

## Murder Cleaners

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IT'S a dirty job but someone's got to do it, and those that do are cashing in on the filthy business of murder. They call themselves "Murder Cleaners" and are making tidy sums out of police departments and private individuals across the United States cleaning up apartments, houses, hotels and offices where killings take place.

For years individual police departments took charge of the aftermath of murder, in theory assigning officers to clean up the bloodstains and remove the soiled carpets, sheets and any other items.

Often, though, they did not, leaving it to the bereaved to sort things out.

Now in the honed-down, hived-off, privatised world of modern-day Main Street America, the job goes to specialised agencies.

AA Trauma Cleaning Services, of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, is turning over close to GBP 500,000 [ed: about US\$850,000] a year performing such grisly tasks.

Joan Dougherty, 57, a partner in the firm, dresses up in NASA- style spacesuits to disinfect and clean the scenes of crime.

Dougherty said: "In no other country in the world are there as many crimes committed with guns. Consequently, there's one hell of a mess to clean up and that's what we do. I know from personal experience what a terrible task this can be for people not trained in it - my own 17-year-old stepson was murdered with a shot to the head. I asked the police who would come and clean up and they said: "Do it yourself - we don't have the manpower."

Copycat agencies have sprung up in California, Arizona and Texas, charging around GBP 100 [ed: about \$170] per room.

Chuck Jones in California, who offers his services the length and breadth of the State, said: "We deal every day with the sordid side of life - and it takes nerves to do it. We are confronted with Aids, tuberculosis, other infectious diseases in blood. That's why we have to be extra careful and why it is expensive. But as long as America continues to have more than 30,000 gun deaths each year there will be a need for us."

Story from [www.EditInternational.com](http://www.EditInternational.com)

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## **MURDER CLEANERS**

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The wounded are recovering.  
The dead are buried. Now bring  
in the Murder Cleaners.

By Ron Laytner  
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Joan Dougherty works with horror every day but somebody has to do it and it's making her rich.

Joan, a petite middle-aged woman living in Fort Lauderdale, 20 miles north of Miami, is one of the pioneers of a unique and strange American industry: the murder cleaners.

“My stepson died from a bullet in his brain about 20 years ago. I asked the police who would clean it up and they told me ‘You will. There’s nobody else that does such a job.’

Murder cleaning is a secretive almost unknown fast-growing industry. America has so many guns, murders and suicides that over 100 of its biggest cities now have murder cleaners.

Movie viewers have glimpsed them pulling up to violent death scenes in small, unmarked white vans in films like *La Femme Nikita* and *Pulp Fiction*.

These movie ‘murder cleaners’ work for secret US government agencies and get rid of bodies and all traces of those killed in the line of national interest.

In American real life mostly gangsters and serial killers still secretly dispose of bodies. The desert around Las Vegas and the Florida Everglades are favorite illegal dumping spots for bodies that are never found.

But in every US city local government or federal coroners do legitimate body removal. The murder cleaners come in next.

Members of companies like Joan Dougherty’s AA Trauma Cleaning Service of Fort Lauderdale, McNulty’s American Bio Cleaners of Missouri and Texas’ Houston Trauma Cleanup which is made up of off duty police officers, do everything else.

They are part of the continent-wide American Bio Recovery Association with almost 100 members.

The costs of restoring a site to pre murder or suicide averages about \$3,000. It must be protected against diseases carried by blood and air - AIDS, hepatitis and tuberculosis.

Blood saturated carpets, curtains or furniture are cut up, broken down, put in plastic-lined containers, dated and disposed of within 30 days at special dumps where the material is incinerated.

“When we are finished no one will ever find a single drop of blood or piece of human tissue,” says Dougherty proudly. “We make it safe for people to move back in.”

Joan Dougherty and her colleagues in various American cities enter crime scenes wearing ‘space like’ level C protective suits made of nylon with all ends taped over and special rubber stockings inside heavy rubber boots. They wear a double set of rubber gloves and breathe through a full face respirator containing its own oxygen supply.

“I just detach myself. My head tells me I am just going in and cleaning. I would go crazy if I focused on anything other than that,” Dougherty says.

For as long as it takes they scrub and sanitize the crime scene using industrial strength disinfectants, deodorizers, steamers and chemical foggers.

Don McNulty and his Kansas City company, Bio Cleaning Services of America, has expanded into three American States.

“This may be the least known and fastest growing of all businesses,” says McNulty. “Humans have to clean up after their dead. This is a new industry in the modern world.”

McNulty says people learn how to make bombs on the internet and it’s a problem but the internet is also the greatest place to help new industries form. “All our association members confer every day on the Internet.”

He said America’s great numbers of violent deaths keep all members of the national Bio Recovery Association busy all the time.

Some cases he remembers well. “My company murder-cleaned a rented Kansas City home in which five men were shot to death. Three were killed first. The killer lived in the house for two weeks with the bodies then killed two more men who came by before fleeing. A man was later arrested and is now awaiting execution on death row.

“The landlord paid almost \$3,000 for the cleanup. The five bodies lay undiscovered for a week. And yet the home of a young man shot in the head with a big .357 Magnum a week earlier took even more work.”

America’s murder cleaners have seen it all, including bodies that lay undiscovered for weeks and months on end.

Don McNulty says his worst case was an 'unattended' - "That's when someone dies and their death is not discovered for some time."

An 82 year-old man who lived by himself died in his bathroom in Carrolton, near Kansas City, Missouri in the middle of winter.

"He lay dead for ten days with the thermostat turned up to 90 degrees fahrenheit (32 Celcius) until police were notified and the body was removed. It took a week to get the house back to normal.

Says McNulty, "It was hard to breathe, and so unhealthy, even through my respirator, that I suffered from flu-like symptoms for a week, had nightmares for a year and have never gotten over it."

Sometimes the work is easy and well paid. Other times it's the roughest job imaginable but even then murder cleaners earn about \$400 an hour

Says Dougherty: "My most tragic case was that of a 12-year-old boy who committed suicide with a shotgun in his divorced mother's bedroom when he was home alone. I broke down and cried.

"The mother was totally distraught. In a suicide every survivor feels guilt whether it's deserved or not. What could a 12 year old boy be possibly thinking of to take his own life?

"I see suicides every week. It is the most terrible and selfish of all crimes because the person who dies murders the minds and hearts of his own family for the rest of their lives."

Don McNulty described just two days in April in Kansas City: "First, a man murdered his two children and wife and a brother-in-law. Then he fled to Nicaragua and killed himself there.

Four days later a nearby man shot his live-in girlfriend and her seven year-old daughter, then their pet dog and finally himself."

The amount of work murder cleaners do depends on a city's population. It divides into 100,000 people at a time. According to statistics, there are 12 to 14 incidents (murders or suicides) for every 100,000 residents.

McNulty had a daughter who worked as a missionary in Poland. Lee Ann McNulty came back to America and began work as a murder cleaner in her dad's firm. "After three years she suffered critical stress syndrome and has gone back to church work,"

These days McNulty spends most of his time teaching others in the new field. After a couple of years in the business technicians earn about \$175,000 a year. McNulty's technicians only work in pairs and lock themselves in when they are doing a death scene.

Don McNulty founded a Trauma Counseling Network to which anyone involved in violent death is provided free help. Many attending are police..

McNulty says he actually enjoys his work and finds it fulfilling.

“I talk to the family of the dead at the beginning. I hold them and cry with them and somehow help get them through the pain. When I go home at night I sleep soundly, knowing I did some good for those suffering so much bad.”

The End

By Ron Laytner  
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CRIME SCENE - Chalk outline shows where victim had lain and two bullet wounds – one in the shoulder, another in the heart. After investigators leave and the body is removed a Murder Cleaner will remove all traces of violence to prevent the spread of diseases such as AIDS, hepatitis and tuberculosis. Photo Edit International.

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Joan Dougherty founded the Murder Clean industry some 20 years ago after the suicide of a family member. “I just clean and clean and never concentrate on the entire subject of what I am doing or I would go crazy,” she says. Photo by Ron Laytner, Edit International.

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American police work at a murder crime scene. Soon, Murder Cleaners will come in and no physical traces of the victims will be left. Photo Edit International.

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The eyes of Murder Cleaner Don McNulty have seen it all. “I often hug and hold and cry with the survivors of murders and suicides,” he says, “When I lay down to sleep at night I feel I have done good to help those who have suffered so much bad.” Photo Edit International.

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A bio hazard suited technician takes away the last traces of violent death as he cleans a traum room scene using a high temperature steam machine. Photo Edit International.

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After an elderly woman fell and broke her hip in Florida she had no one to call for help and died alone of thirst, hunger and pain. She stayed so long in her apartment that her body left an almost photographic imprint on her rug. Photo Edit International.

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When a family member shot themselves in the head police told Joan Dougherty she would have to clean up by herself, that no one did such work. That's when she got the idea of forming AAA Trauma and became the first of a fast growing industry of Murder Cleaners. Photo by Ron Laytner, Edit International

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ONLY IN AMERICA - Kansas City in Kansas has five of these rather shocking signs looking for work for murder cleaners and Kansas City, Missouri will soon have its own signs. Owner Don McNulty says the signs bring in business, fulfilling a need. Photo Edit International

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[GRAPHIC PHOTO DELETED BY PROF. LIMA]

A young woman is murdered in Houston, Texas and her body left in a shower. A coroner will remove the body. Then Murder Cleaners will remove all traces of the crime. Police Photo from Edit International.

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You don't want to see this space alien type creature coming to your door. This is a Murder Cleaner at work - dressed in a bio hazard suit, boots and gloves with their own breathing air filter system - entering into a former crime scene which has been cleared of bodies but now is ready to be cleaned of any traces of violence. Photo by Ron Laytner, Edit International.