

DAY IN COURT

"We found cryptic notes in his home about other possible crimes," says Det. Derek Mois of Garcia (in court in September). "He wasn't done."

SERIAL KILLER DOCTOR

DEADLY REVENGE

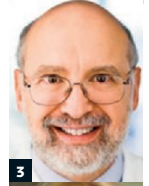
After being fired from a residency program at Creighton University School of Medicine, Dr. Anthony Garcia is convicted of murdering 4 innocent victims in a twisted plot of vengeance

By CHRISTINE PELISEK



The murders were as baffling as they were brutal. Sometime after 3:30 on the afternoon of March 13, 2008, someone had entered the Omaha home of prominent Creighton University physician William Hunter and savagely stabbed to death his youngest son, Thomas, 11, along with the family's housekeeper Shirlee Sherman, 57. "It was strange," recalls Omaha police department homicide detective Derek Mois. "There was nothing gone from the house. It wasn't ransacked. There didn't appear to be a motive." As time passed with no new evidence appearing, the case eventually went cold. Then five years later, on May 14, 2013, police discovered the bodies of Dr. Roger Brumback and his wife, Mary, both 65, in their West Omaha home. Roger, the former chair of Creighton's Department of Pathology, had been shot three times and stabbed six times; Mary had been stabbed more than 20 times. And as with the 2008 murders, the killer had left behind a grisly signature: The victims had had a kitchen knife plunged into the right side of their necks, severing their carotid arteries and jugular veins. "It was eerie," says Mois. "It told us that whoever did this knows anatomy. It was methodical. It wasn't an act of rage."

Instead it seems it was an act of revenge. Two months after the Brumback murders, police arrested Anthony



THE VICTIMS

1. Shirlee Sherman, 57, worked for the Hunter family.
2. Thomas Hunter, 11, "loved video games," says his brother Tim.
3. Dr. Roger Brumback, 65, founded the *Journal of Child Neurology*.
4. Mary Brumback, 65, was a retired attorney.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: MATT MILLER/THE OMAHA WORLD-HERALD; KENT SEIVERS/THE OMAHA WORLD-HERALD; COURTESY DOUGLAS COUNTY ATTORNEY (4)



SPITE & MALICE
Garcia's home (left) was in foreclosure, and he hadn't worked since 2013. "For him, it was a termination that wouldn't go away," says prosecutor Don Kleine.



Thomas's brother Tim. "He wanted to cause anguish more than just simply take out the person who caused him trouble. I think he wanted to inflict more pain than that."

'[DR. GARCIA] COULDN'T LET A GRUDGE GO. IT FESTERED, AND HE BECAME OBSESSED. IT'S A PATHETIC JUSTIFICATION FOR MURDER.'
—TIM HUNTER, BROTHER OF 11-YEAR-OLD VICTIM THOMAS

Even after Garcia's conviction, friends say they are baffled by how the once-promising University of Utah medical school graduate could wind up a cold-blooded killer. "The person I knew was polite and easygoing and got along well with everyone," says Garcia's former University of Utah classmate Dr. Steve Lore. "He was not some kind of weirdo sticking dead animal heads on sticks in his backyard,"

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: LEFT: BOB POINTEUR/TERRANCE STARAP; MATT HANNING/AP; JEFF BEEBMAN/THE OMAHA WORLD-HERALD; COURTESY DOUGLAS COUNTY ATTORNEY(S)

adds Garcia's defense attorney Bob Motta Jr. "He played football for all four years of high school. He dated girls and was a completely normal guy."

But there were signs of trouble. Even before he came to Creighton in 2000, Garcia had been forced to resign from a residency program at Bassett-St. Elizabeth in Utica, N.Y., for behavior issues. His 2001 termination from Creighton came after a botched autopsy and reports of multiple complaints of inappropriate behavior, including trying to sabotage a fellow resident's exam performance. "He called the guy's wife and said, 'Your husband was supposed to work tonight at Creighton, and he needs to drop what he is doing and get to work,'" says Mois. "He wanted to derail him taking the exam."

Authorities believe Garcia finally snapped in February 2008, when he was fired from a Louisiana State University residency program for having failed to disclose his termination at Creighton. LSU officials had confirmed his dismissal with William Hunter. Two weeks later, they say, Garcia drove to the Hunter home, where sixth grader Thomas was playing video games on his Xbox in the basement. After killing the boy, he murdered housekeeper Sherman near the back stairs. "My mom was in the wrong place at the wrong time," says Sherman's son Jeff.

But Garcia's employment problems continued as he moved from Walnut, Calif., to Shreveport, La., to Chicago to Terre Haute, Ind. On May 12, 2013, authorities say, Garcia also allegedly attempted a break-in at the Omaha home where Dr. Chhanda Bewtra, another Creighton pathologist, lived with her husband, but an alarm scared him away. Shortly afterward, records show, he used his cellphone to search for Roger Brumback's address. Police believe he confronted Brumback at the front door, then murdered his wife in the couple's living room. "They were both wonderful,



HONORING THOMAS
The Creighton Cardiac Center's statue of victim Thomas Hunter was unveiled in 2010; his parents, William and Claire, are doctors there.

useful people," says Brumback family friend Dr. E. Steve Roach. "Their whole lives they helped other people. They certainly did not deserve this."

Now with Garcia behind bars, the victims' families are still trying to make sense of the tragedy. "To this day I still can't understand how somebody can just do that to another human being over a job," says Sherman's son Jeff, who attended every day of the four-week trial. "It's evil. He had a medical degree. He could have used that degree to pursue something else in medicine." The Hunters too have struggled as they grieve. Garcia's conviction "provides some closure," says Tim Hunter, "but I'm not sure if it gives me much in the way of satisfaction. Obviously there are people who can't let go of a grudge. But it is kind of a sad reason for murder."

—With reporting by Elaine Aradillas and Harriet Sokmensuer

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Timeline: A Doctor's Lethal Plan

JUNE 2001
Dr. William Hunter and Dr. Roger Brumback fire Garcia from the pathology residency program at Creighton University School of Medicine after he tries to interfere with a colleague who is taking a medical license exam.



FEB. 26, 2008
Garcia is tossed out of a residency program at Louisiana State University after he fails to reveal his termination from Creighton. Hunter verifies his termination to LSU staffers and the reason behind the dismissal.

MARCH 13, 2008
Hunter discovers the bodies of 11-year-old Thomas Hunter and the family's house cleaner Shirlee Sherman, 57. Both are found with knives sticking out of the right side of their necks.

SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2012
Garcia applies for a medical license in Indiana. The Indiana Medical Licensing Board asks Creighton to verify Garcia's former employment. Brumback discloses to the board that Garcia was dismissed because of "unprofessional behavior." Garcia is denied the license.



MAY 12, 2013
Garcia allegedly attempts to break into the home of Creighton University pathologist Dr. Chhanda Bewtra but gets scared off after the alarm system is activated. Bewtra and her family are not home at the time.

MAY 14, 2013
The bodies of Garcia's former colleague Brumback and his wife, Mary, are found in their West Omaha home. Police believe they were killed on May 12, after Garcia's failed break-in attempt at Bewtra's home.



JULY 15, 2013
Garcia is arrested on suspicion of four counts of murder. He is found with a .45-cal. handgun and a box of bullets.

OCTOBER 2016
A jury finds Garcia guilty of the first-degree murders of Hunter, Sherman and the Brumbacks. He is also convicted of four counts of use of a deadly weapon and one count of attempted burglary.