

a boxer. As a portrait artist, though, he counted First Lady Grace Coolidge, H.L. Mencken and Douglas Fairbanks among his clients.

He used his own face in a sculpture of "Pan and his Pipe," the Greek god associated with wild nature.

That wasn't much of a stretch, according to family legend.

"He lived a life without compromise," Danilo Lazzari said, recalling the artist's reputation for having a way with the ladies. "He described himself as a professional Latin lover."

In the mid-1940s, probably as rents in Palm Beach were getting higher, Lazzari went to Boca Raton and built the studio and home that stood just off North Federal Highway.

A night of crime

The double killings happened just as the clock ticked into Nov. 14, 1948, when the couple returned

one else intrigued by the case.

Sally J. Ling, a Deerfield Beach historian and writer, stumbled over a mention of the Lazzari murders as she was researching a book about Boca Raton's history.

Leno Lazzari's use of light and shadow in his work had captivated Ling. She was drawn to the case file that had been transferred from the Sheriff's Office to the city police. And she discovered that a huge trove of the sculptor's art had disappeared from the scene.

After finding a Lazzari portrait up for bid on eBay, Ling discovered that Danilo Lazzari was her rival in a bidding war for it. From there, they struck up a friendship.

Finding the art

The unanswered questions along with the missing trail of art had Ling's cre-

Ling got the idea that writing another book, a novelized version of the Lazzari killings, might bring forward people who have the slain sculptor's works around.

"If the crime wouldn't be solved, or couldn't be solved, at least I wanted to see if I could find some of the art, because it [the art] is so beautiful," Ling said.

Danilo Lazzari said his family feels deeply indebted to Ling, who has done much of the legwork of tracking down what has become of the art.

Ling, for example, called Rollins College and unearthed the records of when the sculptor's plaque on a campus garden bench was dedicated.

"Sally has worked on this for eight years," he said.

Danilo Lazzari found that the official police record didn't specify any motives for the murder. But he also found that the official

perhaps the sculptor was too well loved, according to the investigation report.

"She further told the officers that soon after they arrived in America, Mr. Lazzari had become quite a successful sculptor and as he made more money, he began to run around with other women," the report reads. "That he left her for long periods of time and became more or less of a playboy."

So, a jealous husband might have been involved, Danilo Lazzari says. But police in 1948 did not appear to pursue that lead.

The real point of inquiry, for Danilo Lazzari, is finding more of his great-grandfather's artwork.

And there has been progress on that front already.

Since Ling's self-published "Who Killed Leno and Louise?" came out in October, she heard from Bo Hertz, of Lake Worth, who sent a photo of a portrait

rather in ways he never expected. He said he is following in his great-grandfather's footsteps in some aspects, working as an architect.

He also visited Palm Beach, to see where his great-grandfather's Worth Avenue studio had been, and also to sites in Miami Beach, where replicas of his great-grandfather's work can be seen.

He shares the same interest in proportion and design that his great-grandfather had, he said.

"It's quite strange to stand here," he said, as he stood on the site off Federal Highway where his great-grandfather once lived, now occupied by a Starbucks. "I would like to move the ground and look for something of him, some artifact he left behind."

*ageggis@tribpub.com,
561-243-6624 or Twitter
@AnneBoca*

Lazzari estate, identified in the investigations report as "Mr. Castiglioni," was removing property from the scene and asked that his rights as an heir to the estate be protected. Castiglioni also was the husband of the woman who had initially found the bodies.

Jan. 6, 1953: Julia Lazzari tells the Palm Beach Post she intends to pursue a widespread search for 20 pieces of art missing from her ex-husband's Boca Raton studio.

Oct. 1, 1953: Leno Lazzari's estate settled; worth \$20,186.62, according to the Palm Beach Post.

2013: Vermont antiques dealer discovers Lazzari portrait underneath a watercolor purchased for the frame; puts it on eBay.

Source: Palm Beach Sheriff's Office records, Sally J. Ling research, newspaper archives