

Le Bon Journal

Thursday 26 December 2002 <http://www.BonJournal.com>
Volume 1 Issue 12: Patty my friend, how could this be your end

Six years ago today, 32-year old Patty Brightwell Vaughan, wife of Jerry Ray Vaughan (known as JR) and mother of three, Brittany, Ray, and Tyler was reported missing in La Vernia near San Antonio, Texas.

Despite countless exhausting search on foot and horseback, by car and helicopter, her body has not been found. And in Texas, there's a saying "no body, no crime."

It's small town Texas where everybody knows each other. And people have guns to protect themselves.

Here are extracts from the local newspapers, analyticalQ.com web site, and poems dedicated to the kind human being named Patty Inez Brightwell, born 17 August 1964.

The first news

In the winter of 1996 - 1997, I received a surprise call from my friend Suntea. His former high school sweetheart Patty was reported missing by her cousin on 26th December 1996. She was last seen by her husband JR.

At first, I shrugged and didn't want to know. After all, she was not a close friend, and we had not seen each other since graduation.

However, later I remembered that Patty and I had actually shared a lot together.

In high school, we had participated in all musical activities: stage band, concert band, show choir, concert choir, talent shows, and finally the graduation song Of the Class of 82.

In 1985 she asked if I would play at her wedding. I declined because I was loyal to Suntea. Why didn't she marry him?

As these memories flooded back, I also heard Pachelbel's Canon in D. In one evening after work, I wrote the entire piece: lyrics and music. I played it for Suntea over the telephone. He wrote the last two

verses about God as she was quite religious.

When writing the piece, I hoped the lyrics would hint to others what really happened to her.

Unfortunately, this song has never been sung in public.

Over the years, I started asking more questions. They remained unanswered even after I travelled to San Antonio to visit Patty's mother, sister, and brother in December 2000.

Why would she disappear? If she didn't, then where is she? Is she alive or dead? What is the current status of her case? Is there a case? If not, why not? People don't disappear for no reason at all. Especially on Christmas Day.

analyticalQ, 25 November 1998

Patty my friend

Words and music by Anne Ku

*Patty my friend,
how could this be your end?
A life that's so unkind
to a soul like yours so fine.*

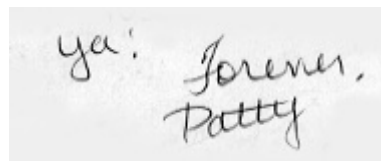
*Your angelic voice,
so high and oh so pure
inspired quite a few
but hid the pain that you endured.*

*Life can be unfair
to the ones who needed it most.
Your love was not enough
to change the path that you had
chosen, chosen, chosen.*

*I sing for my friends,
who have known and loved you
more
than you will ever know,
in another time of long ago.*

*I sing to you this prayer
God above may comfort you.
No more pain will you endure,
your suffering is finally over.*

*I thank you for your mem'ry
I give praise for your good spirit
I pray for a new day
when we will share together His
glory.*



Letter from Patty's family

January 27, 2001

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in regard to my missing sister, Patty Brightwell Vaughan.

She disappeared under suspicious circumstances on December 25, 1996, around 6:30 p.m., from her home on Oak Park Road in Wilson County, Texas.

Her van was found the next day, about fifteen miles from her home. One of the tires had been purposely deflated. Bexar County officials took from her van and also from her home, blood and other evidence.

All of this evidence from Bexar County and Wilson County has supposedly been transferred to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

After four years of searching, I am making another plea for help. If there is any way you can help, my family and I would greatly appreciate any assistance. I would like to thank you for your time and interest, for we have suffered a great loss.

Police reports

27 Dec 1996

Bexar County Sheriff's Deputies A. Ramirez and B. Johnson investigated the van. Ramirez found a dark colored stain on the bottom portion of the rear center seat.

When Johnson kneeled down on the van's carpeting (in the area between the rear seat and the sliding door) to look at the stain, he discovered that his jeans now had wet stains on the knees. Ramirez believed the carpeting in the area between the rear seat and sliding door had been washed or cleaned.

When they removed the rear center seat, they observed that the seat holders nearest the sliding van door **contained a significant amount of water.**

Using the chemical substance Luminol, Ramirez found a reaction in the areas of the **carpet between the van's sliding door and the center seat, under the rear portion of the front passenger seat, under the rear seat sliding door side, and on the interior of the sliding door.**

After removing the plastic covers around the center seat closest to sliding door area, Ramirez noticed some **red and brown stained condensation under the larger piece of plastic that holds part of the seat belt strap.**

Later Chief Forensic Serologist Lonnie D. Ginsberg positively identified human blood from an area under the rear seat of the van.

29 Dec 1996

Bexar County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigation Division and other evidence technicians investigated Patty's residence. Using the chemical substance **Luminol** to find reaction with items contained in blood, the officers found very strong reactions in the **bath area, wall adjacent to bedroom door, and bedroom floor.**

When the officers turned off the light, they observed what appeared to be **shoe prints on the bathroom floor**, leading to the closet. There were also various streak or swab-type markings on the bedroom floor, adjacent to the bathroom floor and leading into the bath and closet area.

The blood found in the van and in the house was DNA tested and confirmed to belong to Patty.

In the news

3 June 1997

FLORESVILLE - Despite thousands of hours of work by deputies from four sheriffs' offices, Texas Rangers and the Texas Department of Public Safety, with assistance from the FBI and two engineering firms, Wilson County

Sheriff Joe E. Tackitt Jr. said his department is no closer now to solving the disappearance of Patty Vaughan than on the day she was last seen.

Tackitt admitted the heavy criticism of his department for not finding the woman, or her body, has taken its toll, but he said he understands the family's frustration. "Of all people, I can certainly understand and appreciate their feelings," the sheriff said. "I know we are certainly frustrated. "I would give anything if we could bring this case to a conclusion, preferably by finding her alive, or at least in finding her body." Tackitt said his office alone has worked more than 2,000 hours on the case.

No closure

How do you get people to contribute without paying them? What motivates people are not so obvious.

Why does the family of Patty Brightwell Vaughan persist in bringing her case to closure? Why do friends of her family help? Because they care. They have a sense of moral responsibility. They want to see justice.

So many of us want to help, but we underestimate our capabilities. But every little bit helps. You don't have to be perfect. You just have to believe.

Patty's father

When I learned of Patty's father Billy Brightwell's death in January 2000, I asked myself

why would anyone leave a 15 to 20 page suicide note?

why would anyone put a gun in his mouth when he had not completed his search (for the cause of his daughter's disappearance)?

why was the police so quick to diagnose a suicide verdict?

I've read about people who have severe depression. While they may think about suicide a lot, **do** they actually have the willpower to commit the final act?

Watching together

Words by Pamela L. Grant
Music by Anne Ku

*Billy lost his daughter
they say she disappeared
But in his heart and spirit
he knew that she was killed.*

*He was a man of determination
where there's a will there is a way.
Many back breaking hours
searching for his precious Patty.*

*Many had to tell him
that he should move on.
Forget trying to look for her.
She's alive or she's gone.*

*But anyone who had known her
that was touched by the songbird's
heart
knows the truth inside their sorrows
she's in heaven with our lord, her
God.*

*Now he's with his precious Patty
they are watching from above
It is said he committed suicide.
Depression overwhelmed his heart.*

*Flying free they are soaring
in truth and love
A father and daughter
in Jesus arms, they are.*

Update December 2002

At time of writing, there is still no closure, except that "the cold case unit is supposed to dig up the pits at Patty's house. She has been on the news more and more when a woman comes up missing." The good news is that there is a reporter following the case and she is in contact with the investigators.



Editor

Anne Ku last saw Patty on Okinawa in 1982 after their high school graduation. They last spoke on the phone in 1985. Patty's story did not end on Christmas 1996, but continues at <http://www.analyticalQ.com/patty/> where Patty's children will find it one day.

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