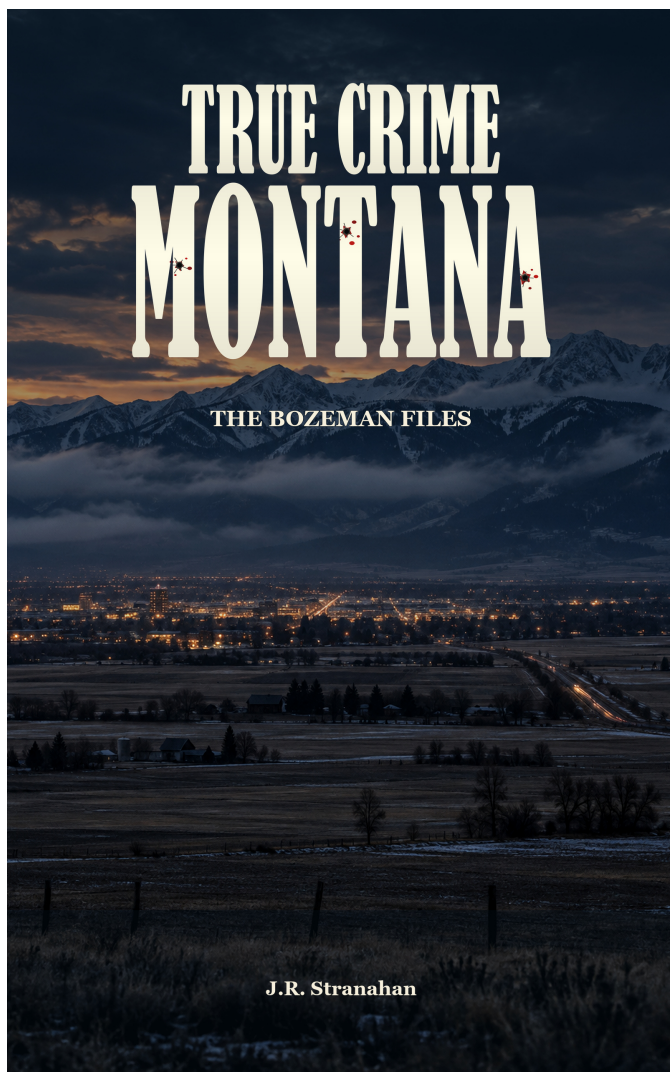




True Crime Montana: The Bozeman Files

J.R. Stranahan

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The Murder of Robert Hare

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File 1: The Murder of Robert Hare

Place and period: Four Corners near Bozeman, 1989-1991

Present legal status: Philip Sadowski was convicted of deliberate homicide and received forty years plus a ten-year weapon enhancement. The Montana Supreme Court affirmed.

This file belongs first to Robert Hare, his family and friends, and the Four Corners community. The public record is necessarily organized around investigation and adjudication, but a criminal case is not the measure of a life. The account uses the available record to describe what happened and how institutions responded, while avoiding invented biography where sources are silent.

The human scale

A group gathered after bar closing at Sadowski's furniture workshop near Four Corners. That fact is the fixed point for this portion of *The Murder of Robert Hare*. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. In Four Corners near Bozeman, later retellings sometimes collapse the investigation and the judgment into one continuous story. The public record does not. It preserves the order in which information appeared and the forum in which it was tested. The present legal posture is stated separately: Philip Sadowski was convicted of deliberate homicide and received forty years plus a ten-year weapon enhancement. The Montana Supreme Court affirmed.

For Robert Hare, his family and friends, and the Four Corners community, the procedural vocabulary cannot be allowed to eclipse consequence. Everyone present had been drinking. The detail belongs here because it changes the chronology, not because it supplies

atmosphere. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. Keeping that boundary visible lets the reader understand both the institutional response and the loss that made the response necessary.

The 1989-1991 record from Four Corners near Bozeman contains a point that resists shorthand: A confused confrontation developed inside the combined shop and residence. The present legal posture is equally specific: Philip Sadowski was convicted of deliberate homicide and received forty years plus a ten-year weapon enhancement. The Montana Supreme Court affirmed. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. One proposition may be established while a neighboring proposition remains disputed. Treating them separately is not hesitation; it is accurate reporting.

A headline can make this episode appear settled in a sentence. The underlying record is narrower. Sadowski shot Robert Hare and claimed justifiable use of force. From there, the inquiry moves through source, timing, corroboration, and legal consequence. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. None of those steps authorizes invented dialogue or a claim about what Robert Hare, his family and friends, and the Four Corners community privately thought.

Location matters in this file. Four Corners near Bozeman determined which agencies, courts, and communities carried the case, while 1989-1991 marks the span over which the public learned it. The appeal examined prior-act evidence, post-arrest silence, and the handling of possible scene evidence. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. The result is a chronology with identifiable custodians rather than a collection of free-floating claims.

This part of the account begins with a modest question: what did the cited source actually establish? Its answer is plain: A group gathered

after bar closing at Sadowski's furniture workshop near Four Corners. The answer does not automatically prove motive, identity, or every charge in the case. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. The remaining status is stated without embellishment: Philip Sadowski was convicted of deliberate homicide and received forty years plus a ten-year weapon enhancement. The Montana Supreme Court affirmed.

The case file gives different kinds of information different weight. Everyone present had been drinking. A contemporaneous observation, a laboratory result, a charging allegation, and an appellate finding do not perform the same job. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. Describing those jobs plainly is especially important when the story concerns Robert Hare, his family and friends, and the Four Corners community.

The first account

By the time *The Murder of Robert Hare* reached public memory, sequence had become easy to lose. Sadowski shot Robert Hare and claimed justifiable use of force. Restoring sequence shows what investigators knew, what prosecutors alleged, what the defense contested, and what a court or jury ultimately resolved. What witnesses reported at the time remains separate from what investigators later inferred. An older headline cannot replace the current status: Philip Sadowski was convicted of deliberate homicide and received forty years plus a ten-year weapon enhancement. The Montana Supreme Court affirmed.

There is no need to enlarge the evidence to make this file serious. The appeal examined prior-act evidence, post-arrest silence, and the handling of possible scene evidence. That proposition is consequential on its own. What witnesses reported at the time remains separate from what investigators later inferred. The account therefore avoids borrowing certainty from unrelated defendants, other jurisdictions, or later cases

that happen to resemble events in Four Corners near Bozeman.

The public record speaks most reliably when attribution travels with the claim. Here is the supported proposition: A group gathered after bar closing at Sadowski's furniture workshop near Four Corners. The source may recount an allegation, summarize trial proof, or state a judgment, and the language must match that function. What witnesses reported at the time remains separate from what investigators later inferred. That practice protects the accuracy of the case and the dignity of Robert Hare, his family and friends, and the Four Corners community at the same time.

At this stage of the file, absence is also information. The available materials establish this much: Everyone present had been drinking. They do not establish every rumor that accumulated during 1989-1991. What witnesses reported at the time remains separate from what investigators later inferred. Refusing to bridge those gaps with speculation keeps the unresolved portions visible instead of disguising them as narrative momentum.

Consider the detail in its proper scale: A confused confrontation developed inside the combined shop and residence. It is neither disposable nor self-executing. Its force depends on where it sits among the other records from Four Corners near Bozeman. What witnesses reported at the time remains separate from what investigators later inferred. A measured account can explain that relationship without turning legal caution into a repetitive disclaimer.

The language of this chapter changes when the legal posture changes. Sadowski shot Robert Hare and claimed justifiable use of force. If the proposition came from an accusation, it remains attributed; if it survived adjudication, the judgment is named; if review altered the result, the alteration is carried forward. What witnesses reported at the time remains separate from what investigators later inferred. The controlling endpoint is recorded separately: Philip Sadowski was convicted of deliberate homicide and received forty years plus a ten-year weapon

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Building a chronology

The most useful context is the context that changes interpretation. Everyone present had been drinking. In the Four Corners near Bozeman record, that detail helps explain why a particular investigative or legal step followed. Dates and sequence preserve the difference between early uncertainty and later knowledge. General crime lore would add volume but not understanding, so it is left outside the account.

The end of a proceeding is not always the end of a case's public life. A confused confrontation developed inside the combined shop and residence. Families, institutions, and communities continued to live with the result after 1989-1991. Dates and sequence preserve the difference between early uncertainty and later knowledge. The legal status is reported in its own terms: Philip Sadowski was convicted of deliberate homicide and received forty years plus a ten-year weapon enhancement. The Montana Supreme Court affirmed. It does not imply that every question or consequence disappeared.

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Physical evidence

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Witness evidence

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Digital and documentary trails

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Charging choices

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The courtroom

What happened to Robert Hare, his family and friends, and the Four Corners community generated records made for different audiences: investigators, lawyers, judges, jurors, officials, and the public. Everyone present had been drinking. Those records overlap, but they are not interchangeable. A trial tests admissible proof under defined rules and does not recreate every event or rumor surrounding a case. Reading across them carefully prevents a later summary from erasing an earlier uncertainty or a later reversal.

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Appeal and review

A headline can make this episode appear settled in a sentence. The underlying record is narrower. The appeal examined prior-act evidence, post-arrest silence, and the handling of possible scene evidence. From there, the inquiry moves through source, timing, corroboration, and legal consequence. Appellate review addresses claimed legal error on a fixed record rather than conducting a second trial. None of those steps authorizes invented dialogue or a claim about what Robert Hare, his family and friends, and the Four Corners community privately thought.

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Status at manuscript lock

The controlling status for this account is: Philip Sadowski was convicted of deliberate homicide and received forty years plus a ten-year weapon enhancement. The Montana Supreme Court affirmed. That sentence is deliberately narrower than a television summary. It does not merge co-defendants, convert accusations into findings, or imply that an appeal erased a human death. Later proceedings may change the legal posture, but they should not be projected backward onto the record described here.

Sources from the edition

The Murder of Robert Hare

- Montana Supreme Court, State v. Sadowski: <https://law.justia.com/cases/montana/supreme-court/1991/e559f786-23cb-4dcf-bd8f-667d35afa966.html>

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