

A double life

Dennis Rader lived quietly while killing 10

Dennis L. Rader was born March 9, 1945, to William E. and Dorthea Rader. One of four boys, he graduated from Heights High School in 1963. Rader served in the U.S. Air Force from 1966 to 1970. He was stationed in Turkey, Greece, Japan and South Korea. Since about 1971 he lived at 6220 Independence in Park City. He was arrested Feb. 25.

Information for this timeline was drawn from public records, including property tax rolls, voter registration records, city directory listings and public education records, and from Wichita Eagle archives.



Jan. 15, 1974: Joseph and Julie Otero are strangled in their home at 803 N. Edgemoor along with Josephine, 11, and Joseph II, 9. The family car is later found at the Dillons store at Central and Oliver.

April 4, 1974: Kathryn Bright, 21, is found stabbed to death in her home at 3217 E. 13th St. Her brother is shot but survives. Police later conclude their attacker was BTK.



October 1974: The Wichita Eagle-Beacon is alerted to a letter in a book at the public library. The letter includes details from the Otero crime scene that only the killer could have known. The killer first suggests that he be called the BTK strangler, adding that BTK stands for "bind them, torture them, kill them."

1972: Death penalties across the country are invalidated by the U.S. Supreme Court.



1971: Rader works in the meat department at Leeker's IGA, where his mother works as a bookkeeper.

1971-73: Rader attends Butler County Community College in El Dorado.

1973: Rader returns to Wichita State University; he had attended briefly in the 1960s.

1974-88: Rader works for ADT Security from November 1974 to July 1988.

1972-73: Rader works for Coleman Co. BTK victims Julie Otero and Kathryn Bright worked at Coleman in the early '70s.

1975: Rader's son is born.

1978: Rader's daughter is born.

1979: Rader graduates from Wichita State University with a major in administration of justice.

March 17, 1977: Shirley Vian Relford, 26, is found tied up and strangled in her house at 1311 S. Hydraulic.



Dec. 8, 1977: Nancy Fox, 25, is found tied up and strangled in her home at 843 S. Pershing. BTK's voice is captured on tape when he calls an emergency dispatcher to report the homicide.



Jan. 31, 1978: A poem written with a child's printing set on an index card arrives at The Wichita Eagle-Beacon. The poem, patterned after a "Curley Locks" nursery rhyme, refers to the Vian Relford homicide.

Feb. 10, 1978: A letter from BTK arrives at KAKE claiming responsibility for the deaths of Vian Relford and Fox and an unnamed victim. At a hastily arranged news conference, Police Chief Richard LaMunyon announces that a serial killer is at large and has threatened to strike again.

April 28, 1979: The killer waits inside a home at 615 S. Pinecrest, but leaves before the 63-year-old homeowner returns. He later sends the woman a letter letting her know he was there. Police think he was targeting her daughter.

Aug. 15, 1979: Wichitans listen to repeated radio and television broadcasts of the voice of BTK from the 1977 phone call. Police receive 110 tips during the first day of the broadcasts.

1984: A new BTK investigation is opened. Lt. Ken Landwehr is one of six detectives assigned to work full time on the case. "The Ghostbusters" spend three years using new techniques including DNA testing, computer database searches and psychological profiles.

April 27, 1985: Park City resident Marine Hedge disappears from her home at 6254 Independence. Her home is in the same block as Dennis Rader's.



May 2, 1985: Hedge's car is found at 21st and Woodlawn.

May 3, 1985: Police recover Hedge's purse in a ditch near 143rd East and 37th North.

May 5, 1985: Hedge's body is found near 53rd North and Webb Road.

Sept. 16, 1986: Vicki Wegerle, 28, is strangled in her home at 2404 W. 13th St. The family car is found two blocks away in the 1300 block of North Edwards.



Jan. 19, 1991: Dolores "Dee" Davis is abducted from her home one-half mile east of Park City.



Feb. 1, 1991: Davis' body is found near 117th North and Meridian.

1994: Kansas Legislature reinstates the death penalty for crimes committed after July 1, 1994.

1988: Rader stops working for ADT in July.

1989: Rader works for the U.S. Census Bureau, compiling addresses, from May through July.

1991-2005: Rader works as the Park City compliance supervisor, enforcing laws about animal control, nuisances and inoperable vehicles, May 1991 to March 2005.

1993: Rader helps son create Park City directory as part of an Eagle Scout service project.

April 10, 1996: Rader is appointed to the Sedgwick County Animal Control Advisory Board on the recommendation of then-County Commissioner Betsy Gwin. He resigns in 1998.

October 2001: Park City Mayor Emil Bergquist presents Rader with an award for 10 years of service.

BTK RESURFACES

After years of silence, a flurry of communication, an arrest and a guilty plea

Jan. 17, 2004: The Wichita Eagle publishes a story on the 30th anniversary of the Otero killings.

March 17, 2004: A letter arrives at The Wichita Eagle containing a photocopy of Wegerle's driver's license and three pictures apparently taken by the killer.

May 2004: KAKE receives a letter containing chapter headings for the "BTK Story," plus fake IDs and a word puzzle.

June 2004: Police receive a letter.

July 17, 2004: Package found at Wichita Public Library, 223 S. Main.

Oct. 22, 2004: Package found at Omni Center package dropbox, 250 N. Kansas.

Dec. 14, 2004: Package containing Fox's driver's license and a bound doll found in Murdock Park.

Jan. 25, 2005: KAKE receives a postcard detailing the location and contents of a Post Toasties cereal box; it is found near 69th North and Seneca.

Feb. 3, 2005: KAKE receives a postcard, apparently from BTK, but at police request does not report on it until March 1.

Feb. 16, 2005: KSAS receives "Communication #11" from BTK, including a computer disk that police trace to Rader's church.

Feb. 25, 2005: FBI obtains a DNA sample from Rader's daughter to compare it to an earlier sample taken from her medical records.

Feb. 26, 2005: Police Chief Norman Williams says "BTK is arrested."

Feb. 28-March 3, 2005: Sedgwick County sheriff's officers search the 61st Street North roadside with metal detectors for BTK evidence but find nothing.

Feb. 25, 2005: Rader is arrested less than a block from his home. He is interrogated by police detectives.

Feb. 26, 2005: Rader is identified in a news conference as the BTK suspect. His bond is set at \$10 million.

March 1, 2005: Rader is charged with 10 counts of first-degree murder related to BTK. Three public defenders are assigned to his case.

March 2, 2005: Rader is fired by Park City for failing to report to work since Feb. 25.

May 3, 2005: Sedgwick County District Judge Greg Waller enters a not-guilty plea on Rader's behalf after public defender Steve Osburn said his client would "stand mute" on the 10 charges of first-degree murder.

June 27, 2005: Rader pleads guilty to 10 counts of first-degree murder.

