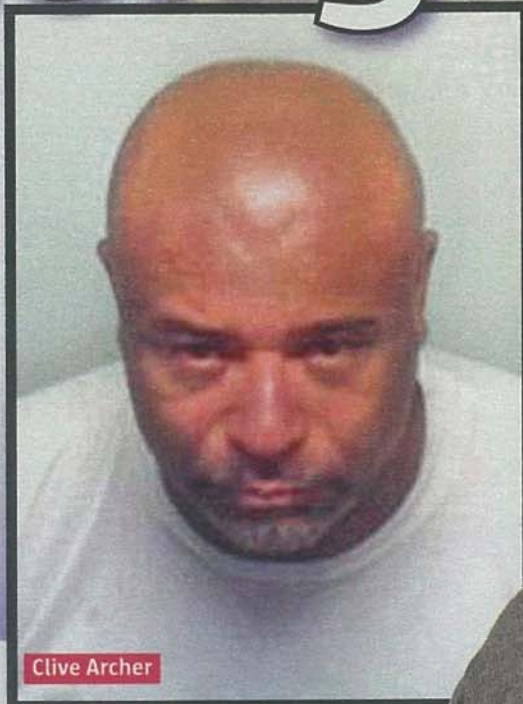


R LIVES: Countdown to a killing

'Tonight, you will DIE at nine'



as being held hostage by my own boyfriend and as the minutes ticked by, I began to wonder they would be my last.
Jane Sargeant, 40



Clive Archer



Me



A letter arrived

He was big and burly, and he looked like the kind of man you wouldn't want to run into on a dark night. But in reality, my friend Clive Archer was more of the giant than a raging bull. He was always cooking for me and doing little things to surprise me. One evening he said: 'Go on, there's something for you.' I went up to find he'd run me a bath and scattered rose petals in the

before, Jane.'

'Oh,' I said. 'What for?'

He replied: 'Someone was threatening one of my children and we got into a fight.'

I was very close to my daughter and could understand him defending his family. So I put it to the back of my mind. After all, Clive was never violent towards me.

In fact, he was very protective.

When I went out with friends, he'd often appear in the pub too.

At first I didn't mind but then I noticed he was showing up every time I went out without him.

If I made a phone call he wanted to know who I was talking to. And when I was putting out my washing, he told me: 'Don't hang your underwear on the line — I don't want everyone seeing it.'

We'd been together just three months. I realised Clive wasn't being protective. He was becoming possessive. So I made a decision.

The next time I saw him, I'd tell him I wanted to slow things down.

A few days later, Clive invited me over to his place for dinner.

I arrived at his flat and he invited me in.

But as soon as I stepped through the gate at the entrance he locked and bolted it behind me.

I wondered why.

Inside, we sat down at the table to eat. I took a mouthful

of food but when I looked up, Clive was staring at me.

'What's wrong?' I asked.

He replied: 'I've lost you, haven't I?'

His tone was flat and his expression was blank. I started to feel panicky.

I said: 'You haven't lost me but I should be getting home.'

Clive got to his feet and then I heard a crack as he punched me in the face, knocking me off my chair.

I lay on the floor, too shocked to say anything or scream.

Eventually I managed to gasp: 'What are you doing?'

He pinned me down with one hand and ripped my clothes off with the other. Then he threw a pile of his own clothes all over the floor.

'Fold these up,' he said.

I crawled around on all fours

picking them up. I was wearing only my knickers and I was shivering with fear and cold.

Clive stood over me and every time I finished folding the clothes, he hit me and said: 'Not good enough. Start again.'

All the time, his eyes were completely blank. There was no expression — not even anger.

It was as if he was a completely different person.

Then he flung all his CDs on to the bed.

He said: 'Pick some music to put on.'

But every time I selected a CD, he

punched me in the face, saying: 'That's not the one I wanted.'

'You're not going to lose me,' I said. 'We're fine. Please.'

He forced my legs apart and took pictures with his mobile phone. My face burnt with shame. Then he tried to

touch me but I pulled away.

'You owe me,' he shouted.

I said: 'I'm not having sex with you.'

Then he pointed to the kitchen clock. It was 8pm. He'd been holding me captive for three hours.

He said: 'You're going to die tonight. At nine o'clock.'

He picked up a kitchen knife, grabbed me by the throat and sliced a gash in my cheek.

I thought: *This is it. He's really going to kill me.*

I pictured my daughter and my grandchildren. I could hear my daughter's voice telling me: *You can get through this, Mum. You've been through bad things before.*

'Please,' I begged Clive, 'I want to see my grandchildren grow up!'

My chest was heaving as I tried to speak through my tears.

I was racking my brains for a way out. I knew that even if I got out of the door I'd never get over the locked gate.

Then, out of the corner of my

eye, I noticed something.

My phone was lying on the floor. It must have dropped out of my pocket when Clive hit me. I realised that I would have just one chance.

As he threw more CDs on the bed, I grabbed the phone and hid it down the back of my knickers.

'I need to use the toilet,' I told him.

He grabbed me by the arm and led me into the bathroom at knife-point.

He pushed me down on to the toilet seat and said: 'There you go.'

'I can't do it like this,' I told him.

He turned the light off. I could feel the blade of the knife against my neck.

'Just let me have a minute,' I said.

He slammed the door and I heard him go into the kitchen. I grabbed the phone and with trembling fingers rang 999.

The call was answered and before the operator could speak, I said as quietly as I could: 'Help me. Help me.'

I hid the phone under the bath mat, hoping the call had connected properly and that the police could

trace it.

As I came out of the bathroom, Clive grabbed me and said: 'You're going to die at nine.'

By now, the hands of the clock had reached half-past eight.

I thought: *Half an hour left.*

Clive threw me on to the bed and stomped around,

punching the walls like a maniac. It was as if he was psyching himself up to kill me, and all the time the clock was

counting down the minutes to my death.

I prayed the police would come in time.

The clock reached 20 minutes to, then quarter to. When there was just 10 minutes left I gave up.

And then I heard sirens. Moments later a voice shouted: 'Clive Archer — come out with your hands in the air. You have 10 seconds to open the gate or we're coming in.'

Clive told me: 'Don't you dare tell them what happened. Say it was an argument.'

I ran outside and collapsed in front of the gate. Clive was led away and a female officer wrapped me in her coat. We went back inside and she helped me find my clothes.

I went into shock. I couldn't believe what had happened.

In the days that followed, I could barely sleep. Every time I saw the kitchen clock, it reminded me of that feeling of helplessness.

I couldn't bear to be alone in my flat in Medway, Kent, and had to stay with my daughter.

In time, Clive Archer, 45, of Magpie Hall Road, Chatham, Kent, appeared at Maidstone Crown Court. He pleaded guilty to false imprisonment, making threats to kill and actual bodily harm.

He was sentenced to serve a minimum of 20 months in prison.

The court was told

he had 28 previous convictions and had been jailed four years earlier for wounding with intent. If I'd known about his past, I'd never have got involved with him.

It was a relief to see Clive jailed but I couldn't get over what he'd done to me.

One morning a letter arrived at my home. When I opened it and saw who it was from, I felt sick.

It read: *I miss you baby. It's lonely without you by my side. Every day I think of you. Even when I'm sleeping I dream of you...*

It was from Clive. He made no mention of the attack and didn't offer any apology.

Instead, he said I should write to him and asked for my phone number.

On the back of the letter he wrote a poem:

*They say there is a reason
They say that time will heal
But never far or reason
Will ever change the way I feel*

Now I've started seeing someone else but it's going to take me a long time to trust again. I'm thinking of moving away to a place where no one knows me. It's the only way I will feel safe.

'Don't you dare tell them what happened'

Here it happened



Me now

Tell your true-life story. Help yourself or a charity. See page 4 for details.