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Who Was William Henry Hance, **The Real-Life Serial Killer In** Mindhunter?

ALEJANDRA SALAZAR <u>19 AUGUST 2019, 2:10</u>



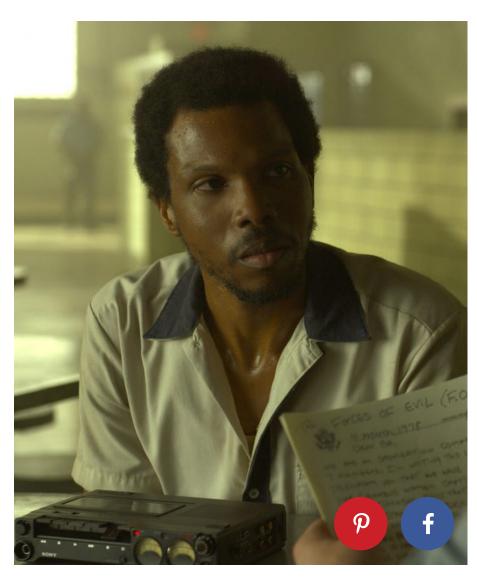


PHOTO: COURTESY OF NETFLIX.

Mindhunter is back for season 2 -and that means a whole new lineup of serial killers for the FBI's fledgling Behavioural Science Unit to get very, erm, well-acquainted with.

In the third episode of the season, FBI wunderkind Holden Ford (Jonathan Groff) and Agent Jim Barney (Albert Jones) head to Georgia, where they meet a pair of eccentric killers: William "Junior" Pierce and William Henry Hance.

Both in *Mindhunter* and in real life, Hance was a former soldier convicted of killing three women near military bases in Georgia in the 1970s. Hance is also the only serial killer featured in *Mindhunter* who was sentenced to death, according to PopSugar.

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Hance, played to great effect by a very dazed Corey Allen, drives Ford in circles ("like a doughnut") during his interrogation, albeit unintentionally (Hance had an I.Q. of less than 80 points, according to ScreenRant). But Hance's story took several turns that Ford — and real-life authorities — at times had a hard time following.

Hance's string of crimes coincided with another serial killer's run: Carlton Gary, also known as the Stocking Strangler, was killing elderly white women in nearby Columbus, GA at roughly the same time. To throw police off *his* trail, per Murderpedia, <u>Hance sent letters</u> posing as the fictitious "Forces of Evil," claiming to be part of a group of seven radicalised white men demanding that the Strangler be apprehended. As the "Forces of Evil," Hance told police that a black woman would die if the Strangler was not caught — though, in reality, he had already killed a Black sex worker named Gail Jackson (also known as Brenda Faison) and sent his demands in an effort to cover his tracks. He also asked for a \$10,000 ransom in exchange for the alleged "hostage."

Hance soon after killed Irene Thirkield, another Black sex worker. Like Jackson's case, Hance anonymously alerted police about the crime after the fact, warning that the "Forces of Evil" would kill another woman.

Using eyewitness accounts and an FBI profile of the killer, authorities pieced together that a Black soldier was actually responsible for these deaths (Hance wrote his letters using stationery from a U.S. military base, and authorities used his handwriting as evidence). Hance was soon arrested and confessed to the murders of Jackson and Thirkield, along with the murder of Karen Hickman, a white Army private. He was later linked to a fourth murder in Indiana, though he was never charged, *E! News* reports.

Hance died in 1994 at age 42 via electric chair. According to The New York Times, his death raised questions about his mental health and sparked widespread debate about racial bias in the criminal justice system.

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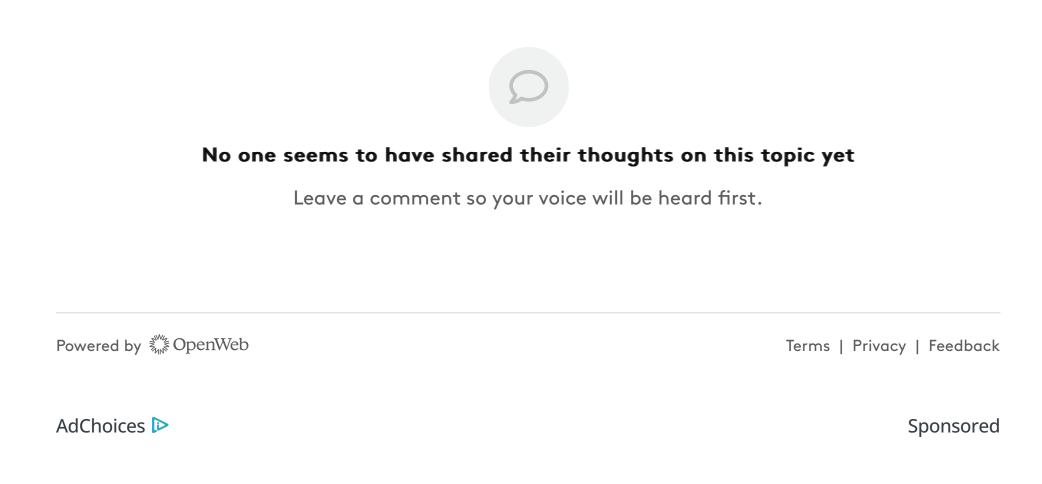
WRITTEN BY ALEJANDRA <u>SALAZAR</u>

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