

Thoughts of the webmaster

An account after four years of fighting against injustice in Arizona



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I'm taking the chance to state my opinion about this case of [Debra Milke](#) and analyze some of the facts that I had the chance to see, read or find out for myself. I am in no way related, paid or otherwise dependent on anyone of the summarized persons, therefore I would consider myself an independent observer ... admittedly, with detail knowledge up to this day. I am completely convinced of [Debra's](#) innocence, and since I had the chance to get to know this case so well, I'd also like to point out why.

When I became involved in this case in 1998 [Debra Milke's](#) [mother, Berlin-born RENATE JANKA](#), passed me all the pertinent records and documents I needed to maintain and work with the website. After the first steps I challenged her time and again, asking questions and trying to find out for myself whether the scenario told made sense to me. It did make sense, in matters of realizing that [a big injustice](#) happened to [Debra](#) and that the understanding of legal principles of the Arizona authorities must have missed big time when she was convicted. Some people have asked me what drives me to support [Debra](#) ever since and I will state very clearly and unmistakably that I'm personally disgusted by the lack of honesty, competence and the rush to retribution in a sloppy fashion. The Arizona legal system not only railroaded [Debra Milke](#), but also displayed no respect for her 4-year old child that was killed. And more than that, it still happens. Today, as you read this, and on any other day.

On December 2, 1989 [JIM STYERS](#) and the son of his room mate [Debra Milke](#) left his apartment at 7734 N. 12 Street in Phoenix, Arizona. The little boy, [CHRISTOPHER MILKE](#), had seen Santa Claus on the preceding day [December 1, 1989] when [STYERS](#) - along with his own 2-year-old daughter [WENDY](#) - and [CHRIS](#) were at the Metro Center. In the morning hours of that Saturday, while his mother [Debra](#) was still asleep, [CHRISTOPHER](#) shoved [JIM](#) if they could go and see Santa again. After [Debra](#) had gotten up and learned about the wish of her son she inquired with [JIM](#) if he would mind taking the little boy with him. [JIM](#) willingly agreed and was granted to take [Debra's](#) car, because his own had wrecked up some weeks ago.

It must have been approximately 10 or 10.30 a.m. when the two left the apartment complex. But instead of going directly to the mall [STYERS](#) elected to pick up an old friend - [ROGER SCOTT](#). [SCOTT](#) and [STYERS](#) had been spending time together previously, and it appears that the reason for this was [JIM STYERS'](#) new-born interest in guns. He had bought a first gun on November 11, 1989, and the purchase of two more guns followed approximately a week later. As had been found out the three individuals went to a desert area north of Phoenix, presumably to go target practicing or to shoot at cans and snakes, when all of a sudden three shots killed little [CHRISTOPHER](#). [According to STYERS](#) they were already on the way back to the car, [CHRISTOPHER](#) behind him and [SCOTT](#) at the end of the line, when he heard those three shots. Turning around [STYERS](#) saw the boy lying in the desert sand, while [SCOTT](#) was pointing the gun at him, driveling on \$ 250 he had asked for previously.



The gun point

Allegedly frightened by the fact that he was a witness of the unforeseeable killing STYERS successfully calmed SCOTT down. Eventually both went along, and upon returning to Phoenix the two sat down at a pizza place to create a scenario to tell the police, and come up with a story to cover both their butts. STYERS was to go to the Metro Center and later claim he had lost CHRISTOPHER there, when both were using a restroom where STYERS was using a stall. He later called the boy's mother, Debra, and told her that CHRISTOPHER was missing from the mall. A missing person report was filed and later that day police - along with friends and acquaintances of Debra - combed the shopping center to find the little boy.

Around midnight STYERS mentioned his buddy ROGER SCOTT. Immediately suspicious, police decided to interrogate ROGER, and the interview began at 4 a.m. on December 3, 1989. Discrepancies unraveled in the accounts of both men, STYERS and SCOTT. At 12.50 p.m. a police veteran of the homicide detail DETECTIVE ARMANDO SALDATE entered the interview room where DET. R. MILLS examined SCOTT. SALDATE took over and pressed SCOTT, threatening to ransack his apartment where SCOTT'S elderly and frail mother was living. SCOTT feared this would kill her, and at around 3.35 p.m. he incriminated JIM STYERS, saying "Jim killed him". SCOTT told police a story that he was supposedly only the driver, and how he had tried to talk JIM out of the plan. He also told police that he was to receive a payment of \$ 250 from a life insurance policy which JIM intended to cash, and later on led the detectives to the dead body of the boy.

In the meantime Debra was anxiously waiting to hear news about CHRISTOPHER. She had been awake all through the night from Saturday to Sunday, with friends and family members waiting and supporting her. Her step-mother MAUREEN had come all the way from Florence to be on her side, and on Sunday noon Debra decided to be with her family and go to Florence, where she arrived at approximately 3 p.m.

At this point in time Phoenix police uncritically ordered the arrest of JIM STYERS and Debra Milke. At 4.50 p.m. one car drove to STYERS' apartment, where he was about to leave with his ex-wife KAREN for a church service. Another car with three officers commenced a drive to Florence, supposedly to learn the exact location of Debra Milke at that time, and to interview her. Upon STYERS' arrest he asked officer CAREY whether CHRISTOPHER had been found, but added "I hope you did but I'm not sure if I want to know, but if you did he's probably dead." Returning from the trip to the murder-scene DET. R. MILLS started an interview with JIM at 6.41 p.m. at the Police Main Station, but upon reading the Miranda Warnings STYERS immediately replied : "I want an attorney" and refused to say anything else. Debra had tried to lay down for some time at her father's home, when all of a sudden DEPUTY SOULES of the Pinal County Sheriff's Office rang at the door of the SADEIK property and asked her to come down to the local jail facility. Debra agreed to come down and was eventually accompanied by an acquaintance of the SADEIK'S, JANET FROEBE.

The two women came down to the facility at the same time that LT. JAHN, DET. HAMRICK and DET.

DiMODICA arrived with their car from Phoenix at 6.35 p.m.. Without speaking to any of the two women they requested DEPUTY SOULES to take the two to a room where they could wait for DET. SALDATE to arrive from Phoenix. SOULES offered Debra and JANET a room where they waited for more than an hour. Also none of the officers spoke to DET. SALDATE upon his arrival via helicopter, and he eventually made contact with Debra Milke at 7.53 p.m., sent JANET FROEBE out of the room and closed the door behind him. No one else but SALDATE and Debra were present in that room.

While the interrogation of DET. SALDATE with Debra Milke took place, [DET. HAMRICK interviewed JANET](#) and already filled her in that Debra would be "charged as one of the three people involved in the death of Christopher". After that interview the officers went to the SADEIK property and [DET. DIMODICA interviewed MAURREN SADEIK](#), notifying the family of the death of CHRISTOPHER and the arrest of Debra.

That's interesting, especially in light of the fact that SALDATE emerged from the interview room after 35 minutes, claiming he had a confession of Debra Milke. A confession that Debra steadfastly denied in the preceding twelve years of her unjust indictment and conviction. Three days later SALDATE produced two reports about his [interrogations of ROGER SCOTT and Debra Milke](#), written chronologically twisted and including statements that cannot possibly have taken place as described [completely contradicting at least two independent witnesses statements]. Ever since each report or testimony shifted his story more, stabbing the knife even harder into the back of Debra Milke.

What followed was an unspeakable string of character assassination, twisted statements, sensationalizing media coverage and family neglect. A specialty of prosecutor NOEL LEVY, who had previously achieved unjust death sentences of people who have fortunately subsequently been freed. And more than that : her own father, a prison guard and therefore an employee of the Arizona Department of Corrections, as well as his third wife MAUREEN and her daughter KAREN willingly confirmed and supplied every damaging detail needed to pre-convict Debra. RICHARD SADEIK and his family abandoned Debra in an amazingly uncritical manner. Together with the one sided media coverage it was almost like a herd instinct. It was no longer "innocent, to be proven guilty", but "guilty, to be proven innocent".

Next I've learned about the difficult relationship of Debra and her younger sister SANDY, which was defined by jealousy and a feeling of inferiority on SANDY'S side from early on. SANDY later made some strong points against Debra at trial, and if you correspond with her on the internet you'll soon learn that she is still pretty comfortable with what she testified, she's comfortable with what she was told to believe and what would suit her fine to do so. The main points she made were describing Debra as a horrible and reckless mother to her son Christopher. But the charge of "child abuse" was the first one dropped as a result of the Appeal to the Arizona Supreme Court. And prior to the murder - if any of the statements SANDY made were true - someone would have reported Debra to any child protective service or police or even another family member. But nothing like this ever happened.

DET. SALDATE made an interview of SANDY shortly prior to the trial, and [the report about this interview](#) is one of the best examples of SALDATE'S pattern to falsify a story. To narrate a run down of this interview SANDY didn't have the slightest idea about what actually happened in the murder case of her nephew at first, [until SALDATE told her details](#) as he wanted her to believe them. And SANDY, the person she is, uncritical picked up on them and continues to repeat this fabricated story over and over again.

SALDATE also alleged during that interview that Debra had [flashed her breasts to him](#) while he interviewed her in the closed room in order to manipulate him. As far as I know Debra today, I and anyone close to her exclude that completely; that's definitely not the way she is at all. But since he claimed that to SANDY and later at trial, I asked myself why didn't he include that in [his initial report](#) ? He also didn't mention this alleged incident during an [interview with Debra's defense attorney, Kenneth Ray, and prosecutor NOEL LEVY](#) present. Is it easier to make a jealous woman believe such a lie ?

SALDATE'S interrogation with SANDY was tape-recorded on her father's request and - even though never played in public during the trial - was later played in the jury room, since it was allowed on the list of exhibits, and Debra's government-paid public defender didn't object to it. The jury obviously never cared to listen closely, because if they had, the contradictions in SANDY'S statements and the

questionable techniques of SALDATE'S interrogation would have come to their attention. This taped interrogation was shrewd to serve as character damage. And as we have seen with the RAY KRONE case, finding an innocent person guilty is no big deal in Phoenix, Arizona ... [by the way : the same prosecutor - NOEL LEVY !]

In a [pre-trial interview of Debra's attorney Ken Ray with SALDATE](#) the cop confirmed that he intended to arrest Debra from early on. "Based on what ?" you will ask. Only based on a unbelievable, self-serving incrimination of ROGER SCOTT. Other that SCOTT'S statements all following incidents and incriminations were orchestrated to fit Debra into a participation in the crime. Or as she said herself : "If I was confessing - why in the hell didn't this cop of 20 years go get a witness ?! There were at least 5 or 6 Phx cops around. Not to mention the employees at the jail ! Why ??! Why ??! (...) He didn't have a witness because there was no need for one - I was not confessing to anything !" Upon being questioned about details of this interview SALDATE declared that he checked with his notes to refresh his memory about this case. But at trial he declared his notes destroyed in order to frustrate requests of the defense for them. My assumption more and more became conviction that this cop had a pattern of lying and falsifying.

The obvious determination of the Phoenix police department [culminated in fabricating the motive](#) for Debra's alleged involvement in the murder. As a responsible mother she participated in a social benefit plan that was offered by her employer. This is something she did with every job she had, and life insurance was a part of that package. During the police investigation she was confused and denied to have life insurance in particular, because she never went to an insurance agency to buy a policy. But when the \$ 5,000 insurance was later discovered as a part of her social benefit package it perfectly fitted and served as a motive for the baseless contention of a conspiracy [pecuniary gain - aggravating circumstance]. But this mere allegation flies in the face of the fact that Debra worked in the insurance field for some years. Every child knows that no insurance company would ever pay in case of a felony [and the insurance conditions of this particular group plan state the same], but here the prosecution makes the claim that three adults were after exactly that, to cash in on a life insurance ? That's hardly believable. By the way, the issue of life insurance policies is often used to serve as a "motive" by cops and prosecutors, not only in this, but also in other questionable criminal cases [also see [the Darlie Routier case](#) and others].

Speaking of unethical police work ... SALDATE ran for constable in the central district of Phoenix in June 1990. In order to accomplish his election he falsified his living address. Does it surprise you that Debra's attorney was not allowed to address this at trial ? SALDATE was also recently surprised by a TV crew interviewing him about his duties and professional affairs. First he was upbeat and friendly, invited them into his home, but when the reporter asked him about his involvement in [The Debra Milke Case](#) he [expelled them immediately and threatened them to sue the TV network](#). If his work as a police detective was so reputable, why wouldn't he just answer their questions and justify his interview technique ? There is no plausible explanation for his actions.

Shortly after Debra's arrest she was put in Durango Jail where criminal psychologist DR. GARCIA-BUNUEL worked with her. He and his staff had no doubts that Debra showed any signs of guilt, only grief, and would be acquitted, but his assertion wasn't heard at trial due to his travel plans. At Durango Debra also took a polygraph test, which she passed. But DR. FRITZ, a criminal expert, later declared the result wouldn't be admissible and was inconclusive because of the environment.



Inmates at Perryville
(Debbie is not allowed
to be on the outside like this)

In April 2001 Debra's mother RENATE and I went down to Tucson, where we had a chance to see and meet JANET NAPOLITANO, Arizona's State Attorney General, as a part of a function at the ASU. Her office has the power to either admit error or renounce to continue fighting Debra. When she was finished MS. JANKA had the chance to talk to her briefly and passed 5,000 signatures on to MS. NAPOLITANO. You don't think she has ever cared to check deeper into the case or recognized the obvious error of it ? Upon a request for an interview about this case her office replied it was 'not appropriate to discuss it'. But - is it rather appropriate to keep an innocent person on death row ? Knowing that MS. NAPOLITANO has intentions to run for governor in 2002 I urge every citizen of Arizona to have grave thoughts about this point.

After analyzing all this I came to the following convictions :

1. SALDATE'S police report was fabricated
2. the media sloppily pre-convicted JIM STYERS and Debra Milke
3. her sister SANDY - in a state of jealousy and feeling inferior - took the chance to get even with her older sister
4. the DOC dependent family supplied character damage without a critical stance
5. the judge's conduct supported every prejudice against Debra
6. the State Attorney's sworn duty to have justice prevail for anyone was and is a political joke
7. the votes as a result of a death penalty sentence mean more to the Arizona authorities than an innocent human life

Let me explicitly express that I have found out about most of the facts contained herein all by myself, and it is my free will and wish to support Debbie, her mother RENATE and the entire defense team in any way possible. Speaking for myself, I know that Debra is innocent and there is nothing that links her to this crime, or as she once said : "I'm not a guilty person with overwhelming evidence against me looking for a legal loophole. I'm an innocent person with no evidence against me looking for justice." I'm taking my hat off for somebody who recognized :
"I cannot support a system, which, in its administration, has proven to be so fraught with error and has come so close to the ultimate nightmare, the state's taking of innocent life." - Governor George Ryan, on declaring a moratorium in Illinois

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webmaster, friend, supporter
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