
HOMICIDE AT ROUGH POINT



THE UNTOLD STORY OF HOW DORIS DUKE
THE RICHEST WOMAN IN AMERICA
GOT AWAY WITH MURDER

PETER LANCE

FIVE TIME EMMY-WINNING AUTHOR OF TRIPLE CROSS
COVER UP AND 1000 YEARS FOR REVENGE

CHAPTER ONE

MURDER AT THE GATES

On the last full day of his life -- October 6th, 1966 -- Eduardo Tirella flew into Newport, RI, the storied summer colony of The New York 400.⁷ Doris Duke, the wealthiest woman in America⁸ picked him up at the airport and they drove to Rough Point, her English-manor estate on Bellevue Avenue, known to Newporters as “Millionaire’s Row.”⁹ Tirella, whose close friends called him “Eddie,” was about to declare that he was leaving Doris¹⁰ after seven years as her constant companion,¹¹ artistic curator and designer at her estates in New Jersey, Bel Air, Honolulu, and Newport. It was now time to let his patron know, face to face, that he was severing his professional ties with her, for good.

The handsome Tirella, a war hero and Renaissance man with movie star looks, had just finished the set design for *Don’t Make Waves*, a new film starring Tony Curtis and his close friend Sharon Tate.¹² With his Hollywood career amping up, he was anxious to get back to the West Coast, so he’d asked Doris to rent a station wagon.¹³

His plan was to load up his paintings and effects and drive to his mother's house in New Jersey, where he'd drop them off and fly home.¹⁴ At 42 he was on the edge of an important new career. But nobody left Doris Duke without consequences. A notoriously jealous Scorpio, she was known for her violent temper.¹⁵ A few years back, in a drunken rage, she'd stabbed her common-law husband with a butcher knife when *he'd* angered her,¹⁶ and Eduardo, who was gay, had been warned by his partner and friends not to test her.¹⁷ He assured them that he could handle Doris and agreed to come back to Newport for one last curating job.

Still, by late the next afternoon, October 7th, servants at Rough Point remember them getting into a heated argument.¹⁸ Doris, then 53, had rented the Dodge Polara wagon from the local AVIS dealership and they were about to head out to pick up an artifact Eddie had deemed worthy.¹⁹

Moments later, as they exited the estate with Tirella behind the wheel, he got out to open the massive wrought iron gates. Suddenly, Duke slid into the driver's seat and seemed to snap.

She released the parking brake, shifted into drive and slammed down on the accelerator. The rear tires of the two-ton wagon spun, leaving gouges in the gravel driveway. From a dead stop the wagon roared forward, hit Tirella, burst through the gates and dragged him halfway across Bellevue before smashing through a fence and crashing into a tree.²⁰ As Doris sat stunned behind the wheel, Eduardo's body lay beneath.²¹ With massive injuries to his lungs, spinal cord and brain, death was instantaneous.²²

Ninety-six hours later, with no inquest – basing the brief probe of Tirella's homicide *entirely* on the word of Miss Duke – police chief Joseph A. Radice declared the death accidental.²³ Doris later signed a transcript of an interview prepared by the police²⁴ and the case was closed.²⁵ Seven months after that, Radice retired and later bought the first of two condominium units in Hollywood, Florida.²⁶ The Lieutenant Inspector who had first questioned her, leap-frogged over the Captain of Detectives to become chief.²⁷ Another cop at that interview was promoted to Sergeant.²⁸

Eight days after the homicide, following years of haranguing with Newport after she blocked off Cliff Walk,²⁹ the pedestrian path surrounding her estate, Doris donated \$25,000 to restore it.³⁰ It was the

equivalent of \$200,000 today.³¹ Next, she gave \$10,000 (\$80,000 in 2021 dollars) to Newport Hospital, where she'd been hidden away from authorities on the night of the crash while her lawyers traveled from New York to create a cover story.³² In the months that followed, she began to set up The Newport Restoration Foundation which eventually renovated 70 original colonial buildings.³³ Her sudden burst of philanthropy led one cynical Newporter to muse, "The death of one man was well worth the long-term benefit to this City."³⁴

Tirella's closest surviving niece sees it another way: "She killed him twice," said Donna Lohmeyer, 74, who's been searching for decades for the truth behind his death. "She destroyed his body and then she eviscerated his memory."³⁵ That came four and a half years later after Doris steadfastly refused to settle with Tirella's five sisters and three brothers who were willing to accept as little as \$200,000³⁶ at a time when she was making \$1 million a week in *interest* on her money.³⁷

Instead, she forced them to file a wrongful death civil suit which led to a 10-day trial in the summer of 1971³⁸ in the same Providence Superior Courthouse where the second trial of Duke's Bellevue Avenue neighbor, Claus von Bulow, had taken place.³⁹ In that action the Tirella family was asking for \$1.25 million.⁴⁰ After all, Eddie was at the top of his game professionally. He had more than two decades of earning capacity ahead of him and the year before his death he'd made more than \$43,000⁴¹ – the equivalent of \$355,000 today.⁴²

At that trial Doris testified that she "always asked Eduardo's advice before buying or planning anything for her estates."⁴³ Over the past decade he'd counseled her on the purchase of art worth tens of millions -- pieces they'd acquired together on more than 100 occasions.⁴⁴ He traveled with her to London, Paris and Italy to scout paintings, tapestries and rare furniture and he'd transformed Duke Gardens, a series of abandoned greenhouses on her New Jersey estate, into a spectacular series of themed botanical displays considered one of the most significant glass-house collections in America.⁴⁵ Eddie had his own living quarters in each of Doris's five estates⁴⁶ so she clearly wanted to keep him close.

"But even more," said Pola Zanay, a longtime friend, "She hated the idea of *him* leaving her."⁴⁷



Eduardo Tirella and Doris Duke. Mid 1960's

Doris Duke was actually found “negligent” in Tirella’s homicide,⁴⁸ but during the damage phase, her lawyer portrayed him as a spendthrift, ne’er-do-well and “financial fiasco.”⁴⁹ The shocking result: after legal fees and disbursements were deducted, each of his siblings was awarded a grand total of \$5,620.⁵⁰ “Considering what he had done for her and meant to her, it was shameful,” said Zanay who was also close to Eddie’s partner, sculptor Edmund Kara. “It was the worst kind of character assassination, considering the sort of nationally-known designer that he was.”⁵¹

As a gay man in the mid-Sixties Tirella had a diverse and complex resumé that ran deep. He’d been a performer at New Jersey nightclubs in the early 1940s, falling in with Frank Sinatra. His niece Donna told me that her mother “Remembered them coming home to eat Italian after some of Frank’s dates at the Meadowbrook, where the big bands played. But the war changed all that.”⁵²

In 1943, Eduardo enlisted in the Army and shipped off to Europe, earning a Bronze Star for his service at the Battle of the Bulge.⁵³ In the early Fifties he ran the millinery department at Saks in Beverly Hills⁵⁴ where he designed hats for gossip columnists Hedda Hopper and Louella Parsons.⁵⁵

As he further developed his design skills, he transformed Peggy Lee's Los Angeles hilltop home, showcased on CBS's interview program *Person to Person* in 1960.⁵⁶ Ironically, in a piece published three weeks after his death, *Vogue* cited his design⁵⁷ for the "vast" new kitchen in Falcon Lair.⁵⁸

Eduardo's partner Edmund Kara was the most prominent natural wood sculptor of his day⁵⁹ and apart from Miss Lee, Tirella counted among his personal friends Richard Burton, David Niven, Alan Ladd, Kim Novak and James Coburn.⁶⁰ He'd recently created Elizabeth Taylor's beach house for the 1965 Vincent Minnelli-directed Hollywood production, *The Sandpiper*⁶¹ as well as sets for *Don't Make Waves*,⁶² in which Sharon Tate co-starred with Curtis and Claudia Cardinale.

Eddie played cameos in both films.⁶³

But after Doris Duke finished with him in court, he was relegated in the eyes of the jury to the status of celebrity sycophant.⁶⁴ By then, she had gone to great lengths to erase him from her own life as well as the public record.

CHAPTER TWO

LITIGIOUS & VINDICTIVE

Rough Point was built in 1892 for Frederick William Vanderbilt, ⁶⁵ the grandson of “The Commodore” Cornelius, progenitor of the family responsible for six spectacular Newport estates. ⁶⁶ The gardens were designed by Frederick Law Olmsted who gave Manhattan Central Park. Yet when James Buchanan “Buck” Duke bought it in 1922 he found the red sandstone and granite estate so inadequate that he added a new ballroom. Back then, he considered its “Great Room” too small to accommodate the coming-out party he envisioned one day for his beloved 10 year-old daughter, Doris. ⁶⁷

After his death, when she was presented to Society at the age of 17, some 600 guests celebrated on the final evening of Tennis Week at The Newport Casino, site of the first U.S. Open ⁶⁸ On that night in 1930, two orchestras played at Rough Point as the tall blonde debutante sat next to her mother Nanaline. Five years earlier, her future had been cemented by a \$50,000,000 inheritance. ⁶⁹ But as she sat under colored lights on a specially-constructed cliffside marquee amid the top shelf of Newport Society, Doris couldn’t have imagined that 36 years later, outside the gates of that very same estate, she’d be willing to kill the handsome younger man she’d been so close to.

In 1993 when she died in Los Angeles, leaving a fortune of \$1.3 billion and generating years of lawsuits involving her butler, Bernard Lafferty, accused of hastening her death, ⁷⁰ Doris Duke's 2,900-word obituary was sprawled across $\frac{3}{4}$'s of a page in *The New York Times*. But Eduardo Tirella, her trusted friend and advisor, earned only a single sentence of 34 words. ⁷¹



**Rough Point 52 years to the day after Eduardo Tirella's Death.
(Adam Fithers photo)**

In her *L.A. Times* obit, which was more than twice that long, he got two sentences; the second of which reported that “an inquest cleared Duke;” though there never was one:

Interior designer Eduardo Tirella was helping refurbish Duke's home in 1966 when he jumped from the driver's seat of her car to open the gates of her Newport mansion -- and the vehicle slammed into him. Although an inquest cleared Duke, who was in the passenger's seat, she turned more reclusive. ⁷²

“Doris Duke was bent on controlling the narrative of her mangled legacy,” said her one-time business manager, Patrick Mahn, the former NYU professor she put in charge of her finances in 1984. ⁷³ “Litigation was her favorite foreplay.” ⁷⁴

Starting at age 13 when she sued her own mother, ⁷⁵ Duke was involved in more than 40 lawsuits over the next seven decades. ⁷⁶ “She could be incredibly vindictive,” says Mahn, who co-authored *Daddy’s Duchess*, a scathing Duke biography. ⁷⁷ “After I left, she went bonkers and sicced the legal dogs on me.”

Her godson, Pony Duke, who co-wrote another bio entitled *Too Rich*, put it this way: “Doris gave no second chances. She collected people and then she threw them away.” ⁷⁸

Buck Duke, who made his first fortune with American Tobacco Company, creating the modern cigarette as we know it, ⁷⁹ warned his daughter on his deathbed to, “Trust no one,” ⁸⁰ and she’d been famously paranoid ever since. Dee Dee, as her few close friends called her, ⁸¹ was infamous for hiring ex-FBI agents to intimidate disgruntled friends and lovers who might be sources for reporters or biographers. ⁸² Columnists were harassed to print retractions. ⁸³ Ex-staffers were threatened and bullied. Thirty-nine months before Tirella’s death, she slashed the arm of her common-law husband Joe Castro in that jealous rage. ⁸⁴ Then, after Castro sued her for assault, he was effectively kidnapped in Hawaii by private investigators hired by her lawyers and induced to drop the suit. ⁸⁵

THE MISSING PHOTO

The only known photograph of Doris and Eduardo, published on page 6, is strangely unaccounted for in the archives of Getty Images, owner of the Bettmann Archives which had previously licensed the photo. ⁸⁶ The entire file of the Tirella wrongful death case is gone from R.I. Judicial Archives. ⁸⁷ The file on the police “investigation” was reported missing from the Newport Police Department in 1990. ⁸⁸ Even the negative of the photograph of the crashed 1966 Dodge Polara station wagon which made the front page of *The Newport Daily News* the next day, was selectively removed from archives at The Newport Historical Society. ⁸⁹

Newport Daily News

Local Forecast

Fair, mild tonight. Snow in the 10s. Tomorrow, fair and continued warm.

(Detailed Report on Page 2)

VOL. 122—NO. 128

NEWPORT, R. I., SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1966

12 PAGES

PRICE: SEVEN CENTS

Doris Duke Kills Friend In Crash



Newport police this morning the road, bleeding from head refused to indicate when they cure.

would question Doris Duke, who Police said an autopsy would was as the wheel of a station wagon that killed her 42-year-old male friend yesterday afternoon.

The victim was Edward T. Tarella appeared in the middle years known as Bill Duke's constant companion, the crashed station wagon east side her Bellevue Avenue estate.

The accident occurred about 5 p. m. The only witness, Miss Duke, who was admitted to Newport Hospital suffered only from facial cuts and severe shock.

She was treated for cuts in the face and head, but hospitalized through this morning and Mrs. Duke was in "good condition" after the crash, but "might" be released pending the coroner's report.

Police Chief Joseph A. Baker said the car was over a 10-year period not be insured in Rhode Island, and "was not and mentioned in his office this morning.

The car, owned by Doris Duke, was insured in the 1950s and 60s, but Mrs. Duke's insurance was not renewed after she died in 1963.



Doris Duke

DEATH VEHICLE — Doris Duke's station wagon after it was rolled to remove the body of Edward Tarella who was dragged across the street from her estate last night and killed. (Daily News Photo)

Daily News October 8th 1966 Headline + Missing Photo

Fifty-three years after Tirella's death in April, 2020, a laudatory 316-page biography, *The Silver Swan: In Search of Doris Duke*,⁹⁰ was published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Authored by heiress Sallie Bingham, whose own papers are archived at Duke University, the book covers Tirella's brutal homicide in a scant 15 paragraphs and continues to perpetuate the "accident" theory -- demonstrating that even in death, the late billionaire maintains a firm grip on her troubled legend.

THE CASE THAT GOT AWAY

The truth of what happened at Rough Point has gnawed at me for decades, ever since I started working as a cub reporter for *The Newport Daily News* eight months later.⁹¹ I went on to report for ABC News as a correspondent on *20/20*, *Nightline* and *World News Tonight*⁹² and over 13 years post-9/11, I wrote four investigative books on counter-terrorism and organized crime for HarperCollins.⁹³

But when Donald Trump declared, "I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose any votes,"⁹⁴ a light bulb went off. The notion of a self-professed billionaire openly

bragging that he could get away with murder sent me back home to the story I should have covered in the summer of '67, when life and my career got in the way.

In 2010, during my investigation into the FBI's pursuit of al Qaeda, I'd worked with veteran NYPD Detective James Moss, of Brooklyn South Homicide. At that time, with the help of ex-FBI undercover operative Emad Salem, we cleared the 19-year-old unsolved murder of imam Mustafa Shalabi, who'd been shot and stabbed on Coney Island in 1991.⁹⁵

If *that* trail of evidence had been cold, getting the truth behind Tirella's death would be an even bigger challenge, given Doris Duke's efforts at hagiography. But when I started to kick over rocks, I was surprised at the number of current Newporters who still had passionate opinions on the homicide. Dozens of members of the dedicated Facebook group, "If You Grew Up In Newport, RI Share Some Memories," regularly posted comments like, "I never believed it was an accident" and "If you have enough money, you can kill someone."

Another wrote, "I don't think we will ever know the real story."⁹⁶

Taking that as a challenge, I began reaching out to people in that group who claimed to have personal knowledge of the incident. One identified the first cop on the scene who gave me a groundbreaking interview. I tracked down the first surviving civilian witness, then a young Navy nurse, who got there minutes after the crash and found Doris wandering back into Rough Point. I spoke at length with the investigator for the Registry of Motor Vehicles, now 87, who told me that he'd been prevented by the police from interviewing Miss Duke. I had a revealing conversation with a retired Newport Police detective who talked to Duke before she was locked away from that same State investigator in a private room at Newport Hospital.

I found a Newport Fire Captain who remembered visiting the scene as a 9-year-old. He was so taken by the prospect of re-examining the death, that he went up into the attic at Fire Headquarters and unearthed the original logbook from that fatal night, which helped me rewrite the timeline.

I even located the blacksmith hired to repair the two massive wrought-iron gates forced outward by the impact of the two-ton wagon.

Now 89, he told me that the damage to the seven-by-fifteen-foot gates was so severe that they were twisted and bent. Five of the gates' inch-thick iron baluster rungs were knocked out.

A crucial find turned out to be the stepson of the news photographer who arrived at the scene within minutes of the crash and took a series of heretofore unpublished photos that opened a new line of investigation. They show a Newport Police sergeant, who was the department's chief accident investigator at the time, working the scene shortly after the death. Ironically, 14 months later, I'd written a story in *The Daily News* about how he'd trained the Police Department's rookies. ⁹⁷

That sergeant's take on the death was a shocking scenario in which Eduardo had gone up onto the hood of the station wagon after Duke hit the gas and roared forward from a dead stop 15 feet from the gates. Still alive at that point, he might well have looked her in the eyes as the Dodge Polara burst out onto Bellevue Avenue. But then, as the sergeant saw it, Doris hesitated for a millisecond, causing Tirella to roll off. At that point, the sergeant believed, she made a decision to *commit*, hitting the accelerator one more time and dragging him under the vehicle to his death. This previously undisclosed copy of Eduardo's Death Certificate contains important clues (we'll discuss later) that support the sergeant's "up on the hood" analysis.

COPY OF CERTIFICATE OF DEATH STATE OF RHODE ISLAND									
I. NAME OF DECEASED			First Middle Last			E. DATE OF DEATH			
Edward			Tirella			October 7, 1966			
8. PLACE OF DEATH		a. COUNTY		b. CITY, TOWN, OR LOCATION		c. USUAL RESIDENCE (Place dressed dead. If Institution - Residence before admission)			
Newport		Newport		Newport		California			
2a. LENGTH OF STAY IN STATE		2b. NAME OF HOSPITAL, STATE OR INSTITUTION		6a. CITY, TOWN, OR LOCATION		6b. STREET ADDRESS			
		Bellevue Avenue		Los Angeles		2048 Stanley Hill Road			
3. SEX		4. COLOR OR RACE		7. MARRIED <input type="checkbox"/> NEVER MARRIED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WIDOWED <input type="checkbox"/> DIVORCED <input type="checkbox"/>		8. DATE OF BIRTH		9. AGE (In years, months, days) (If under 1 year, in weeks, days, hours, min.)	
Male		White				8 June 1924		42	
10a. OCCUPATION (On the kind of work done during most of working life, even if retired)			10b. KIND OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY			11. BIRTHPLACE (State or foreign country)		12. CITIES OF BIRTH (Street)	
Type-setter, Danvers, Cal.			Self			New Jersey		USA	
13. WAS REGISTERED WITH IT? (If no, no. of witnesses)			14. SOCIAL SECURITY NO.			15. PLACE OF BIRTH OR BIRTHPLACE, IF ANY		16. AGE OF SPOUSE	
Yes			None						
17. CAUSE OF DEATH (State only and other per line for (a), (b), and (c))									
PART I. DEATH WAS CAUSED BY IMMEDIATE CAUSE (a)									
Fractures of skull, ribs (rt) side of chest; Fractured right humerus, hip and 6 and 7 dorsal vertebrae; Subarachnoid hemorrhage; Transection of dorsal cord. Rupture of rt. lung and bilateral hemothorax									
PART II. OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING TO DEATH BUT NOT RELATED TO THE IMMEDIATE OR CAUSAL CHAIN (b) (c)									
Multiple tears of spleen and liver. Multiple abrasions and contusions of body surface.									
18. WAS AUTOPSY PERFORMED? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>									
19. ACCIDENT STATUS (Indicate nature of injury in Part I or Part II of form 17)									
Decedent struck by auto while opening iron gates and then dragged under vehicle									
20. THE NUMBER OF COPIES MADE, DATE, TIME, AND BY WHOM									
5-00 10-7-66									

Back in 1966 I had no idea that this police sergeant had done an investigation of the case and effectively concluded that Doris had killed Eduardo Tirella with intent. When I finally I got the missing report I learned that those specific findings had been excised -- editing necessary at the time to justify Chief Radice's accident theory. But elsewhere in that document there is prima facie evidence of a cover-up at the highest level of The Newport Police Department.

One of the most important breakthroughs for me came when I located Donna Lohmeyer, Eduardo's niece, who had eight pages of trial transcript documenting how her father, a former Marine captain and engineer, had visited the crash site within hours after Eddie was declared DOA at Newport Hospital. He'd photographed what he described as parallel "gouges" an inch-and-a-half to two-inches deep, inside the gates. Those gouges were the width of tire tracks, suggesting that Miss Duke had gunned the station wagon's engine before it roared forward.

Donna also helped me find the undisclosed autopsy report from the County Assistant Medical Examiner, who signed on as Dee Dee's personal physician moments after pronouncing the death. He'd protected her within the walls of the hospital until her lawyers took over. When I learned that this official was Dr. Phillip C. McAllister, I was stunned, because he'd been *my own family doctor* growing up and I'd never had even a hint of his blatant conflict of interest.

In this case, the man legally charged with determining the cause of death had allowed himself to be paid to protect the killer. As we'll see later in this book, Dr. McAllister, a prominent member of the Newport medical community, would see his own personal life and career unravel in the years after he made the decision to protect Doris Duke.

A BARGAIN MADE IN BLOOD

All of this reporting, which I'll go into in depth, leads to the unambiguous conclusion that on the eve of his departure, after Eduardo Tirella had declared that he was leaving her for good, the heir to one of America's greatest fortunes, exploded in a jealous rage, turned a vehicle into a murder weapon and crossed into the perilous territory of intentional homicide.

That's what I found after a two year investigation involving interviews with dozens of surviving witnesses and the accumulation of more than 10,000 pages of documentary evidence which underscore not just Doris Duke's *motive* for the murder, but the lengths that she, her attorneys, private investigators and press flacks went to in covering it up.

Keep in mind as you read this that a jury of seven women and five men found her civilly *negligent* in the homicide, the same way a civil jury later found O.J. Simpson liable after he was acquitted of criminal charges. The difference was that Simpson still owes some \$70 million in damages⁹⁸ for the wrongful death of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman, but in this instance, after shamelessly denigrating the decedent, the total award Doris Duke was on the hook for was only \$75,000, plus interest.

Another eye-opening discovery for me was that the five lawyers for Tirella's family shaved 42% of that damage award off the top. One of them included J. Joseph Nugent, the retired Attorney General of Rhode Island, who had initially pledged to get to the bottom of the anemic police investigation but later acquiesced to it.⁹⁹ He then sat in court during trial and charged the Tirella family the equivalent (today) of \$11,549.¹⁰⁰

"In lieu of the proper damages," said his niece Donna, "all we have is Eddie's memory which I'm working to restore – to let people know the kind of man he was."

And what kind of woman was Doris Duke? One Newporter I found on that Facebook Group had a very pointed opinion. Denise Clement's late mother, Rosemarie, had been Chief Radice's secretary at the time of Tirella's death. In a lengthy interview in which she seemed happy to unburden herself after so many years, she told me this:

"Doris Duke *bought* the City of Newport and got away with murder. My mother read the full police report and knew that there was a cover-up, but there was nothing she could do. After she retired and we drove past those houses Doris had restored that helped Newport become a tourist destination, she'd say, 'It was blood money that paid for all this.'"¹⁰¹

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

THE CASE FOR MURDER

In Rhode Island's criminal law of homicide, the degree of culpability – and therefore punishment – hinges on the issue of intent. Apart from “murder one” -- typically reserved for the killing of law enforcement officers or other special circumstances⁸⁵² – second degree murder is a function of “malice aforethought” as it has been for centuries.⁸⁵³ Traffic deaths are usually associated with “manslaughter,”⁸⁵⁴ because they involve “accidents” which are, by definition, unintended. Keep in mind that in 1971 Doris Duke was found civilly negligent in Eduardo's death. So there was clearly enough evidence to charge her under the Rhode Island Motor Vehicle statute with, “Driving so as to endanger, resulting in death.”⁸⁵⁵ That didn't happen. But even if she'd been so charged back in 1966, her lawyers could have argued that the homicide was unforeseen and *that* might have mitigated any punishment – unless she'd been drinking.

At the time, her pro tem physician, Dr. McAllister, had insisted, “There was absolutely no evidence of alcohol in the blood of either Miss Duke or Tirella”⁸⁵⁶ and caretaker Harold McFarlane, whom Registry

investigator Perrotti *did* interview, told him that “Miss Duke seldom drank alcoholic beverages.”⁸⁵⁷

But common-law husband Joe Castro told his L.A. attorney that Doris had used “alcohol and drugs to excess, starting in the mid 1950’s.”⁸⁵⁸ Leon Amar, a Spanish-Moroccan decorator, who became her lover in the late ‘60’s told Stephanie Mansfield that “Doris drank a lot. When she drank, she became violent. . . She threw a bottle of wine at me once and nearly killed me.”⁸⁵⁹ Mansfield also reported that Doris was known to drink heavily, even in the afternoon.⁸⁶⁰

In the AVIS case lawyers representing Duke’s interests were so audacious, they actually asserted that, “The death of Edward Tirella was proximately caused by his own act or neglect.”⁸⁶¹

But the lab report on *his* blood showed that he’d tested negative for alcohol or barbiturates.⁸⁶² Could the same be said for Doris? We’ll never know. That’s because, in contrast to what Dr. McAllister reported, Chief Radice admitted, “We could not administer sobriety tests because of her injuries.”⁸⁶³ Normally, if “the fix,” hadn’t been in, the question of whether Doris was under the influence would have been central to manslaughter charges.

WHAT ABOUT MURDER?

Intentional homicide wasn’t even under consideration back then, but what about it? Under Rhode Island law, all records of “accidental” deaths have to be retained permanently by the investigating authorities.⁸⁶⁴ But like so many other official records in this story, the file on the homicide of Eduardo Tirella was reported missing from Newport Police archives for decades.⁸⁶⁵

I later obtained a copy from a confidential source, but even before I opened it, I’d uncovered evidence that the truth behind Tirella’s death was actually proven *within hours* after crash. It was documented by the Newport Police Department’s chief accident investigator whose findings went far beyond manslaughter. In fact, he concluded that Doris Duke had acted with intent.

To consider that, let's review what is undisputed. We know that Eduardo got out of the car and walked to the gates. ⁸⁶⁶ From Doris's October 9th statement we know that he had just enough time to unwrap the unlocked chain from around the gates when the station wagon "leaped forward." ⁸⁶⁷ The damage to the gates shows that they were struck virtually head-on at a point when they were still closed.



The Rough Point gates closed inward the morning after the crash as one of Doris Duke's German Shepherds roams in the background.

(Jerry Taylor photo)

With the help of Donna Lohmeyer I got Tirella's official autopsy report which had been buried for more than five decades in the basement of the RI Medical Examiner's office, misfiled under the name "TIRELLA, Edmund G." Published here for the first time, it proves that his injuries were entirely inconsistent with Chief Joseph Radice's official theory of the crash.

Doris Duke had told the police and Radice had assured the press that “Tirella... was crushed against the irons gates.”⁸⁶⁸ But the autopsy report, filed by Dr. James J. Flanagan, shows that except for a fracture of his right hip, all other injuries to Eduardo’s body were *above* the waist. He sustained zero damage to his legs.⁸⁶⁹

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL		COPY CONFIDENTIAL NOT FOR LEGISLATIVE RELEASE	
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER 250 Benefit Street Providence 3, Rhode Island			
REPORT OF AUTOPSY			
NAME OF DECEDENT TIRELLA, Edmund G.		AUTOPSY NUMBER A66-27	MEDICAL EXAMINER
USUAL ADDRESS		AUTOPSY AUTHORIZED BY	
TYPE OF DEATH: Unattended by a physician <input type="checkbox"/>		RIGOR <input type="checkbox"/> LIVOR <input type="checkbox"/>	
Violent or Unnatural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Color: light blue	
Sudden in apparent health <input type="checkbox"/>		Anterior <input type="checkbox"/> Posterior <input type="checkbox"/>	
Fatal Agency: Unusual <input type="checkbox"/> In prison <input type="checkbox"/>		Lateral <input type="checkbox"/>	
Suspicious <input type="checkbox"/>		Regional Dept. <input type="checkbox"/>	
Age 42 Race Can. Sex M Length 5'7" Weight 160 Eyes hazel Pupils: R. 4mm Opaclites, etc.		Persons Present at Autopsy Doc for Flanagan Agents: T. Nolan Edward O'Connell	
Hair: Beard _____ Mustache _____ Circumcised _____ Body Heat _____ Pupils: L. 4mm		NON FATAL WOUNDS, SCARS, TATTOOING, OTHER FEATURES:	
PATHOLOGICAL DIAGNOSIS			
Multiple abrasions and contusions of the entire body surface.			
Multiple bone fractures as follows:			
a) three fractures of left parieto-temporal frontal area			
b) fracture of right humerus, juxta trochanteric			
c) fracture of 6th and 7th dorsal vertebrae			
d) extensive fracture of the sternum and multiple rib fractures at chondro-costal junction			
e) fracture of right hip			
Massive subarachnoid hemorrhage and cerebellar pressure cone			
Transaction of spinal cord at the level the 6th and 7th dorsal vertebra			
Crushing fracture of right lower lobe of lung with extensive retropleural and upper mediastinum hemorrhage and massive bilateral hemothorax			
Multiple contusions with crushing fractures of liver parenchyma and two capsular tear			
Large capsule tear to spleen			
Probable cause of death: FRACTURE OF SMALL WITH EXTENSIVE SUBARACHNOID HEMORRHAGE AND CEREBELLAR PRESSURE CONE		PROVISIONAL REPORT <input type="checkbox"/>	
TRANSECTION OF DORSAL SPINAL CORD		FINAL REPORT <input type="checkbox"/>	
A true copy:		The facts stated herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. <i>James J. Flanagan</i> Signature of Pathologist	

Eduardo Tirella’s autopsy report filed under the name Tirella, Edmund G.

The Dodge Polara was six and a half feet wide.⁸⁷⁰ It was idling 15 feet from the gates -- more than enough room to open them without Doris having to put the vehicle in reverse. Then, by Doris’s own account, it “leaped forward” at a “fast” speed from “a dead stop.”⁸⁷¹

All of the damage to the gates was *below* Tirella’s waist. So, if Doris Duke *had* crushed him against those gates as she’d told Chief Radice, why were there no injuries to his lower body?

The answer began to emerge when I got an unpublished photo taken by the actual news photographer who'd covered the event. A heavily cropped version of it had already been published on that Facebook Group, "If you Grew Up in Newport." It was posted by a woman named Jane Maguire whom I soon learned was married to John Quigley. ⁸⁷² John's stepfather Ed had been a freelance photographer at the time of Tirella's death. In fact, it was his compelling coverage of the homicide scene that led to a permanent job on *The Newport Daily News*. ⁸⁷³

When I started working at the paper, eight months later, Ed Quigley was one of the two staff photographers along with Ron LaChance. It was Quigley who later took the photo of Stephen Robertson's "perp walk" the night he surrendered to Newport Police at Headquarters.

So I reached out to John and Jane who went down into their basement on Long Island and found a series of Ed's negatives and photos. What they sent me, published first in the July/August issue of *Vanity Fair* and now in this book, took the investigation to a whole new level. The image below is a much wider angle of the post-crash photo, with compelling new details.



Ed Quigley's shot from inside the gates at Rough Point shortly after the crash. Sgt. Fred Newton can be seen working the scene at lower right.

First, there are several witnesses to the left of the damaged gates. One of them was Paul Faerber, who grew up to be a Newport Fire Captain. It was Paul who went up into the attic of Fire Headquarters and located the logbook recording the response times of the Newport and Middletown “rescue wagons” that late afternoon.

Near a bicycle, you can see two of the balusters that snapped off the gates as they were blown out over the two-by-five-inch metal stop. Located in the lower foreground of the shot, you can see that it was riveted into the concrete to keep the freely-swinging gates inward. The owner of that Stingray bike was Steve Mey (not pictured) then a nine year old paperboy who delivered *The Newport Daily News* along the “Avenue route.”

He had just dropped off a paper with Arthur Maloney, the night watchman at Marble House down the street, when he returned to his route and peddled south toward Rough Point.⁸⁷⁴ By the time he got to Rock Cliff, the Harold Vanderbilt estate, Mey told me, “I heard this loud noise and stopped. I couldn’t have been more than a long block away and I saw this white station wagon smashed against a tree across from the Duke place. So I immediately headed back to Arthur’s, burst in and told him what had happened. He ran upstairs to call it in, so I got back on my bike, cut across the Marble House lawn and came out through the gates onto Bellevue. By the time I got to Rough Point where the gates were bent and pushed out, I heard sirens.”

Joseph G. Silvia, the blacksmith who’d repaired those gates, told me that, “They were exceptionally heavy. Wrought iron. It would have taken quite a bit of force for them to go up and over that stop.”⁸⁷⁵

THE MAN WHO CRACKED THE CASE

The photo at left reveals something else significant: the man in the fedora hat at the lower right of the frame who was inspecting the gates. His name was Fred Newton Jr. A detective sergeant at the time, he was promoted to lieutenant the next year. I actually found a *Daily News* profile of him that I’d written on the methods he used in training all of the Newport PD’s recruits.⁸⁷⁶

The New Breed: Eight Rookies Train

By PETER A. LANCE

The era of the round faced, neighborhood policeman is over. With crime a multi-billion dollar business, a corruptive science, today's policeman must be the composite of a historian, court justice, psychologist, medic, ballistics expert and super-death.

At Marlborough Street headquarters, eight rookies are caring that being a policeman means more than just directing traffic or chasing pranksters.

Since Nov. 19, when they were sworn in at City Hall, the new patrolmen have undergone extensive textbook and field training. At the conclusion of their six-week basic instruction course, they will have logged more than 120 hours in the classroom and on the beat.

"Police work today is a far cry from what it was in the twenties and thirties," said Lt. Frederick Newton, supervisor of the training program. "A policeman has to know more, and he has to be able to use his knowledge in a technologically advanced society."

"When the new men were sworn in, the chief told them that when he started on the department 20 years ago they gave him a badge, a gun and a nightstick, and sent him out on his beat. P.I.'s have changed. Today when a man starts out we make sure he knows his business."

The six-week orientation period is grueling and expensive. Each of the recruits, paid \$140 for a "basic issue" uniform consisting of a shirt, trousers,

visiting lecturers, expects in various criminology fields like Robert Harmon, state narcotics inspector, who will speak to the men on drug abuse.

"I never realized there was so much to being a policeman," said one of the rookies at a riot drill recently on Goat Island.

"You know it's funny, people seem to act differently towards you when they find out you are joining the force," said recruit Charles Dwyer of 3 Tyler St.

"A few of the old friends act coldly towards you, but the great majority of them respect you."

The seven other men at the session snugly dressed in nylon overcoats agreed.

Like several of the other recruits, firearms are not a novelty to Dwyer. In the Marines he received the marksmanship medal and was a prize winning boxer.

Recruit Eugene J. Sullivan of 28 Fair St. was discharged recently from the Air Force where he spent four years in the military police. "Recruit William M. Clapper Jr. (of 4 Barney Court) is certainly no stranger to firearms," Lt. Newton said. "He's been hunting since he was 14 years old."

"Each day one of the recruits is chosen corporal to inspect his teammates and act as squad leader of the day's activities," Lt. Newton said. "I think the responsibility is healthy for the men and it brings them closer together as a team."

Morning inspection for the young officers is at 8:15 a.m.

though not compulsory, has been very good," he said.

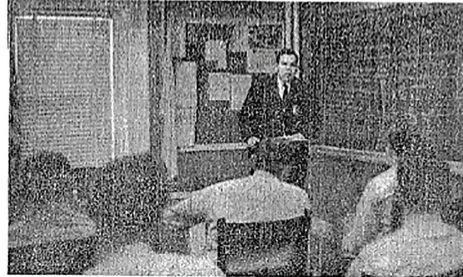
In addition Lt. John Hopkins is working towards his bachelor's degree at the URI extension in Providence, and Capt. Jeremiah Sullivan recently completed 12 weeks of study at the FBI National Academy for Police Work in Washington.

Twenty-four members of the Auxiliary Police Force are attending weekly volunteer lectures given at headquarters by year to see that the pie urban Lt. Newton. "The attendance,

though not compulsory, has been very good," he said.

A map of the city looms like an enormous pie on the wall in Lt. Newton's office, divided into eight segments called "traces" which are subdivided into the 17 beats manned daily by the department's 84 men.

The nine new recruits, who will begin manning these beats early next year, will be considerably better equipped than the Keystone constables of yesterday to see that the pie urban Lt. Newton. "The attendance,



IN THE CLASSROOM — Lt. Frederick W. Newton Jr., instruction supervisor and statistical analyst of the Police Department, conducts a lecture on recent Supreme Court decisions affecting police work. Eight new recruits and a ninth who will join them after Christmas will raise the manpower level of the department to 84 men.

Sgt. Newton was known as a straight shooter and a professional who always conducted himself by the book. Decades ago, I'd lost touch with Fred, whose nickname was "Fig," and he'd died at the age of 70 in 1999. But six years after that fateful crash, he'd risen in the department to become Assistant Police Chief and by 1980 he had the top job, Chief of Police.⁸⁷⁷ My sense was that if anyone had discovered what really happened at Rough Point it was Fred Newton and I finally learned what *he'd* learned after I located the first officer to respond.

"HE ROLLED UP ON THE HOOD"

Edward Angel had been a rookie patrolman assigned to "The Avenue beat." He'd just gone on duty that night at 5:00 pm and within minutes, the radio crackled in his unit with word of an accident. He hit the roof lights and sped to the scene. This is what he told me he found on arrival:

"There was a woman inside the vehicle. She was extremely upset. I looked down and found someone underneath the car all rolled up. I was inexperienced and young, so I guess I blurted out, 'He's under the car.' That sent her into shock.

“She jumped out and thank God, there was a young Navy nurse there – Judith Thom - and I asked if she could help her.”⁸⁷⁸ I was just focused on whoever was under the vehicle; whether he was still alive.”

Later, after the two Rescue wagons arrived and Newport’s truck extricated the body, Angel, who had been on the job less than a year at that point, pulled out a pad and pen, and started to make a sketch of the scene.

“I walked into Bellevue, looked down and I saw some skin and blood,” he said. “I drew a diagram of what I thought had been the point of impact between the subject and the vehicle -- where I thought he’d been run over.”

Not sure, at that point, who Tirella was or his relation to the woman he now realized was Doris Duke, patrolman Angel’s first thought was that she might have hit a *pedestrian* crossing the Avenue after she’d gone through the gates.

“I submitted my findings,” he recalled, “and the next day, before I was to go back on duty, I got called in by Sergeant Newton, who’d been my training officer. He took me back up to the scene and explained to me how the gates, which normally opened inward, had been pushed out. He showed me markings on the gates that suggested somebody had been forced up on the hood of the car. Then he walked me back into Bellevue, explaining that the blood and the skin that I’d found was from when the body rolled off and fell in front of the car. At that point it was rolled over...”⁸⁷⁹

I’d been conducting the interview with retired officer Angel over the phone and I wasn’t sure I’d heard him correctly.

“Are you telling me that Fred Newton thought that Eduardo Tirella went up on the hood of the wagon *before* it hit the gate?” Angel was quick to respond. “That’s what he told me. That was his theory of the crash, and that at some point after the gates blew open, she hesitated and tapped the brakes and he rolled off. At that point he was run over by the vehicle and dragged to the point where he was still underneath it when it hit the tree.”

The shocking visual image of what he told me prompted a number of questions: When he went up on the hood, was Eduardo *facing* Doris on the other side of the windshield? If his body hadn't rolled off, could he have survived the crash?

The significance of Edward Angel's account was groundbreaking. Based on what he told me regarding Sgt. Newton's calculations, Doris Duke had committed an act of intentional murder. In fact, leading up to it, she had engaged in four affirmative/voluntary acts prior to the Dodge Polara "leaping forward" from "a dead stop."

First, she'd slid over behind the wheel. Next, she'd released the parking brake by hand. She'd then moved the wheel-mounted shift lever from "park" to "drive" and finally, she'd hit the accelerator. The wagon surged forward and struck Tirella who went up on the hood.

But instead of "crushing" him against the gates, as Chief Radice had claimed, Eduardo remained on the hood, alive, as the Dodge blew through the gates with enough force that it bent them and knocked out five of the 34 balusters. It was only *after* Doris hesitated, tapping the brakes, that the victim rolled off onto Millionaire's Row and she made a conscious decision to keep going.

The parallel tire-wide gouge marks "an inch-and-a-half to two-inches deep," which Robert Aughey had photographed 30 feet back, support that sequence of events, as do the tire marks that Lewis Perrotti found along the gravel inside the gate.

The 1966 Dodge Polara was 18 feet long.⁸⁸⁰ The rear tires were three feet from the back bumper, so the math would have been right: the front bumper 15 feet from the gate – the tires gouges in the gravel 15 feet back from there. Edward Friedman, attorney for the Tirella family, had made an uncontested statement at trial that, "Tirella was dragged and was pinned beneath the car when it stopped."⁸⁸¹ It now seemed clear that he was dragged from the very location where Edward Angel had first noticed the blood and the skin. I went back and re-examined Eduardo's Death Certificate, reproduced in Chapter One, and found evidence of precisely the same thing. It read, "Decedent struck by auto while opening iron gates and then dragged under the vehicle."



Ed Quigley's photo of the underside of the Dodge Polara wagon with what appears to be blood at lower right.

In the newly discovered shot showing Sgt. Newton, no residue of blood or skin is visible anywhere near the gate stop. But another photo by Ed Quigley taken from *under* the Dodge after Tirella's body had been removed, suggests that Doris had dragged him across Bellevue to the tree.

In that shot above, just below the left rear tire you can see a length of pipe from the post-and-rail fence on the Quatrel estate and to the right of that, just below it, a small pool of what looks like blood. The rear differential also appears to be blood stained.

Curiously, it was the negative of that very photo that went missing from *The Newport Daily News* archives at the Historical Society. And yet, John Quigley's wife Jane found the print (above) made in 1966.

What's more, when I interviewed him, Robert Aughey Jr., Tirella's nephew, recalled that the morning after the crash he noticed a sticky substance near where his uncle's body had come to rest.

“I remember kneeling down and putting my fingers in it,” he told me. “Lifting them up, they were red with blood.”⁸⁸²

Looking back at Eduardo’s Death Certificate there’s nothing in it to support Chief Radice’s public statement that he’d been “crushed” against the gates. In fact, the graphic description of his injuries support a finding that he’d been crushed under the wheels of the wagon:

“Fractures of skull, ribs (rt) side of chest; Fractured right humerus, hip and 6 and 7 dorsal vertebrae; Subarachnoid hemorrhages; Transection of dorsal cord. Rupture of rt. lung and bilateral hemothorax. Multiple tears of spleen and liver. Multiple abrasions and contusions of body surface.”⁸⁸³

The forensic evidence to support Sgt. Newton’s “up on the hood” analysis is clear and convincing and a number of long retired police officers from the Newport, PD who worked the case, now agree.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

“IT MOVED LIKE A ROCKET”

I reached out to retired Newport Police detective Al Conti, who had spent the last 20 years of a 28 year career in plain clothes. He was a veteran of many investigations on and off Bellevue Avenue, including multiple jewel thefts from Bois Doré which he solved. At one point he also recovered a valuable painting stolen from the home of Nuala Pell, wife of the Senator. I asked him about Fred Newton’s theory of the crash as recounted by officer Angel.

“If it was me that night,” said Conti, “and I’m facing the car, my first instinct would be to jump up on the hood. What happened to Mr. Tirella was outrageous, no matter what the cause, but to think that he might have seen his own death coming is an awful prospect to consider.”⁸⁸⁴

As to the cover-up of the case by the Newport, PD I tracked down Norman Mather, the 20-year veteran of the Department who retired in 1984 as an Inspector and earlier recounted the story of Mrs. Beck. On the night of Eduardo’s death he got to the crash scene not long after Patrolman Angel had arrived and Doris Duke had just emerged from her run into Rough Point. At that moment, he told me, she was in the middle of Bellevue Avenue, crying.

“So I said, ‘Miss Duke, my name is Patrolman Mather. Were you in the car?’ And she kept on crying. She wouldn’t answer me.” Just then, Mather said, “Chief Radice arrived in his black Chrysler. It had the seal of the City of Newport on the door, but it was otherwise unmarked. So the Chief got out, walked over to me and said, ‘Mather, I’ll take over. You go back to the station and type it out.’”⁸⁸⁵ The retired Inspector then had a vivid recollection of Radice escorting Doris Duke “arm-in-arm” into Rough Point as Sergeant Don Bergeron arrived and took immediate command of the scene.



An unpublished photo of the Dodge wagon 45 minutes after Doris Duke burst through the gates of Rough Point. The police officer pointing at right was Sgt. Don Bergeron. (Ed Quigley photo).

Later, back at Newport Police headquarters, Mather put an official accident report form (in triplicate) into a typewriter and proceeded to follow the Chief’s orders. “Suddenly,” he said. “Sgt. Bergeron rushed in and pulled out my original and my copies with the carbon paper. He crumpled them up. So I said, ‘What are you doing?’ And he said, ‘This matter is being taken care of by *Chief Radice*. You don’t have to do any more.’ And with that, my report got thrown into a trash can.”

Mather speculated that after the Chief walked into Rough Point with Doris something had changed. “Did he make a deal with her? I don’t know. But the next day I went up to Radice’s office on the second floor and I asked him, ‘Hey Chief, what’s going on?’ He looked up at me and said, ‘Mather, I’m the Chief. What I say goes. Now get out of my office.’”

Another Patrolman who arrived on the scene that night was Bill Watterson. In the small world of Newport, Bill, now retired after 30 years, is the first cousin of Brad Watterson, another classmate of mine from De La Salle who later lived around the corner from Dr. Phillip McAllister's office.

"When I got there, said Watterson, "Clem Brown from Pelham Garage, who rented the wagon to Doris, had his tow truck lifting it up. I had the sedan version of that Dodge Polara and it was very powerful. It moved like a rocket. So when she hit those gates, she had to be really going, to do that kind of damage."

After the Middletown Rescue wagon took Doris to Newport Hospital, Watterson went to the hospital's Emergency Room expecting to find her there. "But she wasn't in the E.R.," he remembered. "She was in the old waiting room on the Friendship Street side of the hospital —what was then the main entrance."

Watterson told me that Doris was "in the lobby, off to the side, on the phone." He didn't know who she was talking to, but when she hung up, he was able to question her briefly.

"She was holding what looked like a rag up to her mouth," he said. "She might have had a bloody lip, but she had no other physical injuries beyond superficial cuts or bruises; what I used to call 'steering wheel injuries.' She said, 'I don't have my license with me,' but I got her date of birth and a brief story of what happened."

"Doris said that (after Tirella got out) she'd slid over behind the wheel and when she did, she put it in gear. It then jolted forward." Soon after that, Watterson remembered, "The nurses were trying to get her to go. I don't know if she was waiting for phone calls or calling her lawyer, but I went back up to the scene up on Bellevue."

Watterson's account of briefly questioning Doris dovetails with the interrogatories from the AVIS case that I found in The National Archives. In them she said she'd "discussed the accident with police" on the night of Tirella's death.⁸⁸⁶ That explained the similar account reported by *The Newport Daily News* the next day at a time when Doris was being hidden from state investigators.

Bill Watterson retired in 1995 as a veteran detective in the Bureau of Criminal Investigation. I asked him pointedly if he believed there had been a cover-up by Chief Radice in the Tirella homicide. He responded without hesitation: “There’s no if, and, or but about it. In the old police Department under Radice if you were a patrolman you were a peon. Old Joe called the plays, and *nobody* was in a position to buck him if they wanted to keep their badge.”

THE MISSING REPORT

Throughout my investigation, which started with a blank page and a hunch, the most important single document that eluded me was the official report of The Newport Police Department. When former *Washington Post* reporter Stephanie Mansfield was researching her definitive Duke biography *The Richest Girl In The World* in 1990, she wrote to Eduardo’s sister Anita and noted that she was unable to “locate the file” on his death at the Newport PD.⁸⁸⁷

Newspaper coverage of the 1971 Tirella wrongful death trial detailed how that police report included transcripts of Miss Duke’s two “interviews” with Newport Police after the crash. Both were entered into evidence, but the trial transcript had disappeared from state judicial archives.

Since the Newport police cleared Doris on the basis of those interviews, that elusive file would have been the best evidence of a police cover-up. But even without it, I reached the conclusion that Tirella was murdered by the possessive heiress and that the police brass had suppressed the evidence, allowing her to escape criminal charges.

My findings were based on hundreds of pieces of empirical evidence I’d uncovered and analyzed surrounding the crash and its aftermath. The process involved dozens of interviews with police officers, fact witnesses, the Rough Point staff, friends of Duke and Tirella, the discovery of the previously hidden autopsy report and the crash scene photos that confirmed Sgt. Fred Newton’s analysis within hours of the death.

As related to me by retired Patrolman Angel, Sgt. Newton determined that Eduardo had gone “up on the hood” of the Dodge Polara.

Then, after blasting through the wrought iron gates, Doris braked for a moment, causing Tirella to roll off, whereupon she drove forward with intent—dragging him to his death.

That's what I learned, even *without* the official report. In Chapter Eighteen I discussed my obsession with finding it. Then, after searching for more than a year, I got it.

Except for withholding Sgt. Newton's "hood" analysis, which would have surely demanded Miss Duke's immediate arrest, I was gratified to learn that 95% of the findings in that official file were in sync with my own. It not only included the Newport PD's two "transcripts" reproduced in Chapter Seven, but there was also an eight-page summary by Lewis Perrotti, the state Registry of Motor Vehicles investigator, who had been prevented from interviewing the killer.

The official file, parts of which are contained in the Appendix on pages 323-325 included Sgt. Newton's detailed report, complete with diagrams that dovetail with my independent findings. It included the report of Patrolman Angel, who told me that he'd found skin and blood fragments on Bellevue Avenue. The file recounted his interviews with Judith Thom and her father Lewis, the first civilian witnesses on the scene. They'd told Officer Angel that minutes after the crash, Doris admitted that "*she had run over Ed*" In fact, his interviews with the Thoms, directly contradict the three-page Q&A described as the "interrogation" of Doris Duke by Captain Paul Sullivan four days later.

MINIMIZING TIRELLA'S INJURIES

One of the first things that struck me in the report was that in a section entitled INJURED, Doris Duke was listed first, as experiencing "Shock" and "Lacerations of the face." (Appendix page 323) But below that, while noting "Edwardo" Tirella had died, the extent of his injuries was left blank. The black redaction obscures his L.A. street address: 2048 Stanley Hills Place in Laurel Canyon.

I N J U R I E S	Name Miss Doris Duke	Address Rough Point Estate	Injured <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Driver } In vehicle
	Age 54 Sex F	First aid given by Middle Rescue	Injured taken to Newport Hosp
T o t a l n u m b e r i n j u r i e d a n d k i l l e d	Did person die? No	Nature and extent of injuries Shock, Lacerations of the face	<input type="checkbox"/> Passenger } No
			<input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrian
	Name Eduardo Tirella	Address [REDACTED]	Injured <input type="checkbox"/> Driver } In vehicle
	Age 42 Sex M	First aid given by Newport Rescue	Injured taken to Newport Hosp
	Did person die? Yes	Nature and extent of injuries	<input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrian
			<input type="checkbox"/> Specify other

Newport PD report detailing Doris Duke’s injuries vs. no stated injuries for Eduardo.

Contrast that with the copy of his Death Certificate obtained independently from the Rhode Island Medical Examiner.

C E R T I F I C A T E	17. CAUSE OF DEATH (State only one cause per line for (a), (b), and (c).)	INTERVAL BETWEEN ONSET AND DEATH
	PART I. IMMEDIATE CAUSE (a) Fractures of skull, ribs (rt) side of chest; Fractured right humerus, hip and 6 and 7 dorsal vertebrae; Subarachnoid hemorrhage; Transection of dorsal cord. Rupture of rt. lung and bilateral hemothorax	
	CONDITIONS, if any, which were felt to have caused (a), effected the suddenness of death, and how cause listed. Multiple tears of spleen and liver. Multiple abrasions and contusions of body surface.	
	PART II. OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING TO DEATH BUT NOT RELATED TO THE TERMINAL DISEASE CONDITION GIVEN IN PART I (a)	18. WAS APPROPRIATE FOR CORONER? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

Eduardo Tirella’s death certificate documenting his fatal injuries, consistent with his body being dragged across Bellevue Avenue under the Dodge Polara wagon.

In gruesome detail it describes the horrific extent of his injuries.

As reported, in Chapter Seven, the “bedroom interview” with Doris Duke was conducted on October 9th, 1966, two days after the crash, by Lt. Frank Walsh and Det. George Watts, following Doris’s return home (Saturday). Until then she’d been kept incommunicado at Newport Hospital by Dr. McAllister.

It’s worth remembering that this brief session took place Sunday in the presence of Doris’s business manager Pete Cooley who had pointedly insisted that Doris’s estates manager, David Rimmer be *excluded* from Rough Point during that weekend.

Registry investigators Perrotti and Al Massarone (prevented from talking to Doris before then) caught the tail end of the brief session as Duke sat in bed. It was on the basis of the limited questions and her anemic response that Chief Joseph Radice closed the case the next day, declaring it an “unfortunate accident,” but after state Attorney General Nugent chastised him, the chief quickly backtracked, insisting that the probe was still open. That’s when Doris’s Rhode Island lawyer Aram Arabian suggested that the police “write something up” and if he approved, she would sign it.

Then, in contravention of any conventional law enforcement norm, in which the police serve as the objective finders of fact, the Newport PD produced that contrived 3 page "transcript" of a Q&A that never took place. As detailed in Chapter Seven the most remarkable thing about that account -- supposedly typed by a stenographer during a live "interrogation" of Duke at Rough Point on October 11th -- is that the police got her date of birth wrong in answer to the first question, which she then had to correct and initial on the typed copy.

In examining that "transcript," retired NYPD homicide Det. James Moss was shocked by the lengths that the Newport Police Department went to in order to exonerate the killer. "On page two," Det. Moss said, "they actually asked and answered a variation of the same question twice."

- Q. Is there any possibility, Miss Duke, that your foot could have engaged the accelerator pedal?
A. Not to my knowledge.

"Apparently they wanted to give her a further excuse for confusing the gas pedal with the brake. So they asked and answered that question again in a slightly different way."

- Q. Is there a possibility that your foot slipped off the brake pedal onto the accelerator pedal?
A. That could have happened, but I have no recollection of it. J.J.

"But this time, when the police answered for her, 'That could have happened,' her lawyers apparently objected, because she ended up writing in, 'but I have no recollection of it,' then initialing it, 'D.D.'"

"That was her attorneys' way of protecting her," said Det. Moss, "since the 'could have happened' admission might have exposed her to charges of criminal negligence. But Doris Duke was *never* subjected to an 'interrogation' in real time as the Q&A states. If she had been, her lawyers would have prevented her from answering that way."

After examining the newly discovered police report in depth, Det. Moss reached this conclusion:

“This had to be the biggest homicide investigation in Newport history at the time and one would think that the Chief would have conducted it 100% by the book, especially with the Rhode Island Attorney General looking over his shoulder. But no. In fact, in the entire three-page Q&A, the police never used the word ‘homicide.’ I have never seen an ‘investigation’ more favorable to the only person of interest—the killer—who was also the only living witness to the death. I don’t fault any of the junior members of the department, including Sgt. Newton and patrolmen Angel, Watterson, Mather and Ring. They were clearly prevented by the Chief from telling the full truth at the time and they’ve come forward now to set the record straight. But I can say this, without a doubt: if that report had included Sgt. Newton’s actual conclusion that Tirella had gone up on the hood of the wagon, rolled off and Doris Duke had driven over him, she would have been in handcuffs. So, as Mr. Perrotti from the Registry of Motor Vehicles concluded, ‘the fix was in.’”

FORENSIC ANALYSIS

I submitted the evidence uncovered in this investigation to Harm Jansen, a senior staff engineer with Collision and Injury Dynamics, one of the nation’s top forensic consulting firms, located in El Segundo, California.⁸⁸⁸

He drilled down specifically on Sgt. Fred Newton’s theory of the crash and agreed that Eduardo Tirella had gone up on the hood of the Dodge Polara wagon just before Doris Duke drove it through the gates.

“There is no evidence he was pinned against the gates,” says Jansen. “We know he was on the hood. We also know he got run over—mid street. To me it’s clear. This was a multi-sequence event in which the driver made a number of affirmative decisions in the course of the incident. The analysis of his injuries, limited to upper body, the head-on damage to the lower sections of the gates, the account of the first officer on the scene and the contemporaneous investigation by the senior police accident investigator, Sergeant Newton, lead me to conclude that the event did *not* occur as described by Doris Duke.”⁸⁸⁹

Murdered “On the night before the rest of his life.”



HOMICIDE AT ROUGH POINT chronicles ex-ABC News correspondent and best-selling author Peter Lance’s investigation into one of the least known, but infamous unsolved homicides in recent American history: the brutal death of gay interior designer and war hero Eduardo Tirella, outside the gates of Doris Duke’s Newport, R.I. estate in October, 1966.

“**HOMICIDE AT ROUGH POINT** is a page-turning epic for our time. Proof that when a narcissistic billionaire assumes, they can get away with murder, there’s a reporter out there willing and able to expose them.”

— Nicholas Pileggi, author of *Goodfellas* and *Casino*

“**HOMICIDE** is the best true crime book I’ve read in years; solving the horrific cold case murder of Eddie Tirella, a gifted Italian-American war hero who didn’t deserve to die. Peter Lance is the most tenacious reporter I know. A must read!”

— John A. Gotti

COVER UP: “Without a doubt... had Mr. Lance been a special agent with the FBI working international terrorism cases in the 1990s, the al Qaeda terrorists who attacked America would either be in U.S. prisons or deceased.”

— Joseph F. O’Brien’s FBI special agent (ret.) and co-author of *Boss of Bosses*

DEAL WITH THE DEVIL: “A blistering account of a cunning and brutal Mafia capo who triggered some of New York’s most violent gang wars, all while serving as an informant for the FBI. Packed with revelations. It offers the most penetrating look into the inner workings of the Mafia since *The Valachi Papers*.”

— Nicholas Gage: former organized crime correspondent for *The New York Times*

