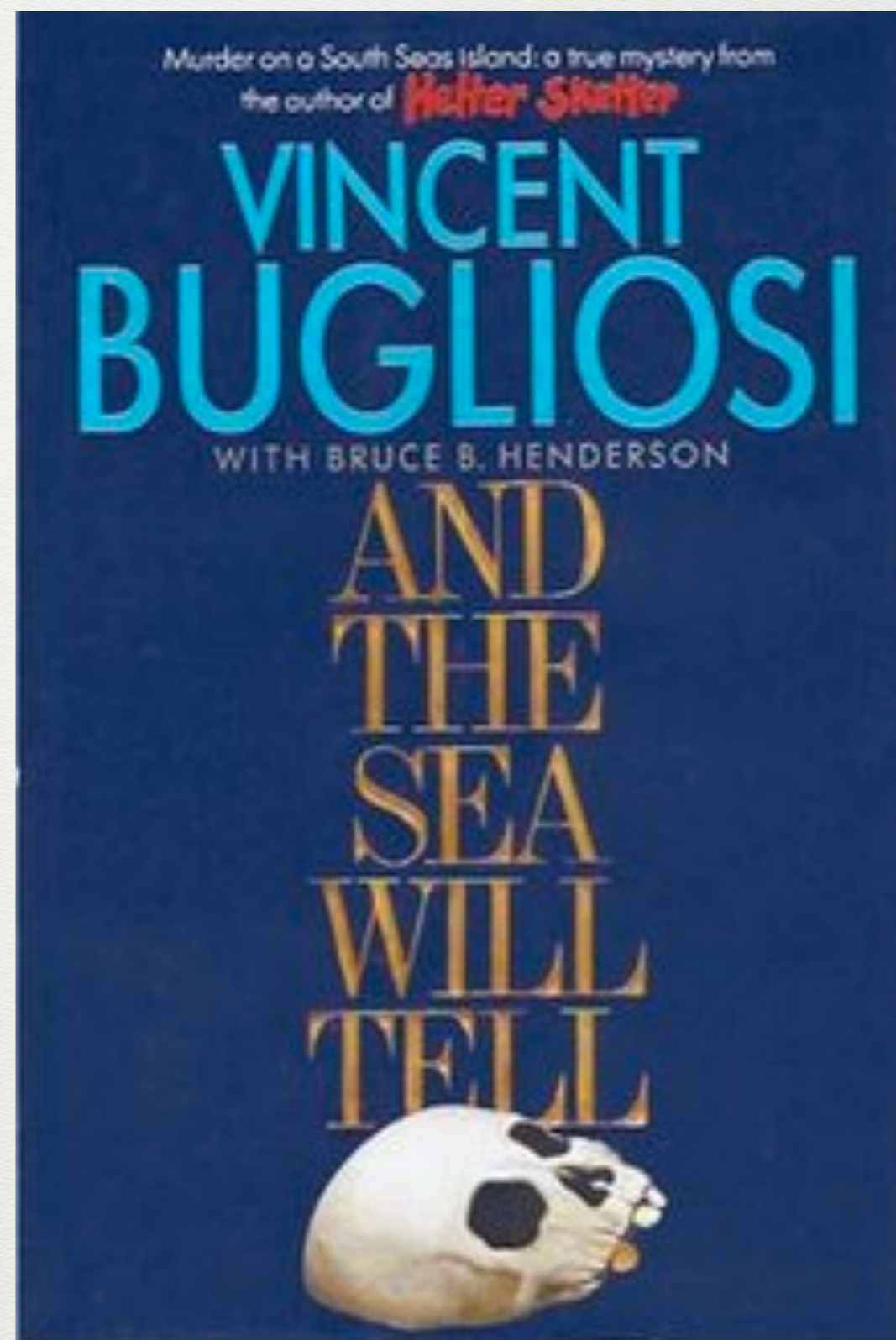
- Iola didn't sink on the reef... Stephanie had pictures of the Iola under full sail but standing on the Sea Wind but
- Because the red nets were on the sea wind the court determined that the Grahams were not involved.

Bibliography

- Palmyra: True Story of an Island Tragedy
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1. Final Argument: An Inquiry Into the Torture and Murder of Mac and Muff Graham on Palmyra Island Perpetrated by Buck Walker and Stephanie Stearns, and the Subsequent Trial of Stephanie Stearns.

Palmyra:
The Story of An Island Tragedy



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- <https://www.apnews.com/858369c4278665a315aa47706a09363e>
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Videos

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Y7pT-BJitg>
- Cursed Paradise (Available on Amazon)