

TIMELINE OF DONALD NEILSON, aka THE BLACK PANTHER

EARLY LIFE

- 1936 Aug 1** Donald Nappey is born
Bradford, West Riding of Yorkshire, England
- 1946 Jan** Donald's mother dies of breast cancer (aged 33) when he was 10 years old
- 1948** Donald is caught breaking into a shop to steal from it, but he is only given a warning by police due to his young age and difficult family circumstances.
- 1954** Donald is called up for national military service
- 1955 Apr** Donald (aged 18) marries **Irene Tate** (aged 20)
- 1958** Donald leaves the army at his wife's insistence
- 1960** Donald and Irene welcome the birth of a daughter, Kathryn. Donald starts various businesses, but all are failures.
- 1964** Donald changes the family's last name to Neilson to prevent his daughter's schoolmates from teasing her over the "Nappey" name, which he experienced growing up.

CRIMINAL BEGINNINGS

- 1967** Donald begins committing more than **400 home burglaries**
- 1972 Feb** Donald attempted to raid the sub-post office and private residence of **Leslie Richardson** and his wife. Leslie fought back and provided a description of Donald to police.
Heywood, Lancashire (nighttime attack)
- 1972 Feb** **George Whittle's** estranged wife begins legal proceedings against her deceased husband's wealthy estate, igniting a scandal that received British media attention. Donald takes in the media coverage and begins plotting how he could steal some of the Whittle estate for himself.

ESCALATION

- 1974 Feb** Donald raids a sub-post office and murders **Donald Skepper**
New Park, Harrogate, North Yorkshire (5:00 am)
- 1974 Sep 6** Donald raids a sub-post office and murders **Derek Astin**, an attack which earns him the "**Black Panther**" moniker from the media.
Baxenden, Lancashire (3:45 am)
- 1974 Nov 11** Donald raids a sub-post office, murdering **Sidney Grayland** and severely beating his wife, sub-postmistress **Margaret "Peggy" Grayland**. Her description of the attacker to the police would prove to be an extremely accurate match to Donald Neilson.
Langley, West Midlands (nighttime attack)

LESLEY WHITTLE KIDNAPPING

- 1975 Jan 14** Donald kidnaps **Lesley Whittle** (aged 17) in the middle of the night from her home in *Highley, Shropshire*. He takes her to Bathpool Park in *Kidsgrove, Staffordshire*, and ties her with a wire noose, hooded and naked, to the inside of a ventilation shaft.

ARREST & CONSEQUENCES

1975 Jan 15 Lesley's family discovers that she is missing and finds the ransom note Donald left behind. **Ronald Whittle**, Lesley's brother, contacts police. Police fail to initiate a press blackout, and media interference leads to a failed ransom drop at the Swan shopping center in *Kidderminster*.

1975 Jan 16 **Gerald Smith** is shot six times at a *Dudley Freightliner Terminal* after he caught "a tramp" tying Dymo tape to telephone pole. Unbeknownst to officials at the time, the shooter drove to the location and abandoned his vehicle there.

Based on a new phone call with pre-recorded instructions from Lesley, Ronald drove to Bathpool Park at *Kidsgrove, Staffordshire*, to attempt another ransom drop, but he was apparently too late. A couple in the area shortly before Ronald saw flashlight signals and a panda car. **This is the night authorities believe Lesley Whittle died.**

1975 Jan 22-23 The abandoned vehicle at *Dudley Freightliner Terminal* is investigated and linked to The Black Panther, connecting the sub-post office burglaries and murders with Lesley Whittle's kidnapping.

1975 Mar 7 Lesley Whittle is found hanging from a wire noose in a ventilation shaft at Bathpool Park after police conduct a more thorough search of the area – 51 days after she went missing, and seven weeks after she died.

1975 Dec 11 **Donald Neilson is arrested** in *Mansfield, North Nottinghamshire*, after a police incident where he is stopped and questioned due to suspicious behavior.

1976 Jul Donald Neilson is **found guilty** on four counts of murder, kidnapping, and burglary and is given five life sentences.

2006 Donald Neilson is given Whole Life Tariff status

2011 Dec 17 **Donald Neilson dies** at the age of 75