

Getting Away with Murder on the Island of Guam



The U.S. Territorial Island of Guam has 103 unsolved cold case homicides. The victim in Case No. 70 was the mother of Pornchai Moontri and it needs a new set of eyes.

September 14, 2022 by Gordon J. MacRae

The Island of Guam, which at 212 square miles is the largest of the Mariana Islands in the Western Pacific, is today home to about 170,000 people. About 80% are indigenous Chamorro or of Filipino or other Pacific Islands descent. Guam also hosts one of the most strategic U.S. military bases in the Pacific, Andersen Air Force Base. In 1950, United States citizenship was conferred upon all permanent residents of this unincorporated U.S. territorial island.

As in the rest of the U.S., the citizens of Guam elect their Executive and Legislative branches of government. Guam has a federal judiciary appointed by the U.S. president, and superior court judges and an Attorney General appointed by the governor. Guam also has a phenomenon plaguing its law enforcement system. Writing for the Guam Daily Post (November 7, 2021) reporter Nick Delgado penned an article about the **extraordinary number of Guam's unsolved 'cold case' homicides.**

<https://beyondthesestonewalls.com/posts/getting-away-with-murder-on-the-island-of-guam>

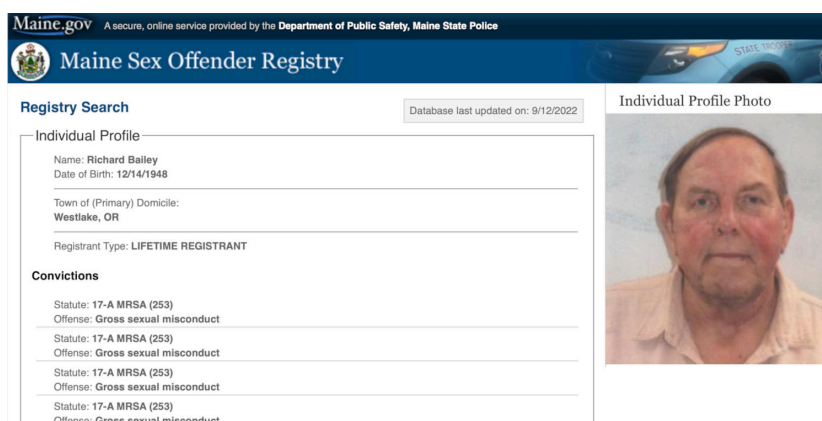
One of these unsolved cases, number 70 on a list of 103, is that of Wannee Laporn Bailey, the mother of Pornchai Moontri. She was murdered in Guam at age 47 on April 18, 2000. I first wrote of this in **“Human Trafficking: Thailand to America and a Cold Case in Guam,”** an article that lays out the back story of Pornchai’s life before being sent to prison at age 18.

Earlier articles that I wrote about Pornchai’s life garnered some attention from around the world, including from some who had formed erroneous conclusions about him and his offense. What I wrote gave context to a nagging gap in his 1993 trial. That gap was the six years between his arrival in the United States at age 12 and the offense that sent him to prison at age 18.

After reading my articles, Clare Farr, a Trademarks attorney with an Intellectual Property law firm in Western Australia, alerted police and the District Attorney in Maine that something essential was amiss in Pornchai’s trial: an account of six years of trauma prior to his crime. A detective and an Assistant District Attorney then went to interview Pornchai 26 years into his prison sentence.

Then they interviewed Pornchai’s brother, Priwan, two years older. These interviews, now heavily corroborated, resulted in a 2017 warrant for the arrest of Richard Alan Bailey at his Westlake, Oregon home. He was indicted on 40 felony counts of gross sexual assault, charges in which Pornchai and his brother, Priwan, were victims as young immigrant children transported from rural Thailand to the city of Bangor, Maine in 1985. A long held and highly destructive secret thus ascended into the light.

Richard Bailey Brought to Justice – Sort Of



Maine.gov A secure, online service provided by the Department of Public Safety, Maine State Police
 Maine Sex Offender Registry
 Registry Search Database last updated on: 9/12/2022
 Individual Profile Photo
 Individual Profile
 Name: Richard Bailey
 Date of Birth: 12/14/1948
 Town of (Primary) Domicile: Westlake, OR
 Registrant Type: LIFETIME REGISTRANT
 Convictions
 Statute: 17-A MRSA (253)
 Offense: Gross sexual misconduct
 Statute: 17-A MRSA (253)
 Offense: Gross sexual misconduct
 Statute: 17-A MRSA (253)
 Offense: Gross sexual misconduct
 Statute: 17-A MRSA (253)
 Offense: Gross sexual misconduct
 Statute: 17-A MRSA (253)
 Offense: Gross sexual misconduct

On September 12, 2018, Richard Alan Bailey entered a plea of “no contest” but was found guilty in a Maine Court on all 40 felony sexual assault charges. A testament to the nature of these proceedings was that of Pornchai himself whose testimony was read into the court record by

Assistant District Attorney Alice Clifford:

<https://beyondthesestonewalls.com/posts/getting-away-with-murder-on-the-island-of-guam>

“Your Honor, Richard [Bailey’s] actions have had a catastrophic impact on me, and I believe it is important for the Court to understand this in the context of my life history. I am an inmate of New Hampshire Prison for Men. I am in prison because when I was only 18, I killed a man and I have been in custody ever since. In 1993, I was sentenced to a term of 45 years in prison. I am now 46 years of age and have spent 60 percent of my life in prison.

“What Richard [Bailey] did to me began when I was only 12-years-old. The few years that I have spent in his “care” – and “care” is in quotations – were the worst years of my life. Worse even than the last 26 years in prison.

“I accept responsibility for the crime I committed. However, the responsibility for turning me into an angry, alienated and despairing young man who killed a man belongs to Richard Bailey. And he has never faced up to what he did to me. Nor has he faced up to what he did to my brother and our mother, Wannee.

“I was born in Thailand, and at the age of two I was abandoned by my parents and then raised by my grandmother living on a small farm in the north of Thailand. When I was 11, my mother came to retrieve me and my brother and told us that she had married an American, that she would take us to live with him in the United States, that we would have a great life, and want for nothing.

“We came to America in December of 1985 when I was 12. Within two weeks, Richard Bailey began to sexually assault me. The first time was when I was lying on the floor covered with a blanket while I was watching television. Richard placed himself under the blanket and began to fondle me. I was terrified.

“On another occasion ... he got in the shower with me and began to explain male physiology while fondling me. At other times he would make me watch pornographic material. It wasn’t long before things graduated to sodomy. He would do such things when my mother was not in the vicinity. He would take me for drives or go camping and he would sodomize me. I hated it. I hated him. I could not speak English, but Richard was clear that if I told about the sexual assaults there would be dire repercussions.

“At home, Richard was a tyrant and a drunken bully who was physically abusive to me, my mother and my brother. We lived a life of fear, intimidation, and violence. No one was allowed to speak Thai in the house and we were not permitted to have friends come over ... He completely controlled our lives ...

“I first ran away from him to escape the abuse at age 12, only to be returned to him by the police. I spoke very little English and wasn’t able to tell the police that

Richard had been sexually assaulting me. I could not tell my mother at that time because Richard threatened what would happen to her if I told.

“Richard Bailey sexually assaulted me more times than he is charged with ... I ran away again and again, living in juvenile detention centers, the homes of friends, or finding a place of shelter wherever I could. Sometimes my mother would bring me food when I was living under a bridge [In Bangor, pictured below]. When I had no food, I would steal. When I was caught I was sent to juvenile detention where I told counselors about the abuse and they reported it.”

– End of Transcript Excerpts

Justice Delayed – Repeatedly



Maine Youth Center

Because Pornchai was a prisoner when Richard Bailey was finally brought before the Court, the D.A feared putting Pornchai on the witness stand in a trial. So Bailey was offered a plea deal, and like most guilty defendants, he accepted it. For 40 felony counts of child sexual abuse, Bailey would serve no time in prison and 18 years on probation. After registering

on the State of Maine Sex Offender Registry, he quietly returned to his lakeside Oregon house.

Over the six years when Pornchai was 12 to 18 years of age leading up to his own offense, Maine officials received reports about the sexual abuse of Pornchai. These interventions were inexplicably ineffective. Official reports from the Maine Youth Center and Department of Human Services should have resulted in a protection order for Pornchai, and investigation of Richard Bailey, and criminal charges, but none of that happened. Here are excerpts:

November 8, 1989: ***“Pornchai alleges that his stepfather, Rick Bailey, perpetrated sexual and physical abuse upon him. [He] is concerned that Mr. Bailey will take out revenge on his mother.”***

<https://beyondthesestonewalls.com/posts/getting-away-with-murder-on-the-island-of-guam>

November 10, 1989: ***“Pornchai has trouble explaining himself in English, so it was hard to get more details from him. Also, he is protective of his mother.”***

December 14, 1989: ***“[The sexual abuse] totally destroyed boy’s faith in family – mother made aware – did nothing. Boy began to habitually run away. Boy terrified some type of revenge will be taken out on mother.”***

December 21, 1989: ***“Pornchai has opened up to me information about sexual abuse by his stepfather. This was a significant breakthrough with Pornchai since he has been holding this in ... At this point we have notified the Dept. of Human Services.”***

February 15, 1990: ***“In terms of the allegations of sexual abuse, Pornchai has to go to Bangor. He will have to make a tape or prepare some kind of testimony and he is having a very difficult time even thinking about the events that occurred.”***

April 26, 1990: ***“Pornchai has been going through some major crises in his life ... He went to court in Bangor and was made a ward of the State. His allegations of sexual abuse do not seem to have progressed ... His mother was in to visit him and told him that she did not want him to go through with this issue any further. He fears that he will be harming his mother if he proceeds with this.”***

From an undated Interagency Protocol Report: ***“Boy states that stepfather started touching him, talking “dirty,” showing porno movies and progressively became more abusive. Made Pornchai perform oral sex on him. He would pull his hair and slap him if he refused. He would set up situations where he would have Pornchai alone. Stated if he told anyone his mother would suffer.”***

The record contains dozens of similar reports of violent sexual abuse, some much more graphic and disturbing. Sheriff’s deputies once found Pornchai escaping Bailey’s house by running along railroad tracks out of Bangor, but they did not understand his protests as they forcibly returned him to Richard Bailey. They wrote a report of their suspicions, however, but nothing happened.

Pornchai’s mother found blood on his bedding and underwear, but Bailey kept her in a silent state of poverty, desperation and helplessness according to statements from neighbors and others. One neighbor confronted Bailey after seeing 12-year-old Pornchai beaten and bloody. Bailey beat Pornchai again while forbidding him from interacting with others. A school nurse documented suspicions that Pornchai was sexually and physically abused, but she was advised to keep silent and not get involved.

Pornchai's Offense



Penobscot County Jail

From there on Pornchai spent most of his childhood living on the streets of Bangor, a broken young man. Harassed by a Bangor gang, he carried a knife for protection. At the 2018 plea deal hearing for Richard Bailey, the D.A. read again from Pornchai's Statement:

“A few months after I turned 18, I was involved in an incident at the local supermarket and I killed a man when I was highly intoxicated. I was tackled by Michael Scott McDowell, a man having a much larger frame than myself, and in a kneejerk reaction I took my knife and stabbed him and he later died. It was unintentional. At the moment I stabbed at him my mind was Richard Bailey on top of me and I never wanted to be in that situation again.”

It was not up to Pornchai Moontri to investigate and prosecute Bailey. That was the job of the State of Maine and the State failed him miserably. Pornchai was a traumatized child who neither spoke nor understood English when Bailey's assaults commenced. After all the above interviews with DHS and Maine Youth Center staff, sheriff's deputies interviewed Richard Bailey — and him alone. In his response, he gave them a well-rehearsed story about having lovingly opened his home to Pornchai, who doubled-down on his youthful shunning of a kind stepfather's discipline by making false claims against him.

The sheriff's deputies who interviewed Bailey in 1990 never questioned Pornchai, his brother, their mother, or any of the Maine Youth Center staff who made the above reports. This was not a case with dubious claims of repressed or recovered memory. No one can rightly claim today that sexual abuse just wasn't on the radar in 1990. At the same time the above reports were made, a high-profile panic about sexual abuse by Catholic priests was brewing right next door to Maine in New Hampshire.

At Pornchai's own trial in 1993, Bailey feared for what Pornchai might divulge to police and the Court so he took matters into his own hands. He wrote a letter to presiding Judge Margaret Kravchuk. He presented himself as a caring stepfather whose discipline was rejected by this wild child who turned on him. He blamed influence from Pornchai's drug-infested and delinquent friends in order to deflect blame in case

<https://beyondthesestonewalls.com/posts/getting-away-with-murder-on-the-island-of-guam>

Pornchai pointed a finger at Bailey. These friends today describe that letter as “a pack of lies.”

Meanwhile, while held in Maine’s Penobscot County Jail waiting trial at age 18, Pornchai’s mother, Wannee, came to him, sent by Richard Bailey to deliver a message about what would happen to her if Pornchai told anyone about Bailey’s abuse of him. So he remained silent, refusing to participate in his own defense. Bailey’s egregious witness tampering took place right under the noses of Maine officials. Pornchai’s fear for the safety of his mother was well founded. The evidence for that loomed just over a distant horizon.

Getting Away with Murder



Name: RICHARD A BAILEY
Inmate Number: 3923885
Booking Date: 2/24/2017 2:54:00 PM
Age: 68
Sex: Male
Race: W
Location: Lane County Jail

Wannee’s life had been a hard one even before meeting Bailey in Bangkok in the later 1970s. She was but 19 years old when she was abandoned in the rural north of Thailand by her first husband while raising two-year-old Priwan and still carrying the unborn Pornchai. In 1975, out of the desperation of poverty,

she left them when they were two and four years of age hoping that her extended family would care for them.

Wannee traveled nine hours to Bangkok in search of work. Her first job was in construction. This small and frail young woman carried two large cement buckets on a pole as an indentured servant earning her meals and fifty cents a day. She later worked as a cook.

Richard Bailey had been a civilian helicopter pilot in Vietnam, but frequented the Bangkok area when the war ended. In the later 1970s, he and Wannee met. They married in Bangkok on February 14, 1980, then relocated to Bailey’s hometown of Bangor, Maine. There, with Wannee now in a foreign land where she spoke no English, he controlled her every move and would not allow her to pursue citizenship. He obtained work for her as a hotel chambermaid, but tightly controlled her income. Bailey knew that she left two young sons in Thailand, but he had no interest in them until they were 11 and 13 years old. Then, in 1985, he sent Wannee to retrieve them.

Two years after Pornchai was sentenced to prison, Richard Bailey sold his home in Maine and relocated with Wannee to the Western Pacific Island of Guam. Bailey secured work with the Federal Aviation Administration as an air traffic controller. They

<https://beyondthesestonewalls.com/posts/getting-away-with-murder-on-the-island-of-guam>

purchased a home in Talofoto, a small seaside town in the south of Guam. His life there was privileged, secure, and far from the wreckage he left behind in Maine.

The next few years passed by in relative comfort for Bailey living a new life in Guam, but Wannee grew increasingly troubled by all that had transpired. Finally, in late 1999, she became resolved to leave Bailey and filed for divorce in a Guam court. On February 14, 2000, a divorce decree was finalized with a judgment against Bailey which included the following provisions:

That Bailey pay Wannee monthly alimony payments of \$1,000;

That the jointly owned home in Talofoto be sold and the proceeds be divided equally,

That upon Bailey reaching the age of 59½, he pay to Wannee \$8,000 as her share of his IRA; and

That Bailey pay Wannee \$25,000 from a money market account in May 2000.

Wannee had built up the courage to leave and return to Thailand, but both her sons were in their 20s living in Maine. Pornchai was in his eighth year in prison where he was stranded with no family help or support at all. While in Thailand, Wannee used what little funds she had to secure a small parcel of land and began to have a house built for her and her sons whom she hoped to redeem from the past. However, back in Guam Richard Bailey simply ignored court orders for payments to Wannee. So she planned a fateful return to Guam to seek justice.

On her way back to Guam, Wannee visited Pornchai in prison in Maine. She apologized for not believing him as a child, and for the years of torment he suffered. She told him that she had divorced Bailey and was going to expose all that he had done to her, Pornchai, and Priwan. But first, she said, she was returning to Guam to seek enforcement of the divorce decree. She had no idea she was going to her death.

Weeks later, while alone in a Maine prison, Pornchai received word from Richard Bailey's sister in Maine that Wannee had died in Guam. Pornchai was left with an impression that his mother had accidentally fallen from a high cliff, but his instincts knew better. He asked Bailey's sister, "Did Richard kill my mother?" There was a moment's pause before she answered, "I don't know."

After all the wreckage of the past, this news was devastating for Pornchai. He gave up on his life and ended up serving the next several years in the maddening cruelty of Maine State Prison's "SuperMax" solitary confinement unit. ([PBS Frontline produced a video documentary on Maine's solitary confinement.](#)) Pornchai had surpassed nearly all other prisoners in the amount of time spent there. Then, in 2005, he was transferred to the neighboring New Hampshire State Prison where he spent the next 15 years with me.

Over these years, as the story of Pornchai's life unfolded, I wrote several additional articles. Clare Farr, Pornchai's advocate in Western Australia, joined me in an effort to investigate. Among the many inroads we made was one to officials in Guam who

<https://beyondthesestonewalls.com/posts/getting-away-with-murder-on-the-island-of-guam>

released Wannee's April 2000 autopsy report. It revealed that her cause of death was ruled a homicide.

Wannee had been beaten to death according to the autopsy report. Her broken ribs caused devastating injuries to inner organs and a broken wrist revealed defensive wounds. Wannee was 47 years old at the time she died. Pornchai sat in our cell and wept openly upon learning the truth about the death of his mother.

Cold Case Homicide



Dontana Keraskes / The Guam Daily Post

According to Guam police statements, Richard Bailey had reported that Wannee was on the Island visiting with him, but went missing. Two days later, Bailey reported finding Wannee's body himself. Because this technically remains an open cold case homicide, though now dormant for 22 years, Guam police have seemed reluctant to provide further information.

However, an interview with Wannee's niece conducted by Clare Farr in 2016, revealed that Wannee telephoned her from Guam on the day

she died. She said Wannee was frantic, saying that Richard had threatened her. Richard could be heard shouting in the background. Wannee told her niece in Thai, "If I am found dead, Richard did it and I want you to demand an investigation."

Bailey never did pay Wannee the money she was owed in alimony, or the money due to her from his IRA and the money market account and the sale of their jointly owned Guam property. And on her death, he should have paid the money due to the executor of Wannee's estate. However, Bailey never told the executor that there were court orders in place and that he owed money to Wannee, so the money never went into Wannee's estate for distribution to Pornchai and Priwan, who had been Bailey's victims of abuse. This money would have been of crucial importance to Pornchai tasked with starting life over after he emerged from prison. He returned to Thailand penniless with nothing but the clothes he was wearing.

None of the above — not the background about Richard's crimes against Pornchai and Priwan that he desperately wanted covered up, nor the telephone call from Wannee to her niece — was known to Guam police at the time they first investigated the homicide

<https://beyondthesestonewalls.com/posts/getting-away-with-murder-on-the-island-of-guam>

of Wannee in 2000. We believe that there is now sufficient cause to reopen this case and identify a suspect.

In a December 19, 2021 Guam Daily News article by Nick Delgado, "[GPD Enhancing Efforts to Solve 103 Cold Cases](#)," Guam police Chief Stephen Ignacio described new efforts to investigate and close these unsolved cases. He also revealed that he led the Guam Cold Case Task Force in the early 2000s, the time of Wannee's death. The Guam police have posted a short video describing these cases. A box containing the case of the homicide of Wannee Laporn Bailey is visibly at the top — and it is in the top graphic on this post along with a photo of Wannee and Pornchai.

Wannee's cremated remains were returned to Thailand after her death in 2000. Upon his own return to Thailand in 2021, Pornchai prayed at her tomb for the first time and slept in the half-built home she had hoped to complete for him. Pornchai is overwhelmed with the wreckage not only of his own life, but with the lives of Wannee and Priwan as well. Rebuilding is a daunting task, but Pornchai Moontri is today a man of unconquerable faith and an inspiration to many.

Richard Alan Bailey still resides at his lakeside Oregon home. After Wannee's death in 2000, he traveled to Thailand and returned with a new Thai wife 31 years younger than himself.

+ + +

Please click [here](#) to view the Guam Court orders for restitution to Wannee and her estate for which Wannee died while Bailey ignored the Court orders.

Please share this important story and visit these related posts:

[Former Maine Man to Serve no Prison Time for Sex Abuse in the 1980s](#) (*Bangor Daily News* 09/12/2018)

[Human Trafficking: Thailand to America and a Cold Case in Guam](#)

[For Pornchai Moontri, a Miracle Unfolds in Thailand](#)

[Pornchai Moontri: A Night in Bangkok, a Year in Freedom](#)

[Documents in the Story of Pornchai Moontri](#)

To help Pornchai rebuild his life, visit our "[Special Events](#)" Page

<https://beyondthesestonewalls.com/posts/getting-away-with-murder-on-the-island-of-guam>