

Massacre at Good Hart – 1968

“Final Statement – The Robison Family Murders”

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Wayne Richard Smith

The brutal slaying of the entire Richard Robison family in the early summer of 1968 at their idyllic and isolated log home on the Lake Michigan shore below the bluff at Blisswood, a mile or two north of Good Hart in northern Emmet County came as an overwhelming shock to the local community and reverberated throughout the Midwest, if not the entire country. After forty years, the case is still officially unsolved and that fact lends itself to all sorts of theories, rumors, legends and outright fabrications.

I was in my sixth and last year as Prosecuting Attorney for Emmet County on July 22, 1968. At about 4 p.m. on that day I was called to the location of these homicides, which are even today firmly impressed upon my mind. I have not discussed the Robison murders in public very often, but neither have I been particularly reticent when asked. In 1998, CNN interviewed me airing it over Thanksgiving weekend of that year and in 2003, a Detroit television station interviewed me in Harbor Springs, but other than that I have been largely silent although I appeared at a forum at the Petoskey Public Library in May 2009 and probably said more publically than I have ever said about this tragedy. I write this now because in recent years three books have been published based upon these homicides. Two of them purport to be fiction, *The Tarnished Eye* by Judith Guest and *Dead End* by James J. Pecora. The most recent book *When Evil Came to Good Hart* by Mardi Link is a non-fiction historical documentary, using real names and is a quite accurate description of the events as they occurred over the many years that the investigation has consumed.

Today, I am virtually “the last man standing” who was personally present at the ghastly scene on July 22, 1968 and feel constrained to report what actually took place. None of the authors of the three books written thus far interviewed me prior to the publication of their books and as far as I know, didn’t speak with anyone else who was personally present at the scene and so my purpose is to tell what the various authors either failed to say or said inaccurately. I am under no illusions though that this is going to set the record straight for all time.

Those that know me well also know that I have what has been described as a “phenomenal” memory. I personally make no such claim and my memory gets worse as I age but I can truthfully say that the events surrounding the horror of the Robison murders are inexorably burned into my memory. This is not a “revisionist history.” What follows is the truth as I experienced it.

A person or persons still officially unknown savagely killed all six members of the Robison family on June 25, 1968; probably a short time after six o’clock in the

evening. The rapidly decomposing bodies were not discovered until July 22, 1968, nearly one month later.

At that time I had been Emmet County Prosecuting Attorney for five and one-half years. Early in June 1968 I announced that I would not be a candidate for re-election and later on that month, I filed for the newly created District Court judgeship to which I was elected in November of that year.

During the 1960s and all previous years going back to Emmet County's inception, the office of the county prosecutor had been a part-time job. The Prosecuting Attorney was allowed (and expected) to carry on a private law practice and run the public's business out of his private law office. The county paid a minimum salary, no benefits, a small portion of a secretary's salary (quaintly referred to as "clerk hire") and the telephone bills for a separate prosecutor's phone line. There was no staff and no assistant prosecutors. If the prosecutor wanted to go on vacation, it was necessary to enlist another local lawyer to fill in for a short time. The office was generally viewed as either a training experience for you lawyers or a safe harbor for old lawyers not wanting to retire just yet. I was the former, my successor Donald Noggle, the latter. It was never considered a career position, nor had anyone ever held the job for more than six years.

The prosecutor's caseload was not particularly onerous in those days. As I recall I authorized warrants for only about fifty felonies a year and most of the accused pled guilty, either straight up or as a result of a plea bargain. I tried on average only one felony case a year and maybe a dozen or so misdemeanors. Most of the crimes were property crimes such as burglary, larceny, forgery, arson, bad checks and non-support together with a few vehicular homicides and a number of drunk driving cases. Crimes against persons such as assault, battery, rape etc. were rare. Until June 25<sup>th</sup> 1968, there had only been three murders in Emmet County in 50 years.

On the other hand, there may have been more homicides than anyone knew. Dr. Jean Webster, my neighbor and long-time of pathology at Little Traverse Hospital (now Northern Michigan Regional Hospital) had told me several times over my tenure as prosecutor that Emmet County was probably one of the easiest places in the United States in which to commit murder. In frequent conversations over the back fence he related to me that on a number of occasions where persons were found dead with no obvious or clear cause and under suspicious circumstances, the county coroner was not allowed to order the performance of autopsies because the county board of supervisors refused to pay for them. During most of my time as prosecutor the coroner was a retired state police lieutenant who had founded and headed up the state police crime lab. We were most fortunate to have someone with his qualifications. He certainly knew when an autopsy was needed but his hands were pretty much tied. The situation changed late in my last term when the state adopted a medical examiner system but during my first four years, the supervisors would only occasionally and very reluctantly pay for an autopsy and even then complain about it vociferously. Their main point was that the pathologists just wanted to

make money by performing autopsies on every person who died without medical attendance. Since the county was only being charged \$150.00 for such post mortem examinations, the supervisors' position was untenable, particularly when they were appropriating and paying money to farmers whose chickens were killed by dogs or coyotes.

For that reason, I had early in my tenure requested that the sheriff's office, city and village police departments and the state police post notify me immediately when a suspicious death occurred in the county, even if they thought suicide, and I would, if at all possible travel to the scene. I felt that if the coroner had my support, it might be easier to properly investigate possible homicides by ordering up autopsies.

So on the afternoon of July 22, 1968, I was notified in a rather circuitous way that a number of bodies had been found in a cabin near Good Hart and although it appeared to be a murder-suicide, my presence was requested.

The call came to me about 4 p.m. from Jim Jensen of the Petoskey Police department who told me that a deputy sheriff had radioed in from near Good Hart asking him to contact me and drive me to a location in upper Emmet County where several bodies had been found. Jim arrived at my office a few minutes later in an unmarked city car and we drove to Blisswood north of Good Hart, a journey of a little over 45 minutes, arriving shortly before 5 p.m., about 1 ½ hours after the sheriff's department first arrived.

Upon arrival, my first observation was pandemonium and chaos. At least a dozen persons, probably more, were milling around. There were part-time deputies, a police chief from Mackinaw City, township constables, the local probation and parole officer, a newspaper photographer, a tow truck driver and others with no visible law enforcement connections tramping about the premises. At least one of the state police from the Petoskey post was there. I was appalled by the lack of any control over the crime scene by anybody. (My wife says that when I came home that evening, I was cursing and loudly complaining about the manner in which the initial investigation at the Robison cottage was compromised.) The area was never cordoned off and none of the curious was prevented from having a look. I asked one of the deputies to get a rope and place it around the area to keep people out (there was no such thing as yellow crime scene tape in those days), but my request was ignored or unheeded. I talked briefly with Chauncey A. Bliss (known as Monty or Monnie), the person characterized by the media as "the caretaker" who had called in about the bodies. I asked one of the deputies to sit down with him on the spot and take a written statement, but that was never done.

At the time of my arrival fire fighter's gas masks had appeared from somewhere and Undersheriff Fosmore and several deputies were in the cottage. Fosmore brought out a hammer from the inside thinking that it might be a murder weapon and I told him to put it back and not to touch anything else in the cottage.

After that, I briefly went into the cottage to view the circumstances but stayed probably less than a minute or two. The permeating stench of the decomposing bodies was overpowering but did serve to somewhat mask the horror of the occasion.

The interior was blanketed with houseflies. Never have I seen so many houseflies in one place. I never again wore the suit I was wearing that day and eventually burned it along with the tie I had worn.

I was told that there were two, possibly three bodies in the rear of the cabin but that the officers could not get around the bodies stacked in the hallway to get to them. It was still thought to be a murder-suicide situation and the deputies wanted to check out the bodies in the rear of the cottage to see if a gun, guns, or other weapons could be located. I advised them it would be all right to break and go through a rear window. Cliff Fosmore did so, squeezing through a very small window.

After it was determined that there were apparently no murder weapons anywhere in the cottage other than the hammer and that the bodies in the rear of the cottage had apparently been murdered, we realized that six cold-blooded murders had taken place.

At that point we did not know when they occurred, although it was fairly quickly determined that none of the family had been seen after June 25<sup>th</sup> and it was surmised that the bodies had been lying in the cottage since then, a reasonable supposition given the state of their decomposition. Later the time was pinpointed fairly accurately after it was discovered that tree-trimmers had left the premises at 5 p.m. on June 25<sup>th</sup> and returned on the 26<sup>th</sup> but did not see any member of the family on that day.

I immediately told Fosmore that the state police crime lab should be called and brought in as soon as possible. He dispatched a deputy to call and it was my understanding that the call was made from the Good Hart store. Radio communication below the bluff at Blisswood was difficult at best. At any rate, while I was still at the location, I was told that the crime lab response was that they didn't go to murder-suicides. I told the deputy to call back and tell them the prosecutor said that this was no murder-suicide but a massacre of six people. The crime lab then agreed to come and officers arrived a little after 10 o'clock that evening. In the meantime, I asked Cliff Fosmore to see to it that the area was secured and that several police officers be posted to guard the premises until the crime lab personnel arrived. That was done. Shortly after 6 p.m., Jim Jensen and I left the scene.

One of the authors mentioned above has commented on the "compromised crime scene" and the "screwed up crime scene investigation by the sheriff's department and the prosecutor's office in Petoskey." (Dead End by James J. Pecora, p. 40 and p. 282.)

As the author claims the book is fiction and uses fictitious names, it can fairly be inferred that the crime scene investigation comment is also fiction. While it is true that all kinds of people were running around the crime scene (reminiscent of decapitated chickens) and there was little organization or order as I have mentioned, Pecora does not mention that the crime scene had already been seriously compromised; like 27 days worth of compromise. It was raining on the evening of June 25<sup>th</sup> and heavily raining on the following day. Visitors had been to the cottage, Bliss and his helper, Steve Shananaquet had been by on who knows how many occasions and tracks or footprints on the outside were not going to be found or if found, were not going to be helpful as any tracks left by the killer or killers would have long since been obliterated by the weather, the passage of time or the passage of unknowing humans, or all three.

A bloody footprint found on the inside of the cottage was never identified, but it was the same size as Joe Scolaro's shoe size and was that of an overshoe quite popular among businessmen in the Detroit metropolitan area at that time. Interestingly, although many fingerprints were found on the premises, including one set that has never been identified, no prints were found matching those of Joe Scolaro, which leads to the belief that he was either wearing gloves or wiped off everything he had touched. No prints of any kind were found on the hammer that Cliff Fosmore was photographed handling. Whoever wielded it either wore gloves or wiped it clean after use.

If the investigation was "screwed up," there is plenty of blame to go around; it really is fictitious to falsely accuse only the sheriff and the prosecutor and I will let it go at that. In retrospect and after a legal career of over 50 years, I can honestly say that given the same circumstances now as then, there is very little I could or would change.

It is rank sophistry to attempt to apply standards of today to law enforcement efforts in 1968.

Further investigation the next day revealed that Richard Robison had withdrawn \$800 or \$900 from the bank in Harbor Springs on June 25<sup>th</sup>. His wallet was empty when his body was found. Shirley Robison's large diamond ring and other jewelry were also missing. She had been placed in a position where it might easily appear she had been raped, her skirt and slip pulled up above her waist; her hose, panties and girdle pulled down to her ankles and obviously cut. She had been covered with a plaid blanket.

It would be easy to surmise a rape and robbery and initially we thought that this was entirely possible. The Manson family murders in California were yet to happen, but the book "In Cold Blood" had recently been published. I had read it in serial form in the New Yorker magazine several years earlier and the murder in Kansas of the entire Clutter family by two paroled felons intent on robbery immediately came to mind. Also earlier in 1968, rather strange people had assassinated both Bobby

Kennedy and Martin Luther King. It was therefore not illogical to think that perhaps drug-crazed hippies, drifters along the beach or escapees from the minimum-security prison camp not far away, had perpetrated this horrific crime and the investigation began to proceed along these lines.

Shortly it became apparent after intensive investigation by state police detectives and others that there were no casual suspects who had the motivation, opportunity and means to commit these crimes. It was also pretty obvious that the killer or killers knew the area, must have known the Robisons and must have been to their cottage before. Moreover, the killer or killers were clever enough to hide the bodies from view, draw the blinds, cover the bullet holes in the window, turn the furnace up and perhaps fake a rape and robbery. The focus had to shift, but where?

Sheriff Dick Zink was at Yellowstone National Park on vacation with his family on July 22<sup>nd</sup> and when he heard about the massacre he headed straight for home, arriving back in Petoskey on July 25<sup>th</sup>. The next day, Friday in the late morning, I was meeting with him in his office, filling him in on the events of the week when a deputy knocked at the door to ask him if he wished to talk to a Mr. Scolaro who said that he was the "business partner" of Richard Robison. Neither of us had heard of Mr. Scolaro prior to that time but Dick Zink nodded and said to bring him in. Scolaro entered the office, we both rose and shook hands with him and then he started talking a mile a minute; very fast, very agitated. Dick (Zink) told Scolaro that he could probably give us a lot of valuable information and would he mind if we tape-recorded the conversation. Scolaro agreed and Dick started up an old reel-to-reel tape recorder. We talked with him for over an hour. He talked very rapidly and made quite a number of inconsistent statements, some of which I asked him to explain, occasionally interrupting his monologue.

After he left, Dick and I looked at each other and each express our opinion that we might have found a suspect and although there was no evidence at that point that Scolaro was in any way involved, his manner, demeanor and just plain strange behavior could not be totally explained by shock alone. We also both felt after that interview that Scolaro was really there to find out how much we knew. Later the sheriff told me that he had listened to the tape very carefully and that my questions to Scolaro had caught him up in a number of what we knew to be outright lies. I never heard the tape and do not know if it was preserved or exists today. I do know that my suspicions about Scolaro never lessened and were later heightened when I learned that he had been in military intelligence while in the armed services.

The Detroit newspapers were on strike that month and the Robison murders were not immediately covered heavily in southeastern Michigan; television news was not as sophisticated as it is now and there were no cable news networks in existence. People still used their daily newspapers as their primary source of information. Reporters flocked in however from Cleveland, Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis and from the news services, UPI and AP. Local radio and the local newspapers provided extensive coverage. I acted as the official spokesman for the investigation at its

inception. At the first press conference we held, I stated “the trail is as cold as the winters in northern Michigan.” And it was. After ten days, the media people left town and there were no more press conferences as such. The Detroit newspaper strike was settled in August and those newspapers published some feature stories, but for all practical purposes the frenzy was over.

Al Koski, a reporter accredited by the Royal Oak Tribune and later by a Dearborn newspaper was one reporter who did not give up. To this day, over 40 years later, he continues to investigate. I don't know if he will ever write his book, but if and when he does, it may be definitive.

In October 1968 Sheriff Zink and I attended a conference held at State Police Headquarters in East Lansing called by Captain Dan Myre, Chief of Detectives. Detectives Lloyd Stearns and John Flis who were the main investigators for the state police were also present together with Lieutenant Edward Goss, a state police polygraph operator who had run Joseph Scolaro on the polygraph just a few days before for some six hours. General discussion agreed that there was not enough evidence to charge anyone with murder but Goss definitely opined that based on his polygraph examination Joseph Scolaro “either did it or knows who did it.”

While polygraph results are not admitted into evidence in the courts of this country, the polygraph is a useful investigative tool. I have been told, that in the hands of an experienced polygraph examiner, the polygraph is between 90 and 95% accurate.

Thus at this point Joseph Scolaro became a major suspect.

Detectives Stearns and Flis had yet to discover that shell casings found on a private target range owned by Scolaro's father-in-law matched shell casings found at the Robison cottage. These shells had come from an AR-7 22 caliber rifle and a Beretta 25 caliber handgun using unusual Finnish ammunition. Scolaro had earlier voluntarily disclosed that he had once owned two of both of these types of guns. He said that he had given a Beretta to Richard Robison and an AR-7 to a friend in Chicago. He still possessed the other Beretta handgun but never explained what really happened to the other AR-7. (He stated that he had returned the rifle to his brother-in-law, a part-time gun dealer. His brother-in-law would not or could not confirm that statement.)

Neither the AR-7 nor the Beretta that killed the family were ever found. Nor was any evidence ever found to the effect that Richard Robison was given, possessed or owned the other Beretta handgun. Its registration was never changed from Scolaro.

Sometime in the middle of July, long after the murders but before their discovery, Shirley Robison's mother called Joe Scolaro, concerned because she had not heard from her daughter for some time. (This was very unusual as Shirley called her mother often.) Joe assured her that he had just talked with the Robisons and they were fine and in Kentucky.

Whether or not the circumstantial evidence implicating Scolaro would be sufficient for a murder conviction has been the subject of much speculation. I have always thought of circumstantial evidence this way: if there are deer tracks in the snow, that is circumstantial evidence that a deer has been there." There were quite a lot of deer tracks in this case but I recognize that reasonable minds might differ on the subject.

After this October meeting I was elected District Judge and remained more or less out of the loop although Sheriff Zink informally kept me advised of developments.

During the initial phases of the investigation, Chauncey A. (aka Monnie or Monty) Bliss was posited as a suspect. He consented to and was given a polygraph examination and passed it. There are still people forty years later that firmly believe that Bliss committed these murders. The late Bob Clock, a very decent and intelligent fellow, was a reporter for the Petoskey News-Review at the time and believed to his dying day that Bliss was the perpetrator. He and I would often privately debate that topic. The pivotal question always has been: if Bliss committed these murders, how did he come to be in possession of an AR-7 of which only 25,000 had been sold in this country and a Beretta handgun which had utilized rare Finnish Sako ammunition, both of which had admittedly been purchased and owned by Joe Scolaro? No one has ever given a satisfactory answer.

Maybe Bliss and his helper Steve Shananaquet have some complicity. Although it is extremely doubtful that either committed the crime, is it possible that one or both took the cash from Richard Robison's wallet and the large diamond ring from Shirley's finger? Is it possible that one or both engaged in necrophilia with Shirley's corpse?

Bliss was run on the polygraph on the basis of "Did you kill . . ." He was never asked if he knew about the murders long before he reported them or if he had been in the Robison cottage at any time before his report.

Shananaquet was never given a polygraph.

In 1999, I received a telephone call from a Native American woman of my acquaintance alleging that Steve

Shananaquet and his wife, whose name she gave me, took all of Shirley Robison's jewelry. I duly relayed this message to the late Sheriff Jeff Bodzick, but don't know if he ever followed up. It is entirely possible that this was simply an envious attempt to get another into trouble. Still, there is no evidence as to when Bliss forced opened the front door to the cottage. He told the police that he did so on July 22<sup>nd</sup> when he



was investigation the odor and then saw the bodies. The only corroboration for that statement is from the late Steve Shananaquet. Bliss could have forced the door at any time. He was generally known to be very much on top of everything that was happening at Blisswood. It has been said that if a car as much as pulled into the driveway off what is now M-119, he was out there in a flash to check out the occupants.

It is pretty hard to believe he did not check out the Robison cottage much earlier than reported, particularly given the pervasive odor, which was much stronger than that of a dead raccoon under the house and was being complained of for at least a week by neighbors.

We will doubtlessly never know the truth of the matter but it does raise questions.

Another theory is that these homicides were a mob "hit job" on Richard Robison. There was never any evidence that his was the case, the weapons used were not the kind favored by professional killers and the mob does not go in for killing "innocent" victims. An IRS fraud investigator who had an office near mine told me in 1970 that he asked some of his more nefarious contacts in the Detroit area if this had been a Mafia revenge type killing and was assured that the mob simply did not intentionally kill wives and children and if they had wanted to hit Robison, there were lots of ways they could have done it when he was alone and "without wasting a trip" to northern Michigan.

With Scolaro, motive, opportunity and means all meshed. No other possible suspect had all three. State police detectives twice drove up from Lathrup Village to Good Hart and back and determined that there was plenty of time to make the drive, commit the slaughter, arrange the bodies, pull the blinds and otherwise tweak the scene and drive back to Lathrup Village in twelve hours.

Scolaro could not and did not account for his whereabouts during the time span of 11 a.m. and 11 p.m. on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1968. His story about where he had been on that day did not check out and was proved to be a lie that he never was able to explain away.

There came a time when the state police detectives requested a murder warrant for Joseph Scolaro from Prosecuting Attorney Noggle and were turned down. Noggle had the backing of Michigan Attorney General Frank J. Kelley and the chief of his criminal division, the late Bob Goussy. There were others however who felt that a warrant should issue and that the circumstantial evidence was strong enough to get the case to a jury. Basically, those who felt that the time was not ripe for the issuance of a warrant wanted a recovery of the gun or guns that were used in the killings.

I have occasionally wondered what I might have done with the warrant request had I continued as prosecuting attorney for another term. It seems to me that I would

have attempted to convene a grand jury to hear evidence *in camera*. I would have subpoenaed all of the suspects, put them under oath and questioned them relentlessly. I think much more information might have been obtained by putting witnesses under oath before a grand jury. If we couldn't have obtained a murder indictment, I am sure perjury charges would have been proper in some cases. I wonder also if a grand jury investigation might have triggered an earlier suicide for Scolaro.

However, I said that I would attempt to convene a grand jury. There was not assurance that the Circuit Judge would allow it or that the county board of supervisors would agree to pay for it.

In point of fact, it is my belief that one of the reasons Dog Noggle was so reluctant to do anything about these homicides was his knowledge that the county supervisors did not want to shoulder the expense of a long drawn out and costly murder trial. After all, this was a downstate matter; why should Emmet County get caught up in it? The county had already spent too much on the investigation.

The board of supervisors recruited Noggle to succeed me as Prosecutor just as soon as I announced that I would not be seeking another term. He had just retired from a federal government job and was ready to retire into this one. He had been county prosecutor for a few years back in the 50's and was perfectly willing to go along with the supervisors' whims. Their main desires involved holding down their own property taxes, maintaining the *status quo*, and being the most powerful men in their respective neighborhoods or townships. Providing fitting and proper local government was merely secondary but OK if it came cheap enough.

Over the past 40 years I have heard other strange theories about the Robison slaughter. One of the most curious is memorialized in Judith Guest's book, *The Tarnished Eye* in which convicted serial killer John Norman Collins is tied to the Robisons and accused as their killer.

While she claims her book is fiction, it seems that Guest is convinced that John Norman Collins murdered the Robison family. This idea is based on the sole fact that maybe Collins and the oldest Robison son were acquainted in college at Eastern Michigan University. Even that supposed fact was never clearly established.

Ms. Guest is quoted as stating:

"They really limited the search immediately and only focused on Mr. Robison and his acquaintances and his business connections."

She basically asks the reader to believe that investigators focused only on Joe Scolaro and no one else. That in itself is a complete fabrication and an outrageous one at that.

Anyone taking the time to study and analyze the police reports in depth will discern that the John Norman Collins slant along with many other angles were painstakingly probed in almost boring detail. These probes continued even after Scolaro became the major suspect. Ms. Guest badly needs to refine her research.

There are times when police make assumptions and jump to conclusions that are not justified by fact or reason (see *The Innocent Man* by John Grisham). This was not one of those times.

Critics of the main investigators have written that:

“The weakness is that Scolaro had no violent criminal history, except for alleged embezzlement and/or fraud. Going from embezzlement and fraud to the murder of six people at one time is a giant leap for criminologists.”

This of course is patently ridiculous. Jack the Ripper, Ted Bundy, and even John Norman Collins had no violent criminal behavior before they killed their first victim. That is why Bundy and Collins were so hard to catch and the Ripper was never caught. Come to think of it, Charles Manson had no violent criminal history, either.

Another weird theory is that Dick Robison staged his own murder; that the body discovered in the cottage was not his but a look alike; that he escaped, ran off to Egypt with an unidentified woman and was later killed by the CIA. This story supposedly came from someone who had been ensconced in a “safe house” near Miami, Florida. A person who seriously believed the story told it to me with a straight face some twenty years ago. Of course, Dick Robison’s body had been positively identified by the medical examiner shortly after his autopsy.

In spite of the theories that have been spun, and there are probably more that I haven’t heard, it all comes back to Joe Scolaro. It seems impossible to almost everybody that any person could possibly commit these horrid killings, especially Joe Scolaro, with “no violent criminal history” who wore a suit and tie and with to work everyday with all of the appearance of respectability.

Yet to professionals accustomed to homicide investigation, Joe Scolaro would be no surprise; his history and actions prior to and after the murders fit the classic definition of the sociopath. Any psychologist, psychiatrist, criminal profiler or seasoned detective, knowing the history and personality of Joe Scolaro, could easily come to that conclusion.

In her book *The Sociopath Next Door*, Dr. Martha Stout tells us that, “. . . people who do hideous things do not look like people who do hideous things. There is no ‘face of evil.’”

The sociopath has no conscience and no remorse for his or her destructive acts. It is not difficult for the sociopath to kill another human being if it serves his purpose.

Dr. Stout makes the point that people who are conscience bound do no murder, torture or rape. Those that do may be formally insane, substance abusers, members of a group that has been desperately deprived, or under the spell of a psychotic delusion, but most often they are people with a lack of conscience; sociopaths.

Dr. Stout states: "deceit is the linchpin of conscienceless behavior." Joe Scolaro was an accomplished liar and a master of deception and deceit. Michigan State Police investigators established that even in high school Scolaro was known by his friends and acquaintances to be a shameless liar.

There is simply no question whatsoever in my mind that Scolaro was the archetypal sociopath, totally capable of killing the Robison family with no feelings of guilt or remorse.

Three years after he had killed the Robison family, Scolaro killed himself but not out of any feelings of shame or contrition. He took his own life because he knew that the game was up; he was about to be exposed; he knew the evidence against him and more importantly he knew the Oakland County Prosecutor's office was about ready to act on that evidence. He was going to be held accountable. It is an understatement to say that sociopaths don't like to be held accountable.

The Good Hart murders were not as complicated or complex as many avid theorists would wish. Certainly there are unanswered questions that only Joe Scolaro can answer and there may be other questions that will forever remain unanswered because those who could answer them are also dead.

It is not open to question that law enforcement knows when the crime was committed, how the crime was committed, where the crime was committed and the only person with the motive, opportunity and means to commit the crime.

What is not known for certain is Joe Scolaro's endgame. The old Sicilian phrase "qui bono" comes to mind. Who benefits?

After over 40 years there has been no indication that anyone other than Joe Scolaro stood to benefit or did in fact benefit from the murders of Dick Robison and his family. There has to be a very great magnitude of hate for a revenge killing. Even then, for real revenge the family gets killed and (the person who views themselves as) the victim lives. The years have failed to produce anyone who hated Dick Robison enough to seek out he and his family in a remote cabin and put them all violently to death.

The only thing that makes sense is to "follow the money." When that happens, it becomes plain that Joe Scolaro had the motive; he had not only been caught stealing, but had also been freshly caught in the scam he had been working on his employer. He had the weapons necessary to do the job and the time in which to do it.

Current law enforcement theorizes that Scolaro acted alone. It is certainly possible that he did. I still would not rule out the possibility that he had help although I think it is a thin possibility given the number of years since the investigation ceased and the lack of any disclosures to the contrary during that time.

It all comes back to the unanswered questions and for that reason people will undoubtedly continue speculation well into the rest of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

For my part, I would just as soon see this over and done with. We can be certain the responsible party has been positively identified. Everything else is pure conjecture.