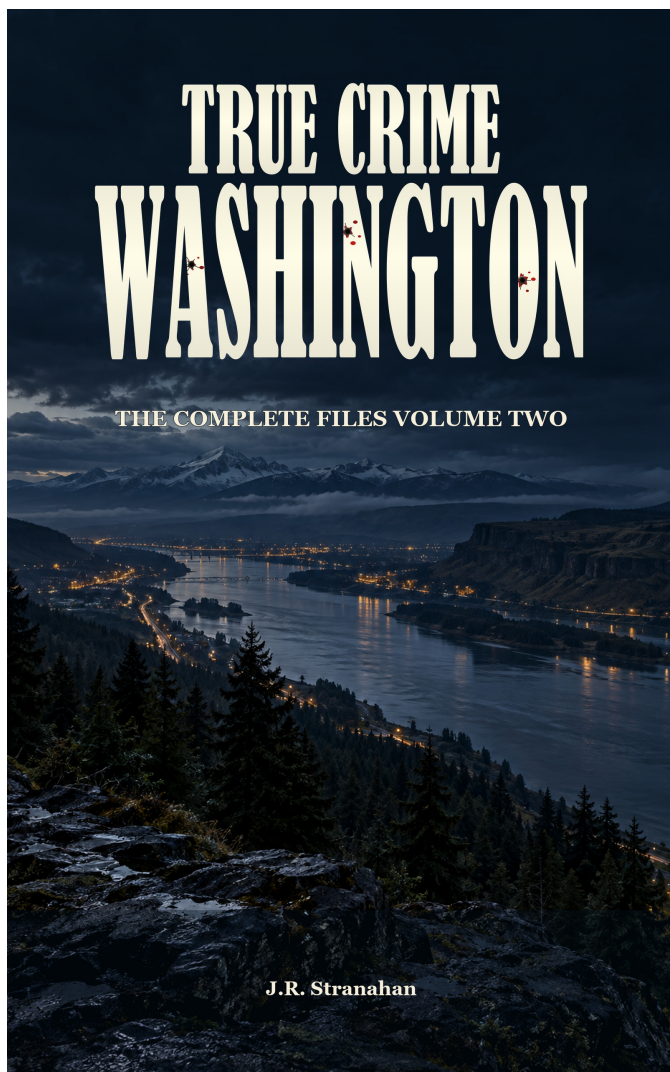




True Crime Washington: The Complete Files, Volume Two

J.R. Stranahan

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The Murders of Cole Neer, Billy Neer, and Lee Iseli

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File 1: The Murders of Cole Neer, Billy Neer, and Lee Iseli

Place and period: Vancouver, Camas, and Clark County, 1989-1993

Present legal status: Westley Allan Dodd pleaded guilty to three counts of aggravated first-degree murder. The Washington Supreme Court completed mandatory sentence review, and Dodd was executed in 1993.

This file belongs first to Cole Neer, Billy Neer, Lee Iseli, their families, and children in southwest Washington. 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

Cole and Billy Neer were found in Vancouver's David Douglas Park in September 1989. That fact is the fixed point for this portion of The Murders of Cole Neer, Billy Neer, and Lee Iseli. The account keeps the people harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community consequences in view. In Vancouver, Camas, and Clark County, 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: Westley Allan Dodd pleaded guilty to three counts of aggravated first-degree murder. The Washington Supreme Court completed mandatory sentence review, and Dodd was executed in 1993.

For Cole Neer, Billy Neer, Lee Iseli, their families, and children in southwest Washington, the procedural vocabulary cannot be allowed to

eclipse consequence. Four-year-old Lee Iseli was found near Vancouver Lake in November. 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 1989-1993 record from Vancouver, Camas, and Clark County contains a point that resists shorthand: A child escaped an attempted abduction in Camas and Dodd was arrested. The present legal posture is equally specific: Westley Allan Dodd pleaded guilty to three counts of aggravated first-degree murder. The Washington Supreme Court completed mandatory sentence review, and Dodd was executed in 1993. 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. The investigation joined Vancouver, Clark County, and Portland agencies. 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 Cole Neer, Billy Neer, Lee Iseli, their families, and children in southwest Washington privately thought.

Location matters in this file. Vancouver, Camas, and Clark County determined which agencies, courts, and communities carried the case, while 1989-1993 marks the span over which the public learned it. Dodd entered guilty pleas and sought to waive ordinary appellate review. 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: Cole and Billy Neer were found in Vancouver's David Douglas Park in September 1989. 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: Westley Allan Dodd pleaded guilty to three counts of aggravated first-degree murder. The Washington Supreme Court completed mandatory sentence review, and Dodd was executed in 1993.

The case file gives different kinds of information different weight. Four-year-old Lee Iseli was found near Vancouver Lake in November. 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 Cole Neer, Billy Neer, Lee Iseli, their families, and children in southwest Washington.

The first account

By the time *The Murders of Cole Neer, Billy Neer, and Lee Iseli* reached public memory, sequence had become easy to lose. The investigation joined Vancouver, Clark County, and Portland agencies. 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: Westley Allan Dodd pleaded guilty to three counts of aggravated first-degree murder. The Washington Supreme Court completed mandatory sentence review, and Dodd was executed in 1993.

There is no need to enlarge the evidence to make this file serious. Dodd entered guilty pleas and sought to waive ordinary appellate review. 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 Vancouver, Camas, and Clark County.

The public record speaks most reliably when attribution travels with the claim. Here is the supported proposition: Cole and Billy Neer were found in Vancouver's David Douglas Park in September 1989. 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 Cole Neer, Billy Neer, Lee Iseli, their families, and children in southwest Washington at the same time.

At this stage of the file, absence is also information. The available materials establish this much: Four-year-old Lee Iseli was found near Vancouver Lake in November. They do not establish every rumor that accumulated during 1989-1993. 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 child escaped an attempted abduction in Camas and Dodd was arrested. It is neither disposable nor self-executing. Its force depends on where it sits among the other records from Vancouver, Camas, and Clark County. 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.

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Building a chronology

The most useful context is the context that changes interpretation. Four-year-old Lee Iseli was found near Vancouver Lake in November. In the Vancouver, Camas, and Clark County 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.

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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 Cole Neer, Billy Neer, Lee Iseli, their families, and children in southwest Washington generated records made for different audiences: investigators, lawyers, judges, jurors, officials, and the public. Four-year-old Lee Iseli was found near Vancouver Lake in November. 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.

The most useful context is the context that changes interpretation. A child escaped an attempted abduction in Camas and Dodd was arrested. In the Vancouver, Camas, and Clark County record, that detail helps explain why a particular investigative or legal step followed. A trial tests admissible proof under defined rules and does not recreate every event or rumor surrounding a case. General crime lore would add volume but not understanding, so it is left outside the account.

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Appeal and review

A headline can make this episode appear settled in a sentence. The underlying record is narrower. Dodd entered guilty pleas and sought to waive ordinary appellate review. 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 Cole Neer, Billy Neer, Lee Iseli, their families, and children in southwest Washington privately thought.

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Location matters in this file. Vancouver, Camas, and Clark County determined which agencies, courts, and communities carried the case, while 1989-1993 marks the span over which the public learned it. Cole and Billy Neer were found in Vancouver's David Douglas Park in September 1989. Police, prosecutors, defense counsel, courts, laboratories, journalists, and families occupy different roles in the record. The result is a chronology with identifiable custodians rather than a collection of free-floating claims.

Status at manuscript lock

The controlling status for this account is: Westley Allan Dodd pleaded guilty to three counts of aggravated first-degree murder. The Washington Supreme Court completed mandatory sentence review, and Dodd was executed in 1993. 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 Murders of Cole Neer, Billy Neer, and Lee Iseli

- Washington Supreme Court, State v. Dodd: <https://law.justia.com/cases/washington/supreme-court/1992/57414-6-1.html>

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