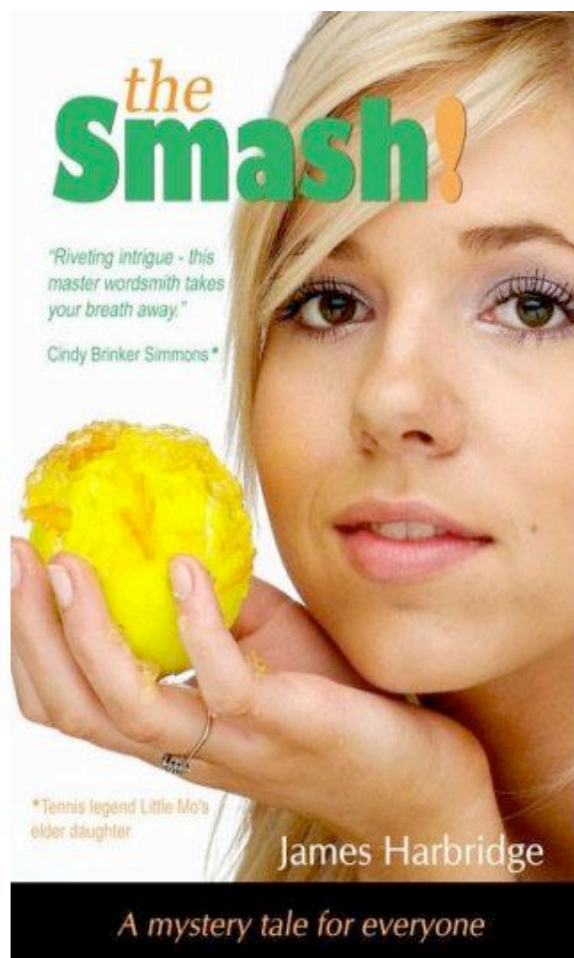


## The Scene.....

Wimbledon is in turmoil. On the very first day of the tournament, the world's No 1 male player is murdered.....The men's event is hastily abandoned as a mark of respect, and the lady players take centre stage.

So who is the murderer? And who will win the coveted women's Wimbledon title?



*"The author was born the year I won Wimbledon - his love of The Championships shines throughout this fast-moving novel"*

**Ann Jones, 1969 Wimbledon Champion.**

Here is a sneak preview of this new tennis novel, **'The Smash!'** written by James Harbridge.

*We join the action as the world learns of the premature demise of the current Wimbledon Champion and world number one, just as he is due on Centre Court to begin the defence of his title. Terry Proudley, tabloid journalist and tennis lover, is on the case!:*

### Chapter 6

Terry was still somewhat blissful as he made his way into his allotted seat in the Centre Court press stands at about 12.55pm. He had printed off the email, put it in his back pocket, lunched happily and then wandered

around the various outside courts, drinking in the pleasure of the opening Wimbledon skirmishes.

It was hard for him not to feel a little patriotic as he now gazed down at the immaculate grass and reflected on the fact that his compatriot Javea Jackson had earned the right to commence Wimbledon's Centre Court clashes this year by bagging the title crown 12 months earlier.

Of course, there had been a prodigious surge in tennis' popularity in the country as a consequence of that accomplishment. Players of all ages were swarming onto the park courts every day of the week, inspired by Jackson's stupendous feat.

Play was due to begin on Centre Court, by recent tradition, "at 1pm precisely". That was when Javea was required to walk out in front of 14,000 fans and one billion world-wide television viewers, flanked by his unseeded opponent.

Only, it didn't happen. For the first time - ever. The stadium was full to capacity, all present were ready to give a roar of greeting to their hero. But the minutes ticked by and the players did not appear.

By 1.20, Terry was anxious and the hoi polloi began an impatient slow hand clap to signify their displeasure. Was Javea or his opponent ill, wondered Terry? That must be it. In which case, one of the guys would soon be claiming a walkover and, sensationally, Centre Court would be deprived of watching the reigning Champion!

Terry's intuition turned out to be incorrect. Down on court he saw the All England Club chairman shuffling slowly towards the empty umpire's chair. The distinguished personage took to the high chair and the congregation silenced itself immediately to catch the announcement. "Ladies and gentlemen," he intoned without emotion, "the scheduled first match on the Centre Court Order of Play has regrettably had to be cancelled and we can give no further news in this respect at the current time. We greatly appreciate your forbearance. There will be an interval of an hour, or more - we are not sure yet - and then the Ladies Singles will continue, and playing on Centre Court will be Miss Jacalyn Jeanice of France versus Miss Roxanne Miller of Great Britain."

The throng booed and howled in displeasure. Terry was instantly out of his seat and rushing to the press conference room. This time he trusted his instinct that his collective colleagues would be calling determinedly for a full briefing from both the chairman and the tournament referee. Once inside the media centre he heard Sue Barker, the BBC TV anchorwoman, looking tense into her camera, saying: "Well, we'll of course bring you more news as soon as we have it, but all we can say for

now is that this is a most bizarre and unorthodox beginning to the Championships. John Lloyd, what do you make of all this?"

Terry didn't hear the reply from the Englishman who had been the Australian Open runner-up in 1977. When he reached the press conference, he had to content himself with standing at the back of the crammed room. Sure enough, he saw the chairman and tournament referee sitting at the front, their twin faces melting second by second into increasing sweat which was induced by the bright spotlights beaming down on them.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," began the chairman gravely, "this is a media announcement in respect of which there exists a publication embargo until 3pm this afternoon. The committee of management of these Championships deeply regrets having to inform you that the reigning men's Champion and world No 1, Mr Javea Jackson, was found dead a couple of hours ago at his rented accommodation close to the tournament grounds. This will be an immense shock to all of you gathered here, and we express our heartfelt and profuse sorrow to everybody who knew and loved him."

Before the tumult of press noise erupted, the referee just had time to add: "The men's Championship will now be curtailed this year as a mark of utmost deference to Mr Jackson."

**LIKE TO READ ON, AND FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE  
WIMBLEDON CHAMPION, AND WHY?**

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