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Corey Rogers' long road to murder

SUSAN CLAIRMONT
The Hamilton Spectator

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It's a rough night for Corey Rogers.

His girlfriend kisses another guy in front of him at the Dizzy Weasel bar. A big kiss. On the lips.

His problems with the cops are getting worse. His picture is plastered all over the city.

He is broke. Has quit his job. Has to bum cash from his dad to buy beer. Dad is getting tired of Corey's troubles. Threatens to kick him out of the house if he screws up again.

Before sunrise the spiral seems too much.

He dials 911.

I'm Corey Rogers, he says. Hamilton's Most Wanted. I want to turn myself in. Send a cruiser to my house.

The woman on the other end of the line has a different idea. Could he just walk to the police station?

Corey never shows up.

One week later a bloody fury is unleashed outside the Dizzy. In a rampage that lasts less than five minutes, two teens are stabbed to death. Another two survive knife wounds.

And Corey is guilty of it all.

At noon last Friday, in a courtroom packed with weeping relatives and armed cops, a jury of seven women and five men came back with their verdict for 24-year-old Corey Christopher Rogers.

They came to their decision without being told of Corey's attempt to surrender. Or the enormous crisis that resulted for the Hamilton Police Service when its deadly mistake was uncovered by The Hamilton Spectator. The jury never heard about the public's call for Chief Brian Mullan's resignation or the investigation into the mess by Niagara Regional Police. An investigation that cleared the entire service of any wrongdoing.

Nor was the jury told of the other charges for violent crimes Corey is facing.

For six weeks, the jurors did hear the details of Corey's murderous rampage.

They heard assistant Crown attorney Nancy Flynn argue he was out for revenge and blood that night.

And high-profile defence lawyer John Rosen say it was self-defence.

A female juror stood and delivered the verdict.

Guilty of first-degree murder in the death of Paul Haggerty, 19.

Guilty of second-degree murder in the death of Lucas Deane, 18.

Guilty of the attempted murder of Kenny Clark, 18.

Guilty of aggravated assault on Lee-Anthony Newell, 18.

Hamilton's one-time most wanted man will serve a life sentence with no parole eligibility for 25 years.

Life doesn't start well for Corey.

He is born in Hamilton on April 8, 1984, 25 years ago yesterday. His parents split up when he is seven or eight.

He lives with his mom and his sisters in a shelter and then a townhouse. Mom is an alcoholic, though, so Children's Aid takes Corey away.

It becomes Dodge Rogers' duty to raise Corey. They settle into an apartment at Tisdale Street North and Corey goes to Tweedsmuir Middle School, then Cathedral High. He makes it to Grade 10.

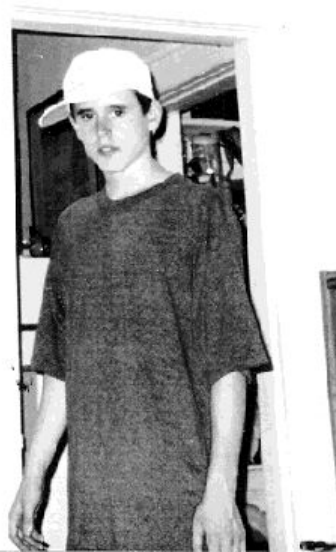
This is when things really start going bad.

Corey's friends say when he is sober, he is a quiet guy. When he's drinking or on drugs, he's different.

He starts racking up criminal convictions when he's 15. Assault. Possession of stolen



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cars. Carrying a concealed weapon. Possession of a dangerous weapon. Mischief. Robbery. Fail to comply with court orders.

Police are getting to know him.

Oct. 15, 2004.

Early in the morning, a 49-year-old labourer is attacked and robbed outside a home on Madison Avenue by a young man and woman he doesn't know.

He is left a quadriplegic.

Corey is out of jail again.

It's the spring of 2006. He lands a job insulating industrial tanks.

For six months he reports for work. Then, as he puts it later, "I just stopped going all of a sudden."

Instead he hangs out with friends, listening to music, playing video games and drinking.

Sometime that summer, Corey gets jumped by a stranger. Beaten.

He will later tell a jury that attack led him to start carrying a knife.

August 2006.

A woman, 21, is arrested for the attack on the labourer. The Hamilton woman is charged with robbery and aggravated assault.

September 2006.

There is a fight at a Boston Pizza in Stoney Creek.

A young man punches a guy and knocks him out when he tries to quell an argument.

DNA leads to Corey being arrested. He is released when the victim refuses to co-operate.

Around the same time Corey hooks up with a new girlfriend. Joana DeSouza is pretty. Has long dark hair.

Though she doesn't have a lot of money, she likes to give her boyfriend gifts. Clothes, usually.

Corey's got street style. Baggy jeans. Oversized hoodies. Someone gives him a hand-me-down black parka for the winter.

The side pocket of the parka is where he carries his knife. It's about a foot long, has a black plastic handle. A cutting edge on one side. It is from a drawer in the kitchen.

October 2006.

An arrest warrant is issued for Corey in connection with the attack on the labourer two years earlier. He is wanted for robbery and aggravated assault.

Another arrest warrant is issued for assault and two counts of breach of probation in connection with the Boston Pizza fight.

Police are looking for Corey.

A detective turns to Crime Stoppers for help. Asks if Corey can be made Hamilton's Most Wanted.

In the first days of January 2007, Corey's photo -- dark hair cropped close, a scruffy goatee -- appears on hundreds of posters officially naming him as the city's most wanted.

He is described as 22, aboriginal, 5-foot-9, 164 pounds, brown eyes, tattoos on his fingers. The posters say he is violent. A reward of up to \$2,000 is offered.

The heat from the cops doesn't seem to worry Corey much.

He still goes to the Dizzy.

On Friday, Feb. 9, he winds up there with Joana.

She bumps into an old friend, Lee-Anthony Newell. She kisses him on the mouth.

Corey is furious.

They argue. Some say Corey shoves her. They break up.

It is the phone call that rocks the Hamilton Police Service.

Rogers is home now after his night at the bar and the fight with Joana. At 6:19 a.m. on Feb. 10 he calls 911. A female civilian dispatcher at Central station answers. Corey gives her his name, birth date, details of his criminal record and identifies himself as January's most wanted man. He says he is at home on Tisdale Street North.

He says he wants to surrender.

Though the official policy of the Hamilton police is to pick up wanted people, the call taker instead does what is commonly accepted in the communications room: she asks Corey to walk to Central and turn himself in at the front desk.

Corey hangs up and calls back at 6:23 a.m. He gets a different call taker. Explains who he is, where he is and what he wishes to do.

She also asks him to walk over and turn himself in.


The front desk is notified that a wanted man named Corey Rogers is expected. Then both call takers go off duty without telling their supervisor about Corey's calls.

Nearly an hour after Corey tries to surrender, a cruiser is sent to Tisdale Street. Nobody answers the door. Officers wait, but get called to a home invasion.

For the next week a sergeant is the highest ranking officer to know about the botched surrender. Nobody goes back to Tisdale.

It is as though Corey never made a call at all.

CRIME STOPPERS MOST WANTED
CASH REWARD
FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE ARREST OF
COREY CHRISTOPHER ROGERS



Crime Stoppers of Hamilton needs the public's assistance in locating
Corey Christopher ROGERS

The Hamilton Police Service has arrest warrants for ROGERS in relation to: robbery, aggravated assault, assault level 1, and breach of probation x 2.

On Saturday October 15, 2004 ROGERS was at a residence on Madison Avenue. In the early morning hours he was involved in a serious physical confrontation outside of the residence which resulted in a male victim requiring medical treatment. The victim was abandoned and severely injured. During the encounter the victim was robbed by ROGERS and another suspect. Subsequent to the incident, the victim is now a quadriplegic.

DESCRIPTION: male, aboriginal, 22 years old, 5'9" tall, 164 pounds, black very short hair sometimes shaved, goatee, brown eyes, tattoo on his fingers. His last known address was in the area of Tisdale Ave. N. He is known to be violent particularly when under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

If you have any information about the whereabouts of Corey Christopher ROGERS or information on any other crime, call Hamilton Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 to be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$2,000. **AND REMEMBER, CRIME STOPPERS DOES NOT SUBSCRIBE TO CALL DISPLAY!**

To see this information please visit: www.crimestoppershamilton.com

JANUARY 2007
CRIME STOPPERS
 OF HAMILTON INC.

YOU NEVER HAVE TO GIVE YOUR NAME • NO CALL DISPLAY
CALL 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS)

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The day after the bungled 911 call from Corey, a supervisor evaluates it as part of a training exercise and gives the call taker a perfect score.

The next Friday, Feb. 16, 2007, is much the same as the one before. Except this time, the police will go to Corey's house on Tisdale and arrest him. And he will become one of the city's most infamous killers.

He gets up around noon. Goes to a friend's. Drinks beer.

Later that night he borrows \$20 from his dad and goes to his bedroom to change clothes before heading out for the night.

In his room police will later find photos of young men making the sign for the Bloods street gang. Police believe Corey is a member. One of the guys in the photos is Lee-Anthony Newell.

And there is a clipping from The Spectator from March 2005 about a home invasion where one person was arrested for attempted murder, but another suspect was never identified. Police will wonder in their own documents if Corey kept that clipping as some kind of trophy.

Corey has changed from sweat pants to jeans. Lastly -- according to his own testimony -- he takes his knife from under his bed and slips it into his parka.

And at about 11:30 p.m., Hamilton's most wanted man walks into the Dizzy Weasel.

Susan Clairmont's commentary appears regularly in The Spectator. sclairmont@thespec.com 905-526-3539

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