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Phone: Monique Maynard 021 372 481

A former British naval commander and a long-time Christchurch peace activist could be considered an unlikely couple. But they are a formidable force when it comes to fighting the establishment — this time over a murder in England. **Kate Shuttleworth** reports

Search for UK murder truth continues

ROBERT GREEN and Kate Dewes are the first to admit their story is off-the-wall, but it's hard to believe anyone would go to such lengths to torment themselves with such a twisted reality.

They met at the United Nations in Geneva in 1992 at the launch of the World Court Project.

Ms Dewes, from Christchurch, sits on the United Nations disarmament panel and is a close friend of former Prime Minister Helen Clark.

Mr Green is from the UK and a former Royal Navy Commander who moved to New Zealand in 1994.

They corresponded after Mr Green moved to Christchurch but Ms Dewes may not have known what she was signing up for.

"The first letter I received from Rob in '92 was opened and the first letter I sent him was opened — I should have known he was trouble then," she said.

They allege they have been subjected to more than a decade of mail interference, phone-tapping, break-ins and intimidation by secret agents.

Ms Dewes has kept the letters and shows the envelopes crudely sliced open and taped back together — today she is surrounded by newer packages that have been opened and resealed. Some of the contents are gone.

The alleged harassment stems from when Mr Green said he was catapulted into the anti-nuclear campaign after the high-profile murder of his 76-year-old aunt, a renowned anti-nuclear campaigner and rose grower.

Hilda Murrell's murder in 1984 became one of the United Kingdom's most high-profile cases. She was abducted, murdered and her body dumped in a field near Shropshire weeks before she was due to deliver a paper to the Sizewell B Inquiry, a nuclear power station eventually built between 1987 and 1995.

Mr Green said his relationship with police became frosty after they held back information from him and the rest of his family.

He concluded the murder of his aunt was politically motivated and the result of her connections with the anti-nuclear movement.

The speech she was due to deliver at the inquiry was nothing new, but Mr Green said other information she wanted to pass on to others for safekeeping could have been the target.

"The documents she twice tried to give to others for safekeeping and possible publication must have been must more sensitive. She was known to be in touch with at least two seriously dissident nuclear scientists — Don Arnott and Professor Ross Hesketh — and several other Sizewell objectors who were under surveillance," said Mr Green.

The ingredients are ripe for a



ANSWERS WANTED: Robert Green and Kate Dewes with the book about murdered woman Hilda Murrell (above).

crime novel with the setting Margaret Thatcher's cold war Britain and her quest for nuclear power.

But for Mr Green this is no fiction — he has dedicated 28 years to piecing together the details surrounding the murder of his aunt and released a book *A Thorn in Their Side — The Hilda Murrell Murder*.

In 2005, Andrew George was convicted of Murrell's murder. At the time George was 16-year-old truant living in a foster home.

Police said the murderer drove Murrell's body to a field where she was found dumped and the car abandoned nearby.

Mr Green said George could not drive.

The conviction prompted his book and was a catalyst for people to come forward with new evidence, he said.

This ramped up the level of interest in the case, with more witnesses coming forward.

"If they hadn't convicted Andrew George I don't think we would have written the book, it would have just died away. If he was acquitted I don't think we would have gotten access to the information."

"It was because of the conviction that people who knew more came out of the woodwork, it was almost provoked by it."

When the case was officially closed in 2006 West Mercia Police released further files to Mr Green showing other DNA had been found under Hilda Murrell's fingernails on both hands and semen samples on her cardigan showed more than one individual

was involved.

This evidence makes up much of the content of the book.

The police files document witness accounts of movements around her home before and during the days of her abduction and murder. All describe three people — two men and one woman sighted near her home over a three-day period.



TWISTED REALITY: Geneva, where Kate Dewes and Robert Green met.

Mr Green and Ms Dewes are not alone in what they think happened to Hilda Murrell — top British Queens Counsel Michael Mansfield is pushing a call for a Commission of Inquiry.

He participated in court cases and an inquest involving accused IRA bombers, the Bloody Sunday incident, and the deaths of Jean Charles de Menezes and Diana, Princess of Wales.

Mr Mansfield believes the wrong person was convicted and says Green and Dewes are being subjected to monitoring.

"I believe there is a strong inference that they are subject to monitoring by some agency with sophisticated resources. It is difficult to see who would be interested other than British agencies."

British Labour Party MP Austin Mitchell has drafted a motion he wants passed in the UK parliament calling for a Commission of Inquiry into the murder.

He has called for the Justice Select Committee to view all files held by Government, the security service and the police.

"The book raises serious and substantial doubts about the criminal investigations to date into this controversial murder."

Mr Green said he also wrote the book to clear his name because he was "severely smeared at the time".

As a naval intelligence officer with access to highly classified information on the deployment of Britain's submarine nuclear weaponry, Mr Green was vulnerable.

Secrets were leaked over the sinking of the Argentine cruiser General Belgrano in 1982 during the Falklands War.

He was fingered as the leak and came under suspicion for high treason — Labour Party MP Tam Dalyell trampled on Mr Green's name in parliament under parliamentary privilege. "He grossly exaggerated my role in the war, which is a very

dangerous thing to do when your colleagues are all reading this in the newspapers."

Mr Dalyell says he read and liked the book but would not comment on the case or if he believed Green and Dewes were under surveillance of any kind. He said he had a drip feed of intelligence that shows the Belgrano was not a threat when the ceasefire was being negotiated.

Mr Green says Mr Dalyell eventually apologised but has never revealed his source from the time.

He said he wanted to put the matter behind him after arriving in New Zealand in 1999.

But police reopened the case in 2001 and decided to visit Mr Green.

He and Ms Dewes say it was disheartening when officers returned to their original theory that a 16-year-old delinquent was behind the murder.

"We can't cope with a man being in jail for 15 years that we don't think that did it," said Ms Dewes.

Mr Green believes he may never find out who killed his aunt. But even coming closer to find out who made the order will give him the closure he needs.

They say the surveillance they endure is a breach of their human rights and have met with the Privacy Commissioner and the head of the Security Intelligence Service Warren Tucker.

"We've been assured it's not the New Zealand Government," said Ms Dewes. —APNZ