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AS KILLER DENIED PAROLE

EXCLUSIVE
BY ANDY GARDNER

THE abduction and murder of elderly anti-nuclear campaigner Hilda Murrell sparked a Cold War whodunnit that gripped the nation.

The 78-year-old's body was found in a forest after she was snatched from her home in 1984 as she prepared a blistering attack on the British nuclear industry and the UK's nuclear deterrent.

The Cambridge graduate had friends in high places – she grew roses for the Queen Mother and her nephew was an intelligence chief in the Falklands War.

Yet it took 21 years to try someone for her murder, in a case that has spawned books, plays and films.

But the conviction that followed is still mired in controversy – with even Hilda's nephew Robert Green, a former Royal Navy Commander, insisting it is unsafe.

Labourer Andrew George was sentenced in 2005 to life for her murder, with a minimum term of 15 years.

Just 16 at the time of the killing, he lived in a children's home close to Hilda's house in Shrewsbury, Wilts. Now 54, he has always denied the crime.

REJECTED

The Sunday Mirror can reveal that his second application to be freed on parole was rejected last month.

Bizarrely, George's biggest supporters are Hilda's nephew Robert, 78, and his wife Dr Kate Dewes, 69.

They have spent nearly two decades claiming that George is the victim of a State-inspired miscarriage of justice.

Robert even wrote to the Parole Board to support George's application for release on licence. Rather than a random killing, he believes his own clandestine career played a part in his aunt's death.

As a high-ranking intelligence officer, he provided crucial details about the Argentine cruiser General Belgrano during the Falklands War in 1982.

It was sunk by the British submarine HMS Conqueror, with the loss of 323 sailors, while 54 miles outside the islands' exclusion zone.

The decision to torpedo the vessel remains controversial 40 years later.

Robert believes his aunt was killed because the security services suspected he had hidden secret papers about the Belgrano with her.

Hilda, believed to have worked at ultra-secret Bletchley Park in the Second World War, may also have known of other State secrets.

At the time of her death she had been preparing to present a damning report on the planned Sizewell B nuclear power plant in Suffolk. Hilda believed the UK had problems with radioactive waste disposal that would make nuclear energy extremely dangerous.

Speaking from his home in New Zealand, Robert told the Sunday Mirror: "I'm outraged the Parole Board decided Andrew George is not to be released."

"In my book *A Thorn in Their Side*, I document why he could not have abducted, let alone murdered her.

"It reveals alternative DNA, including under her fingernails and from semen on her cardigan, and other key evidence not presented at his trial. It would have

Why I believe my anti-nuke aunt died at the hands of British spies



SIZEWELL B
Controversial nuclear plant plan



THE WARSHIP
Belgrano was sunk in Falklands War

established 'reasonable doubt' for the jury." George will now have to wait two years before he can apply again.

The hunt by West Mercia Police to find Hilda's killer failed to identify a suspect for nearly two decades.

In this void, alternative theories evolved – including blaming British secret agents and rogue elements in the nuclear industry. The most high-profile allegation came in December

1984, when Labour MP Tam Dalyell

claimed Hilda had been killed by "men of British intelligence" who he said were looking for documents concerning the General Belgrano.

The investigation stalled until 2003 – when a cold case review using previously unavailable DNA techniques led police to Andrew George.

His DNA had been found at Hilda's home after she disappeared on March 21, 1984, in broad daylight.

George, by now aged 37,

was found guilty of murder at Stafford Crown Court in May 2005. He was also convicted of kidnapping and sexually assaulting Hilda.

He admitted breaking into the house – but maintained that other people had carried out the killing.

Judge Mr Justice Wakerley said Hilda's last hours had been truly awful.

The court was told George had tied her to banisters with an ironing board cover and sexually assaulted her.

She was then stabbed three times and bundled into her own car, which was found crashed six miles away.

Finally she was stabbed again and dumped by a tree. A pathologist said she died of hypothermia.

Richard Latham, prosecuting, said at



NEPHEW
Robert blames Brit spies

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