



### Historical Media Coverage

THE DAILY BULLETIN

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# Retired cop can't forget '55 tragedy

**'Sometimes I have visions and see the three boys'**

BY RUMMANA HUSSAIN  
*Sun-Times Reporter*

When Chicago Police Detective Jimmy Jack first spotted the three naked, strangled bodies lying atop each other like "50-pound bags of potatoes," the young father cried along with the older, seasoned officers who stood by his side. Then, he threw up.

"Sometimes I have visions and see the three boys walking down the street," Jack, now 77, said, recalling the infamous Peterson-Schuessler murders that rocked Chicago five decades ago and shattered any semblance of innocence often associated with the 1950s.

Jack, who spent several years in an orphanage and almost joined the 1948 U.S. Olympic boxing team, en-

joyed a legendary police career before he left the department in 1974 to take a job as head of security for a toy store chain. He was struck by a car while saving a 2-year-old girl who ran into traffic, escorted Jackie Kennedy during a visit to Chicago and was punched in the face by alleged mob boss Frank Calabrese Sr. during a shooting investigation.

**Unsolved until 1993**

But it's the chilling murders of Anton Schuessler, 11, his brother, John, 13, and their friend Robert Peterson, 13, that haunt him, replaying in his head and reducing him to tears even 50 years later.

"It made me love my children more," said Jack whose upcoming book with attorney Michael J. Pisaní, *Three Boys Missing*, will chronicle the city's most notorious cold cases. "This is the one that ripped me apart."

The book by Jack, one of the first police officers at the crime scene, is in the publishing stages.

The triple homicides remained

**"It made me love my children more."**

**JIMMY JACK**  
Who investigated the 1955 murders of Anton and John Schuessler and Robert Peterson

Jack still remembers the desperate look on Malcolm Peterson's face as he pleaded for help in finding his son. Eleanor Schuessler's screams that she would gladly cut off both her arms just to see her only children one more time still echo in Jack's head.

**'They were like angels'**

And Jack's heart still aches for the boys he never met. Anton Schuessler wanted to be a priest, and John Schuessler dreamed of becoming a vet, Jack said. He was sure Robert Peterson would have studied medicine or dentistry.

"They were brilliant little kids," Jack said. "They were so beautiful. They were like angels."

Although the Schuessler boys' parents have asked to be left alone so they can put the past behind them, Jack occasionally talks to their youngest child, Tommy, who was just a toddler when the 26-year-old detective first met the family that fateful fall.

Every 10 years, Jack visits the boys' graves. This year, the anniversary of the Oct. 16, 1955, murders falls on a Sunday, the same day the boys were killed. Jack will be there with three roses.

"I go there and say two prayers and then say goodbye."

Jimmy Jack's upcoming book is about the murders of three Chicago boys. Jack still visits the boys' graves. —RICHARD A. CHAPMAN/SUN-TIMES

unsolved until 1993, when Silas Jayne's former Idle Hours Stable employee Kenneth Hansen was fingered as the man who lured the boys and dumped their bodies in a grassy ditch in Robinson Woods. Hansen's 1995 conviction was overturned, but he was sentenced to 200 to 300 years in prison in a retrial in 2002.

"I was turning somersaults," Jack

said of his reaction to the severe punishment Hansen received.

To this day, Jack can recount details of the Loop theater and every Northwest Side bowling alley the boys visited before they made "their one mistake" — accepting a ride from Hansen as they hitchhiked along Lawrence Avenue near Milwaukee Avenue.

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