

Brought to book, the unfaithful husband caught out by his crime novelist wife

By **Tristan Stewart-Robertson**

IT could have been a story straight from the pages of the detective novel which made Louise Murray an international success.

The Scots writer thought she had a happy marriage, with her businessman husband Cliff cheerfully playing the role of breadwinner, while she raised their two sons and cared for their £1.25 million Glasgow home.

But when Mrs Murray began to suspect her seemingly perfect life was a sham – and that Cliff was an adulterer – she turned sleuth to unravel years of lies and deceit.

The discoveries she made, revealed in an exclusive interview with The Scottish Mail on Sunday in the wake of her multi-million-pound divorce settlement, destroyed her 20-year marriage and blew her world apart.

‘The last two years have been hell’

Now, after being awarded their luxury home and land worth a further £2.5 million, the writer has opened her heart about the years of emotional turmoil ended by a sheriff's decree earlier this year.

Mrs Murray, 42, said: ‘The last two years have been absolute hell. There were times when I thought my life was stranger than fiction. It was like a soap opera. You couldn't make it up.’

‘Now I feel nothing but pity for Cliff. He has wasted his life. Thank God he didn't manage to waste mine, too.’

Mrs Murray, whose first novel Perception Of Death, written under the name Louise Anderson, was translated into German, Swedish and Italian, met her husband in April 1988 when she was 22.

By October, they were married and



LIES: Cliff Murray leaving a sauna

had moved to Miami, where they spent the next four years establishing a company selling tropical fish.

They appeared to enjoy a loving, stable relationship, although there was a disturbing lack of intimacy, which she thought was due to her husband having a low sex drive.

Then in 1996, she caught him in bed with one of her childhood friends, a scene she used two years later in her debut novel.

Despite the betrayal, she stayed with her husband for nine more years, raising their two sons while he became increasingly distant.

Mrs Murray said that while they were together, he showed little interest in his boys, never putting them to bed or collecting them from school.

The businessman, 48, did not even turn up at hospital when David, now

13, was four months old and underwent seven hours of life-saving neurosurgery.

Eventually, Mrs Murray's increasing isolation and unhappiness led her to ask for a divorce. But Mr Murray said he wanted the marriage to continue, and then asked that she let him sleep with other women.

Mrs Murray refused but agreed to give their relationship another chance. However, her suspicions had been aroused and, using the skills she had learned while researching her novel, she began to investigate her husband's murky private life.

She said: ‘When Cliff asked for an open relationship, it made me feel sick. I'm a one-man woman and I loved Cliff and continued to love him. He was my first real love.’

‘What he was basically saying was “I don't have time for you but let's have an open relationship so I can

‘My entire adult life was a sham’

continue having a comfortable life”. He wanted the lifestyle he was already leading to be given a rubber stamp. We were never singing from the same hymn sheet. He just wanted casual sex.’

Soon after asking for a divorce, she discovered her husband had joined a dating agency in Glasgow.

Suspecting he had bought a second home where he was conducting an illicit affair, she enlisted the help of a private detective to investigate his computer habits.

Using software developed by the FBI, they found he had accessed websites for escort agencies as well as pages and pages of pornography. There were also dozens of phone numbers for prostitutes and brothels.

An examination of his call records



NOVEL APPROACH: Louise Murray used research skills to uncover deceit

disclosed a history of betrayal stretching back for years. Mrs Murray said he rang sex agencies on one son's birthday and other important family occasions.

She believes he spent more than £35,000 annually on sex and made more than 2,500 calls in one year.

The information she gathered was passed to her lawyers in a formidable document, which Mr Murray chose not to contest. Instead, he settled out of court, giving his wife everything except his £200,000-a-year business.

Mrs Murray says she now wants to get on with her life and finish her next novel.

She said: ‘If someone chooses to

lead a double life and hide everything from you, that's the way it is.’

‘I had always forgiven Cliff for all that he had done, and I think he thought I would forgive him again. I couldn't.’

‘It all nearly destroyed me. My entire adult life was a sham and he used me from day one because I'm a kind, caring and generous person. I was trapped in a situation where I couldn't get out.’

‘I do feel sorry for all the people Cliff has lied to and all those people who have continued lying on his behalf. But most of all, I feel sorry for my two lovely sons, whom he ignored and lied to every day.’

Anger as pupils bring back 30 knives from school trip

A PARTY of first-year pupils from a Scottish secondary school returned from a trip to Switzerland with more than 30 knives in their luggage.

Police launched an investigation after a horrified father found a lethal hunting knife in his 13-year-old son's suitcase shortly after he arrived home last week.

Now officers have been passed a list of 31 fellow pupils from

By **Jane Simpson**

Dunblane High School in Perthshire who also purchased knives on the £500-a-head, week-long geography trip.

Last night, the father of the 13-year-old, who is now assisting police with their enquiries, said: ‘There were 51 kids on that trip and 31 of them that we know about

came back with knives. That is a lot of knives in one Scottish town and there could be more.’

‘My son's knife is quite a weapon, yet it is not illegal in this country as the blade is only three inches long. That's incredible, as it could do some real damage. More worryingly, he claims some of his friends came back with bigger blades, which would be illegal.’

Central Scotland Police is now

‘working closely’ with the school, which has run the annual trip for the past 20 years.

The 13-year-old boy said: ‘Everyone was buying knives, even some girls. Mine was not the biggest.’

‘The teachers had given us a couple of hours to go shopping and told us if anyone bought knives then they had to give them to staff until the return flight.’

A spokesman for Stirling Council

said: ‘In normal circumstances, we would not permit knives to be purchased on school trips.’

‘But this is a long-standing school trip and one of the most popular gifts that students buy for parents and relatives are very small souvenir Swiss army knives.’

He added: ‘In the light of the current situation, we will be reassessing our policy and procedures.’