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DOMESTIC KILLING FOLLOWS SLAUGHTER IN THE BLETTERBACH



BLETTERBACH: "A CURSED PLACE"

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The storm which battered the region from April 28 to May 3, claiming eleven lives and cutting off the village of Siebenhoch for almost week, provided cover for a triple murder of unprecedented savagery. The bodies of Kurt Schaltzmann, Evi Baumgartner and her brother Markus were discovered in the Bletterbach canyon on the night of the 28th by a search party led by Forest Ranger Max Krün, which, in a horrifying twist, included Kurt's father Hannes Schaltzmann. But what followed was more terrible still. Hours after returning from the scene, Schaltzmann shot his wife Helene at point blank range with his hunting rifle. He was later found, catatonic, by her body, the rifle still in his hands, and remains in custody.

MOUNTAIN RESCUE HERO TELLS OF UNIMAGINABLE CARNAGE

With Siebenhoch cut off from the world, it was days before the Carabinieri could begin their

investigation of either crime scene. Captain Alfredo has refused to comment, as has Max Krün, but local resident and Mountain Rescue worker Werner Mair, who was part of the search party, was willing to speak with us: "The tent had been ripped by something sharp," he said of the scene at the Bletterbach. "A blade. There was stuff everywhere. And they, too, were . . . everywhere . . . God was looking in another direction, that April 28." Mair insisted that Schaltzmann cannot be held responsible for his wife's murder: "It wasn't Hannes who killed Helene: it was the bastard who slaughtered Kurt, Evi and Markus," he said, though he later clarified that he did not mean for this to be taken literally.

According to Mair, the search party, which consisted of himself, Schaltzmann, Krün and Günther Kagol, brother of local entrepreneur Hermann Kagol, set out at around 10 p.m. on the 28th, just before the storm took full hold. They risked their lives searching for Kurt, Evi

and Markus in some of the worst weather the region has seen for decades, but nothing could prepare them for what they found.

LOCAL RESIDENT DESCRIBES THE BLETTERBACH AS "A CURSED PLACE"

With the Carabinieri unavailable for comment, there are no clues at this time as to who could have carried out such a crime. But Siebenhoch residents have suggested that Kurt and Evi may not have been short of enemies. Luise Walder told us: "There was something about those two. Especially that Evi. That girl thought she was better than the rest of us put together. I don't want to speak ill of the dead, but there's some around here who'd say she had it coming." Meanwhile, another resident, a young woman would not give us her name, claimed: "I'm certain that the Bletterbach is a cursed place. Look at it however you want, but behind even the most absurd legend there's a small element of truth."