

**TRIAL AND ERROR:  
THE CASE OF JEREMY BAMBER**

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**Jeremy Bamber**

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### “Evil almost beyond belief”?

On 29 October 1986, Jeremy Bamber was convicted, by a majority of ten to two, at Chelmsford Crown Court, for the murder of five members of his adoptive family. The judge who presided over his trial, upon sentencing him, described Bamber as *“evil almost beyond belief.”* It was recommended that he should serve no less than twenty-five years. However, in 1994 Bamber received a letter from the then Home Secretary, Michael Howard, informing him that he would never be released from prison; one of only a small number of convicted murderers for whom their life sentences mean just that. Since his conviction two appeals have been dismissed, the first in 1989 and the most recent one in 2002.

### Death in the Summer: The Shootings of August 1985

At some time after 03:00 on the morning of Wednesday 7 August 1985, Jeremy Bamber awoke to the sound of his telephone ringing. Upon answering he heard his father, Ralph Bamber, exclaim, *“Sheila’s got the gun, she’s gone crazy, come over quickly.”* Before further details could be provided, the telephone was hung up. Attempts to make contact with the Bamber household, named White House Farm, were met by an engaged tone.

Sheila Caffell, like Jeremy Bamber, had been adopted by Ralph and June Bamber. She had two twin sons, Nicholas and Daniel, who were six years of age. Sheila and her sons had recently moved to White House Farm.

This was not the first occasion on which Sheila had ‘gone crazy’. The reference to the gun, however, was a cause for concern and so Bamber decided to telephone the police as a precaution. He did not wish to dial 999 in case it was not an emergency situation; the police had never been called in the past and the arrival of vehicles with flashing lights and sirens could make what was perhaps a manageable situa-

tion, a dangerous one. Instead he telephoned Chelmsford Police Station and asked them to meet him at White House Farm.

After telephoning the police, he contacted his girlfriend, Julie Mugford, as he was unsure as to whether or not he had taken the correct action. He was concerned that he may cause embarrassment if the police arrived to find that no threat had been posed. After the call had ended, he drove from his cottage in Goldhanger to White House Farm, which is located in the neighbouring village of Tolleshunt D’Arcy.



White House Farm

Bamber arrived at the farmhouse, shortly after the police, to find that the upstairs lights were switched on, as was the light in the kitchen. Armed police officers arrived at the scene at around 05:30. Time was spent deciding upon how the situation should be best tackled, with a map having been drawn of the layout of the building. Details relating to the telephone call, Sheila’s state of mind, and the weapons within the house, were discussed in order to try and fully understand the situation.

Finally, at 07:30, the police battered down the door to gain access to the building. Armed officers stormed in, but there was no longer any danger. A terrible scene of carnage met their eyes.

Ralph Bamber’s body was found downstairs in the kitchen. The telephone, which was located in the kitchen, was off the hook and so it seemed that perhaps Ralph had attempted to call for help or that his assailant had taken the phone off the hook so that no calls could be received or made. June Bamber was located upstairs, in the main bedroom. It was clear that she had been shot once in bed and shot numerous times as she moved across the room, towards the door. The twins had been shot several times in the head as they lay in their beds. Sheila Caffell, a former model nicknamed ‘Bambi’, was found at the side of her parent’s bed in the main bedroom. She had sustained a gunshot wound to the throat. Her fingers were clutching an Anschutz .22 semi-automatic

rifle, which lay on her chest.

Upon hearing the news of the deaths of his family, Bamber entered a state of shock, failing to comprehend the situation. He was also observed to vomit.

### The Mind of Sheila Caffell

Sheila had been in an unsuccessful marriage. When the marriage broke down she became depressed and her state of mind deteriorated further, resulting in her becoming a sufferer of paranoid schizophrenia. On two occasions she had had been admitted to a hospital because of her condition. Indeed just days before the shootings she had been discharged from a hospital. Psychiatric reports noted that her illness was centred on her children whom she referred to, according to one report, as *“the Devil’s children”*. Sheila’s psychiatrist, Dr Ferguson, wrote in his report that Sheila had also expressed suicidal ideation. Before the shootings, she had not been taking her prescribed medication that was used to control her state of mind.

According to Bamber, a discussion had taken place on the eve of the deaths, during which it was suggested that Sheila’s two twin sons should be fostered on a part time basis due to her illness, or that another alternative for their care should be considered. Such discussions could have sparked a schizophrenic episode, creating the belief in her mind that killing her children, her parents and then herself, was the most appropriate means by which the issue could be resolved.

The evidence at the scene, in addition to knowledge of Sheila’s illness, led police to the conclusion that Sheila Caffell had murdered her adoptive parents and her two children before she shot herself.

### The Police Reconsider

By 8 September 1985 the police had interpreted the evidence in a different way and had reached the conclusion that Sheila Caffell had not committed suicide. Instead they believed that Jeremy Bamber could have committed five acts of murder and had then placed the murder weapon in the hands of Sheila Caffell as to create the false impression that she had killed her family before killing herself. Bamber was arrested in connection with the incident, questioned for five

days, and then released without charge. On 29 September, he was once again arrested but this time charged with the murders.

### Was Money the Motive?

The motive, which allegedly drove Bamber to murder the five members of his family, was greed. The prosecution told the court that he stood to inherit a fortune of approximately £438,000. The Bamber estate was comprised of five farms, including White House Farm, a farming co-operative and packaging factory in which Ralph owned a twenty percent share, a large caravan park that currently has an annual turnover of approximately £1,000,000, and cottages and flats. Bamber held shares in most of these properties. It was claimed



**The funeral: Jeremy Bamber centre**

that the prospect of inheriting such valuable assets created an irresistible temptation that fuelled his need to commit the crimes.

However, as was stated by Mr Justice Hutchison, in his summing up, in *R. vs. Susan Hilda May* (1993), *“It could be said of almost any of us that we have interests in this or that relative dying if we are a beneficiary under the will, but it does not support a case of murder against us does it – at any rate not with any conviction.”*

Members of the Boutflour and Eaton families now own all but a few of the Bamber family assets. The jurors at Bamber’s trial were informed that Robert Boutflour (Bamber’s uncle) would not inherit anything following the deaths. He would, it was therefore believed, not have any financial incentive for the evidence he was to provide in his testimony. Although this was correct, the jury were unable to appreciate the effect of the inheritance which other members of his family received. The jury had no knowledge of who would therefore benefit financially from Bamber’s conviction. Robert Boutflour (Bamber’s uncle), David Boutflour (Robert’s son and therefore Bamber’s cousin) and Ann Eaton (Robert Boutflour’s daughter) had frequently visited the police and accompanied them to White House Farm.

### Julie Mugford

The prosecution alleged that before telephoning the police Bamber had contacted his girlfriend, Julie Mugford, to inform her that his plan was going well.

Mugford was a student who lived in a flat with other students at this time. From studying the police logs, it can be shown that Bamber contacted Chelmsford police station before 03:26. It was at 03:26 that a Malcolm Bonnett logged a call from a constable at Chelmsford station regarding Jeremy Bamber's message. Therefore Bamber's call must have occurred at around 03:20. Bamber alleges that he telephoned Mugford following his contact with the police, to seek reassurance that by contacting the police he had taken the correct action. On 8 August 1985, Mugford told the police that she had received the call at 03:30. However, one month after the call Helen Eaton, Douglas Dale, Susan Battersby, and Joanna Woad, claimed that the call was made at between 02:00 and 03:15 and therefore was made prior to the call to the police, corroborating the prosecution's argument and suggesting that Bamber was involved in the shootings.

Mugford had provided incriminating evidence in her statements and at trial. She told the court that Bamber had made murderous threats against his "old" father, "mad" mother, and his sister who had "nothing to live for". He informed her, she alleged, that a hit man had been hired to commit the crimes. Matthew MacDonald, Mugford claimed, was the man whom Bamber had named as the hit man who broke in to White House Farm and who had committed the murders. MacDonald had been believed by many to have been a mercenary and he did nothing to discourage such stories, informing the police in his statement, "*This was pure fabrication, but I kept it going at times because it made people think I was somebody, but it was all totally untrue.*" Mugford's information can be shown to be untrue because MacDonald had an indisputable alibi for the night of the shootings. In the absence of evidence to substantiate Mugford's claim that a hit man had been used, the prosecution alleged that this was merely Bamber's means of indirectly confessing to having committed the murders himself.

Julie Mugford's allegations can possibly be rejected by also considering further comments she made during her testimony at Bamber's trial. She told that on the night of the massacre, Bamber had called her saying, "*Tonight's the night.*" There was allegedly a later telephone call from him, at around the time he called the police, in which he said, "*Everything's going well.*" This contradicts an earlier statement she made, in which she admitted that she could not remember anything about the telephone call as she had been smoking marijuana and drinking that evening. She had simply told Bamber to go to sleep when he had telephoned to express his concerns. The contradictions in her statements and trial evidence have called

in to question her credibility as a witness.

It was suggested by Bamber's defence team during his 2002 appeal that Mugford had reason to testify against her former boyfriend. She had become incensed by Bamber following the shootings. In court, she admitted her anger towards her former boyfriend. She testified that on Saturday 31 August, although it is possible that the incident occurred a few days later, that, "*I told him that I would really love to hurt him. ... at one point I got a pillow and put it over his head. I took it off and he asked me why I did it and I said if he were dead he would always be with me.*" She added, "*I preceded it with the comment 'He would be better off dead.'*" Bamber maintains that he was told, "*If I can't have you nobody will.*" On 4 September 1985, Mugford was present when Bamber received a telephone call from one of his ex-lovers. This enraged his girlfriend who admitted, "*I was annoyed with him about the call ... I walked out of the room, went into the bedroom, as I was angry. I picked up a Chinese box of Jeremy's and threw it against a mirror, which smashed.*" On the eve of her approaching the police, she had been with her best friend, Liz Rimmington who informed Mugford that she herself had had sex with Bamber. Hurt and upset, having been told by Bamber that their relationship was over, she visited the police the following morning.

The police became aware that she had committed criminal offences. Mugford had broken in to Osea Caravan Park, had dealt cannabis, and had appropriated money by deception by committing a cheque fraud. The police offered Mugford immunity from prosecution on the condition that she should testify at Bamber's trial.

The police were not the only people who offered Mugford incentives for information. The *News of the World* paid her £25,000 for her story. Although she denied it, negotiations had begun before the trial had commenced.

The defence team therefore alleged that it would be profitable for her to testify to the effect that Bamber committed the crimes. In doing so she could exact revenge, gain financially, and maintain her own liberty.

### **Blood, the Moderator, and DNA**

The main plank in the prosecution's case was the blood found in the sound moderator – a 'silencer' in layman's terms. It was this issue that allegedly proved Bamber's guilt. David Bouffour found the moderator, three days after the shootings, in a gun cupboard. Tests on the moderator showed that the

blood was of the same type as that of Sheila Caffell. If indeed Sheila's blood was present in the moderator, it would have made suicide impossible. This is firstly because, with the moderator attached to the rifle, the rifle's length would have made it impossible for Sheila to shoot herself. Secondly it would not be possible for her to shoot herself and then place the moderator in the gun cupboard located downstairs. Therefore, the issue of the sound moderator, and whose blood is in the moderator, is of fundamental importance in determining the identity of the person responsible for the shootings.

As has been mentioned the court heard that the blood was of Sheila's type. However, studies of the blood before the trial by the prosecution's expert witness, showed that the blood could have been a mixture of Ralph and June's blood. Therefore, the forensic evidence could not be used to prove that Sheila had not committed suicide.

By the time the case came to court, it was stated that the possibility of the blood being a mixture was remote. This belief had been expressed before DNA profiling came into existence.

Tests that are more recent have been conducted on the blood in the moderator in the hope that its provenance could be established. The analysis failed to identify any of Sheila Caffell's DNA. Instead a DNA profile was found of June Bamber and an unidentified male. Low Copy Number (LCN) DNA Profiling is so sensitive that if only a few cells of Sheila's blood had ever been present it would be detectable. The fact that her DNA has not been detected is highly suggestive that her blood was never in the moderator in the first place. This means that she could have carried out the shootings, placed the moderator in the cupboard and then shot herself having realised that she could not shoot herself with the moderator in place. The absence of Sheila's DNA therefore strongly argues against the suggestion that Bamber committed the murders.

### **The Mysterious Figure in the Window**

A significant piece of information, which seems to have been ignored by all those wishing to portray Bamber as *'evil almost beyond belief'*, can be used to help demonstrate the validity of his defence. This piece of information is the sighting of a moving figure within the main bedroom. The police and Jeremy Bamber made the observation when they arrived at the scene of the crime.

The figure could not realistically have been any of

the other occupants within the house. If it had been either Ralph or June then the police would have presumably been called. The height of the individual ruled out the twins, who both died in their beds. Therefore, by the process of elimination, it seems reasonable to conclude that it was probably Sheila who was observed walking around in the main bedroom, where her body was later found, whilst her alleged killer was stood outside in the company of police officers. It is known that Sheila's bed had not been slept in that night. With the doors and windows having been found secure when the police entered, whoever was seen to be moving in the bedroom did not leave alive.

Are we to assume that Sheila Caffell could sustain a fatal gunshot wound yet manage to walk around in the main bedroom for a substantial period of time, without raising the alarm? The pathologist who gave evidence at court told that she would not have survived for very long at all after the gunshot. It would therefore be plausible that Sheila did not receive the gunshot until *after* she was observed. If correct then how could Bamber have been responsible?

Examinations indicated that either Sheila had been sat up or lying down when shot. This would suggest that, if it was Sheila Caffell who was observed, having committed the murders, she paced around the main bedroom and then sat or lay down to shoot herself. Her feet were not stained with blood and therefore she must have been walking in the room before shooting herself.

When the figure in the main bedroom was sighted, the police and Bamber retreated behind a hedge and then moved two hundred yards up Pages Lane. The Anschutz .22 does not have a loud rapport. From that distance, the firing of such a weapon would have been inaudible. Post-mortem examinations failed to determine the times at which the five individuals died. It is therefore possible that Sheila Caffell could have committed suicide unnoticed whilst the police and Bamber were just a short distance away.

### **Sheila Caffell and Guns**

It has been argued that Sheila would have been unable to fire and reload the rifle. Ann Eaton testified that Sheila had very little knowledge of guns; indeed, she stated that Sheila did not know one end of a gun from the other. This belief is untrue. She had been taught how to fire guns, including shotguns, whilst on a shooting holiday in Scotland with David Balfour. Photographs of Sheila holding guns were found. Additionally Sheila had participated in target

shooting and so had used firearms on numerous occasions over a number of years. She had observed the Anschutz having been reloaded. Indeed, she had watched Bamber load the rifle on the eve of her death. Sheila Caffell had lived on a farm, where firearms were used on a regular basis, for much of her life. Under such circumstances, it is inconceivable to believe that she was unable to use a rifle at short range. It must be accepted that Sheila was competent with firearms and was capable of carrying out the murders.

### The Windows and the Hacksaw

The prosecution alleged that in order to gain access to White House Farm, so that he could carry out the shootings, Bamber forced open the downstairs toilet window and later left via the kitchen window. It was not possible for him to enter through a door, as these were locked from the inside. Ann Eaton and Robert Boutflour claimed that they found the bathroom window catch insecure. Eaton alleged that she found the kitchen window to have been bloodstained on 26 August. However, she destroyed this evidence before anyone else had seen it. There was certainly no blood present when the police examined the windows in the days following the incident.

A hacksaw blade, which the prosecution claimed was the tool used to open the window from the outside, was found. However, the discovery was not made until two months after the murders. The blade was clearly visible when found and so one has to ask why it was not found sooner. It is probable that this item was placed on the ground at a later stage.

Evidence that showed that Bamber was not responsible for the insecure window was withheld. On 7 November 1985 Detective Superintendent Ainley wrote, in a report, *“As stated, there was no apparent entry to or exit from the house D/Chief Inspector did in fact examine the inside of all the ground floor windows and noted that they were all shut and secure on their latches. ... It seems, however, that after the inspection by DCI Jones some person partially opened the transom window in the kitchen and also opened the catch on the ground floor bathroom window. I have been unable to discover the person responsible ...”* Numerous officers verified that upon arrival they found the windows secure. Such information would have been invaluable at Bamber’s trial, for it removed the prosecution’s explanation as to how the defendant accessed the building.

### The Bicycle

Following the tragedy Ann Eaton and Robert Bout-

flour visited Bamber’s cottage where they found June Bamber’s bicycle. Believing this to be of importance, Eaton soon informed the police of its location. The police were already aware that the bicycle was at the cottage but had attributed no significance to this point.

In court it was argued that Bamber had cycled to and from White House Farm on 7 August 1985, leaving his car at his cottage as to provide a false impression that he was at home. Furthermore, the prosecution alleged that Bamber had told Mugford that he would cycle, or walk, to and from his parent’s home when the time came for him to carry out the killings.

The defence, on the other hand, provided an innocent explanation as to why the bicycle was present at the defendant’s home. This explanation was based upon fact rather than speculation. Mugford had stated her desire to have a means of transport whilst staying with Bamber. For convenience Bamber had asked his mother if Mugford could borrow the bicycle whilst she was staying in Goldhanger, over the summer holidays. Mugford had confirmed her desire to borrow the bicycle in her statements to the police.

Julie Mugford noted that Bamber had informed her that it would take him only fifteen minutes to cycle to White House Farm. The jury were informed that such a short period of time, to cover the three and a half mile distance, was sufficient. It should be pointed out that June’s bicycle was an old, one-gear bicycle, without lights. The route which Bamber allegedly took would have seen him travelling along muddy country lanes with no lighting at all. Thus, fifteen minutes is seemingly an underestimate of the time required.

There is no evidence at all to suggest that the bicycle was used that night. If responsible for the crimes, it is to be expected that Bamber should have blood upon his hands. The murderer was close enough to the victims for the blood to enter the sound moderator. If responsible Bamber would also have had to have staged the suicide scene, moving Sheila’s body in to an appropriate position and also placing the gun on her chest. With Sheila having been covered in blood ultimately Bamber’s hands, if he were the killer, would have become blood stained. It is therefore interesting to note that the bicycle was subjected to forensic examination with no evidence being found.

Additionally Robert Boutflour carried out extensive examination of the countryside surrounding White House Farm. He went to extraordinary lengths to try and locate wheel tracks. With the weather having

caused muddy terrain, such tracks would certainly have been left should a bicycle have been moving in the area. No tracks from June Bamber's bicycle were discovered. With his determination to uncover evidence, if tracks existed he would have found them. Police officers also spent time looking for tracks, but to no avail. Soil samples were taken and matched against soil found on the tyres of the bicycle. These showed that no soil from the vicinity of the crime scene was present on the tyres.

It would therefore appear that the bicycle was not used in the crime. This further undermines Mugford's claims and the prosecution's argument.

### More Flawed Evidence

At Bamber's most recent appeal hearing Lord Justice Kay told, *"We have concluded that there was no conduct on the part of the police or the prosecution which would have adversely affected the jury's verdict"*. I hope that the following points will cast doubt on this conclusion. Bear in mind the words of Bamber's barrister, Michael Turner QC, *"If nondisclosure is a fact it would be difficult to conclude other than it was withheld deliberately."*

At trial, the prosecution alleged that Bamber wished to purchase a new Porsche car, at a cost of many tens of thousands of pounds. They believed that this planned extravagant expenditure indicated his knowledge that he was soon to inherit his parent's wealth. The prosecution's claim is inaccurate; Bamber did plan to buy a car but the vehicle he planned to purchase was a *replica* Porsche kit car, at a cost of approximately £2500. Bamber could afford such a vehicle without the inheritance money. The jury were unaware that it was a replica he sought, although the police had verified that Bamber had contacted a company that sold such vehicles and that he had expressed an intention to buy one. The prosecution had withheld the police report on this issue from the defence, and therefore this matter could not be addressed.

During Bamber's trial, the prosecution argued that a fight or struggle had occurred in the kitchen at White House Farm between Ralph Bamber and his assailant. They alleged that as Ralph was six feet two inches tall, Sheila would have been unable to fight with her father and because she had no injuries the attacker must have been Jeremy Bamber. When carrying out the investigation the police noted the disturbed scene and the presence of sugar on the floor, hence it was believed that a struggle had taken place. As Sheila had been found barefoot, her feet were checked for the presence of sugar. No traces of

sugar were found and therefore it was assumed, and later told in court, that Sheila could not have participated in the struggle otherwise traces of sugar would be present.

The jury did not hear that the disturbed scene was caused by the tactical firearms group upon their entrance in to the building. Such information was not released to the defence until five years after Bamber had been convicted. In 1991, Ronald Walter Cook told the City of London police enquiry, *"I am aware that by looking at the photographs they might suggest such a struggle, but at the time it did not appear that way to me. I could only see two things broken, one was a lampshade and the other was a plate or bowl. There was also brown sugar on the floor but it was confined to one small area. I later learnt that the chairs and the brown sugar had been knocked over by the firearms squad when they rushed about the house looking for Sheila."*

Ralph had no defence injuries consistent with the view that he had been involved in any struggle. With the only injuries, upon his body, being those resulting from the gunshots, it is hard to conceive that he had been subjected to a fierce attack. Additionally Bamber had no injuries suggesting he had fought with his father. The police had carefully inspected his hands in particular and noticed nothing unusual. Even Mugford did not comment on the presence of any injuries or marks upon Bamber's body. If she was aware of such marks then, in her lengthy statements and trial evidence, she would have mentioned them. The fact that this witness, who following the tragedy had seen Bamber naked, did not notice any indications that he had been in a fight strongly suggests that no such indications had ever existed.

In light of the above details, it is logical to believe that no struggle occurred, and therefore one of the prosecution's arguments has been destroyed.

The defence were unaware of two vital pieces of information which could have been used to add weight to the view that, because of a schizophrenic episode, Sheila Caffell committed four murders before shooting herself. The first piece of evidence was a photograph taken of a cupboard in the bedroom shared by Sheila's twin sons. The photograph showed that the words *I hate this place* had been scrawled on an interior wall of the cupboard. Such a phrase is consistent with this psychiatric disorder. The second piece of evidence, also in the form of a photograph, was that of an open Bible on or beside Sheila's body. The page, upon which the Bible was open, was allegedly consistent with her condition. If such details were given a mention, they could have been instru-

mental in persuading the members of the jury that Sheila Caffell could have been the one responsible for the murders.

The prosecution called Malcolm Fletcher to provide evidence as to the analysis of Sheila's nightdress. He told the court that he had not detected any firearms discharge residue (FDR) or oil on the nightdress. FDR is released from a firearm upon discharge. If Sheila had fired the Anschutz then one would expect FDR to be present. Absence of FDR would suggest that it was unlikely that Sheila fired the rifle and therefore she did not commit the murders and then suicide.

Unfortunately, Fletcher failed to mention that he only carried out a visual inspection of the nightdress. He did not *see* any FDR or oil and therefore he assumed none was present and testified to that conclusion. This scientist's misleading testimony will undoubtedly have influenced the jury. An important point to note is that Malcolm Fletcher had no experience in carrying out analysis on firearms and exhibits which could contain FDR and oil from firearms. Unfortunately, before further tests could be carried out on the nightdress, the exhibit was destroyed.

Post-mortem examination, by Dr Vanezis, showed that at least one of Sheila's hands was stained with blood. As has been stated the killer's hands would have become bloodstained. The defence has only recently discovered the information relating to the staining of her hands and so such information was not presented to the jury at Bamber's trial. The blood on Sheila's hand(s) explains the bloodstains, believed to be finger marks, on the pages of the Bible found on or beside her.

The prosecution presented findings that Sheila had no lead on her hands and therefore it was believed that she could not have handled the magazines for the rifle, and reloaded it, because, had she done so, traces of lead would have been detectable on the swabs. What the prosecution failed to disclose to the defence, and therefore the jury did not learn, was that a forensic laboratory had rejected the findings because they discovered that the swabs had been contaminated. In addition, because the members of the jury were unaware that Sheila's hands had previously been stained with blood, they were unaware that the swabs had been taken *after* her hands had been washed. This fact is known because the swabs themselves did not become bloodstained, and therefore they must have been used when the blood had been removed. With the blood having been removed, it is likely that any lead present would also

have been removed.

In November 1994, Superintendent Walker instructed that, *'In the light of the recent judicial review I think the exhibits should be retained until this has finally been resolved.'* Despite this instruction, the police decided that most of the exhibits, including Sheila's nightdress and the hand swabs, should be disposed of, without consulting Bamber or his defence team.

It is most unfortunate that the scientific tests were seriously flawed. A man's fate was decided upon a case comprised predominantly of incomplete and incorrect tests. Under no circumstances should this flawed forensic evidence be considered proof that Sheila Caffell did not murder her family before killing herself.

It has been demonstrated above that the jury at Bamber's trial did not hear all of the information required to allow them to make a fully informed judgement. Bamber was convicted by a majority of ten to two, the minimum majority possible to sustain a verdict. One has to ask whether the jury would have reached a different conclusion should they have heard this information.

It has often been said that circumstantial evidence is not second rate evidence. This is not true, for circumstantial evidence is evidence whose conclusion depends upon one's interpretation. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle showed the weakness of this category of evidence when he wrote, *'... it must be confessed that circumstantial evidence can never be absolutely convincing, and that it is only the critical student of such cases who realises how often a damning chain of evidence may, by some slight change, be made to bear an entirely different interpretation.'* It was circumstantial evidence that convicted Jeremy Bamber. The question is, did the police interpret the evidence in the correct way, or could the very different interpretation, that Sheila Caffell committed the murders before killing herself, be correct?

### Still Protesting His Innocence

Despite the dismissal of two appeals, Jeremy Bamber continues to protest his innocence, having commissioned a website ([www.jeremybamber.com](http://www.jeremybamber.com)) in order to let the truth be heard. In December 2002, following the dismissal of his recent appeal hearing, he wrote, *'Let no one doubt that, in years to come, justice will be achieved and my conviction will be quashed.'* Let us hope that his prediction will come true.