

The wild, raunchy past of Foxy Knoxy

by ANDREW MALONE

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Amanda Knox - accused of killing Meredith Kercher - has been portrayed as a blameless girl led astray when she moved to Italy. But as this investigation reveals, she already had a dangerous appetite for drink, drugs and sex ...

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The police officer on duty in his patrol car late one summer evening in Seattle was expecting a quiet shift.

There was nothing to suggest the night would bring anything out of the ordinary.

Then his car radio crackled into life. There was a disturbance at a house near the prestigious University of Washington.

He drove to an area called Greek Row, well known for fraternity parties among rich students letting off steam.

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- Foxy Knoxy changes her story... again



Party girl: Amanda 'Foxy Knoxy' Knox at a college celebration in Seattle

The officer suspected "some kids" were just playing their music too loud, but what he found was no run-of-the-mill summer student party: he later told colleagues it was like a scene from Baghdad.

Gangs of students, high on drink and drugs, were hurling rocks into the road. Cars were swerving to avoid them. Debris littered the road. It was mayhem.

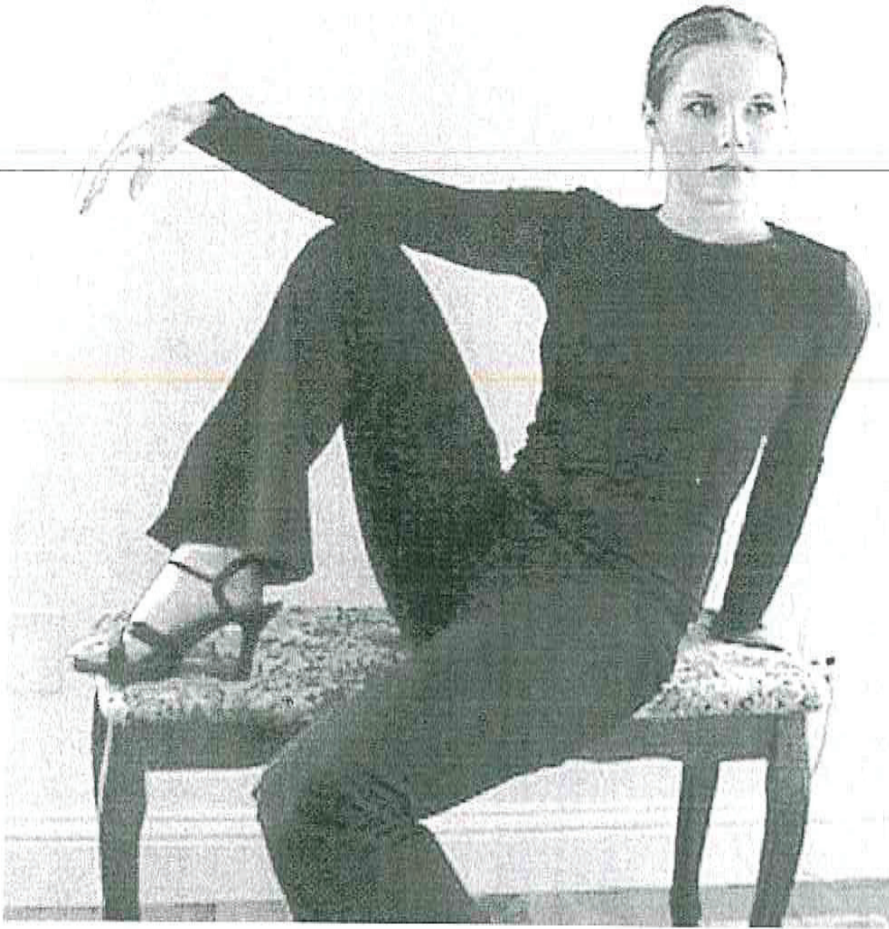
Fearing reprisals, neighbours who had called the police refused to give their names. The police officer called for back-up as the youths began throwing rocks at the windows of houses on the neat, tree-lined streets.

Eventually, after reinforcements had arrived, the students calmed down. Police made only one arrest: the person they held

responsible for the party and the disorder.

Her name? Amanda Knox, or, as she prefers to be known, Foxy Knoxy.

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The 21-year-old American student is facing life behind bars in an Italian jail after the brutal sex-murder five weeks ago of British student Meredith Kercher

Now the same girl has been arrested again, but this time for murder.

For the 21-year-old American student is facing life behind bars in an Italian jail after the brutal sex-murder five weeks ago of British student Meredith Kercher, who had been allocated a room in the same apartment as Knox during a gap year exchange in Perugia.

Four months ago in Seattle, Knox was fined \$269 (£135) at the Municipal Court after the incident - Crime No: 071830624 - and warned that any repeat of her behaviour would lead to much stiffer punishment.



Kercher was found with her throat slashed at the flat she shared with Knox

According to the court records, the first officer on the scene, Patrolman Bender, said the only excuse that Knox gave for her behaviour was that she was moving abroad.

Yet this was not a simple case of mischief at a party getting out of hand: according to police sources, it is rare for a party incident involving a 20 year-old to end up in court unless police believe a serious crime has been committed.

Those present that night say the scenes on the street were as nothing compared to what was going on inside Knox's rented house, less than a mile from where she studied English, German and Italian amid the calm, regulated life at one of America's greatest universities.

It was, according to one party guest, "bedlam, with drink, drugs and bodies everywhere.

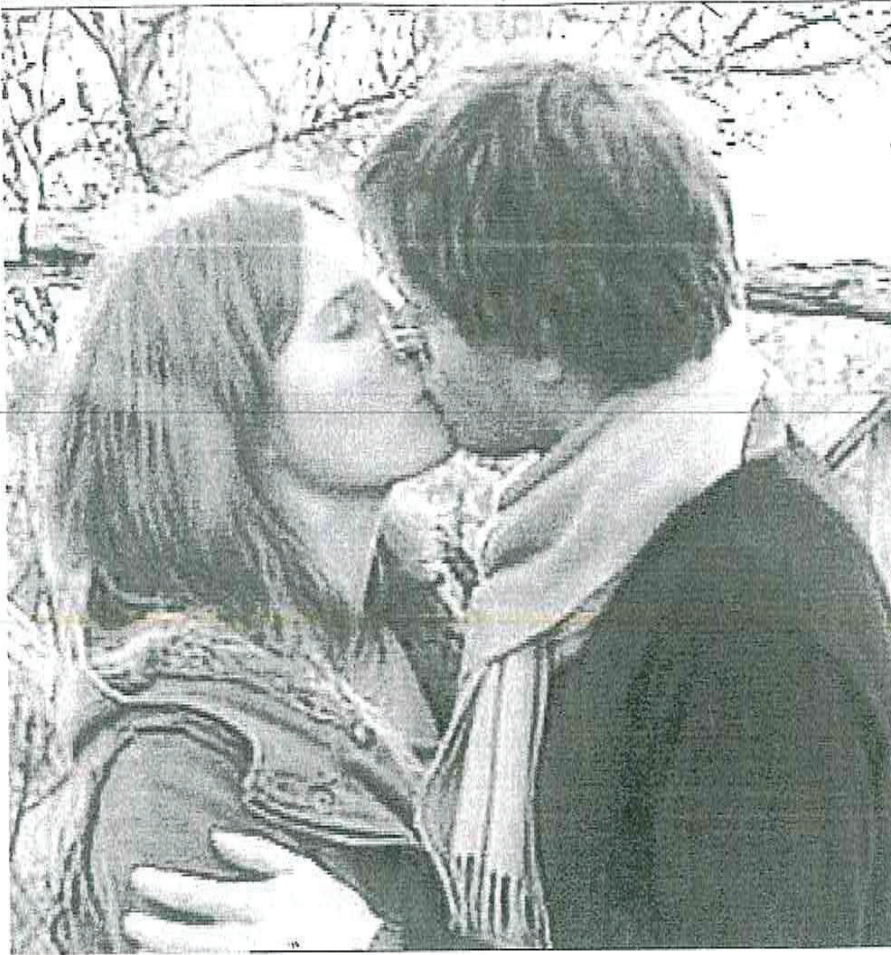
"Some people were naked inside the bedrooms.

"There were people draped over each other.

"I've been to a lot of student parties in my time, but I've never been to a party like that.

"Everyone just wanted to get drunk, get high and get laid. There was also a lot of violence because everyone was so pumped up."

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Knox shares a kiss with boyfriend Raffaele Sollecito

Not surprisingly, Knox's mother was mortified when she discovered that her daughter had received her first criminal conviction, although it was a minor crime compared with what would later transpire in the medieval Italian city of Perugia, when the Leeds University student Meredith Kercher was held down, raped and then murdered by having her throat cut.

After the Seattle disturbance, Amanda assured her mother Edda that the police had been "heavy-handed".

According to a family friend, Edda, a maths teacher, put the incident down to the fecklessness of youth.

But, in fact, that incident was just the first official, public confirmation of what many in Amanda's inner circle already suspected: that the former Catholic choirgirl was an "accident just waiting to happen".

Knox was born in Seattle on ^{July} September 9, 1987, five months after Edda had married William Knox, a decent, upstanding man with a promising career in the retail business ahead of him.

Another girl, Deanna, was born a year later. The family settled in a middle-class suburb in the south of Seattle, a city famous for its waterways, beautiful mountains and low crime rate.

But, sadly, relations between Edda and Bill began to deteriorate. By 1991, her husband had petitioned the Seattle courts for a permanent, legal split, though they remained on cordial terms for the sake of their daughters.

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After enrolling at the University of Washington, she developed what her friends describe as a 'double life'

While Edda worked in a local junior school, Bill was determined "his girls" should have the best possible start in life. Both were sent to the elite Seattle Preparatory School where many of the city's most famous sons and daughters, including the current mayor, had gone.

As might be expected of a school where the fees were £6,000 a year, teaching standards were high and pupils were given every opportunity to try music, sport and debating. With exemplary school reports, Amanda seemed to be destined for a glittering future.

Discipline was, however, strict at this Jesuit institution. Pupils were taught to "work hard and pray hard", and strict codes of dress and behaviour were imposed. Not that this proved a problem for Amanda. According to teachers, she was a model pupil.

Excelling at sports and English, she also joined the school choir, prayed every day and showed no hint of the rebellion and taste for the debauched side of life that would later so spectacularly prove her undoing soon after graduating in 2005.

At the school ceremony, attended by both her parents, the students were told that they must "recognise that the choices and decisions you make have consequences and implications for yourselves and others".

It was a message that Amanda soon forgot.

After enrolling at the University of Washington, she developed what her friends describe as a "double life".

By day, she was a caring and conscientious student, often found in the university study rooms.

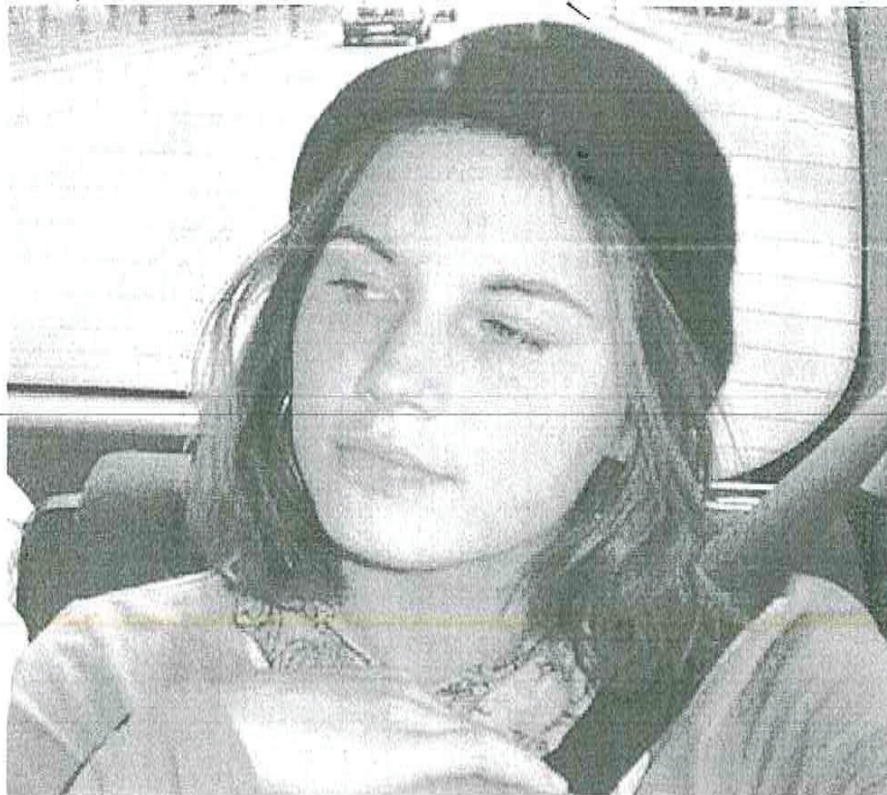
She was, according to friends, glad to have finally left home.

She had been deeply unsettled by the fact that her mother, always so conservative and supportive, had struck up a relationship with a man young enough to be Amanda's brother.

To the shock of their neighbours, Edda at the age of 39 married 27-year-old Christopher Mellas in 2002.

Amanda was 14. Some speculate that this is when the seeds of Amanda's self-destructive behaviour were sown, even though it was not until she had finally left home that she got the opportunity to break free and rebel - with disastrous consequences.

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Within hours of arriving in Rome, she e-mailed a former Washington University student, writing excitedly of having sex with a stranger on a train.

Although achieving top grades at university, she had started smoking potent 'skunk' cannabis regularly and declared to friends that her favourite "poison" was vodka.

But there was a crucial difference between Amanda's behaviour and that of her fellow students.

"We all like to smoke a bit of pot and go out and get trashed at the weekends," one student who stayed in the same halls of residence as Amanda recalled last week.

"But she *really* used drink and drugs.

"By that, I mean she didn't just take stuff to get high and have fun.

"It was like she wanted to get away from herself, as if she had some sort of chemical imbalance she could only cope with by getting wasted."

She also developed a deep, abiding desire for casual sex.

"She was - how can I put it - very friendly, outgoing and bubbly to all men she came into contact with," said Philip Setran, a medical student, who shared a dormitory with Amanda.

"She had what in polite terms you'd call a lot of close male friends."

Others were more blunt, calling her a "man-eater".

She moved in circles more traditionally associated with male students, hanging out with the local football team, climbing surrounding mountains with men and competing aggressively with other women who strayed into her social circle.

With such a lifestyle it was hardly surprising that she hated the strictures of dormitory living.

In 2006, she rented a house in Greek Row, an area traditionally home to football "jocks" and all-male fraternity houses, where she could also escape the alcohol rules of the university accommodation.

"She just went wild," said an acquaintance.

"It was like the brakes were let off. She started smoking pot in the mornings before class and then partying at night. Even by student standards, she was wilder than hell."

As her taste for excess intensified Knox told friends she could not wait to escape Seattle.

Fed-up with American drinking laws that meant, even aged 20, she could not go to bars to meet men for another year, she was thrilled when she was selected as an Erasmus scholar to study in Italy.

Europe, sexual freedom, and unlimited drugs and alcohol beckoned.

Setran says: "I think she couldn't wait to get away."

Her last act in Seattle was to throw that summer party in Greek Row - and collect a criminal record for it.

Yet this did not persuade Amanda to ease off on her party lifestyle.

Within hours of arriving in Rome, she e-mailed a former Washington University student, writing excitedly of having sex with a stranger on a train.

Arriving in Perugia, she also liked what she saw, e-mailing another friend that the party scene was "great" and beginning a series of one-night stands with Italian men.

She also reputedly boasted to one friend in Seattle that she "could have any man she wanted" - and set about proving it.

According to friends of Meredith Kercher, the steady stream of men Amanda brought home caused tensions between the English girl and the American.

Knox also cultivated cannabis plants around the apartment and would smoke her first joint before she got dressed in the morning. There were rumours that Meredith had accused Knox of taking money from a drawer.

At the same time, she also indulged her talents for creative writing.

First, she posted a story on her MySpace page about how a young man drugs and rapes a young woman after remarking that "chicks just don't know what they want".

More recently, she has written page after page of notes to police about the night Meredith died, saying she wasn't at home, that a black bar owner called Patrick did it and that her Italian boyfriend Raffaele Sollecito came into her house with blood on his hands.

But police say a bloody fingerprint found at the murder scene belonged to Knox.

Three suspects are in custody in connection with the murder: Knox, Sollecito, 23, and Rudy Hermann Guede, 20, who is awaiting extradition from Germany. He is an Ivory Coast citizen but was brought up in Italy.

A fourth, Congolese bar owner Diya 'Patrick' Lumumba, 38, was released last week.

Police believe Meredith died after being forced into a drug-fuelled sex game. Her throat had been cut three times and she had bled to death after being locked inside her own room.

Could it all have been prevented if more notice had been taken of the warning signs about Knox's increasingly erratic behaviour in Seattle? It seems unlikely.

The university says it had no indication of anything being wrong.

A spokesman for the university's police force last night insisted Knox had not been guilty of even a "single traffic violation" during her time there.

Any mention of the party in June at which Knox was arrested elicits a flat response.

Norm Arkins, head of public relations at the university, said: "I cannot tell you anything about Amanda."

"I cannot tell you what grades she got, what course she studied, whether she was a good student or bad. I will not discuss anything about this student or anything about her life. End of story."

But, sadly, it is not the end of the story. The student with whom the University of Seattle can find no fault is languishing in a cell in a women's prison awaiting trial.

And a British family is left to mourn the brutal death of their beautiful daughter, who, it seems, died for no other reason than that she had the terrible misfortune to find herself sharing an apartment with 'Foxy' Knoxy.

Comments (7)

"To the shock of their neighbours, Edda at the age of 39 married 27-year-old Christopher Mellas in 2002."

Thats not shocking,only maybe in the hypocritic dark underbelly of America.

Click to rate Rating (0)

- Mike, cambridge, england, 01/12/2007 01:49

When I was her age, I loved being stoned out of my head, was a "man-eater", hung out in sleazy places & was very wild & depressed. But I was also kind, thoughtful & a peace loving person. The wild life style does not mean you will become a bad person. Even "good" so-called upright people have been murderers & worse.

Click to rate Rating 4

- Joy, london, 01/12/2007 01:35

No matter who dealt the final blow which killed Meredith, this girl Amanda has blood on her hands and must be in some part, held responsible. In some way she has contributed to Meredith's death and has so much to answer for!

Click to rate Rating 5

- Janet, N. Ireland, 01/12/2007 00:38

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