

Chillenden murders: Man convicted of Kent's most horrific murders 'will refuse early release'

Michael Stone, now aged 60, has always professed his innocence

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Michael Stone shouts as he departs from a court in September 2005 (Image: Getty)

The man convicted of committing the Chillenden murders has reportedly vowed to refuse early release until his name is cleared.

Michael Stone was 37 when he was jailed for bludgeoning Dr Lin Russell and her six-year-old daughter Megan to death with a hammer, as well as nine-year-old Josie who survived.

According to reports, Stone could go free as early as July next year but will not seek parole until his conviction is quashed.

He believes Levi Bellfield, who murdered schoolgirl Milly Dowler, was responsible for the attack.

In an exclusive interview with the Mirror, Stone's sister Barbara, 58, said: "He'll only come out if he's proven innocent.

"He won't apply for parole. He wants to clear his name. He has fought since day one. He's not going to give in now."

Stone was given three life sentences after and her daughters were tied up and beaten with a hammer in Chillenden, a village between Deal and Canterbury.

The horrendous incident took place in July 1996 when they were walking home from a school swimming gala.



Lin Russell and her daughters Megan (left) and Josie (right)

They were reported missing by dad Professor Shaun Russell.

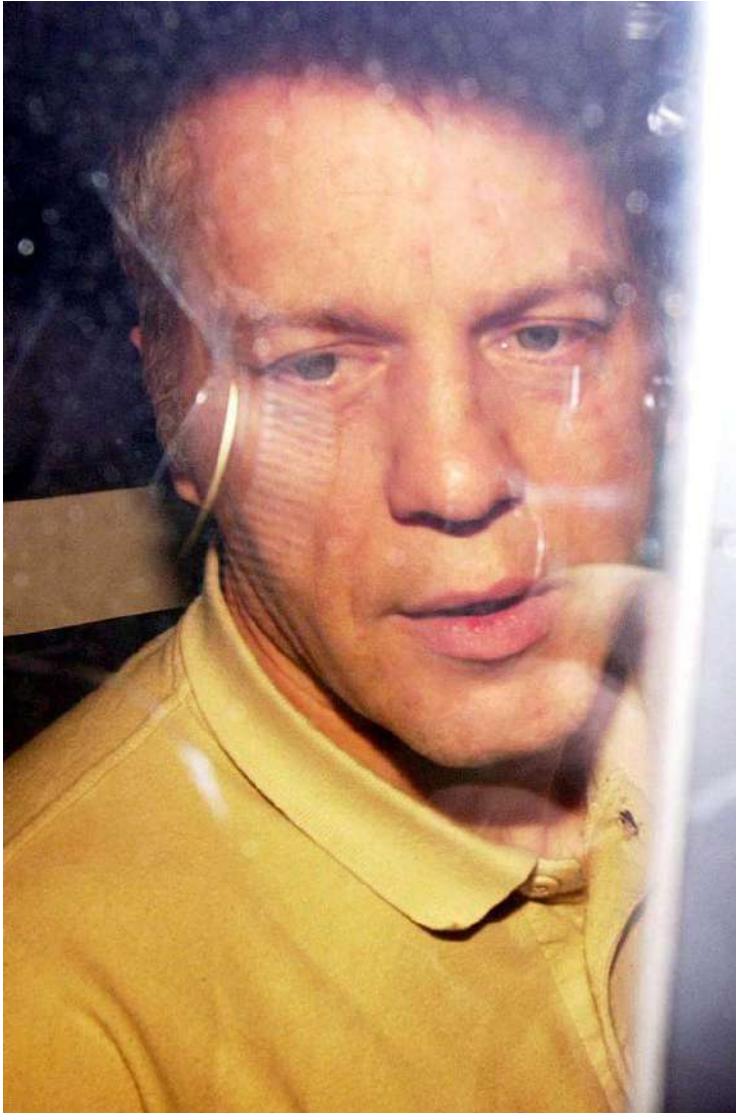
Stone, who had a history of violence and drug abuse, was arrested a year later.

DNA at the scene did not match his, but he was found guilty in 1998 based on evidence from three other prisoners, including pal Damian Daley.

Daley told police Stone had confessed while awaiting trial at Canterbury jail.

Stone was found guilty again at a 2001 retrial, held after one of the three admitted fabricating his account.

The retrial judge ordered he should serve a minimum of 25 years.



Michael Stone was convicted of killing a woman and her daughter

Stone, now 60 and held at HMP Frankland in County Durham, is laying his hopes on a dossier of new evidence his solicitors submitted to the Criminal Cases Review Commission in 2017.

Bellfield, also at HMP Frankland, is serving life for killing Milly Dowler, 13, Marsha McDonnell, 19, and Amelie Delagrang, 22, in South West London between 2002 and 2004. He denies he carried out the Chillenden attack.

Stone's sister Barbara said: "I've been reserved about it but I now think there's every possibility Bellfield did it.



Barbara Stone, sister of Michael Stone (Image: PA)

“He’s always hanging on to our case. Why else would he have an interest?”

Stone’s family say Bellfield’s height and face match descriptions of the killer and an e-fit, and he owned a car similar to one seen in the area.

Barbara said: “His job had taken him across numerous counties. He did go to the area. A man like Bellfield will have undoubtedly committed other crimes.

“I’ve never thought he was guilty. From the word go I was seeing things that were wrong.

“I think he retains just a little bit of faith in the justice system.”

<https://www.kentlive.news/news/kent-news/chillenden-murders-man-convicted-kents-5082035>