

The Fascinating Blonde Dolly

- Molly Quell discusses the life and death of Sebilla Niemans

Sebilla Alida Johanna Niemans, more famously known as Blonde Dolly, was born in Amsterdam on 27 September 1927 to a shoemaker and his wife. Soon after her birth, her mother had to be institutionalised. Social services declared her father's home unfit and removed Niemans and her brother to a children's home. During WWII, the home was annexed by the Germans to be used as a brothel and the children were sent back to live with their father.

In her teens, Niemans had difficulty adjusting to her stepmother and ran away from home. She held a series of odd jobs until she found work as a fortune-teller. Niemans shared her working space with several prostitutes and was introduced to their pimp. The pimp, who Niemans began to work for, claimed that he was in love with her. In 1944, police raided the organisation and the then seventeen-year-old Niemans was sent back into the custody of her father.

In 1948, she moved from Amsterdam to The Hague where she rented a window in the red-light district. During that period, her hair was coloured black and she received the nickname 'Black Molly'. She then later dyed her hair blonde and 'Blonde Dolly' was born.

Later, Niemans quit prostitution as she had met and married Botto van den Bergh, a violinist with The Hague Residential Orchestra. At forty-seven he was twenty-four years her senior. However, the marriage did not last and they divorced in 1951.

After her divorce, she became an escort and her clients included members of the parliament, senior military officers, and diplomats. The contents of her 'little black book' would have caused a considerable stir.

On 2 November 1959, workmen heard the cries of Niemans' pet dog and alerted the police. They found Niemans strangled in her bed.

Robbery was not the motive since 550 gold sovereigns were found in her bedroom. Many assumed that the



murder was related to Niemans' connections to the senior military officers and politicians that she had as clients. Hans Gualthérie van Weezel, son of Jan Gualthérie van Weezel who was serving as chief of police of The Hague during the murder, has claimed that his father knew the identity of the killer but refused to divulge that information. The younger van Weezel alleges that the killer could not be revealed without embarrassing a great number of important people and that his father was unwilling to do so.

In 1977, the police closed the case without any official resolution.

Recently, the Dutch journalist Casper Postmaa identified Niemans' bodyguard, Gerard van Wurgde as the murderer. In his book, *Napels Zien*, Postmaa claimed that van Wurgde murdered Niemans because she would not reciprocate his love. Van Wurgde, who is still alive, refused to comment on the case ●