1. **Background on Victim - Susan Burris Smith McFarland**
   1. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Susan McFarland is 43 years old and born in Webster Groves, MO (suburb of St Louis, MO). [Source 1]
   2. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Susan is the youngest of four children born to Allen H. “Huck” Smith, retired FBI agent who died in 1994 and Mary Mitchell Smith who died in February 2002. [Source 1].
   3. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, friends describe Susan as “an outgoing, organized and dedicated professional who enjoys dinner parties, gallery openings and society events, such as the Veiled Prophet Ball”. [Source 4]
   4. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Susan attended Webster Groves High School, where she graduated in 1977. Susan was on the student council and the Pep and French Clubs. [Source 4]
   5. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Susan went on to attend William Woods College in Fulton, MO, where she graduated with a degree in accounting in 1981. [Source 4]
   6. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Susan worked for an oil company in Amarillo, where she got her CPA. She then worked for the former Enron Corp in Houston before returning to St. Louis in 1987 to work for Southwestern Bell (now SBC Communications), where she is now an account manager. [Source 4]
   7. SBC Communications moved its headquarters to San Antonio TX in February of 1993, at which time Susan moved to the suburbs of Terrell Hills, a suburb of San Antonio. [Source 1]
   8. According to Susan’s obituary in San Antonio Express-News, Susan was a “bright, high-spirited woman with an innate willingness to do for others. Known for her infectious laughter and her mischievous sense of humor, Susan inspired warmth, friendship and inclusion in everyone to know her. Susan’s special sense of style equaled her natural ability to negotiate”. [Source 10]
   9. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the victim was the wife of the perpetrator, Richard McFarland. [Source 1]

1. **Background on Perpetrator - Richard Marvin McFarland**
   1. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Richard is 45 years old and born in Webster Groves, MO (suburb of St Louis, MO). [Source 1]
   2. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Richard is one of three sons born to Richard L. and Ramona McFarland of Kirkwood. Richard’s father worked at Monsanto Co. and the family lived in Webster Groves while the boys were growing up. [Source 4]
   3. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Richard graduated from Webster Groves High School in 1975, where he played water polo, worked on the school newspaper, Echo, and worked on the stage crew for plays. [Source 4]
   4. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Richard continued to graduate from Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield in 1980 with a degree in business. [Source 4]
   5. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, early in his career, Richard was a self-employed computer graphics artist. [Source 1]
   6. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, friends and relatives stated that since 1987 Richard was employed by more than 10 brokerage, sales and telemarketing jobs while Susan was making her way up the ladder at SBC Communications. Most of the last year, it was said that Richard stayed home with the kids. [Source 4]
   7. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Richard was said to be reserved according to high school friends. [Source 4]

**Susan and Richard’s Marriage/Family**

* 1. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the couple was married in 1989 at Webster Groves Presbyterian Church. [Source 2]
  2. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, together the couple had 3 boys, ages 11, 9, and 5 at the time of Susan’s disappearance. [Source 1]
  3. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, when Susan met Richard, he was a stockbroker who was active in the St. Louis Squires and Ladies. The couple enjoyed the same social circles and events. [Source 4]
  4. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Alison Tatlow, a friend of Susans’ from college, stated she and friends were surprised when Susan began dating Richard. She said, “Sue is like a superwoman, very productive, very efficient, a very take-charge person, and Rick wasn’t like that at all”. Alison continues to state “But we thought maybe he was the yin to her yang. He treated her like a queen. She wanted to get married and have kids”. [Source 4]

1. **Leading up to Susan’s disappearance/murder**
   1. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, close friend Dee Ann Dowlen, of Amarillo, Texas stated “On Nov. 13th, she called me and said ‘I just can’t take this anymore. He won’t pull his load. He lets the kids wander off. I’ve asked him to get a job and he won’t’”. [Source 4]
   2. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, friends stated that by the fall, Susan had told them she had lost her faith in Richard’s ability as a father. [Source 4]
   3. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, relatives stated Susan had just seen an attorney early that day on November 25th of 2002, with plans to meet her attorney the next morning. [Source 4]
   4. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Harley Smith, Susan’s brother, stated that Susan has been contemplating divorce for more than a year. She had talked to her husband about the possibility but did not tell him about her plans to file in court. [Source 2]
   5. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Susan instructed family and friends not to say anything to Richard about her plans to divorce him. However, Harley stated someone had hacked into her work voicemail and email in the days prior to her disappearance. [Source 2]
2. **Susan disappears and investigation begins**
   1. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Terrell Hills police found Susan’s 1997 black Ford Explorer at 3:00 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day, November 28th of 2002 a few miles from the couple’s home. They found the keys in the ignition. [Source 4]
   2. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, once Richard was contacted by police about the missing vehicle, he said he would call them back and asked them not to come to his house. [Source 4]
   3. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Richard McFarland came into the police station fifteen hours later to pick up the car keys and file a missing person report. He did not retrieve the Explorer at that time. [Source 4]
   4. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Richard told the police he had not seen his wife in four days. She was supposed to have gone to Amarillo, 700 miles north, to see friend Dee Ann Dowlen. Richard said he had last seen his wife around 9:30 pm on Monday, November 25th of 2002. [Source 4]
   5. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, on Friday, November 29th of 2002, a neighbor informed police that she had found a SUV in her empty garage that was not familiar to her. She was in the process of moving. [Source 1]
   6. According to court documents, the neighbor looked inside the suburban and located a black wallet. She looked inside the wallet and observed items with the name Richard McFarland on them. The neighbor stated to police that there were gasoline cans, insecticide bottles and bags of charcoal inside the garage. She stated that these items did not belong to her. She further stated that these items were not in the garage on November 28th of 2002. The neighbor also advised that a pair of pruning shears was missing from the garage. [Source 15]
   7. According to court documents, upon inspection through the window, police saw a map, two unopened Bounty paper towel rolls, and two plastic shopping bags in the front passenger seat area. The plastic shopping bags contained numerous packages of Band-Aids. Police also observed a Sprite soda box on the floorboard and an open Sprite soda can in the center console. Police observed a large plastic bag on the second-row seat. The plastic bag contained a pair of brown shoes, a blue shirt, a pair of boxer shorts, a roll of plastic, several plastic bags, a roll of gray duct tape and a roll of paper towels. Police observed a large wicker type basket on the second-row seat. (Police observed a similar basket on the back porch of the residence located at 351 Arcadia Place.) The basket contained a multi-colored shirt, newspapers and a plastic bag. The plastic bag contained a plastic organizer folder. The organizer folder contained a black wallet and a document with Compass bank written on it. Police observed several plastic mats and a green military style shovel in the rear area of the suburban. Police observed an apparent blood smear on the rear bumper below the license plate. [Source 15]
   8. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the Suburban had been for sale at a service station near their home and Richard McFarland had taken it for a test drive on November 20th of 2002. [Source 4]
   9. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the vehicle was reported stolen from a gas station near the home of the couple near the time Susan went missing. [Source 1]
   10. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Terrell Hills Police Chief Lawrence Semander stated that one of his detectives, a Texas Ranger, and evidence technicians started searching the McFarland home based on a search warrant on Friday, November 29thof 2002. He said they have no suspects but are trying to solve Susan’s disappearance. [Source 2]
   11. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, on Monday, December 16th of 2002, Richard was identified as “the suspected person” in a police report to the county court. [Source 3]
   12. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Terrell Hills Police Chief Lawrence Semander stated, “We have no forensics back yet, but the investigator considers him to be a suspected person in the disappearance”. [Source 3]
   13. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, police have described Richard as uncooperative. [Source 4]
   14. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, during the investigation of the home, police saw bloodstains in the master bedroom and adjoining bathroom, plus a clump of hair and more blood stains in a hallway downstairs. [Source 4]
   15. The San Antonio Express-News reported that Terrell Hills Police Chief Lawrence Semander stated they seized six personal computers and several bags of items. [Source 19]
   16. According to court documents, the following items were found in Susan’s 1997 Ford Explorer:
       1. Firearms
       2. Firearms ammunition
       3. Spent firearms casings and/or projectiles.
       4. Hair and blood in the form of spatter, splatter, droplets, smears, and pools and other residue constituting evidence of bleeding injuries or other violent trauma, including, if necessary for collection and seizure, the substance or surface on which said blood evidence is found.
       5. Edged weapons, tools or devices capable of use as a weapon for infliction of bleeding injuries or other violent trauma.
       6. Rope, tape, plastic, rugs, mats, bandages, gasoline containers, charcoal, insecticide, excavating tools and/or maps.
       7. Receipts for the purchase of rope, tape, plastic rugs, mats, bandages, gasoline, gasoline containers, charcoal, insecticide, excavating tools and/or maps.
       8. Credit cards, identification and/or other personal items belonging to Susan McFarland. [Source 15]
   17. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Harley Smith, Susan’s brother, stated the family is “extremely concerned about the possibility of foul play. There certainly are a lot of curious circumstances here”. [Source 2]
   18. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Dee Ann Dowlen stated Susan had called her on November 25th of 2002 to say she wasn’t coming to Amarillo. [Source 4]
   19. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the family stated Richard has shown no emotion in the disappearance of Susan and provided no help in the search. [Source 4]
   20. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Ann Smith Carr, Susan’s sister, stated that Richard suspected his wife had been a victim of random violence. [Source 4]
   21. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, SBC Communications continues to pay Susan’s salary to a joint checking account, which is controlled by Richard. [Source 4]
3. **Susan’s body is found:**
   1. According to the San Antonio Express-News, a report by Texas Ranger Shawn Palmer stated they got a break when a person on a farm on South W.W. White Road in southern San Antonio, witnessed both the Black Explorer and the Chevrolet Suburban in the area around Thanksgiving. [Source 16]
   2. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Susan’s badly charred body was found on an abandoned farm outside San Antonio, about 20 miles from the couple's home. [Source 7]
   3. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the results of an autopsy released on Thursday, January 16th of 2003 identified the remains to be Susan McFarland through dental records. [Source 6]
   4. According to the Houston Chronicle, an autopsy revealed Susan was killed by blunt trauma to the skull before the body had been burned. [Source 13]
4. **Richard is arrested on auto theft and tampering with evidence and the investigation continues:**
   1. According to court records, Richard was arrested January 14th of 2003 on charges of unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, tampering with a witness and tampering with evidence. [Source 12]
   2. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Richard is being held in the Bexas County Jail on a $450,000 bail. [Source 5]
   3. According to court documents, police observed that Richard had an injury to the pinkie finger of his right hand and abrasions on the knuckles of his left hand. [Source 15]
   4. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the three children were taken into custody by CPS one hour before the father’s arrest. [Source 5]
5. **Richard’s charges are upgraded to murder:**
   1. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, police arrested Richard less than two hours after finding Susan’s charred body on felony charges relating to a Chevrolet Suburban. Police believe this vehicle was used to transport Susan or her body. [Source 7]
   2. According to court records, Richard’s charges were upgraded to murder on Friday, January 17th of 2003 and he is being held on a $500,000 bond. [Source 18]
   3. According to court documents, Richard requested his bond be lowered to $250,000 [Source 12]
      1. McFarland’s father testified that Richard only has about $700. [Source 12]
      2. McFarland’s home is in receivership, and he cannot receive the equity. [Source 12]
      3. The value of the home will not exceed the family's debt. [Source 12]
      4. Only McFarland’s parents can contribute to the bond, and they can only come up with $30,000. [Source 12]
      5. McFarland’s parents will need to offer their home as collateral. [Source 12]
   4. According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, murder carries a maximum punishment of life in prison. Capital murder could bring the death penalty. [Source 8]
      1. According to The Law Dictionary, first degree murder is if it’s suspected the person took the time to think about killing another person before killing them. Planning or premeditation is needed for this charge. [Source 8]
      2. According to The Law Dictionary, capital murder is first degree murder that can result in the death penalty. [Source 8]
         1. The state must have a law for capital punishment. [Source 8]
         2. Often the crime must have unusual circumstances surrounding it. [Source 8]
   5. According to court documents, Richard’s trial was moved to Austin, TX because of pretrial publicity. [Source 11]
   6. According to court documents, Richard was sentenced on February 5th of 2004. He agreed to a 40-year sentence in the murder of Susan. He is eligible for parole in 2023 due to time already served. [Source 11]
6. **Where Are They Now**
   1. According to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Richard is incarcerated in the Texas State Prison in the Joe Ney unit in Hondo, TX. [Source 17]

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