

THIS BOOK IS INDEBTED TO JAMES BOLTON, FOR HIS KNOWLEDGE
AND TENACITY IN DOCUMENTING HIS FATHER'S CASE

IT ALSO DRAWS ON ACCOUNTS FROM ARCHIVES AND PEOPLE,
WHOSE STORIES WERE NEVER TOLD

Wanganui Chronicle, Saturday, Febru

Appeal Court Unanimous Bolton

WELLINGTON (PA) - The appeal of Walter James Bolton against conviction on a charge of murder has been dismissed unanimously, was handed down today.

The judgement read by the Chief Justice: "Upon a careful review of the evidence we see no reason for holding that the verdict is an unreasonable one which cannot be supported having regard to the evidence." Other members of the bench concurred.

Mr Justice Adams and Mr Justice Gresson.

Bolton was tried at Wanganui and found guilty of murdering his wife by arsenical poisoning. He was sentenced to death. The appeal was dismissed.

The grounds of appeal were that there was misdirection or unfairness in the trial judge and that the verdict of the jury was not supported by the evidence.

Essentially the attack on the trial judge's verdict, states the Appeal Court decision, concentrated on the treatment of the evidence implicating Bolton, especially the judge's address.

It was suggested that the judge invited the jury to disregard evidence which indicated another person had administered the poison.

It was contended that when that sentence was read in context it does not bear the meaning which the judge intended. The judge's address is regarded as a whole we think that the judge's address was properly put to the jury.

CRIMINAL CASE
The case was entirely

Reject Murder Appeal

of Walter James Bolton against conviction on a charge of murder. The decision of the Appeal Court, which was handed down today afternoon.

It was not disputed that Mrs. Bolton died in consequence of arsenical poisoning, but it was contended that the Crown evidence did not establish that the arsenic was deliberately administered. It was also contended that if it had been established that the administration had been deliberate, then it was not established that Bolton had been responsible for such administration.

The defence also alleged that death might well have been caused by the cumulative effect of small quantities of arsenic being absorbed from time to time in accidental and unintended ways.

INFERENCES FROM EVIDENCE

The question was whether the inferences could properly be drawn from the evidence that was given and to the inference, notwithstanding that there was some conduct on the accused's part which might be more consistent with innocence than guilt. The judgement continued: "It was suggested that on a proper consideration of the evidence the identity of the person who administered the poison was too uncertain for any definite finding to be made and that consequently the charge against the accused was not proved beyond reasonable doubt." The case against Bolton rested on the fact that he was associated with the deceased at the time of each attack of illness, that no one else had an equally close association, and that he had access to a quantity of arsenic which could have been the source of the drug found in the deceased's body.

"Another fact was that Bolton had a motive for the way which was, at the least, disloyal to the deceased and could be considered as indicating a desire to get rid of her."

The jury might have attached some weight to incidents occurring immediately before the attack, but whether they did or not it seems to us that it could not be said that the verdict was one which a reasonable jury could not have reached.

"Upon a careful review of all the evidence we see no reason for holding that the verdict is an unreasonable one which cannot be supported having regard to the evidence."

walter james bolton



a small man, holding things together

tea and sweat

the scent of arsenic



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LAST MAN HANGING

A BOOK OF PICTURES



WRITTEN, ILLUSTRATED AND DESIGNED BY ROBYN JOAN WILSON

This is the strange story
of the last man hanged in

new Zealand

walter james bolton was a sheep farmer
from the back hills of wanganui

ISAIAH 43:26

REVIEW THE PAST FOR ME,
LET US ARGUE THE MATTER TOGETHER;
STATE THE CASE FOR YOUR INNOCENCE.

he was sixty eight, when he was accused of
poisoning his wife with arsenic
she died in agony

he was a loving man,
attentive and
hardworking

they had been

married
for forty three years





for seventeen months as his wife grew thinner
and her situation became desperate
she was moved **in** and **out** of

hospitals

she had a sister,
florence doughty

was a
Widow

she lived in town, at 7 kepa street
her home was like an ornament
tiers of tracery windows, immaculate...
everything in its place



but **florence** was a predator
what she couldn't have she **wanted**

while her sister was slowly poisoned
she **kept** the husband company



they were illicit **lovers**

he tended her
garden




but when the **hospital** called,
he would leave her

he would don his wedding ring,
and fetch his wife

returning home together
they would curl up into the

night

A dramatic landscape with a cloudy sky, a dirt road, and utility poles. The sky is filled with large, dark, and light-colored clouds, creating a moody atmosphere. A dirt road curves through the foreground, leading towards a range of dark hills in the distance. Several utility poles with power lines are visible, stretching across the scene from the left towards the right. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blues, greys, and earthy tones.

the road between their worlds
was much traveled

doughty visited daily

tending to her sister's needs
but as soon as she regained her health
bolton's wife would again fall ill

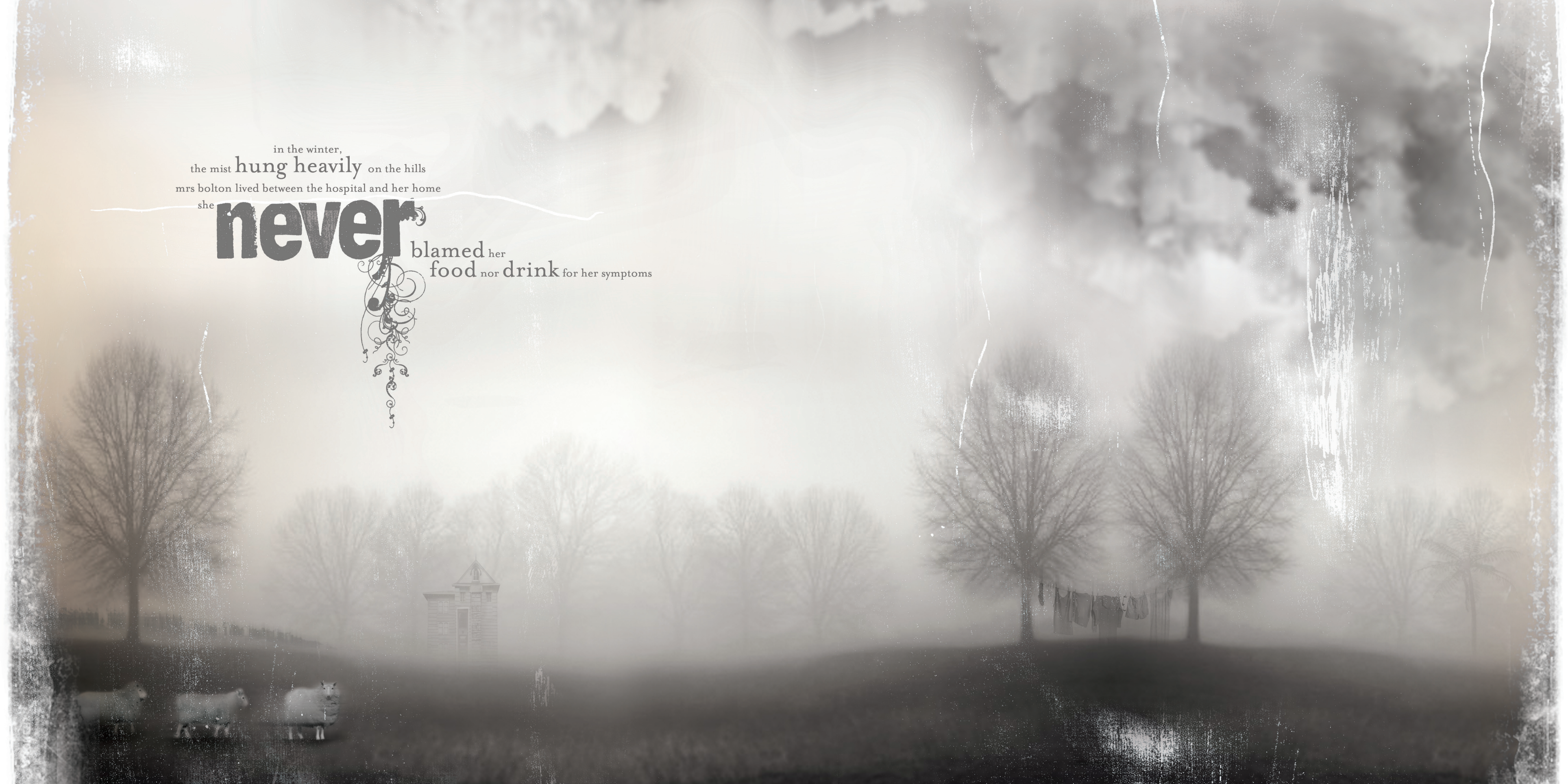
wracked with pain
she would be rushed back to hospital



and would be
re-admitted

in the winter,
the mist hung heavily on the hills
mrs bolton lived between the hospital and her home

she **never** blamed her
food nor drink for her symptoms



but her condition **worsened** across seventeen months
in the end her husband couldn't care for her

but florence
took control
she took mrs bolton back to
the lighted world of suburbia

to a **perfect** home,
with **perfect** meals,
and tea served regularly on a
perfect tray

but mrs bolton said
the tea tasted
queer



florence **blamed**
the **milk**



under her care mrs bolton existed in
a world of **pain** and **recovery**

but increasingly,

in small steps

she got worse

and worse

florence and bolton
called the doctor

they waited



in the afternoon mrs bolton
was injected with
morphine
and was rushed to hospital





in her absence

doughty and bolton
continued to meet

love was a movement of

shadows



and in the shadows of a hospital ward,
mrs bolton died, alone

Beatrice Mabel Bolton

John Doe

Jonothan

then strangely,
despite the fact that his family objected
bolton consented to an

autopsy



Jane

Henry Louis Jackson

Elizabeth Carolina Thames



the pathologist said
her death was strange

samples of her

hair

nails

brain

lungs

kidneys

liver

intestines

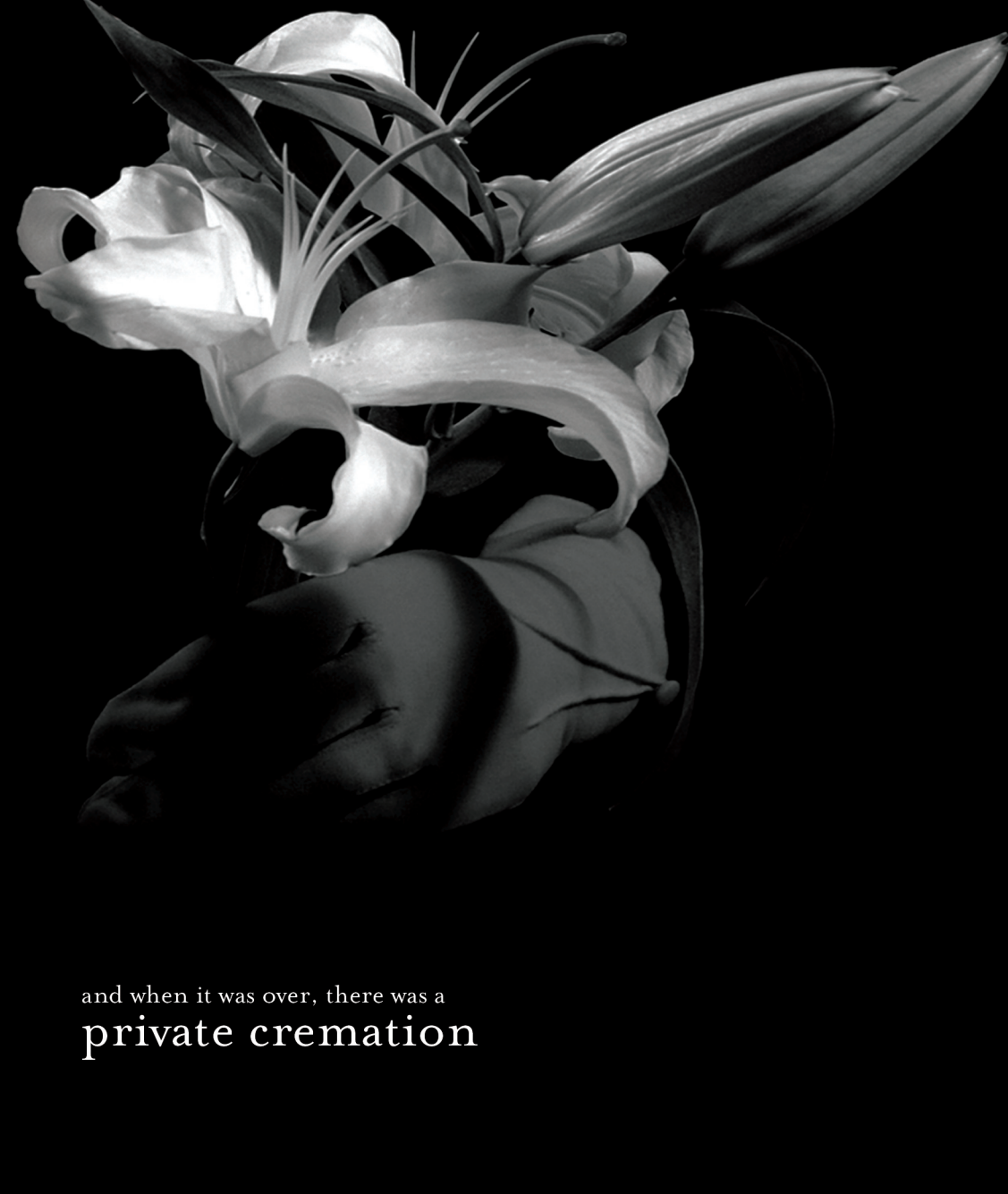
urine

stomach and its contents

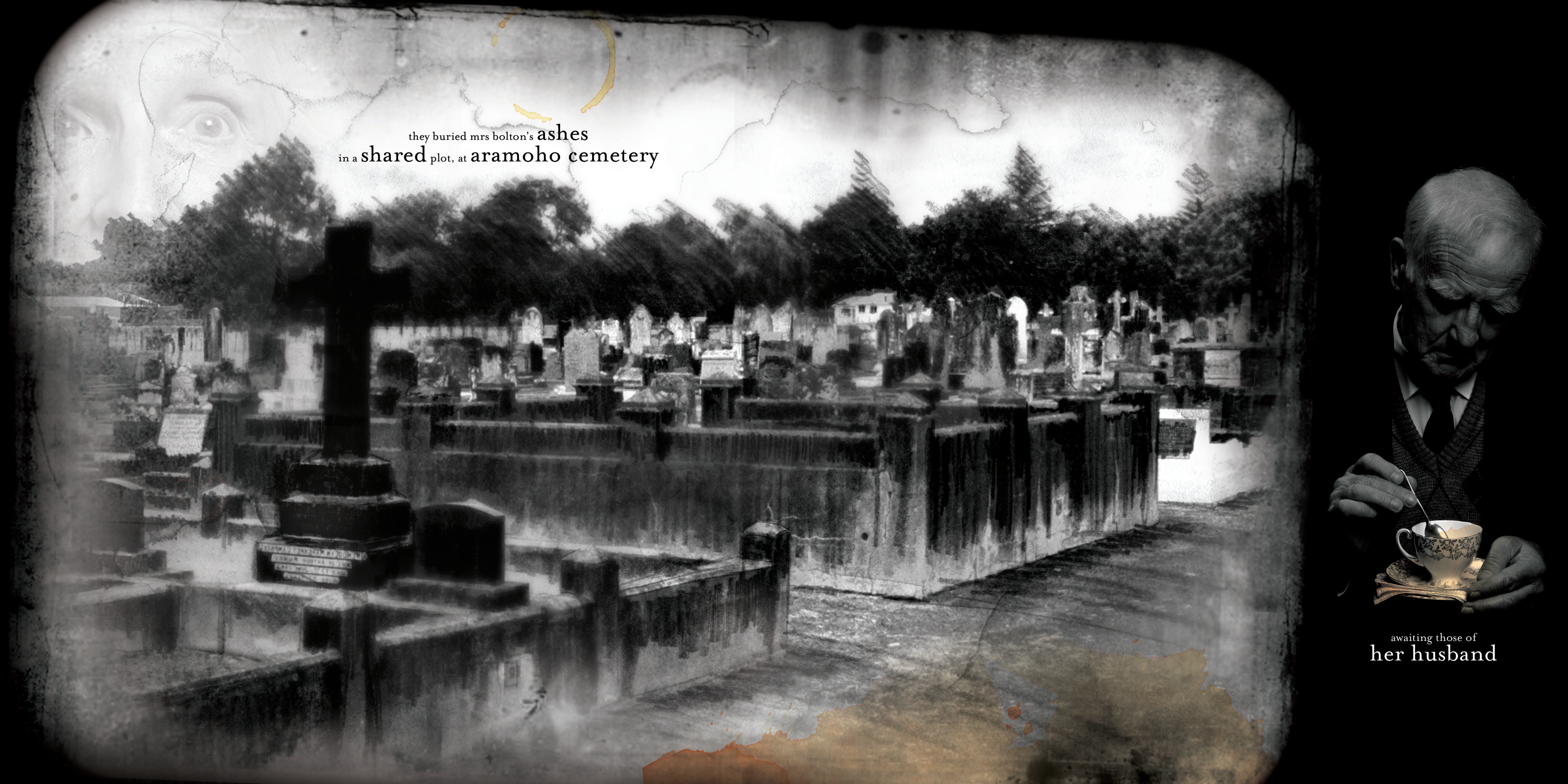
were removed for analysis

Leslie Harold Davis, analytical chemist in charge of the toxicological branch of the Dominion Laboratory, revealed his findings showing the presence of arsenic in the organs submitted to him by Dr Sefton. He said he found a total of one and a half grains, which would be only a small amount of the total which must have been contained in the body.

Crown medical witnesses all agree that Mrs Bolton died of arsenical poisoning. (1956, November 28). The Wanganui Chronicle. p. 5.



and when it was over, there was a
private cremation



they buried mrs bolton's ashes
in a shared plot, at aramoho cemetery



awaiting those of
her husband

but in a small town
rumor is rife

there were many
questions
unanswered
inheritance
adultery
poison

bolton was the
obvious target
he was
arrested

in his shed, they found

arsenic
in the form of
sheep dip



but in his wife's
medicine cabinet

they also found

arsenic



Liq. Arsen.

its **presence** was discovered
in homemade medicines:

- shampoo
- flax concoctions
- herbal remedies

open file titled
"fold-out page.pdf"

open file titled
"fold-out page.pdf"

he waited



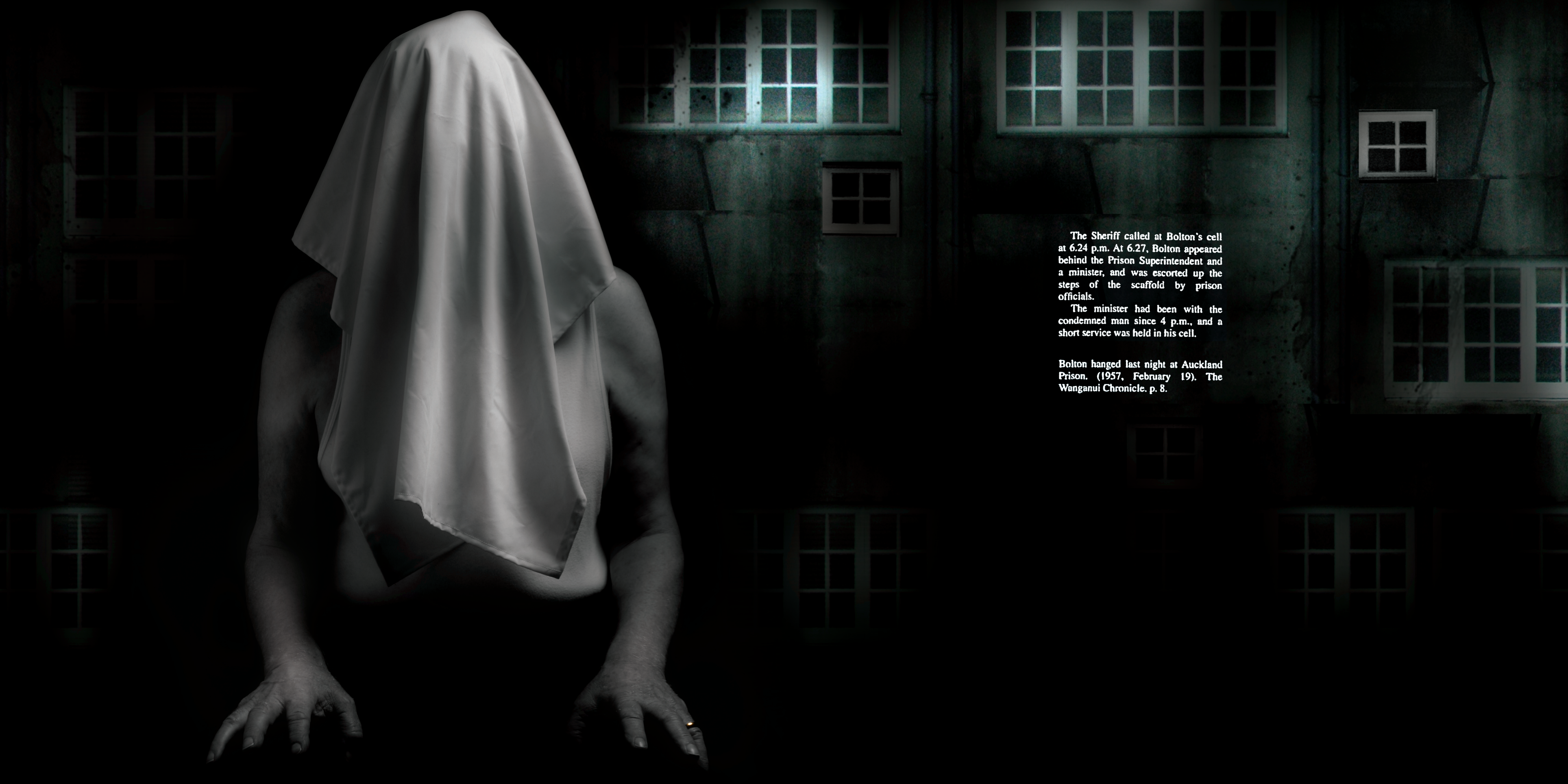


and waited



but his appeal was **overturned**

and time **ran out**



The Sheriff called at Bolton's cell at 6.24 p.m. At 6.27, Bolton appeared behind the Prison Superintendent and a minister, and was escorted up the steps of the scaffold by prison officials.

The minister had been with the condemned man since 4 p.m., and a short service was held in his cell.

Bolton hanged last night at Auckland Prison. (1957, February 19). *The Wanganui Chronicle*. p. 8.



he died from a
**complete
fracture**
of the vertebrae column

bolton was
hanged
at 6:30pm

Bolton was tried at Westminster Hall and found guilty of murdering the two young boys by arsenical poisoning. He was sentenced to death by hanging and the execution was carried out on two gallows.

(a) That the jury found the failure to disclose the evidence to the jury was a material omission and could not be regarded as a mere oversight in regard to the evidence.

...the attack on the...
...turning up...
...court decision, was...
...treatment of the...
...ing Bolton...

Some say he may have been left hanging for up to three hours before taking his last gasp of breath. Others, including his son, believe the authorities had to hang him again some weeks later in a huge cover-up designed to avert pre-election embarrassment for a National government so eager to retain the death penalty.



silence

*M*ATTHEW 7:1-2

JUDGE NOT,
THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED.
FOR WITH WHAT JUDGMENT YE JUDGE,
YE SHALL BE JUDGED:
AND WITH WHAT MEASURE YE METE,
IT SHALL BE MEASURED TO YOU AGAIN.

but then the story
grew darker

at his funeral there were flowers
the velvet reds of damaged

love

and the whites of innocence

he was cremated in auckland and his
ashes arrived at aramoho cemetery
twenty one days later



doughty attempted suicide, she left a note

and on the second effort,

she died




but in her house, hers was not the only death

DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS AT *Wanganui*
 DURING THE QUARTER ENDING THE *Sixteenth* OF *July* 19*56*

DESCRIPTION OF DECEASED			CAUSE OF DEATH	BURIAL	NEXT OF KIN
1. When died.	1. Name and Surname.	1. Sex (M. or F.) 2. Age	1. Causes of Death and Intervals between Onset and Death.	1. When buried. 2. Where buried.	1. Name and Surname. 2. Residence.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(1) 1946	(1) <i>Constance Mabel Jones</i>	(1) <i>F</i>	(1) <i>Cerebral haemorrhage</i>	(1) <i>unknown</i>	(1) <i>Florence Doughty (daughter)</i> <i>7 Kapa Street, Wanganui.</i>
(2) 1948	(2) <i>William Henry Jones</i>	(2) <i>M</i>	(2) <i>Cerebral haemorrhage.</i>	(2) <i>unknown.</i>	(2) <i>Florence Doughty (daughter)</i> <i>7 Kapa Street, Wanganui.</i>
(3) 1949	(3) <i>Evelyn Catherine Pidd</i>	(3) <i>F</i>	(3) <i>Cancer</i>	(3) <i>unknown</i>	(3) <i>Florence Doughty (sister)</i> <i>7 Kapa Street, Wanganui.</i>
(4) 1951	(4) <i>Thomas Collard</i>	(4) <i>M</i>	(4) <i>Cerebral haemorrhage</i>	(4) <i>unknown</i>	(4) <i>Florence Doughty (niece)</i> <i>7 Kapa Street, Wanganui.</i>
(5) 1956	(5) <i>Beatrice Mabel Bolton</i>	(5) <i>F 65</i>	(5) <i>Coroners finding arsenical poisoning</i>	(5) <i>Cremaled by Dempsey and Sons, 13th July 1956. Buried at Karanoko Cemetery, Wanganui, 16th July 1956. Block B, row R, # 717 and 718.</i>	(5) <i>Florence Doughty (sister)</i> <i>7 Kapa Street, Wanganui.</i>

when they investigated they discovered
 that under her care,
 five other people had met their demise



following the execution,
inexplicably
sub-inspector
james j. murray

pulled a gun from his draw and
shot himself in the head

His death certificate revealed that
at the time of death "the balance of his
mind was disturbed."

Investigate Magazine, Jan./ Feb. 2001,
p. 50.

the
judge
mr kenneth macfarlane gresson



also died



and of the twelve jury members...



...eight had perished



twelve mysterious deaths,
and one man hanging

...the legacy of capital punishment

BOLTON'S CHARACTER

Dr Wilson said Jim Bolton was an attentive husband, never demurring at other doctors being called in to see his wife. He always gave the impression of being anxious about her. Whenever Dr Wilson went to see her there was a bowl of vomit available for him to take away. It was never taken. The doctor found Beatrice devoted to her husband.

Gee, D. (1985). *Poison: the coward's weapon*. Christchurch: Whitcoulls Publishers. p. 105.

Walter Edward Fernie, owner of the "Rusthall" property which [the] accused had managed for the last 28 years gave [the] accused a high character reference, and had paid him £1,000 bonus in December 1954, in appreciation. He found Bolton to be of a kindly disposition and considered relations between Bolton and his wife very good.

Similar evidence was given by George Rushton, butcher, who said he had known accused and Mrs Bolton for 25 years.

Anon. Hamilton. May, 1988. *Air New Zealand Almanac 1986*, and *The Wanganui Chronicle*, p. 1.

The revelation that murder was suspected shocked Wanganui to the point of disbelief. The Boltons had seemed a close couple, and many had noted Bolton's distress at his wife's illness. "These people don't do that sort of thing," commented Beatrice Bolton's doctor when he discovered that she died from poisoning. The media published what it could of police investigations,

and speculation began. Both the trial judge and one of Bolton's sons complained of the gossip, which had preceded the trial, the judge warning that it could lead to prejudice against the accused.

Many testified that Bolton was simply incapable of committing murder, to which the lawyer would respond: "But you didn't think he was capable of committing adultery either, did you?"

Steeds, B. (1989, April 22). Murder, they said. *NZ Listener*, p. 30.

THE AFFAIR

The most damning evidence against Bolton came from Florence Doughty when she revealed details of an affair she had had with him. Crown prosecutor McCarthy took this as the motive. "Bolton was sixty-eight, strong in sexual powers. He had an ailing wife and he persuaded his sister-in-law to become his mistress- with his wife out of the way what bar would there be to the fulfilment of this affection?"

Williams, T. (1998). *The Bad, the Very Bad and the Ugly: Who's Who of NZ Crime*. Auckland: Hodder Moa Beckett. p. 48.

"About 12 months before his wife died he visited me at my home on one evening and he persuaded me to be intimate with him. We had sexual intercourse together on a few occasions over a few months, and I then came to my senses and asked Jim to leave me alone and let us just be good friends. From then on he did not have sexual intercourse with me.

"In reference to gifts from Mr Bolton. He has given me money and gifts, which would amount to possibly £250. Mr Bolton paid me £50 towards a combination range in about early 1955 and was purchased from Mr Bert Cox, Hardware Merchant, Aramoho. He also gave me £20 towards the buying of a new carpet from the Wanganui East Furniture factory on my birthday on 9th April 1955. There was also a big plumbing bill with Wadey Brothers for £90 about November 1954. On this occasion there was two accounts and Mr Bolton paid most of the bills. In between times he and his wife have given me money as they knew I was always hard up for money, but he has not given me money for some months and not since Mrs Bolton went into hospital. "I never told Mrs Bolton about the money he had given me because he asked me not to. "There was never any upsets with my sister and myself, and she had no knowledge that Mr Bolton had been intimate with me. "The only reason I weakened to him was probably due to the fact that I was very lonely after my husband died."

Young, S. (1998). *Guilty on the Gallows: Famous Capital Crimes of New Zealand*. Wellington: Grantham House Publishing. pp. 268-269.

Superintendent Aplin then called Bolton into the sitting room where he had been talking with Florence Doughty. She said in his presence that they had been intimate since about the end of 1954 and he admitted this was true. She said, "I only wanted your friendship- you should not have dragged me down like this." Bolton's reply to this was: "Well, I suppose I could have gone up the street and got what I wanted."

Young, S. (1998). *Guilty on the Gallows: Famous Capital Crimes of New Zealand*. Wellington: Grantham House Publishing. p. 268.

"But this was over only a short period and the jury is not here to judge a breach of the moral code by two elderly people," Mr Haggitt said. "It is only natural that Bolton should turn to his wife's sister when his wife was ill. It was for him an episode in a history of loneliness. Mrs Bolton was his wife for forty-three years and the mother of his six children. Can you believe that was sufficient motive for what the Crown says is a vile murder?" he asked.

Any untruthfulness about his relationship with Florence Doughty was an attempt by Jim Bolton to shield her. "If he admitted it before Mrs Doughty he would have been a cad. Because he wanted to shield her the Crown alleges he is a murderer."

Gee, D. (1985). *Poison: the coward's weapon*. Christchurch: Whitcoulls Publishers. p. 111.

MRS BOLTON'S DEATH

Wellington pathologist Dr P. P. Lynch later wrote: "I felt... that the amount of arsenic in Mrs Bolton's body when she died would be many times the one and a half grains found in the organs analysed. Arsenic did not kill instantly, I said. Even in the most acute cases death did not occur for some time; in general it was twelve or twenty-four hours before death occurred, when the amount administered was sufficient to cause death. During all that time excretion took place from the body by vomiting, a large proportion was removed from the stomach, and any in the bowel was excreted in diarrhoea. I concluded that

prior to death Mrs Bolton may have received as much as fifty to sixty grains of arsenic. I believed that on the day of her death her symptoms were typically those of acute arsenical poisoning, and I thought that the fatal dose was taken or administered on the morning of the day before her death.

Gee, D. (1985). *Poison: the coward's weapon*. Christchurch: Whitcoulls Publishers. p. 106.

BOLTON'S APPEAL

An appeal was made, but the Appeal Court was anxious not to "usurp the functions of the jury". The court acknowledged that nobody knew who was present each time Beatrice Bolton fell ill. It decided, however, that the jury was entitled to draw from the evidence what "inferences" it chose- if the evidence did not prove that nobody but Bolton could have administered the poison, the jury was still entitled to decide he was. Bolton, said the court, was present at each attack, he was "disloyal" to his wife, and he had a supply of arsenic. Other explanations may have been equally reasonable, but this mattered little. The jury's decision was not unreasonable- the appeal was denied.

Steeds, B. (1989, April 22). Murder, they said. *NZ Listener*, p. 31.

Notice of appeal against the conviction was lodged at the Wellington Supreme Court on 17 December. The grounds of appeal were stated as, firstly, misdirection of the jury in that: the jury was not properly told that the evidence allowed for anyone other than Bolton to have administered arsenic to Mrs Bolton; the conduct and good

character of Bolton were not properly represented; there was no proper direction on the question of motive; and there was no proper direction on the possibility of Mrs Bolton having taken arsenic accidentally. Secondly, the jury could not reasonably have come to its verdict on the evidence.

On 1 February 1957 the full Court of Appeal delivered its finding that Bolton had been properly convicted.

Young, S. (1998). *Guilty on the Gallows: Famous Capital Crimes of New Zealand*. Wellington: Grantham House Publishing. pp. 274-275.

BOLTON'S EXECUTION

The hangman made a mistake for, instead of dying instantly as intended, Bolton went through the trap door and did not die. He writhed for some considerable time as he slowly strangled to death. The three newspaper reporters present were sick, the priest had a heart attack and some prison warders walked out.

Untitled. (1987, July 3). *Evening Post*.

We went with the prison doctor, who had to certify death. A prison warder released the rope while I supported the body. The body looked about seven feet long, hanging there. The toes were almost touching the ground. The neck had been stretched considerably, while the tongue was out of the mouth and looked to be about nine inches long. The cloth had gone right up the side of the head, and had been damaged where the knot had ripped part of the ear off. The neck was a mess. When the rope was removed, the tongue slurped back into the mouth.

Young, S. (1998). *Guilty on the Gallows: Famous Capital Crimes of New Zealand*. Wellington: Grantham House Publishing. p. 278.

When Bolton's body, washed of its waste material, was brought upstairs to the waiting-room and laid naked on a makeshift stretcher, the officer [who had stuck his fingers in Foster's eyes at his hanging in 1955] grabbed the dead man's penis, saying with obscene levity that never again would he "dip" it into a woman. The guilt and shame brought out the worst in him, and in everyone.

MacKenzie, D. (1980). *While we have Prisons*. Auckland: Methuen. p. 83.

"Have a look at his [Bolton's] death certificate, do you notice there's no doctors signature on it? A death certificate has to be signed by the doctor present. I've spoken to people that were in the prison. What I found out happened is that they [indecipherable], pulled the lever, he dropped, but because he was so sedated his body was limp, they looked down the hole and saw no struggling from asphyxiation, so cut the rope. Then the doctor went down to certify the death, but finds a pulse. Once that rope has been cut, he [Bolton] falls back under inmate category and he's got to be given medical assistance immediately, and to put him back up on the gallows you need another warrant signed by parliament, by the Prime Minister. So they couldn't just string him back up and do it again, they had to wait for the warrant from parliament."

"In that period of time they hid him in the pound, now everyone believed that he was dead, but you have a look at the crematorium notice, it says that the body came in there, you know, and

they handled him on that day. I went to Battersby Funeral Directors, and I have it in black-and-white writing, they never handled the body of Walter James Bolton, signed, by them. They have a record of all the others [sentenced to death] by not my father. And he said, no he was a special, and had a twenty-four hour guard on his body, but because the date the body arrived was later, they couldn't sign for [receiving] it."

Wilson, R., J. (Interviewer), Bolton, J. (Interviewee). (2007, January 10). The case of Walter James Bolton (Cassette recording No. 1). Auckland, Auckland University of Technology.

Prison psychologist Donald MacKenzie later recorded he [Bolton] was so heavily sedated that he was unaware of taking the last sacrament. A last-minute reprieve "might have proved an embarrassment," he wrote.

Young, S. (1998). *Guilty on the Gallows: Famous Capital Crimes of New Zealand*. Wellington: Grantham House Publishing. p. 276.

The medical officer at the time, Harry Shaw, later said in 1988 that Bolton didn't die of a broken neck, but suffocation. "It was not a successful execution," he said. "The hangman miscalculated the drop and the man's neck was not broken. He writhed for quite some time. Death was not instant."

He said that the prison padre, Father Downey, suffered a heart attack and three newspaper reporters were sick, one of them perforating an ulcer.

Anon. Untitled. (2001, Jan/Feb). *Investigate Magazine*, p. 48.

The Bolton hanging has been a source of controversy ever since. The disastrous execution prompted threats from medical officers at Auckland Prison, where all hangings were carried out, that they would resign if asked to witness the carrying out of another death penalty. The hanging is also said to have been a factor in the decision four years later to abolish capital punishment.

Steeds, B. (1989, April 22). Murder, they said. *NZ Listener*, p. 29.

DOUGHTY'S GUILT

Grace Cook told the court she was puzzled about where her mother had obtained the poison and wondered who had given it to her- if she had been given poison. Bolton had answered, "I think she may have committed suicide." Grace replied, "I can't believe that. It would be like cutting off her arm piece by piece." The conversation in the kitchen then turned to Florence. Grace did not think her father had poisoned her mother but thought Florence possibly had. Bolton would not hear of the suggestion and "stuck up" for her.

The next day Jim asked Grace to go with him to Florence's house. Grace said she wasn't keen because she still thought her aunt had something to do with her mother's death.

BOLTON: I suppose your aunt and I did it between us?

GRACE: I don't understand.

BOLTON: I suppose your aunt and I did it between us?

GRACE: Did what?

BOLTON: About your mother.

Gee, D. (1985). *Poison: the coward's weapon*. Christchurch: Whitcoulls Publishers. p. 108.

[An] ambulance driver, John Humphrey of Hamilton, wrote to James Bolton in 1992 and said: "About 15 years ago I was in conversation with a senior constable who was on the case at the time [Constable H. Flynn, now deceased]. He told me that Doughty left a note admitting that she murdered her sister and attempted suicide again.

"He said the police, on this evidence, were prepared to open the case again but the family objected, because all concerned were dead and nothing would be gained by reviving the tragedy. Trusting this will help you and wishing you a happy ending in your quest, yours, J. Humphrey."

Humphrey also revealed that Doughty had a reputation for being promiscuous and years earlier attempted to woo him when he was a delivery man for Maypole Stores in Wanganui. "Eventually I left during this abuse and she stopped deliveries from Maypole," wrote Humphrey.

Anon. Untitled. (2001, Jan/Feb). *Investigate Magazine*, p. 49.

For, Doughty wasn't also known as "Aunty Doull" for nothing. It was her surname of a previous marriage, a fact which the police failed to grasp.

Indeed it was that surname, not Doughty, which appeared on New Zealand's poison register, a mandatory legal requirement for anyone wishing to purchase arsenic. But it wasn't Florence's name on there, but Margaret Doull.

What is the significance of Doull? It was also the surname of one of New Zealand's most prolific poisoners, Margaret Doull who was found guilty of murdering her husband by administering arsenic in 1965.

It is understood that both Doull and Doughty were more than just acquaintances, they were probably related. Both holidayed in Napier at the same time, and Bolton's son maintains it was Margaret Doull who supplied Doughty with the poison.

Anon. Untitled. (2001, Jan/Feb). *Investigate Magazine*, p. 50.

James believes the answer to the motive lies in the ownership of 7 Kapa Street. It was claimed in court that Doughty owned the property, which in those days was valued at £900. Yet an exhaustive search through property records by James reveals that was never the case. In fact, ownership was passed through a series of family members, most of whom died while living at Kapa Street. What's more Walter Bolton was trustee of the family will, and with both him and his wife out of the way, Florence Doughty would eventually be entitled to the house.

Anon. Untitled. (2001, Jan/Feb). *Investigate Magazine*, p. 51.

A SERIES OF DEATHS

Doughty's sister, Evelyn Catherine Pull died of cancer there in 1949. In 1946 Doughty's mother Constance Jones died of a cerebral haemorrhage, a type of blood clot, which is rare. Doughty was a beneficiary of the will, as she was when her father, William Henry Jones, suffered the same fate under her care in

1948. To add to this strange and tragic coincidence, Doughty's uncle, Thomas Collard, died under her care in 1951. The cause? A cerebral haemorrhage. Collard's nephew, Eric Collard, has long maintained that Doughty killed him, probably through long term arsenic poisoning.

In the space of ten years five people died at 7 Kapa Street, all supposedly under Doughty's care.

Anon. Untitled. (2001, Jan/Feb). *Investigate Magazine*, p. 50.

"What it was, was over a will. My mother's mother had made my father, administrator executive of her trust for the will. Remember Doughty says, he paid for the roof, he paid for the plumbing, he paid for a new carpet. Because he was executive of the trust, that covered the house."

"Evelynn died, that's the other sister. She inherits the house, she gets the house after the will was heard, [and] three months later she becomes ill and dies of cancer. So I rang Spratt up, Jim Spratt was a forensic scientist and [Leonard Storkey] Spackman's partner. So I rang him up and I asked him. I said would it have been possible back in the forties, if a person was being poisoned by arsenic and an x-ray was taken of their kidneys or liver. Do you think a [arsenical] gravel build up, could be mistaken for cancer? You know what, he says, you've got one sharp mind, he says, it would have been very easy."

Wilson, R., J. (Interviewer), Bolton, J. (Interviewee). (2007, January 10). The case of Walter James Bolton (Cassette recording No. 1). Auckland, Auckland University of Technology.

there's no way that he [Mr Bolton] did this. Anyone who knew him knew he didn't do it."

"That day the police were brought in to check out homicide suicide. Because it was six months after my father finally was executed, she tries to commit suicide, leaving a full confession on the table, saying it was her, that my mother had died because of her and that my father had nothing to do with it. Coincidentally it so happens the next day, Sub-inspector Murray, the man who is in charge, pulls a gun from his draw and shoots himself in the head. What I believe happened, is that they rung him and said, we got it wrong the old girl's just tried to commit suicide and left a confession at the scene. The death certificate for Sub-inspector Murray reads: self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head while the balance of mind was unstable."

Wilson, R., J. (Interviewer), Bolton, J. (Interviewee). (2007, January 10). The case of Walter James Bolton (Cassette recording No. 1). Auckland, Auckland University of Technology.

BOLTON'S INNOCENCE

Earlier, when a special fixture was arranged for the trial, Bolton entered a plea of not guilty. Twenty-three jurors sought exemption when the trial opened yesterday and of these, fifteen were excused and eight were refused exemption.

Exemption sought by 23 jurors: trial begun of Wanganui farmer on charge of murder. (1956, November 27). *The New Zealand Herald*, p. 23.

"The Wanganui papers were bombarded with hoards of people saying this is an atrocity, this is an outrage,

Wilson, R., J. (Interviewer), Bolton, J. (Interviewee). (2007, January 10). The case of Walter James Bolton (Cassette recording No. 1). Auckland, Auckland University of Technology.

When doctors asked Bolton whether they could carry out a post mortem to cast light on her death, he consulted with her family who signalled their disapproval.

Yet, having spent more than £500 on private medical fees in the vain hope of curing her, Bolton went against their wishes and allowed doctors to carry out the autopsy anyway.

Anon. Untitled. (2001, Jan/Feb). *Investigate Magazine*, p. 48.

When the defence opened, Mr Haggitt said the Crown had failed to prove that the administration of arsenic had been a homicidal attempt. Not only had the Crown failed to disprove accidental administration but it had not even investigated that possibility.

He said that Dr Lynch and Mr Davis had consulted on 23 July [1956], and Dr Lynch had made up his mind it was murder and had discarded all other possibilities. Sub-inspector Murray had gone to Wanganui the next day, and the actions of the detectives had shown there were only two thoughts in their minds- that it was murder, and who was the responsible person?

Young, S. (1998). *Guilty on the Gallows: Famous Capital Crimes of New Zealand*. Wellington: Grantham House Publishing, p. 271.

Bolton said he did not think his wife would take arsenic herself, and he was sure Mrs Doughty did not have anything to do with her death. Detective Thomson pointed out that only left him.

Bolton paused, then said he wanted the detective to believe him when he said he did not give his wife the arsenic. He had spent his life's savings on medical fees to get his wife better. "Would you think that that was the actions of a man who was poisoning his wife?"

Young, S. (1998). *Guilty on the Gallows: Famous Capital Crimes of New Zealand*. Wellington: Grantham House Publishing, p. 264.

Murray asked him [Bolton] if it was correct he had made the statement to anyone that he and Mrs Doughty had "done it between them" when referring to his wife's death. He strenuously denied this. He said they had not done it at all, and he had never told anyone they had.

Young, S. (1998). *Guilty on the Gallows: Famous Capital Crimes of New Zealand*. Wellington: Grantham House Publishing, p. 267.

Leonard Spackman gave evidence of tests on hair, and toe and fingernails, taken from Mr Bolton. The toenails contained no arsenic but the fingernails did. The hair contained the equivalent of

about ten parts of arsenic per million.

Young, S. (1998). *Guilty on the Gallows: Famous Capital Crimes of New Zealand*. Wellington: Grantham House Publishing, p. 272.

Of the sheep dip as a possible poison, Mr Haggitt said Bolton had never looked upon it as anything but a common commodity around the farm. He had never bought any poison. The Crowns case rested on the theory that this old farmer cleverly decanted a clear solution from the sheep dip, colourless and tasteless, and then carried that "devil's brew" around with him. But why had not the grandson Noel Hartley been poisoned? Mr Haggitt answered his own question: Beatrice was small and frail and a thirsty woman. Bolton and Hartley were big, strong, active men.

Gee, D. (1985). *Poison: the coward's weapon*. Christchurch: Whitcoulls Publishers. pp. 111.

"A condemned man cannot be buried in a public cemetery, he's not allowed to be. [But my father is buried] next to the woman that he's supposed to have murdered. Obviously they knew perfectly well that he did not commit it [murder]."

"They wouldn't do it mate. If he had poisoned his wife, murdered his wife, they wouldn't put him in the same grave to hers. That's sacrilege. [It would be] morally wrong and sacrilege towards the church. But because it was so well known that he didn't commit that murder, half of them knew he hadn't done it. It had to be so well known, unquestionable."

BODY OF EVIDENCE RELATING TO THE TRIAL OF WALTER JAMES BOLTON AND SUBSEQUENT REVIEW
BETWEEN 27 NOVEMBER 1956 AND 10 JANUARY 2007

8.000/12/12-11771

Wilson, R., J. (Interviewer), Bolton, J. (Interviewee). (2007, January 10). The case of Walter James Bolton (Cassette recording No. 1). Auckland, Auckland University of Technology.

in New Zealand. He knew some of the parties concerned and they alleged that they could prove "conclusively" that this executed man had been innocent. Hackett said that he believed that one of them "a churchman," had been to see the Minister of Justice himself.

Mr F. Hackett, Opposition member for Grey Lynn, urged a return of the Bill to the Statutes Revision Committee for the hearing of fresh evidence. He had in mind the case of a man hanged for murder

Hanan [the Minister] confirmed this, stating that he had promised the fullest enquiries backed by all resources of the State, but there had been no evidence forthcoming on the subject after some month's lapse.

Although Hackett made another vague reference to the case in his speech during the major second reading debate in October, no further private or official efforts were made on Bolton's behalf and the matter faded into oblivion.

"The matter was not pursued because the Minister and relatives agreed that there was insufficient fresh evidence and little to be gained by attempts to rehabilitate Bolton."

Engel, P. (1977). *The Abolition of Capital Punishment*. Wellington: Department of Justice, pp. 16, 90.

A prison officer present said, "Bolton was possibly the most pathetic spectacle of all. To the very end he denied his guilt."

Gee, D. (1985). *Poison: the coward's weapon*. Christchurch: Whitcoulls Publishers. pp. 112.
