Reena Virk’s Murder

Background Information about Reena Virk:

Reena Virk was a girl who came from a large extended family who had emigrated from India to Canada. An article in Saturday Night described her immediate family as "a minority within a minority", as they were of the Jehovah’s Witness religion in the local East Indian community of 3,000 which was predominantly Sikh.[6]

Virk has been described as a girl who was desperate for acceptance amongst her peers, but was teased and/or ostracized by these girls whose subculture was influenced by Los Angeles street gangs.[1] At the beginning of her adolescence, Virk had become estranged from her family. She began to rebel against her immediate family and their strict religious beliefs. She began to smoke, disobey family rules and spent a few days at a group foster home where she first came into contact with the local youth gang culture to which she became attracted.[2] There also had been allegations that she may have been sexually abused by her father though the charges (filed in January 1996) had been stayed in court and after leaving home for six weeks, Virk returned home.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reena_Virk

The Crime:

On the evening of Friday November 14, 1997, Reena Virk was invited to "party" at a location used for gatherings of teenagers near the Craigflower Bridge, which is located west of the city of Victoria, British Columbia. Virk, who had already been having difficulty fitting in with her schoolmates, decided to accept the invitation.

While at the bridge, it is claimed that teenagers talked amongst themselves, drank, and smoked marijuana. Virk was swarmed upon by eight adolescents, seven girls and one boy. Witnesses said that one of the girls stubbed out a cigarette on Virk's forehead, and that while seven or eight others stood by and watched, Virk was repeatedly hit, punched and kicked. She was found to have several cigarette burns on her skin, and apparently attempts were made to set her hair on fire. The fight ended when one of the girls told the others to stop.

Virk managed to walk away, but was followed by two members of the original group, Ellard and Głowaski. The pair dragged Virk to the other side of the bridge, made her remove her shoes and jacket, and beat her a second time. It is believed that Ellard forced Virk's head under the water and held it there with her foot until Virk stopped struggling.

Despite an alleged pact amongst the people involved not to "rat each other out", by the following Monday, rumors of the alleged murder spread throughout Shoreline Secondary School, where Virk was a student. Several students and teachers had heard the rumors, but no one came forward to report it to the police. The rumors were confirmed eight days later, on November 22, 1997, when police divers found Virk's partially clothed body washed ashore at the Gorge Inlet, a major waterway on Vancouver Island.

The coroner ruled the death was by drowning. However, an autopsy later revealed that Virk had sustained several fractures, and that the head injuries were severe enough to have killed her if she had not been drowned. Virk was 14 years old at the time of her death.

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