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# ‘What Jennifer DIDN’T do,’ Producers of new Netflix show about Markham woman who plotted to kill parents reveal where she went wrong

APRIL 12, 2024 / BREANNA MARCELO



What Jennifer Did is available to stream now on Netflix and currently sits at No.1 in Canada and the U.S. (Courtesy: Netflix)



This article contains spoilers from “What Jennifer Did.”

From victim to villain, new true crime documentary *What Jennifer Did* is taking over television screens across the country. In an interview with Now Toronto, producers are revealing the shocking details of what Jennifer *didn't* do.

Directed by Jenny Popplewell, the Netflix documentary centres on the twisted case of Jennifer Pan, a young woman from Markham who sets out a love-driven plan to kill her parents (mother Bich Ha Pan and father Huel Hann Pan) by hiring three hitmen in 2010.

The documentary takes viewers on a rollercoaster ride through the early years of Jennifer’s life, the web of lies she constantly told, and finally, what led to her orchestrating such a brutal murder.

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What Jennifer Did, from the producers of American Nightmare, is now playing.

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To further understand the making of the film, Now Toronto spoke to the documentary producers who told us about what initially drew them to this case.

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"I covered it as a reporter for 10 months, and I then decided to write a book about it because it's the craziest story I've ever come across. I still think it's the best true crime story there is," Executive Producer Jeremy Grimaldi said.

"So, I wanted to tell it just because we want to learn from what happened. We want to better understand the struggles people go through and make mental health less of a taboo in many cultures. And hopefully people can get help and learn from this incident," he continued.

[READ MORE: Netflix is releasing a true crime documentary about a daughter who hired hitmen to kill her parents in Markham](#)

On the other hand, co-producer Paul Nguyen says what intrigued him about the case was its relatability when it comes to experiencing immense pressures from Asian parents.

"Jennifer's parents are Vietnamese, they're known as boat people. My parents are also boat people. They're refugees. They left Vietnam to escape after the war. And they were lucky to arrive in Canada in '79 or early 80s. So, I can relate to Jennifer, just being a second generation Asian kid growing up in Canada and having those kinds of pressures from immigrant parents," he said.

#### **IMPACT TO THE MARKHAM COMMUNITY**

At the time of the case, the incident sparked widespread panic and fear amongst the community because police originally described it as a random attack, before later discovering it was premeditated.

"I remember finding out soon after it occurred that security companies were trolling the neighborhood where it happened, dropping leaflets on everyone's doors to upgrade their security because for a while it was a random attack. That's what the police were labeling it," Grimaldi explained.

"It frightened the whole country...Markham is a pretty small place and a very peaceful place...I think it's a very traumatic subject when you go by the house. They've tried to sell it a number of times but it can't be sold. Everyone knows that home," he added.

Grimaldi goes on to say that one of the challenges when it came to making this film was the fact that he was not a part of the Vietnamese community, so at times, he felt there was a barrier and distrust between residents who he wanted to speak with.

After years of research and creating *What Jennifer Did*, the producers learned many things about Jennifer's character and background which many viewers might not know.

"The key thing to remember is that she's an unreliable narrator. She's a liar...I'm not saying that the pressure wasn't there. I'm sure it was. But I would also say that we also have to be careful of some of the things she's saying because she was acting in her own defense, so a lot of what she says may be true, and it may not be true," Grimaldi said.

Meanwhile for Nguyen, what surprised him the most upon doing his research was discovering how many people in his personal circle knew her.

"Some of the people I was familiar with actually knew her and so, I was basically just one step away. Some people I talked to, a former teacher of mine, when I was a kid, she knew Jennifer directly and taught her even," he said.

#### **WHAT JENNIFER DIDN'T DO**

From first glance, Jennifer's story starts out like any other, being a sole witness to a heinous crime, but as more details unravel, more questions are formed and viewers quickly find out the massive plot holes in her tale.

Although the documentary points to what Jennifer did, any true crime junkie would also focus on what Jennifer *didn't* do. Grimaldi explains why the murder mastermind was actually disorganized while executing her plan.

"She did make some pretty glaring mistakes for sure. That includes not properly disposing of the phone and walking around the house, according to her father like a co-conspirator. I think it's important to remember that Jennifer, from my experience with her, is extremely confident in her abilities. She thought she could pull the wool over everyone's eyes and she even thought she could pull the wool over the police's eyes," he said.

#### WHAT MESSAGES VIEWERS SHOULD TAKE AWAY

After people watch the documentary, *What Jennifer Did* producers say they hope viewers will learn about the case, form their own opinions and inspire them to talk about mental health.

"I hope people will walk away from the documentary realizing something new, and perhaps that will open up conversations for maybe young people who might have difficulties communicating with their parents that maybe it's time to like, 'let's go to the table and let's have a chat and talk about our feelings,'" Nguyen said.

Meanwhile, Grimaldi says a viewer will leave thinking one of two narratives after watching the film. It's either they feel sympathy for Jennifer or they believe she's evil, but it is up to the viewer to decide.

"It really is impressive in so many ways, because so many documentaries will try to present to you what they think is right, what they think is wrong, who's the good guy, who's the bad guy. This documentary focuses outwards and allows the viewer to decide which is special, and I'm glad people are responding to it," he said.

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