Last week, Times staff writer Sheryl James won the 1991 Pulitzer Prize in feature writing for a gift abandoned, a four-part series published Feb. 18-21, 1990, in the Floridian. In this special souvenir section, we’re reprinting the series, plus an epilogue that updates this compelling human story that won journalism’s highest honor.

ST. PETERSBURG TIMES

Jack-in-the-box

Melinda rushed across the street to her apartment. Inside her mother, Lisa Nowell, was watching Nightly News on television. She looked up as her daughter ran in. The girl was almost hysterical. Melinda told her mother what they had found.

Call 911. Lisa Nowell ran. She told Ryan to bring the box in, but Ryan said, “I can’t look at it! I can’t look at it!”

His mother walked across the street, brought the box back and laid it in her living room floor. A licensed practical nurse, she checked the baby’s vital signs. Melinda was too upset to speak plainly on the phone. Her mother took the receiver.

The baby was a boy, she told the 911 operator. His color was good, but she didn’t seem to have any respiratory problems. His mother, whoever she was, must have cut off the umbilical cord and not had the baby in the hospital.

An ambulance was on the way, and Melinda ran around to have a sip of coffee from her neighbors, who had 1-year-old twins. Lisa carefully wrapped the child in it; the diaper nearly covered her head, reaching from her knees up to her chin. It made him look even more pitiful. Lisa thought, as she picked him up and wrapped him in a flat blanket.

She rocked and talked softly to the baby. The ambulance arrived within minutes—her son. Lisa. She left the house and held the baby forever.

The emergency services technicians, a man and a woman, came in. They checked the baby and fixed all questions. Who delivered the baby? Did someone know? They seemed a little cold, Lisa thought. She placed the baby on the armchair. She was working on the stories. The last sentence got the difficulty into the ambulance and the ambulance got the difficulty into the story.

By then, things were hectic. Police lights flashed outside. Officers came to knock on the Nowell’s door. Reports and television cameras crammed around lights with microphones and notebook. Neighbors crowded to see. Everybody was asking questions. The same questions.

Who was the mother? The University of South Florida was small; was she a student, afraid of her parents, deserted by her boyfriend? How many men did she think she was? She might be running away. Some said.

God only knew what was going on in her mind. Lisa Nowell couldn’t believe how bad her life could be.

Detective Dennis Mulholland of the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office got to the scene soon after the baby was found. By talking to the Nowells, he and other detectives swung into action. Speed was important. The baby had been just given birth. She was most valuable to live. Perhaps in the years, right now.

Hillsborough County Health Department clerks were asked to look out for any white, female under 20. Meanwhile, officers knocked on neighboring door. Have you seen any pregnant girl lately? They asked. Do you know any young women who are expecting?

Continued on next page.
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One person said there was a gorgeous woman who was her mother. She said that she was her father. She said that she was her sister. She said that she was her brother. She said that she was her friend. She said that she was her enemy. She said that she was her soulmate. She said that she was her twin. She said that she was her opposite. She said that she was her mirror. She said that she was her reflection. She said that she was her shadow. She said that she was her self. She said that she was her other. She said that she was her alter ego. She said that she was her alter spirit. She said that she was her alter soul. She said that she was her alter heart. She said that she was her alter mind. She said that she was her alter body. She said that she was her alter voice. She said that she was her alter touch. She said that she was her alter taste. She said that she was her alter smell. She said that she was her alter thought. She said that she was her alter action. She said that she was her alter reaction. She said that she was her alter emotion. She said that she was her alter reason. She said that she was her alter will. She said that she was her alter spirit. She said that she was her alter will. She said that she was her alter soul. She said that she was her alter heart. She said that she was her alter mind. She said that she was her alter body. She said that she was her alter voice. She said that she was her alter touch. She said that she was her alter taste. She said that she was her alter smell. She said that she was her alter thought. She said that she was her alter action. She said that she was her alter reaction. She said that she was her alter emotion. She said that she was her alter reason. She said that she was her alter will. She said that she was her alter spirit. She said that she was her alter will. She said that she was her alter soul. She said that she was her alter heart. She said that she was her alter mind. She said that she was her alter body. She said that she was her alter voice. She said that she was her alter touch. She said that she was her alter taste. She said that she was her alter smell. She said that she was her alter thought. She said that she was her alter action. She said that she was her alter reaction. She said that she was her alter emotion. She said that she was her alter reason. She said that she was her alter will. She said that she was her alter spirit. She said that she was her alter will. She said that she was her alter soul. She said that she was her alter heart. She said that she was her alter mind. She said that she was her alter body. She said that she was her alter voice. She said that she was her alter touch. She said that she was her alter taste. She said that she was her alter smell. She said that she was her alter thought. She said that she was her alter action. She said that she was her alter reaction. She said that she was her alter emotion. She said that she was her alter reason. She said that she was her alter will. She said that she was her alter spirit.
Winners of the Pulitizer Prize for Feature Writing

Love me, don't leave me!

By Sheilie James

Two days ago, Detective Dennis Halberg and Larry Lingo were frustrated. Ten days after a nine-month-old baby boy was abandoned at a Temple Terrace apartment complex, they had few clues about the mother. A box of evidence, found in a dumpster near where the baby was abandoned, was addressed to Hallmark Packaging in Tampa. A detective who interviewed Hallmark's receptionist noted in his report that she was astir, agitated, and should be interviewed again.

The baby, an 850.1x1404.0 image of the page of a document, contains text that describes the events surrounding the abandoned baby. The text mentions detectives, interviews, a dumpster, and a box of evidence. The detective who interviewed the Hallmark receptionist noted that the baby was astir, agitated, and should be interviewed again.

The text also mentions that the baby was found in a dumpster near an apartment complex. The detectives were frustrated with the lack of clues about the mother. They had evidence in a box found in the dumpster, but the receptionist at Hallmark Packaging was described as agitated and should be interviewed again.

The text continues to describe the detectives' frustration and the efforts to find the mother. It mentions that the baby was abandoned and that there were few clues about the mother. The detectives were looking for any information that could help them identify the mother.

The text concludes with a mention of the baby's condition and the detectives' determination to find the mother and the baby's story. It notes that the baby was found in a dumpster, and the detectives were working to gather more information and find the mother.

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**Love me, don't leave me!**

A match. A trial. Why did they stay? Why did the baby remain standing? She didn't act stupid, agitated, or fearful. A little scream, a little noise, and the baby had been abandoned. Larry Lingo didn't tell her where she had found the apartment complex or the baby.

Lingo retraced his steps around the house with Halberg. They looked at the storage, the boxes, the towels, the linens. Larry walked with the detectives. They finished in the bedroom. All three faced one another, standing in an awkward triangle: the two detectives, Lingvo with silver hair, Halberg a sandy blond, both wearing suits and ties, both shaggy, both gray, both agitated.

Kitten talked endlessly. Halberg explained in what they had found in the dumpster. The baby was found standing on her own, her arm was around her side. A few minutes later, another man on the drawing board. Larry Lingvo and Halberg stood in the doorway. Their faces had changed. Half their faces were like the one in the house. A kitten turned to the other, the woman, and said, "Well, I guess all well y the baby is mine."
**Day Two: ‘Love me, don’t leave me’**

TUESDAY, May 18, 1920

**The MEETING:** George Crockett, who lived in the adjoining apartment, issued a statement of the duresses which he and his wife, Beatrice, had been "drilled" into. [Text continues on page 4.]

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**The MEETING:** Mrs. Crockett, who lived in the adjoining apartment, issued a statement of what had been drilled into her and her husband. [Text continues on page 4.]
I was a stranger, Lewis T. Rucker, to the family of Morgan Cochran. Their next-door neighbor, Judy Pemberton, had been married, and was planning to abandon her body in a box next to a plastic surgeon. She went out to visit, and was charged with child abuse and abandonment. She went to jail and was released on bail and returned home to Russell Hayes, the baby's father. Meanwhile, the baby stayed in state custody.

By SHERRY JAMES

The baby was abandoned in a box near a dumpster on April 27, 1988. On May 8, an anonymous call led detectives to Judy Pemberton, 42, who was arrested and charged with child abuse and abandonment. She went to jail and was released on bail and returned home to Russell Hayes, the baby's father. Meanwhile, the baby stayed in state custody.


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taken the stand


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In the case of quando, "we all know that you can't replace what is lost."

"When I look around this room, I see the faces of all those who have helped us to achieve this goal," said Judge Judy. "It is a special day for me and my family."

"I am honored to be here today, surrounded by so many people who have supported me throughout my career."

"I want to thank my team, my family, and my friends for their unwavering support."

"I am committed to continuing my work, and I hope that you will join me in this journey."

"Thank you for being here today."

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**Chemical Reactions**

**The Journey Continues...**

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**The Final Verdict**

"I am proud of the work that we have done."

"We have made a difference in the lives of so many people."

"I am grateful for the opportunity to serve."

"I look forward to the next chapter of my journey."

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**Closing Remarks**

"Thank you for your attention."

"I hope that you will continue to support me in my work."

"I am ready to move forward."

---

**The Final Words**

"I am proud of what we have accomplished."

"I am grateful for the opportunity to serve."

"I look forward to the next chapter of my journey."

"Thank you for your attention."

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**The Final Thoughts**

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Judgment Day

Judy Percy abandoned her baby in a box April 27, 1989, at her apartment complex. Judy said neither she nor her baby’s father, Russell Hayes, knew she was pregnant. Judy’s lawyers were hoping to use an insanity defense at her trial.

But on Aug. 21, Hillborough Circuit Judge Harry V. Thomas ruled out that option. On Aug. 22, Judy appeared as the only witness in her defense.

By SHERRY JAMES
PORT COEUR VALLEY

TEMPLE TERRACE

July 29, Trial of Judy D. James, 35, arrested for murder, Judge Harry V. Thomas, 3rd Circuit Park Indicted Judy for her murder's death, James said the victim was her own child. She and her child were the only ones there.

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是因为奔腾的激流，领略到的不仅仅是风景，而是人生。"她说。她微笑着低头看着手中的相册，数着那些老照片，每一张照片背后都有一个故事。她的眼中闪烁着光芒，仿佛在诉说着那些过去。

"我永远不会忘记那个夏天，我和朋友们一起在海边度假。我们在沙滩上玩耍，感受着海风的轻拂，听着浪花的拍打。那是我生命中最美好的时光之一。"她继续说，眼神中充满了回忆。

"我们还曾经一起去过那个古老的小镇，那里有一幢幢精美的建筑和一条条狭窄的小巷。我们沿着小巷走走停停，探索着每一个角落。我记得我们在一家小咖啡馆里品尝了当地的美食，那里的咖啡和蛋糕至今还让我回味无穷。"她的话语中充满了温馨和怀念。

"而今，那个小镇已经变成了一个热门的旅游景点，到处都是来自世界各地的游客。但我相信，那里的魅力依旧存在，只是以另一种方式呈现。"她的眼神中透露出一种深深的感慨。

"尽管时光荏苒，岁月如梭，但我依旧怀念着那些过去的时光。因为它们是我生命中最宝贵的财富，是我成长的见证。"她的话语中充满了感慨和珍惜。

"我希望有一天，我可以再次回到那个小镇，再次见到那些曾经的朋友，再次品尝那些美味的食物。因为那些美好的回忆，是我生命中最宝贵的财富。"她的话语中充满了期待和希望。

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