



Final Argument: An Inquiry into the murders of Mac and Muff Graham on Palmyra Island by Buck Walker and Stephanie Stearns

By Tom Bucy

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“FINAL ARGUMENT” was written in response to VINCENT BUGLIOSI’S best seller “AND THE SEA WILL TELL” (ATSWT) which recounts the brutal murder and torture of MAC and MUFF GRAHAM on PALMYRA ISLAND August 29, 1974. ATSWT reviewed the supposed facts surrounding the murder of the Grahams on Palmyra, and followed STEPHANIE STEARNS (aka JENNIFER JENKINS) upon her arrest and trial for her role in the planning and participation in those murders. In his zeal to prove Stearns’ innocence, inadvertently, Bugliosi set forth clue after clue proving the guilt of Stearns and her crime partner, Buck Walker. All of which were ignored by the prosecutor, judge, jury and reading public. Stearns, herself, taunts her pursuers with photographs and spurious log notes. (Most egregious were her August 5th log remarks about “drooling and dreaming” anticipating possession of the SEA WIND on execution of the Grahams.) Stearns claims to have studied mathematics, yet in her supposed log she cannot engage in simple addition. Time and again she is exposed as a liar and a perjurer, yet the jury forgives lie after lie all the while ignoring the honest and forthright testimony of the Pollocks (The LEONARDS in ATSWT.) and Mac’s messenger, Curtis Shoemaker. Bugliosi’s careful analysis of the tides revealed Stearns was lying about her activities purportedly occurring on the 30th and 31st of August 1974. Unfortunately, because of Enoki’s refusal to allow Bugliosi’s tidal data into the trial, the jury was deprived of this information. To an experienced sailor, Stearn’s account of her navigational skill is grossly overstated to the point where reading Bugliosi’s book “And The Sea Will Tell” becomes an exercise that tests one’s patience. Her moronic pronouncements (all of which went unnoticed) regarding the birth of the Iola (for the most part wisely left out of Bugliosi’s account of the trial) are absurd to the point of zaniness. However, Stearns murder plot was masterful. Her manipulative skills are unusually sharp as can be observed while she was at work on Palmyra Island the summer of 1974, and in her interplay with counsel and court during her murder trial. FINAL ARGUMENT exposes lie after compounded lie, set forth as truth in Bugliosi’s version of the “facts” surrounding the murder of the Grahams on Palmyra the August of 1974. It includes substantial portions of the original trial testimony that were excluded in ATSWT.

Bugliosi professing his belief in Stearns innocence is duped by his client. Eager to win every point, when necessary he shaves the truth. For the most part he does this by omitting critical testimony that proves the lie such as Stearns' patently absurd account of her sailing method re "leisure sailing", or her improbable account of the Iola's supposed approach to Palmyra. So too, there is considerable variance between Bugliosi's cross-examination as revealed in the original trial transcript re Pollock and Shoemaker and his recounting this same testimony in his book. A careful reading of FINAL ARGUMENT answers these, and many more questions that should have been asked, but were not. Alas, poor Muff, her bones at the time of publishing, languish in the care of the FBI, forty years after her torture and murder by Stearns and Walker, still not at rest, forlorn and forgotten. Most of those that knew and loved her are gone and she has been shamefully abandoned by the sailing community.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

A graduate of the University of Michigan with a bachelor's degree in psychology, Juris Doctor degree from the San Fernando Valley College of Law. A sailor and wooden boat owner for nearly fifty years, duly licensed to practice law in the State of California, former Deputy Public Defender for the County of Los Angeles and trial lawyer for over forty years. Several years ago I happened upon "And The Sea Will Tell", a book written by VINCENT BUGLIOSI and BRUCE HENDERSON. It recounts the murder of MAC and MUFF GRAHAM on the island of PALMYRA in August 1974, and the subsequent arrest and trials of STEPHANIE K. STEARNS and WESLEY 'BUCK' WALKER who were charged with murdering the Grahams. VINCENT BUGLIOSI, acclaimed prosecutor of CHARLES MANSON, now working on the other side, defended STEARNS. For myself, after arguing on behalf of thousands of defendants as a Los Angeles County Deputy Public Defender, I too now change sides, and argue on behalf of MAC and MUFF GRAHAM. In so doing I arrive at an opinion and conclusion contrary to that of the jury, and am persuaded STEARNS and WALKER acted in concert, murdered the GRAHAMS for reasons set forth.

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