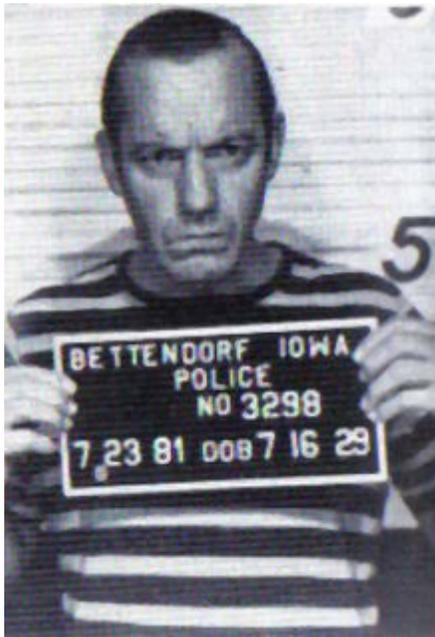


[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Ray\\_Hatcher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Ray_Hatcher)

## Charles Ray Hatcher

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### Charles Ray Hatcher



#### Background information

**Also known as** Albert Ralph Price, Richard Lee Grady, Richard Clark

**Born** July 16, 1929  
[Mound City, Missouri, United States](#)

**Died** December 7, 1984 (aged 55)

**Cause of death** [Suicide](#)

#### Killings

**[Number of victims](#)** 16

**Span of killings** 1969–1982

**Country**            [United States](#)  
**State(s)**           [Missouri](#), [California](#), [Illinois](#)  
**Date apprehended**    July 30, 1982

**Charles Ray Hatcher** (July 16, 1929 – December 7, 1984), was an [American serial killer](#) who confessed to murdering 16 people between 1969 and 1982.

## Melvin Reynolds

On May 26, 1978, four-year-old Eric Christgen disappeared in downtown [Saint Joseph, Missouri](#). His body later turned up along the [Missouri River](#); he had been sexually abused and died of suffocation. The police questioned more than 100 possible suspects, including "every known pervert in town," to no avail. One of them was Melvin Reynolds, a 25-year-old man of limited intelligence who had been sexually abused himself as a child and who had some [homosexual](#) episodes as an adolescent. Reynolds, although extremely agitated by the investigation, cooperated through several interrogations over a period of months, including two [polygraph](#) examinations and one interrogation under [hypnosis](#). In December 1978, he was questioned under [sodium amytal](#) ("truth serum") and made an ambiguous remark that intensified police suspicion. Two months later, in February 1979, the police brought the still cooperative Reynolds in for another round of interrogation—14 hours of questions, promises, and threats. Finally, Reynolds gave in and said, "I'll say so if you want me to." In the weeks that followed, Reynolds embellished this confession with details that were fed to him, deliberately or otherwise. That was enough to convince the prosecutor to charge Reynolds, and to convince a jury to convict him of second-degree murder. He was sentenced to life imprisonment. Four years later, Reynolds was released when Charles Hatcher confessed to three murders, including that of Eric Christgen.<sup>[2]</sup>

<http://www.amazon.com/St-Josephs-Children-Terror-Justice/dp/0818405090>

# St. Joseph's Children: A True Story of Terror and Justice [Hardcover]

[Terry Ganey](#)  
(Author)

## Editorial Reviews

From Publishers Weekly

Justice is shown to triumph--ultimately--in this engaging, instructive true-crime study. In 1978, four-year-old Eric Christgen was kidnapped and killed in St. Joseph, Mo. The police fixed on Melvin Reynolds, a passive, feckless bisexual, for the murder, but only after relentless questioning did he confess. He was sentenced to life imprisonment. Four years later, when 11-year-old Michelle Steele was kidnapped and killed in the same town, arrested was Charles Hatcher, a drifter who had spent years in California mental institutions. Through the efforts of FBI agent Joseph Holtslag, Hatcher finally confessed to 16 murders, among them that of Christgen. He committed suicide in prison; Reynolds was released. Another disturbing factor in the case, as St. Louis Post-Dispatch reporter Ganey shows, is that Hatcher, prior to confessing, was able to deceive the psychologists who examined him.  
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## Product Details

**Hardcover:** 237 pages

**Publisher:** Lyle Stuart; 1St Edition edition (October 1989)

**Language:** English

**ISBN-10:** 0818405090

**ISBN-13:** 978-0818405099

**Product Dimensions:** 9.1 x 6.2 x 1.3 inches

**Shipping Weight:** 1.3 pounds

**Average Customer Review:** [4.7 out of 5 stars\\_ See all reviews\\_\(3 customer reviews\)](#)

**Amazon Best Sellers Rank:** #1,049,800 in Books ([See Top 100 in Books](#))

Melvin Reynolds (1979, Missouri): "I'll Say So if You Want Me To"

On May 26, 1978 in St. Joseph, a 4-year-old child was carried away and murdered. Then came a tip that Reynolds, 25, a man with "mild mental retardation," could be the killer. The police did everything possible to get "the right words" out of Reynolds, including two polygraph tests, hypnosis, and sodium amytal injections. Seven months later, Reynolds was brought in for a marathon interrogation that lasted 14 hours. "Reynolds finally looked up like a dog with his ears pressed against his head and said, 'I'll say so if you want me to.'" The next day, the chief called a press conference and announced that the case was solved. Reynolds was convicted. Four years later, a serial killer confessed to an FBI agent that he killed the child. Reynolds was released, but the police chief was angered by the agent's actions. Being a political power, the chief pressured the FBI to transfer the agent. The agent was transferred from Missouri to Hawaii (Ganey, 1989).