

2 Wednesday, July 18, 1979 Philadelphia Daily News ★



# By Pete Dexter

## The Kid and the Worm

Willie (The Worm) Monroe was lying in a white room with cement walls just off one of the tunnels that circle the Spectrum. The only thing moving was his chest, that and the sweat. His eyes were closed, his hands were folded over his stomach. The hands seemed too narrow to belong to a boxer.

He was still wearing his pink monogrammed trunks.

His wife and his mother took turns holding ice on the swelling that covered half his forehead. They had folded the fight programs into fans and were cooling him with those too.

The Worm had just gone 10 rounds with a kid named Curtis Parker, who is not so much a kid as a truck. Then he'd answered questions until the newspaper and radio guys couldn't think of anything else to ask him, and now all there was left to do was rest.

His mother was holding the ice. She stood above him, calm, looking over the damage. Besides what was under the ice bag there was skin missing inside his mouth, a lump near one of his eyes. "How you feelin', Willie?" she said. There wasn't much worry in it, she had seen him fight before.

He reached up and patted her hand.

The fight was billed as a "classic match-up." That sometimes means a puncher against a boxer, sometimes it means a young kid on the way up against an old pro a shade past his prime. Sometimes it means nobody could think of anything else to call it.

In this case, it was the old pro against the kid. Monroe is 30, and came to the fight with

moves and tricks Parker had probably never seen. He came with that and his punch, but without the talent he used to bring.

Parker is 20 and getting better every day. He is quicker than the Worm, he is stronger, he is in better shape. One of the men he fought died after he knocked him out.

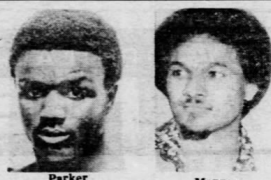
Watching Curtis Parker before the fight, you could see that he knew.

There was nothing cocky about it, but he knew that he would beat Monroe. Maybe he knew that he would beat anybody, at least anybody who weighed 160 pounds. And he knew whatever he did, it would turn out right. He talked about going to college, becoming a lawyer.

"All you got to do is go to church and talk to the old people," he'd said. "They are the ones who enlighten me about the world. No matter how low your job, you are somebody. I like to endeavor in this sport, and pretty soon I'm advancing myself to go to law school."

The Worm, I think, had his doubts. Probably when he was 20 he didn't, but he was 10 years and 47 fights past that. He had been beaten seven times, he had been knocked out. He had been handed bad decisions, he had never had his shot at the title.

I wanted to see him put the kid to sleep. The first round belonged to Parker. He came out throwing punches and he caught Monroe hard two or three times. He followed him into a corner and beat on his arms. Monroe ducked most of it, pushed the kid



Parker

Monroe

off. He fought with his elbows, he put his head into the kid's face.

But Parker kept coming the whole three minutes.

The second round was different. Monroe caught the kid with half a dozen hard left hands flush in the face. When Parker backed him into the ropes, Monroe hit him with left hooks, sometimes two or three, and each one of the hooks seemed to move the kid a step to the right, until Monroe could walk back into the center of the ring.

He staggered Parker with a right hand toward the end of the round, but the kid's corner and refused to sit down on the stool.

He won that round, and I thought he won the next three.

But all the time Parker kept coming, pounding Monroe's arms and shoulders. And at the end of the fifth he caught Monroe hard to the body and then once to the head.

Willie the Worm went back to his corner and asked for his stool.

The rest of the fight was the kid's. Monroe had hit him with his best shots and Parker had kept coming, beating on his arms and shoulders.

Now some of snap was gone from Monroe's left hand and he couldn't keep the kid away with his jab.

By the end of the sixth round, Parker's corner had seen that, and he came out in the seventh throwing vicious body shots.

For the eighth, ninth and 10th, the only question left was what was holding Monroe up. Afterwards he would say, "I only knew if I was goin' down, it wasn't gonna be till after the bell."

The judges didn't give Monroe as many rounds as I did, but nobody there could have wondered if they'd seen a fight. The crowd was still cheering them both five minutes later, and the Worm and the kid made their way back to their rooms with cement walls.

Parker told the reporters he had suffered, that the Worm had courage. The kid's eyes were buried in swollen scar tissue.

"It doesn't matter," he said, "that's only the superficial. I love myself no matter how I look. I love who I am. I love everybody like that, want them to love me for the same thing. I like to endeavor in this sport, which some people think I'm good at it, but I will also advance myself in the future too..."

Down the hallway 30 yards, the reporters had left Willie Monroe's room, and he laid himself back down on the table. He was 20 once, too.

In 10 years since, he had been up and down enough to know that nobody loves you for what you were.

Sometimes — rarely — for what you did, but not for what you were. His mother leans over and presses the ice bag against his forehead. "How you feelin', Willie?" she says.

He reaches up and pats her hand.

Columnist Larry McMullen is on special assignment.

# Reinert Murder Probe: Where Are the Kids?

By JIM NICHOLSON and TOM COONEY

For the first time in weeks, authorities have disclosed new information concerning the murder of Susan Reinert, the Ardmore school teacher and mother whose nude body was found June 25 stuffed in the hatchback of her car in a motel parking lot near Harrisburg.

But the new fact — the approximate time of her death — does more to deepen the mystery surrounding her murder and the disappearance of her two children than to solve it.

**NO CLUES TO** the fate of the children, Karen, 11, and Michael, 10, have been found. They haven't been seen since they and their mother drove away from their home around 9:30 p.m. Friday, June 22.

Dr. William Bush, Dauphin County coroner, said yesterday the 36-year-old woman had been slain between 12:15 a.m. and 6:15 a.m. Sunday, June 24. Police found the body around 5:30 a.m. the next day, shortly after an anonymous telephone message tipped them off.

The time of death, fixed by Bush, is 27.33 hours after Reinert and the children had left their 2½-story twin house on Woodcrest Ave. in Ardmore. Where were they in the meantime, since they'd taken no provisions for staying overnight?

**THE TIME ALSO** is roughly 24-30 hours before the body was found. Police had said earlier that Reinert had not been killed in the car, that her suffocated body had been placed



Susan Reinert; stuffed in car

in it and driven to the parking lot. Was the body on the parking lot for more than a day before its discovery?

The new information also makes even more difficult the biggest question the investigators face:

**Where are the children?** Around 9:15 p.m. June 22, neighbors saw Karen and Michael gathering ballstones left by a storm that had just passed.

About 15 minutes later, the same neighbors say they heard Reinert's Plymouth drive off.

Police speculate now that they left in response to a telephone call, perhaps to fetch a friend to their home. They believe they must have picked up the person who killed Reinert and that they must have known that person.

The petite Reinert had been an

English teacher at Upper Merion High School since 1971.

**AN ACTIVE** member of the Valley Forge chapter of Parents Without Partners, Reinert was to attend a meeting in Allentown Saturday and had hotel reservations for that night for her and the children.

On Wednesday, she had called a PWP official to say a Friday night appointment might make her late for the morning workshop she was to give, and asked that someone fill in for her.

Around 8 p.m. that Friday, Susan, with Karen in the car, stopped in Haverford to pick up Michael, who was playing in a father-son softball game with his father, Kenneth, of Narberth, a senior personnel officer at Fidelity Bank.

**EVERYTHING** in the Ardmore home, which police entered after the body was found, indicated that the family had intended to return to finish getting ready for the trip to Allentown. Neatly folded stacks of the children's clothes were placed beside empty suitcases.

Are there any suspects? Yes, says one source, but nothing firm. Reinert had dated a couple of men since her divorce and may have been thinking of remarrying, but there were no reports of discord with any of her friends or associates.

She apparently had a cordial relationship with her former husband, whom she'd met in college. They were married in 1965, separated in 1974, divorced. (The suit was uncom-



Karen

Michael

State Police are still seeking information on the whereabouts of Karen and Michael Reinert of Ardmore, whose mother, Susan, was found dead in the hatchback of her car June 25 in the parking lot of a Harrisburg motel. Anyone with information about Karen, 11, or Michael, 10, should call the State Police Belmont Barracks at 877-4500.

tested) in 1976. He has since remarried and is the father of a 6-month-old son, but he regularly visited Karen and Michael. He declined to be interviewed.

Harrisburg state troopers arrived at the Belmont Barracks here last week to press a search for clues.

**REINERT'S BROTHER**, W. Patrick Gallagher, of Monroeville, near Pittsburgh, says he clings to the belief the children are still alive. "No reason," he says, "simply the ab-

sence of evidence to the contrary." He's hired a private investigator — Ron Christopher of American Security Command Corp., 20th and Arch Sts. — "not because of any dissatisfaction with the state police, but out of concern for the children."

A Pottstown psychic has said spirits have told her the children are alive and in a state toward the south. But no one has given her any encouragement to pursue her voices. **Where are the children?**