

I have carried out research into the murder of Dr. Richard Castillo which I have published at <https://kulturapress.com/2023/06/25/bramerton-street/> Major public interest issues arising from the murder and the unsolved nature of the murder investigation, which appears to have been closed, are set out below and relate to all four files of closed records in respect of the murder case currently in the National Archives.

Justice for Dr Richard Castillo and his family

It is an astonishing turn in real life narrative that having survived such tragedy during the Blitz and given so much to the community as a general practitioner, as an acute Home Front emergency medic throughout the Second World War, in 1961 Dr Castillo would be murdered at the age of 72 late at night when lured by a fake call-out to see a non-existent patient.

And it remains an injustice to his family and the memory of Chelsea that his murder remains unsolved.

The Metropolitan Police files into the investigation have been mysteriously closed for at least another 30 years, long after the usual release of such papers and documents to the National Archives.

What is there to hide? Why hasn't there been a cold case review? Who was or were the prime suspect or prime suspects? Why was no one ever even arrested and questioned?

Murder at midnight Saturday 6th to Sunday 7th May 1961

Dr. Richard Castillo had been out walking his dog in Chelsea on Saturday night 6th May 1961. By midnight he was dying from two skilfully inflicted stab wounds to the heart and abdomen outside 3 Albert Studios in Battersea Bridge Road on the south side of Albert Bridge.

He had been tricked into going to this address which had been vacated during the day and to see a patient who did not exist.

He had moved to Elm Park Gardens at the end of 1940 and had remarried after the tragic death of his first wife Gertrude in the London Blitz.

The telephone rang and the voice on the other end of the line was first heard by his 19 year-old daughter Angela, born in 1942 by his second wife Renée.

They had been watching the series *Flying Doctor* on the television when the call came in.

Angela Castillo said a man's voice with a heavy foreign accent, possibly Turkish, asked: 'Will the doctor come and see my wife. She has been sick with blood.' When asked for a name, Angela thought he replied with something that sounded like 'Alma.'

As Dr Castillo came into the house he took the phone from her and repeated the name 'Allenby' and '3 Albert Bridge.' He wrote this down on a piece of paper. Minutes later he left to attend to this call because he shared a rota with other NHS doctors.

He was on duty one weekend in four and it was his turn that night.

There was no clue or indication he was being lured into an ambush. His family could not think of any reason why anyone would want to kill him. His whole life had been devoted to saving and looking after the lives of others.

His older daughter Mildred, who had been so dramatically rescued from the wreckage of Bramerton Street 21 years before, was now living away from the family home having married Douglas Colman in Kensington in 1950.

In 1961 people who died from homicide would have full inquests if a suspect had not been arrested and charged and juries could return a verdict of death by murder and in August the verdict given was indeed murder by person or persons unknown.

The Coroner observed that the murder had been premeditated and carefully planned. The killer had selected a very suitable place indeed for an ambush and being able to escape unseen.

The wounds had been inflicted by somebody who knew how to kill with a knife which may have been a single edged weapon, quite possibly a large Boy Scout's type of knife and easily disposed of into the River Thames nearby.

It was never found. The Coroner observed: 'Here is a person who studies Dr. Castillo's habits and realised he was on duty. Dr. Castillo clearly did not recognise the voice on the phone which could well have been disguised and went to do this call without any kind of hesitation or suspicion whatsoever.'

The end of Dr. Castillo's life was horrific. People living in Albert Studios heard blood-curdling yells from the 72 year old victim after he was heard banging the door knocker of 3 Albert Studios.

When people came out to find out what was going on, they found him staggering about and pleading: 'I am a doctor ... I have been attacked ... Call a doctor' before collapsing to the ground.

The Mysterious Dr. Ivan Weisz

There was much background to the murder inquiry concealed from the public, though some reports published in UK newspapers and abroad revealed connections and dimensions that belonged to a John Le Carré novel.

Dr. Richard Castillo himself was no master spy or participant in international espionage.

He had the misfortune of giving a refugee, apparently from Czechoslovakia, his first job in general practice in London.

But Dr. Ivan Weisz was altogether not who he seemed to be. And Dr. Castillo had no way of knowing the real identity of somebody originating from the other side of the Iron Curtain and all the disruption and devastation of Second World War Europe.

Subsequent court hearings, litigation and a professional disciplinary case after Richard Castillo's murder would reveal a disturbing hinterland to the life and world of Ivan Weisz.

Dr. Castillo's colleagues believed the murder could only have been set up by somebody who was fully aware of how the duty cover between GPs operated.

Dr Ivan Weisz had worked in Dr Castillo's practice for almost a year between 1957 and 1958 as a trainee assistant general practitioner.

Dr Weisz had left to set up a rival practice and he was first based in Albert Bridge Road not far from the Albert Studios where Dr Castillo would meet this death.

Weisz was in a position to have the information which Dr Castillo's colleague Dr David Craig said was critical to being able to trick him into going out to see the bogus patient: 'Whoever killed him must have known that it was Dr. Castillo's turn to take calls for three other doctors – including myself – because whoever it was used my name.'

Only weeks before the murder, Dr Castillo had complained to the General Medical Council that Weisz was systematically poaching his patients by distributing leaflets and making uninvited home visits to his patients to try and persuade them to sign up to his brand new practice set up in the rather glamorous Pheasantry building in the middle of the King's Road next door to the Classic Cinema.

Weisz had been saying that Dr Castillo was old fashioned, was not keeping up to date with developments in modern medicine, was too old, and needed to take a refresher course. When one of his patients refused to move over to him, he was heard to say: 'I suppose I shall have to wait for Dr Castillo to die before I get his patients.'

In 1962, Mrs Renée Castillo insisted on the disciplinary hearing going ahead against Dr Weisz despite her husband's death.

The Disciplinary Committee ruled on March 17th 1962 that he had been guilty of infamous conduct in a professional respect by canvassing for patients and denigrating the professional reputation of another doctor, and his name should be erased from the Register.

Putting it plainly and bluntly he had lied on oath, used quite deplorable methods to further his medical practice and wooed another doctor's patients like a commercial traveller.

One intriguing mystery emerged from the hearing that he had provided a false account of his background and qualifications:

'The Chairman: "Do you recall filling an application for provisional registration with this Council in 1956? You told your counsel that you graduated at Bratislava in 1941. Is that correct? You must tell the truth here; you are on oath."

Dr Weisz: "It is not true."

The Chairman: "So you told your counsel an untruth while on oath."

Dr Weisz: "I did not want to disclose the name."

What exactly did this exchange mean?

Weisz had described a troubled past of being born in Czechoslovakia in 1917, graduating in Bratislava, working in private practice for a short time, being sent by the Germans in 1942 to a labour camp in the Ukraine where he was severely injured in 1944 by an Allied bombing attack.

He talked of later escaping to Romania and then going to Egypt. In 1949 he was in refugee camps and came to England in 1955.

There were huge gaps and mysteries in this narrative.

In later court hearings arising from the divorce from his wife Margaret in the early 1970s judges would condemn him for his dishonesty trying to conceal assets, and cashing in his wife's life assurance policy without her knowledge.

A few years after being struck off in 1962 Dr Ivan Weisz had been allowed to resume his practice as a doctor in Brighton and Hackney, but in a court hearing in 1974 Weisz revealed he was in fact a defector from the Soviet Union.

His real name was Major Ivan Federovsky. The name Ivan Weisz was a cover provided by the British secret services.

He had met his Romanian wife Margaret while serving in the Russian Army Medical Corps. To prevent her deportation to forced labour in Russia, he had driven her over the border to Hungary to get married.

When the war ended 'Major Federovsky' defected, stayed with her in Hungary and they were later smuggled out through Cyprus to Cairo, and finally to England where he qualified as a doctor.

Dr Ivan Weisz died 20th April 1980 though the public records show he was otherwise known as 'Ivan Ferenze'

Perhaps this was a misspelling of the Hungarian surname 'Ferenc.'

His divorced wife Margaret died in Chelsea 29th March 2020 under his false name 'Weisz.' Her real identity is as confusing and unclear as his.

Although they claimed she was Romanian, during the divorce case he insultingly described her as 'the German bitch.'

During the murder inquiry into the death of Dr Richard Castillo in 1961, journalists in Britain and abroad were being briefed that a defector from the Soviet Union was being questioned over this killing and this was being linked with the murder of [Countess Teresa Łubieńska at Gloucester Road Underground station in 1957](#).

As in the case of Dr Castillo's death it appears she had been stabbed to death with a small bladed knife. There was no attempt to steal property from her so the motive was unlikely to have been robbery.

The Countess Łubieńska was 73 when she died, one year older than Dr Castillo. She had been a Polish Resistance fighter, Home Army officer, and survivor of two concentration camps.

Łubieńska was a close friend of World War II British agent, Krystyna Skarbek, also known as 'Christine Granville.'

The murder weapon was never found and the remarkable figure of 18,000 people had been interviewed by police including many who lived abroad.

The inquest jury also returned a verdict of murder by a person or persons unknown and the killer of Countess Łubieńska remains unidentified to this day as is the case with Dr Castillo. By the time of Dr Castillo's inquest in August 1961, 5,000 people had been interviewed with the intention of speaking to as many as 10,000 of his patients past and present.

There was a suggestion in media reports that inquiries were being made with the intelligence agencies of the USA and European countries to find out more on the background of the Russian defector.

The Metropolitan Police Special Branch of Scotland Yard and security officers were 'particularly interested in a man who defected from the Communists some years ago.' Was this Major Ivan Federovsky, alias Dr Ivan Weisz, also known as Ivan Ferenza or Ferenc? There are four closed files on the murder case of Dr Richard Castillo lodged with the National Archives.

They are:

MEPO 2/10440 'Unsolved murder of Dr Richard CASTILLO at Albert Studios, Bridge Road, Battersea SW11 on 7 May 1961: original statements.' This file is closed until 1st January 2051 on the grounds of law enforcement and health and safety.

MEPO 2/10438 'Unsolved murder of Dr Richard CASTILLO at Albert Studios, Bridge Road, Battersea SW11 on 7 May 1961.' Closed until 1st January 2054 on the grounds of law enforcement, health and safety, and Personal information where the applicant is a 3rd party.

MEPO 2/10439 'Unsolved murder of Dr Richard CASTILLO at Albert Studios, Bridge Road, Battersea SW11 on 7 May 1961: further reports and laboratory papers.' Closed until 1st January 2051 on the grounds of law enforcement and health and safety.

MEPO 2/10441 'Unsolved murder of Dr Richard CASTILLO at Albert Studios, Bridge Road, Battersea SW11 on 7 May 1961: index to statements, typed statements and completed questionnaires of Malta League members.' Closed until 1st January 2057 on the grounds of Law enforcement, Health and Safety, Personal information where the applicant is a 3rd party.'

It seems the last time the Metropolitan Police took any action or consideration in this case was in 1982 apart from batting away subsequent Freedom of Information requests.

Dr Ivan Weisz and his estranged and divorced wife Margaret are no longer alive.

It must surely now be in the public interest to release into the public domain as much information as is possible.

It may well be the case that Dr Ivan Weisz had nothing to do with the murder of his former employer Dr Richard Castillo, that he had a cast iron alibi, and there were perfectly good reasons there was no decision to formally arrest, charge and prosecute him.

It may be the case that he risks being damned by mere circumstantial coincidences.

Despite the proven facts pointing to disreputable character and conduct, it may well be the case that Dr Weisz, whoever he really was, had rendered invaluable services to the West during the Cold War.

However, would it not be sensible and fair to now reveal more about this to clear any lingering suspicion of being linked not just to one but two murders in London?

And a compelling argument can be made that Dr Richard Castillo has been cruelly denied justice and that remains a continuing and acute injustice for his family.

As was said shortly after his death, the question on everyone's lips had been why and who would want to murder this kindly doctor, hero of the Blitz, who was seemingly without any enemy in the world?

Chelsea's weekly newspaper the *West London Press* quite rightly said 'The knife that ended the life of Dr Richard Castillo destroyed one of the gentlest and most widely loved men in Chelsea, the last man in the eyes of his hundreds of patients and friends to have met his death by violent murder.'

Is it not now time to set the historical record straight and identify and confirm the identity of any prime suspect or suspects who escaped prosecution and conviction for this evil and despicable crime?

I would respectfully argue that the strongest public interest considerations merit the opening of and public access to these files. The murder was 62 years ago. The last action by the Metropolitan Police on the case appears to have been taken 41 years ago. Many thanks for your consideration, Professor Tim Crook.