

Retired Bodyguard, Private Investigator and Author Maureen Hughes Recently Featured on Close Up Radio

RANTOUL, IL, UNITED STATES, June 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- True crime fans looking for their next obsession this summer can clear a shelf for Maureen Hughes. A retired bodyguard and private investigator, her real-life cases read like the most gripping fiction on the market. Except every word is true.

Hughes has spent decades chasing down cold cases, cracking open conspiracies and naming names that most investigators would rather leave alone. Her books pull back the curtain on mob hits, political murders, drug-running operations and one of the most studied assassinations in American history. And she has the death threats to prove it.



A graduate with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, Hughes originally planned to become an attorney. Wanting to understand the law from every angle, she worked as a police officer and later as a hospital investigator, looking into suspicious injuries, possible abuse cases and crime victims brought in for treatment. That hospital job led to one of the most unusual assignments of her career.

Guarding a Countess, Uncovering a Hit Man

While working overnight security for a wealthy female patient at the hospital, Hughes was assigned to protect the Countess Marajen Stevick Chinigo who happened to own newspapers and radio stations. The two did not get along at first. But over the course of several nights, the countess opened up. What Hughes eventually uncovered became the basis for her book "The

Countess and the Mob."

The countess had been married to John "Handsome Johnny" Roselli, a hit man connected to Al Capone's Chicago operation and later relocated to California. Hughes' research traced Roselli's movements on a single night in November 1963, when he was ordered to Dallas. Hughes is convinced Roselli was one of the shooters that day, and her book lays out the case in detail.

Along the way, she interviewed former Tropicana showgirls, including one meeting that involved a blindfolded ride in a black limousine to Los Angeles. She also spoke with figures such as author Joe Wambaugh, John Grisham and his wife, and actor Harrison Ford, all of whom had known the countess personally.

"Sins of the South" and a Confession Forty Years in the Making

Hughes' next book, "Sins of the South" tackles the death of Lester "Shot" Winchester, a nightclub owner and the father of a former Illinois state representative. Winchester's club once hosted Louis Armstrong, a very young Perry Como and other top performers of the era. His death was ruled a suicide. The three bullet holes in his car suggested otherwise.

After reading "The Countess and the Mob," the state representative showed up at Hughes' door and asked her to find the truth about his father. Hughes spent roughly two years digging through transcripts and interviewing reluctant sources in southern Illinois, where she said local officials worked hard to keep her away from the records. A handful of brave insiders helped her access what she needed.

The case cracked open when an elderly man called her out of the blue. He had been a teenager when he was hired to drive two men to the scene of the killing, a secret he carried for more than seventy years. His tearful confession confirmed what Hughes already suspected. Winchester was murdered.

"River of Shame" and a New Theory on the King Assassination

In "River of Shame," Hughes investigates organized crime in Quincy, Illinois, a Mississippi River town with riverboat gambling, prostitution and a local godfather with national reach. "River of Shame" also makes the case that James Earl Ray did not shoot Martin Luther King Jr.

Hughes traveled to Memphis, stood on the balcony where King was killed and examined the rooming house from which Ray supposedly fired. The angles, she explains, do not work. The Quincy godfather, however, was in Memphis that same day, in a room on another street, with a clear line of sight.

A Career Built on Word of Mouth

Hughes does not advertise her investigative services. Every case has come to her by referral, often from families and communities who feel law enforcement has given up. She asks only for a modest retainer to cover gas, lodging and meals for two weeks, and she returns the money if she cannot deliver results.

About Maureen Hughes

Maureen Hughes is a retired bodyguard, private investigator and true-crime author based in Champaign, Illinois. She holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and has worked as a police officer, hospital investigator and personal security detail for high-profile clients. Hughes is the author of "The Countess and the Mob," "Sins of the South" and "River of Shame," each rooted in original investigative research, witness interviews and documents obtained through years of persistent work. Her cases are taken on by word-of-mouth referral.

Close Up Radio featured Maureen Hughes, retired bodyguard, private investigator and author, in an interview with Jim Masters on Thursday June 25th at 3pm Eastern

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For more information about Maureen Hughes, please visit <https://countessmaureen.com/>

Lou Ceparano

Close Up Television & Radio

+ +1 631-850-3314

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