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Plots, Shots, and Liberal Thoughts: Conspiracy Theory and the Death of Ginger Goodwin

Mark Leier

CANADIANS IN THE LEFT and labour movements have been as fascinated by the events surrounding the death of Albert "Ginger" Goodwin in 1918 as Americans have been with those around the assassination of John F. Kennedy. In both cases the official explanation has been attacked by critics who reject the "lone gunman" theory in favour of conspiracies that reach to the highest levels of government and capital. No documents, witnesses, or verifiable testimony of a conspiracy exist in either instance. Instead theorists reinterpret forensic evidence to make the case.

In the case of Kennedy, conspiracy theorists make two forensic claims to support their case for more than one shooter. The first is that a single bullet could not have caused damage to the president and to Texas Governor John Connally and remain nearly intact. The second is that the movement of Kennedy's head after the second shot — back and to the left — indicates he was shot from the front. Both claims are mistaken, and there remains no other hard evidence to support the suggestion that Kennedy was the victim of a conspiracy.[1]

Forensic evidence has been used in a similar fashion to argue that Ginger Goodwin was killed on orders of the federal government and capital. Immediately

[1]See Michael M. Baden and Judith A. Hennesee, *Unnatural Death: Confessions of a Medical Examiner* (New York 1990). Baden is the former medical examiner for New York City and a member of the US House Select Committee on Assassinations. Alexander Cockburn, "Beat the Devil," in *The Nation*, 6/13 January 1992, 9 March 1992, and the "Letters" section of 18 May 1992. For the experiments demonstrating that a shot from behind would in fact push a victim's head forward, see Luis W. Alvarez, *American Journal of Physics*, 44, 9 (September 1976). The magicians Penn and Teller repeated some of the experiments and report identical results in their book, *How to Play with Your Food* (New York 1992).

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following Goodwin's death, people in the left and labour movement questioned the official account. The rumours and doubt of the official story continue to this day. Unlike the Kennedy assassination, no one has debated who killed Goodwin. Instead, the mystery and myths have surrounded the circumstances in which the homicide took place. The general story is well known. Albert "Ginger" Goodwin was born in Yorkshire, England, on 10 May 1887. The son of a coal miner, Goodwin started in the pits in 1902. Four years later, he emigrated to Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, where he worked as a miner for the Dominion Coal Company. He took part in the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) coal strike of 1909-1910, and moved to Cumberland, BC by early 1911. There he went to work for Canadian Collieries, formerly owned by Robert Dunsmuir and his family. Goodwin was active in the UMWA and the 1912-14 strike against Canadian Collieries, served as delegate to the BC Federation of Labour, and was an organizer for the Socialist Party of Canada (SPC). Blacklisted after the strike, he went to Trail, BC, and worked in the Cominco smelter there. He organized for the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers (Mine-Mill), and was elected secretary of the local as well as regional vice president of the BC Federation of Labour. A provincial candidate for the SPC in 1916, Goodwin was an outspoken opponent of Canada's involvement in World War I. Initially exempt from conscription because of ill health, he was later reclassified as fit for service and ordered to report for duty. Like many others, he refused and took to the bush to avoid fighting in a war he considered unjust.

The federal government sent police after Goodwin and other resisters. On 27 July 1918, Dominion Police Special Constable Dan Campbell encountered Goodwin near Cumberland, BC, on Vancouver Island. According to his version of the events, Campbell and Goodwin surprised each other in the bush. Both were carrying rifles. Campbell ordered Goodwin to surrender. Instead, Goodwin raised his rifle and Campbell shot him in self-defence. Controversy immediately swirled around this account. Many did not believe Campbell's story, and he was charged with manslaughter. A grand jury, however, determined that there was not enough evidence to bring Campbell to trial, and he was set free.

Goodwin's death enraged the province's labour movement. In Vancouver, a one-day general strike was held on 2 August 1918, while thousands attended his funeral in Cumberland. Many believed that Goodwin's death could not have been the result of accident or self-defence. From the beginning, rumours and hints of conspiracy and intrigue have surrounded the case.

The conspiracy theory has most recently been aired by writer Susan Mayse in a play, radio shows, and her book *Ginger: The Life and Death of Albert Goodwin.* Mayse has done an admirable job of compiling all the records, interviews, testimony, and other material about Goodwin. While admitting that there is no evidence to support a conspiracy theory, she nonetheless proposes that the forensic evidence strongly indicates that Campbell lied and that he was acting under special military orders to kill Goodwin. Such orders, she suggests, may well have come from the

federal government at the instigation of the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company, whose workers Goodwin had tried to organize at its Trail smelter in 1917-18.[2]

The case for conspiracy hinges on three claims that dispute the official verdict of self-defence and justifiable homicide.[3] Each, if true, suggests conspiracy and intrigue; together, the argument goes, they practically confirm it. The first claim is that Goodwin was shot in the back. This would prove that Campbell had lied and had not shot in self-defence. If true, this would also suggest that Campbell had ambushed Goodwin and had no intention of arresting him and bringing him to trial. The second is that Goodwin was shot with a soft-nosed, or "dumdum" bullet rather than a steel-jacketed military bullet. The contention is that this type of bullet is more deadly than the military bullet and was selected by Campbell to ensure his victim would be killed. The third claim is that Goodwin was not shot from a distance of three to five yards but from a distance of a few feet. If true, this would again suggest that Campbell had waited in ambush, got the drop on Goodwin, and killed him from this vantage point. Each of these claims strongly indicates premeditated murder, rather than self-defence. If Campbell did set out to murder Goodwin, presumably he did so under orders and not on his own initiative, and these orders from higher-up would constitute conspiracy. Since there is no record, testimony, or document that even hints at such a conspiracy, the interpretation of the forensic evidence and the inferences drawn from it constitute the only proof of a plot to get Goodwin. Without them, there is no reason to believe in a conspiracy save suspicion or paranoia.

How well do these three forensic claims stand up to investigation? The first, and most easily dismissed, is the allegation that Goodwin was shot in the back. The location of the entrance wound on the side of the neck makes it clear that Goodwin was not shot from behind.[4] There was no exit wound, but the damage to the neck and spinal column may account for the rumour that Goodwin had been shot from behind. Mayse argues, more plausibly, that Goodwin was shot from the side, but that this too is proof of an ambush.[5] This argument, however, is too weak to stand up. First, the location and path of a bullet wound offers no definitive proof of the relative position of shooter and victim. It is not always possible for forensic

[2]Susan Mayse, *Ginger: The Life and Death of Albert Goodwin* (Madeira Park, BC 1990). Here Mayse plays down the conspiracy theory somewhat. It emerges more strongly in her radio documentary *A Worker's Friend: The Shooting of Ginger Goodwin*, aired on the CBC May 1989, and her stage play, *Yours in Revolt*.

[3]Mayse also suggests other evidence, such as the mishandling of evidence, conflicting testimony, unasked questions, and the like indicate a possible conspiracy. I believe none of these is proof of anything save perhaps incompetence and confusion. See *Ginger*, 189-99.

[4]It is of course possible that the autopsy reports were faked. No one has ever made this claim, however, and conspiracy theorists use the very evidence of the reports for their arguments. If we reject the entire reports, we are left with no evidence of conspiracy.

[5]*Ginger*, 169-70, 195.

pathologists to reconstruct the positions of victim and assailant from the wound alone. Too many different scenarios may explain the physical evidence equally well. For example, the two may not have met precisely face to face as they came upon each other in the sloped, rugged bush country. Campbell might have been in front of Goodwin, but slightly off to one side. They may well have met face to face, with Goodwin stumbling in surprise. He might have turned his head, or moved, to swing his rifle into position or to flee. There are many explanations for the location of his wounds and thus it is impossible to know the relative position of the two men. Reconstructing the positions of the two men is even more difficult in this case because the bullet struck something, probably Goodwin's wrist, before it caused the fatal wound. When it struck the wrist, it fragmented and the two pieces of the bullet went in different directions. This alone makes it difficult to determine the relative position of shooter and victim, since the bullet was deflected from its original trajectory. The claim that Goodwin was shot by someone off to the side cannot be inferred from the entry point and path of the bullet.[6]

Nor is it precise to maintain that Goodwin was shot in the side of the neck, if by that we mean the area of the neck directly below the ear when the head faces forward. The smaller fragment of the ricocheting bullet, about one-fifth of the total mass, entered on the left side of the neck, over the trapezius muscle where the neck joins the shoulder, and lodged under the right shoulder. The larger fragment of the bullet, about four-fifths of it, which was the cause of death, struck Goodwin at the anterior triangle, anterior to the sterno mastoid muscle. That is, the wound was in front of the sterno mastoid, or more correctly, the sternocleidomastoid, muscle. This muscle runs from just under the ear to the sternum and the clavicle. It may be found by pressing the forehead against the palm of the hand and tracing the flexed muscle. The muscle runs forward and attaches to the clavicle roughly under the ear and to the sternum by the hollow of the throat. The anterior triangle, where the wound was found, is in front of this muscle. This region is an isosceles triangle with the base running under the jaw from near the chin to the hinge of the jaw, one side following the sternocleidomastoid from the hinge down to the side of the hollow of the throat, and the other side rising up the throat from that point to the underside of the jaw, about an inch back from the point of the chin.[7] This is a large area that ranges from the side of the neck to the front of the throat. We simply do not know precisely where in this triangle the bullet struck. It may be more accurate to say that it hit the front of the neck, the side of the throat, even the front of the

[6]A. Fatteh, in *Medico-Legal Investigation of Gunshot Wounds* (Philadelphia 1976), maintains that it may be possible to determine the positions of victim and shooter from the wound — and it may not.

[7]I am grateful to Adam Waldie, M.D., for the anatomy lesson. Andrew Waldie, father of Dr. Waldie and Jim Waldie, knew Ginger Goodwin in Trail and is quoted extensively by Mayse regarding Goodwin's activities there. Mayse cites Harold Banks who in one instance locates the wound in the neck and later in the throat. See Mayse, 170.

throat. Mayse herself quotes a witness who described the entry wound as being in the throat. If we cannot place the wound accurately, we can draw no conclusions about the placement of Campbell from the autopsy records. Given that Goodwin may have turned, that the bullet was deflected and fragmented, and that the wound may have been located further forward than the side of the neck, there is nothing to substantiate the suspicion that Goodwin was shot from an ambush off to the back or the side.

The second charge of conspiracy theorists is that Goodwin was shot with a dumdum bullet, that is, a bullet designed to expand or mushroom on impact and create wounds more deadly than those of a military bullet. According to the theory, use of this type of bullet indicates Campbell's murderous intent. Certainly Goodwin's wounds were grievous and deadly. The entry wound was large enough for the examining doctor to insert two fingers. This large entry wound, according to doctors and Mayse, was the result of the bullet striking something before it hit Goodwin in the throat. When it struck, the bullet fragmented. The larger piece did not strike Goodwin nose first but sideways or on an angle. This part of the bullet passed through soft tissue and shattered the third and fourth cervical vertebrae into minute pieces, severed the spinal cord, and lodged behind the acromic-clavicular articulation, that is, where the collarbone joins the shoulder. It is this massive damage that has led many to think a dumdum bullet was used.

Technically, Goodwin could not have been killed by a dumdum bullet. These .303 calibre, soft-nosed centre-fire rifle bullets were manufactured for the British Army in Dum-Dum, India, near Calcutta, from about 1891 until they were outlawed at the Hague Conferences of 1897 and 1907. The soft nose was designed to expand upon hitting the target and the larger "mushroomed" slug would cause greater wounds than the original size and shape. Real dumdums would not likely be available to a policeman in Canada in 1918, and would not fit Campbell's .30 calibre, non-military Marlin rifle. Similar effects, however, may be created by other kinds of bullets. Bullets may roughly be divided into three types: fully jacketed, unjacketed, and partially jacketed. Military bullets have a full jacket. That is, a very thin layer of a hard metal coats the entire soft lead core of the bullet. This tends to prevent the bullet from breaking up on impact, and increases the chance the bullet will pass through the body. Unjacketed bullets have no such coating, but their use is generally restricted to handguns, for they tend to melt or break up at the greater speeds reached by rifle bullets. Partially-jacketed bullets have a coating, but not over the entire slug. These bullets are used for hunting and are sometimes referred to as soft-nosed bullets. Mayse and others have made much of the fact that Campbell used a bullet of this type rather than the steel-jacketed bullet used by the military.

They are wrong, however, to suggest that the type of bullet is evidence of conspiracy and intent to kill. Dumdum bullets were designed for use against native populations in British colonies. Believing their foes to be less evolved and thus

more able to absorb pain and punishment, the British sought ways to increase the damage caused by their bullets. There is no evidence, however, that the soft nose did more harm than standard military ammunition. It is a mistake to assume that dumdum bullets or partially jacketed bullets cause wounds more deadly or incapacitating than full-jacketed, military bullets. The thin jacketing does not always prevent the military bullet from breaking up and causing great harm. The famous British forensic pathologist, Sir Sydney Smith, recounts an episode in which a sentry fired a single military bullet at a car that passed by him. The bullet fragmented and caused so much damage to the vehicle and its occupants that the authorities first believed a machine-gunner had hit them with several shots.[8] All high-velocity weapons, by which is usually meant those with a muzzle velocity over 1,000 feet per second and including virtually all hunting rifles, cause terrible wounds regardless of the type of bullet used. Jacketed bullets cause a high degree of cavitation when they strike and the wounds are described as having an explosive appearance that are identical to the wounds caused by so-called dumdum bullets or partially-jacketed bullets. Forensic experts agree that it is impossible to determine from the wound which type of bullet was used. Only analysis of the bullet itself can indicate if the bullet was fully or partially jacketed. Both are equally deadly and may cause identical effects. It will help to understand this if one remembers that increasing the mass of an object, which is what a soft-nosed bullet in effect does, increases its force arithmetically. That is, doubling its mass doubles its force. Increasing an object's velocity, however, increases its force geometrically. Doubling a bullet's velocity quadruples its force and causes correspondingly greater damage. That dumdums were banned by the Hague Convention is in itself no proof that they were especially lethal or caused particularly grievous wounds. It is more likely that dumdum bullets were banned because they offered no particular advantage and that the British had no reason to oppose the ban. The Hague Conferences and the Geneva Convention, like nuclear arms negotiations in our time, tended to ban weapons that no one wanted any more or that conferred no edge to combatants. Rarely, if ever, were superior or advanced weapons banned on the grounds of their peculiar ferocity. Military, or jacketed bullets may also have provided a slight advantage to combatants, as they would be more likely to go through one soldier and strike another.[9]

[8]Sir Sydney Smith, *Mostly Murder* (London 1959).

[9]On the effects of high-velocity bullets, the fact that the wounds they cause are identical regardless of the type of bullet, and that it is impossible to determine the type of bullet from the wound, see Frederick Jaffe, *A Guide to Pathological Evidence* (Toronto 1976), and Vincent J.M. DiMaio, *Gunshot Wounds: Practical Aspects of Firearms, Ballistics, and Forensic Techniques* (New York 1985). Sidney Smith, *Simply Murder*. If modern forensic experts cannot distinguish between types of bullets from the wounds, certainly experts and laypersons in 1918 could not either. A similiar mistake about the effects of high velocity bullets was made during the Vietnam War. Some critics of the war believed that the grave

Nor does the type of bullet offer clues to Campbell's intent. He was a special constable of the Dominion police, that is, one sworn in for a short period of time, often for a single specific task. He used his own rifle, which was a hunting rifle, not a military rifle, and was designed to fire soft-nosed bullets. It is highly unlikely that he could have obtained full-jacketed bullets for his rifle, which was a different calibre and type from military rifles. He supplied his own ammunition and used the hunting cartridges the rifle was designed for and that were easily available. Indeed, it is unlikely that local merchants would have military ammunition for sale. The partially-jacketed hunting ammunition is what one would expect Campbell to have used, and was likely the same type of ammunition used in Goodwin's rifle. Full-jacketed military bullets would have been exceptional and cause for suspicion. It should also be noted that modern police forces do not generally use military ammunition. They use soft-nosed bullets, not because they offer greater stopping power or are more dangerous, but because they are less likely to go through the victim and cause injury to innocent bystanders. If Campbell were a police officer today, he would likely be equipped with soft-nosed bullets.

The final allegation made by conspiracy theorists is that Campbell shot Goodwin at virtually point-blank range. The implication is that he could only have gotten close to Goodwin by waiting to ambush him. Estimates of the range at which Goodwin was shot vary, but not by much. The maximum range ever suggested was about fifteen feet. The doctor who performed the autopsy declared that the men were at least two feet apart and no more than ten feet apart. Mayse contends variously that the shot was fired from less than ten feet, at arm's length, and at point-blank range.[10] This is consistent with the doctor's findings. Conspiracy theorists prefer the shorter distance of two feet rather than the outside estimates of ten feet or fifteen feet, believing that it bolsters the argument for an ambush. But of course the two men could have stumbled upon each other at any distance in the dense woods. Furthermore, to ambush Goodwin, Campbell would have had to have precise information on his location. There is no evidence to suggest that Campbell had any idea of Goodwin's location other than a general knowledge that he was in the area. Nonetheless, it is worth examining the forensic evidence to show how the desire to prove a conspiracy can cloud issues and turn small irregularities into legend.

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wounds inflicted by the M-16 rifle were the result of bullets designed to tumble end over end in flight and thus create "buzzsaw" wounds when they struck. Of course no bullet has been designed to do this, for a tumbling bullet is wildly inaccurate and has very limited range. The episode does suggest that "common sense" is no replacement for expert testing in the field of forensic evidence.

[10]Mayse, 170, 193, 195. Point-blank technically means a distance too short to allow the projectile to drop appreciably from its initial horizontal line of flight and thus is highly variable from weapon to weapon and from bullet to bullet.

The issue of the distance at which Goodwin was shot hinges on the interpretation of powder marks. The claims of the conspiracy theorists are not always correct. First, Mayse is mistaken when she writes that powder marks result from gunpowder being driven into the skin. That is gunpowder tattooing, and is only found from guns that use black powder of the type used in muskets and similar weapons or in cartridges manufactured before the invention of smokeless powder in 1886. Modern weapons, such as that used by Campbell, do not cause powder tattooing. They may cause powder marks or powder burns. These are caused by superheated particles of gunpowder that do not burn up completely and scorch the skin on contact. Since these particles do not travel far after leaving the barrel of the weapon, the burns indicate a shot from close range.[11]

Second, it is difficult to know what "close range" means, or to fix distance accurately. Powder marks are not a reliable indicator of distance. One expert has claimed that it is impossible to calculate from the wound or powder marks whether a shot was fired from 6 feet or 60 feet.[12] Each weapon, barrel length, type of ammunition, and type of powder, and the condition of each of these, gives different results. Only repeated firings with identical bullets at known distances can allow investigators to give accurate estimates of distance of the gun barrel from the victim. That is to say, no examination of the wound itself can reveal the distance of a gun from the victim.[13]

Oddly enough, the existence of powder burns suggests a scenario even more diabolical than that painted by conspiracy theorists. Some experts have argued that powder burns only occur at very short ranges, that is, from about seven inches to about twelve inches.[14] This would indicate that Goodwin was not shot from an ambush but was executed in a manner similar to the murder, captured on film in one of the most wrenching photographs of the Vietnam war, of a suspected Vietcong commando by General Nguyen Ngoc Loan in 1968.

No one has advanced this possibility, though it is the best way to explain the evidence of powder marks. It may not have been suggested because it is unlikely that any executioner would aim for the throat or would miss a better target at that range. We also know from the entry wound that the bullet had struck something else and was tumbling when it caused the fatal wound. It is extremely unlikely that a shot fired from a distance of only six inches would hit anything, even Goodwin's wrist, before striking his throat. There is another way, however, to deal with the evidence of the powder burns.

[11]Mayse, 194. For the definitions of tattooing and burns, see DiMaio, *Gunshot Wounds*; Fatteh, *Medico-Legal Investigation of Gunshot Wounds*.

[12]Werner U. Spitz and Russell S. Fisher, *Medico-legal Investigation of Death: Guidelines for the Application of Pathology to Crime Investigation* (Springfield 1973).

[13]DiMaio, *Gunshot Wounds*; J.S. Hatcher, Frank J. Jury, Joe Weller, *Firearms Investigation, Identification, and Evidence* (Harrisburg 1957).

[14]DiMaio, *Gunshot Wounds*; Hatcher, *et al.*, *Firearms Investigation*.

It is entirely possible that the doctor was mistaken in his analysis. According to one expert, it is extremely unlikely to find any powder marks from any modern rifle, that is, one that does not use black powder. The long barrel and the hot gases from the explosion tend to ensure more or less complete combustion of the particles.[15] It is, therefore, doubtful that powder marks would appear on Goodwin's body even if the shot was fired from a distance of a few inches. Furthermore, it is very difficult to recognize powder burns or marks, even for modern forensic experts. Lead particles, soot, dirt, and lubricant from the bullet may resemble powder marks, as may haemorrhage of the hair follicles around the wound and subcutaneous bleeding. The dried wound itself may give the edges a soot-like appearance while even insect bites obtained after death may, to the untrained examiner, look like powder marks. Only microscopic and other analysis can determine whether these different marks are caused by powder from the weapon.[16] Thus it is possible that the doctor, other witnesses, and Mayse, were mistaken to insist that powder burns or marks were found on Goodwin's body. Taken together, all of these qualifications and reservations make it impossible to know whether Goodwin was shot from a distance of 6 inches or 60 feet. For this reason, it impossible to base a conspiracy theory on the powder marks.

At the end of this analysis, we are left not with certainties but with unknowns. What was the position of the two men when the shot was fired? It is impossible to know. Was Goodwin shot with a soft-nosed bullet? Yes, but that is irrelevant. Was he shot at a closer range than was reported? Maybe, maybe not. It should be clear that there is no forensic evidence that disproves Campbell's story or that makes a conspiracy theory more plausible.

Of course, in showing the evidence for a conspiracy to be non-existent, we have not proved there was no conspiracy. It is impossible to prove a negative claim, at least without creating positive, testable claims. Try proving there is no Santa Claus without positive claims such as, "If there is a Santa Claus, he can be found at the North Pole except on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day." Therefore, it always falls upon those making a positive claim to prove it with evidence. Without evidence, all speculation is equal. Since there is no documentary evidence, testimony, or forensic evidence proving conspiracy, we are not justified in believing that Goodwin was the victim of a conspiracy.

Does it matter? He is, after all, just as dead as if there were an international web of intrigue. It does matter, for events such as these inform our world view and we may draw powerful lessons from them. I would argue that discounting the Goodwin conspiracy theory is especially important for socialists, for the theory obscures the real working of capitalism and the state.

[15]Major Sir Gerald Burrard, *The Identification of Firearms and Forensic Ballistics* Third edition (New York 1962).

[16]DiMaio, *Gunshot Wounds*; Michael Baden, *Unnatural Death.*

Assume for a moment that all of the forensic evidence is exactly as Mayse and others have claimed it is. Assume the existence of powder marks, of a shot that entered the back at close range, of dumdum bullets. At best this brands Campbell a conscious, cold-blooded murderer; it does not link him to a high level intrigue involving the CPR, Cominco, or the Borden government. Yet the government and business are, in my view, as culpable as if they had pulled the trigger. The government took the country into a war fought to defend imperial privilege. It created the "crime" of pacifism and the category of draft dodger. It sent armed men in pursuit of these "criminals" and used armed force to protect capitalist interests. This is not a conspiracy. It is the way the system is supposed to work. If the word "conspiracy" is to mean anything other than a plan or a group of people pursuing their self-interest — a definition so broad as to be meaningless — it must refer to groups working outside of normal channels, outside the usual exercise of power and authority. In sending police after Goodwin, politicians were operating normally. Immorally, of course, but in their usual fashion, following their usual rules and orders. The real criminality is that they were simply doing their day-to-day, regular jobs, maintaining a capitalist order and ensuring the smooth operation of a exploitative system.

The conspiracy theory takes a short-cut through this analysis and blames not the system but a few villains. Conspiracy theory, in this case, is essentially a liberal theory that prefers not to challenge the social order but to prop it up by deflecting attention away from the real nature of capitalism. At worst, proof of a government conspiracy to murder Goodwin would indicate that, say, the prime minister acted improperly. The solution to that would be to imprison him. As Ginger Goodwin himself knew, the real problem is much deeper, much more evil, and much more difficult to eradicate. Ultimately, conspiracy theory, for all its intrigue and darkness, provides a much simpler analysis of society. It is so simple even a liberal can grasp it. But it is wrong. Socialists do not need a conspiracy to explain Goodwin's murder. What is needed is an understanding of how the system is supposed to work. Conspiracy theory obscures this understanding and deflects our attention from the real issues. That is why it is important to correct the misconception that Ginger Goodwin was the victim of a conspiracy. As a simple conspiracy of a few men, his death has no meaning. Such an explanation leads only to the kind of mystification and liberal idealism Goodwin lived — and died — to refute. As a victim of a particular set of social relations and the institutions created to protect them, his death is a lesson we cannot afford to have obscured by notions of conspiracy.

I am grateful to Roger Stonebanks for sharing his extensive research, knowledge, and enthusiasm for the Goodwin case with me. John Stanton kindly supplied me with a wealth of primary material, including copies of the inquest and trial testimony. I would also like to thank Annette DeFaveri, Jim and Marion Waldie, and Adam Waldie for their assistance.