

*There Came a Day is neither fiction nor TV drama. This is real life in the raw. Each chapter is filled with the unimaginable: a monstrous paedophile, a child murdered, a family devastated. Yet the darkness is pushed back by the unexpected light emanating from the broken heart of a remarkable mother – a light put there by a loving Saviour. Beautifully written, Patricia Cardy holds nothing back in this page-turner. She gives us her heart to hold for a while, and we can feel it beating... beating with love for her murdered child and remaining family, but also beating with an unshakeable trust in the Saviour she has found faithful in the worst of days. Thank you for the privilege Patricia.*

**Catherine Campbell**, author of *Broken Works Best*,  
and *Journey with Me*

*Patricia Cardy has written a moving account of her tragedy. Anyone who has been the victim of extraordinary suffering can find encouragement by reading this. The kind of suffering Patricia describes does not come to most people, but it did to her. If you have been faced with severe suffering, or know someone who has, do read this book and pass it on.*

**R.T. Kendall**, former pastor of Westminster Chapel,  
London, and author of over 50 books

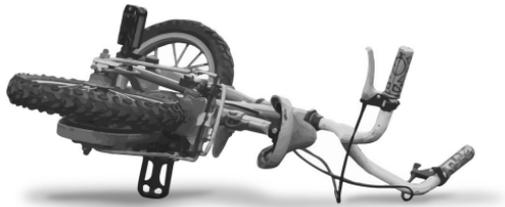


THERE  
CAME  
A DAY



# THERE CAME A DAY

A CHILD'S MURDER,  
A MOTHER'S SURVIVAL



PATRICIA L. CARDY

**10** Publishing

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*Jennifer, school photo, 1981*





# INTRODUCTION

Wakefield High Security Prison holds 700 of the most violent and depraved men in Britain. These are men whom society would choose to forget. Their crimes have conferred upon the jail the title of Monster Mansion. I was to discover that this prison housed a man I had long feared to meet. Years had passed without knowing his name, without having to look on his face, and without having to confront his depravity.

Robert Black had evaded capture while continuing to terrorise and kill little girls for over a decade. For this man there came a day. Once arrested, he spent the remainder of his life in prison, latterly in Northern Ireland, where the Public Prosecution Service had charged and the jury unanimously convicted him of the paedophile abduction, sexual abuse and murder of our nine-year-old daughter, Jennifer. While being held in Maghaberry High Security Prison during the trial, he applied for a permanent transfer from Wakefield.

We have all had our dark days. I have written this book hoping you will accompany me through dark days of my own. We will never understand why some things happen, not on this side of eternity anyway. Certainly, God knows. And this same God, if we trust Him, can see us through all of our days, however dark they may prove to be.

Many have written about Robert Black. I have no wish to highlight the depth of his evil. My purpose is to bring a surprising and welcome clarity that whatever your days do bring forth, we are never at their mercy.

We live in a world fraught with worry and depression of all kinds. A world which, for many, is governed by fear and undergirded with an abject helplessness. But there are answers.

We do not choose our days, we cannot change our days, nor can we relive any of them. Probably we would if we could. Throughout our days, whatever they will be, let us determine that we too will learn to know and trust God to see us through.

Come with me. I can bring you through dark tunnels, dark days, and show you this, our glorious Engineer. Maybe you will trust Him too.



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# THE DAYS WHEN WE DIE

The Bible states, “it is appointed for men to die once” (Hebrews 9:27).

I take issue with that.

It was true for Jennifer, at nine years of age. On that score I agree. Death is a one-time thing. For our daughter, there came a day. Death, however, can take more lives. There are those, still alive, who also die. For Andrew and I, we both died that same death at the same hands of the same murderer. Jennifer’s brothers, Mark and Philip, learned the ongoing reality of death. That day, Jennifer also left a little sister, Victoria, a baby of eight months old, the last person she spoke to before leaving home as she reluctantly cushioned her again into my arms – though not without her well-practised giggly hug. Robert Black

not only robbed Victoria of a loving sister, but he robbed her of a beautiful and irreplaceable relationship. And so, within our days, we die our deaths; few do not.

Robert Black had plunged many defenceless children to early deaths before having to await his own appointment with death in a prison hospital. He was sixty-nine and due to serve another twenty years of four life imprisonments without parole. For our family it was an unexpected phone call on the 12th January 2016: Black had just died in prison of natural causes. Whether we like it or not, God makes His own agenda.

As I slowly replaced the phone, my mind had taken on an inability to function and my mouth struggled for words as I conveyed the news to Andrew. He took it in similar silent fashion. But sense took its hold, as my heart immediately ached for a family in England whom I knew would be suffering more painful consequences of this man's death.

The name Tate brings sympathy from the people of the UK. In August 1978, thirteen-year-old Genette Tate was abducted. Shocked viewers watched television images of an overturned bicycle left abandoned, and newspapers strewn across a country lane in Aylesbeare, Devon. Little did we then know that three years later we were to face the same trauma. While there are striking similarities in the two disappearances, one major difference remains: Genette's body has never been recovered. Her case has become the longest unsolved child disappearance in British history.

Over three decades after Genette's death, the Tate family had begun to live with a new hope. In Robert Black's trial and conviction in 2011 at Belfast and Armagh Crown Court, Prima Facie evidence would give rise to the allowance of similar submissions in any subsequent trials of Black. The alleged murderer was about to face trial, conviction and further imprisonment. The police were very soon to charge Robert Black with the murder of Genette Tate.

After decades of examination, and only weeks away from the police completing their investigation, Black died. The Tate family were barely able to carry on. Knowing this, I felt their despair.

A television news report the following day recorded Genette's father's distress. He spoke of his hope that a letter might have been left in Black's cell, confessing to Genette's murder. He also revealed that he had attempted to visit Black in prison. He ended the interview by saying, "Where do we go now?"

The media interviewed us on national and local news. While many would be expecting us to say how glad we were to hear of his death, even expecting us to say how he could rot in hell, as Christians, we had neither joy nor satisfaction. Eternal hell has no return. There can be no gladness in that.

Five years earlier, Andrew had given these words on behalf of us all outside court the day of the jury's unanimous guilty verdict, "We leave the court so happy that justice has been done, and Robert Black will never

again be able to harm another wee girl. He will be in jail until he dies.”

Truer words have been seldom spoken.

Like Genette Tate’s father, I shared a deep desire to speak with Robert Black, though wondering if, given the opportunity, I would have the guts to do it. I will never know. Nevertheless, I wanted to ask him one thing, and I rehearsed the words again, “Robert, you have done little that has been good in your life. This is one good thing only you can do. You alone can and must tell grieving parents where each of their daughters’ bodies lie; bodies that you disposed of. You still see their faces. You still hear their cries. You know where you have hidden them. This is one good thing only you can do – perhaps, the only good thing you will ever do.”

All these years, and with every other recorded murder of other little girls since Jennifer, my heart dies another death. We know there are still many unsolved disappearances in the UK and Ireland, and further afield in Europe, which bear the hallmarks of Robert Black. The terrible blight upon such parents is one with which so very few can identify. It has caused incredible pain, and to such parents no reunion in this life will ever come. Neither can there come a day when they will know anything of the final hours of their little children.

Young teenagers, loud and laughing on their way home from school. Their noise filled one of the busiest streets in Lisburn, our local town. It was the day after Black

had died. They took my attention, my face beginning to mirror their smiles. Then, suddenly I stopped smiling, for I recalled the time when Robert Black was a similar age to these boys. A twelve-year-old, younger than those before me, when he raped his first victim. At that young age he entered the addictive cycle of sexual cruelty. In that moment I saw the vulnerability of the innocence in the boys around me. I was scared for them as I watched. Childhood adolescence ought to be innocent: I hope for the most part it is.

After Black's death, the Prison Service cremated his body. Little was said. His remains were disposed of at sea. It took Andrew and me by surprise when asked to make our views known on how we would prefer to see Black's remains interred. Answering questions on a radio programme from our home, I was glad that Andrew and I had earlier discussed this. Interested in World War II history, Andrew recalled the story of the hangman, Albert Pierrepoint who executed many Nazi criminals. On one such occasion there was a shortage of coffins and he is reported to have said that "A condemned prisoner is entrusted to me after decisions have been made which I cannot alter. He is a man, she is a woman, whom the church says still merits mercy. The supreme mercy that I can extend to them is to give them and to sustain in them their dignity in dying and in death. This gentleness must remain."

After Andrew had finished his story, I added that Albert Pierrepoint accorded respect to the bodies of some of the

worst war criminals in history. And this, I thought, was a principle that applied in this case. Robert Black would meet with a God more holy than us. In his lifetime, he too had an opportunity to receive the gift – the amazing gift – of forgiveness, redemption and new spiritual life from this holy God. Many may take my words in a completely wrong context, but I make no apology when I say I would be pleased to know he did. For, I remember a little nine-year-old girl, and I remember her gladness in the gift God gave to her at that tender age of seven. Has Jennifer given Robert Black a welcome smile? I think, perhaps she has. For God says, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezekiel 33:11).