

Authorities Investigating Leland Woman's Murder

BY ETTA SMITH

The Brunswick County Sheriff's Department and the SBI are investigating the Monday morning murder of a Leland woman, the third murder in the county within the past two months.

Beverly Jaye Potter Mintz, 23, was found dead in her home by her mother shortly after noon. She had multiple stab wounds in her chest area, according to Brunswick County Sheriff John Carr Davis.

According to Davis, Mintz's one-year-old son was also at the residence when the slaying took place, but the child was unharmed.

Mintz lived with her cousin and their children on Village Road, about one mile west of U.S. 17.

Davis said Mintz's mother, Lorraine Potter, had talked to her daughter on the telephone at about 10

a.m. Monday. When Mrs. Potter went to her daughter's home around noon, she found her dead.

There were no signs of a forced entry and neighbors reported seeing nothing unusual between 10 a.m. and noon, the period in which Davis said the murder occurred.

Several businesses are located on the road where the victim lived. Davis said that anyone who may have seen something suspicious while traveling the area should contact the sheriff's department.

According to County Coroner Greg White, Mintz apparently died from massive blood loss due to the stab wounds. He said her body was sent to the Regional Coroner's Office in Jacksonville for an autopsy.

When contacted Tuesday, Sheriff Davis said law officials had no suspects but that his department and

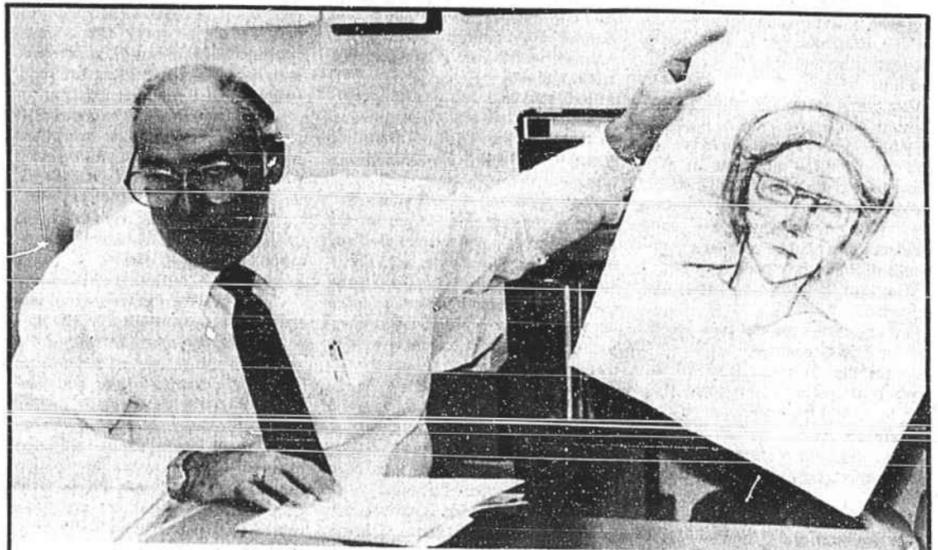
the SBI have received some calls from people who have offered information. He said they are checking out all the calls for leads.

He added that there were no signs Mintz's murder is linked to the two others that have occurred here in the past two months.

One of those murders was that of Davis's son-in-law Thomas G. Summer, 32, who was found stabbed to death Dec. 30 in a van near the entrance to Orton Plantation off N.C. 133. Two pounds of marijuana were also found in the van. No charges have been filed.

Another murder victim, Joe S. Reeves, 31, was shot in the back at his home on Feb. 6.

A warrant for the arrest of Ronnie Lee Clemmons of Leland was issued following the shooting, but county-wide manhunt has yet to secure his arrest.



CAPT. PHIL PERRY of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department shows a composite sketch of a suspect in a 1979 murder that is still unsolved. On his

desk are manila folders that contain information on the three unsolved murders that have occurred in the county in the past 10 years.

Files Never Close On Unsolved Murders

BY ETTA SMITH

Brunswick County Sheriff's Department Capt. Phil Perry has three folders locked in his office that he said he takes personally.

They contain information on three of the unsolved murders that have occurred in this county in the past 10 years. And Perry said he understands how the families of the victims of those murders feel—the murder of his mother 15 years ago has never been solved.

Although an arrest was made and the case went to trial, there was never a conviction. And for a case to be considered solved, or cleared, there must be a conviction.

The number of unsolved murders in Brunswick County over the past 10 years rose to four this week when a Leland woman was found slain in her home.

The Monday murder of Beverly Jaye Potter Mintz, 23, is the latest of the unsolved murders.

The others from the most recent back are those of Brunswick County Sheriff John Carr Davis's son-in-law, Thomas G. Summer, in December 1986; Matthew D. Spaulding in 1985; and Benny Eugene Smith in 1979.

In an interview last week, Perry said investigation of unsolved murders never ends, murders he has been investigating continues, no matter how long it has been since the murder occurred.

"No unsolved murder is ever closed," said Perry. "Even if it takes years, we continue investigating every lead or rumor we hear."

"I know personally how the families of these victims feel," said Perry. "I've been in their position. They want to know who is responsible and want that person off the street."

He added that usually the SBI is called in to investigate a murder immediately after it happens, unless a suspect is arrested.

1987—Reeves

Another recent county murder is considered unsolved—the Feb. 6 shooting death of Joe Reeves, 31, of Shallotte. Reeves was shot in the back at his home on Bellamy Street about 3 a.m. Another occupant of the house provided information that led law officials on a manhunt for Ronnie Lee Clemmons, 30, of Leland. He has not been captured, although the sheriff's department has received numerous calls of sightings.

Reeves had been scheduled to appear in court the following week on multiple drug-related charges. A grand jury had indicted him in October 1986 on charges of selling marijuana and LSD, and maintaining a dwelling for that purpose.

1986—Summer

Another unsolved murder under investigation also appears to be drug-related. Thomas Gilbert Summer, 32, was found stabbed to death in his work van on Dec. 30, 1986, in an isolated area near the Orton Plantation entrance. Perry said there are still no suspects or motives in the case.

According to Coastal Division Supervisor Dave Marshall, the SBI is in the process of contacting the people whose names appear in a ledger found in the van along with two pounds of marijuana. He added that the SBI is working on the assumption the murder was drug-related.

1985—Spaulding

A 1985 murder that remains unsolved is even more puzzling to Perry and the SBI agents working on the case, said Perry.

On July 12, 1985, Matthew D. Spaulding of Winabow, 51, apparently went to his stables to feed the horses and failed to return when expected by family members.

Around noon that day, the sheriff's department received a call from a family member saying Spaulding had been found in the stables, apparently knocked out by a possible prowler. When detectives arrived, Spaulding was dead.

He had been shot several times in the back with a .22-caliber weapon. Perry said numerous interviews have been conducted with people associated with Spaulding, but so far there is no suspect.

1979—Smith

The oldest unsolved murder still under investigation by the sheriff's department is that of Benny Eugene Smith, believed to be in his early 20s.

On June 21, 1979, Smith and a friend were riding a motorcycle on S.R. 1304 two miles from U.S. 17 at Thomasboro when the friend said they met an oncoming vehicle.

The witness said Smith, who was driving, turned the bike around and pulled up to the car. The driver of the car and Smith had started to argue when the driver of the car pulled out a small-caliber weapon and shot Smith in the head. Smith died the next day in New Hanover Memorial Hospital in Wilmington.

Perry said Smith's murderer was driving a green Buick with out-of-state tags. Three or four people reported seeing a car of that description, but the vehicle was never located by law enforcement officers.

The file on Smith's murder is much thicker than (See FILES, Page 2-A)

Two Die In Sunday Accidents

Two Brunswick County men were killed in separate accidents last Sunday on Brunswick County highways.

Dead are David Leon Stallings, 25, of Shallotte, and John Howard Adam, 72, of Yaupon Beach.

Gibb Alva Dozier, 32, of Loris, S.C., was charged with manslaughter, driving while intoxicated and with having no driver's license after he allegedly crossed the center line and collided with Stallings while traveling southbound on S.R. 1303 about four miles from Calabash. According to the report filed by Trooper Jerry V. Dove, Dozier hit Stallings' vehicle,

then continued moving about 200 feet in the southbound lane before running off the left side of the road.

Dozier was driving a 1976 Oldsmobile and Stallings a 1980 Toyota. The accident occurred at 1 a.m. Sunday.

Then at 5:20 p.m. Sunday, Ali Humad Alradwan of Maxton was charged with death by vehicle in connection with Adam's death.

According to Trooper Danny Harwell's report, Alradwan was traveling north on N.C. 133 on a wet roadway when he lost control of his vehicle and veered off the right

shoulder of the road. He then came back on the roadway and struck Adam's car on the driver's side. The report said Alradwan was traveling too fast for safety.

The report did not say what type of vehicles Alradwan or Adam was driving.

Alradwan is scheduled to appear in Brunswick County District Court on March 16 and Dozier on March 17.

The two deaths bring the county's highway fatalities to three this year. Last year there had been only one highway fatality at the end of February.

Summer Rental Firms Protest April 1 Sales Tax Increase

BY SUSAN USHER

Telling Brunswick County Commissioners their timing was all wrong, summer rental business operators voiced objections Wednesday night to an optional half cent sales tax adopted earlier this month.

The tax goes into effect April 1, several months after rental agents have set 1987 rates, printed brochures and rate cards—and booked the bulk of their reservations for the season.

Agents spoke at length of the extra time and expense the change would put on them—and the loss of goodwill they expected from vacationers asked to pay a few dollars more.

"Had we had some advance warning . . ." said Miller Pope, who runs The Winds resort at Ocean Isle Beach. "I'm sure we could have accommodated this."

Alan Holden, whose Holden Beach firm processes 15,000 vacations a year, said goodwill is already a problem because cottage owners have had to increase their rental rates about \$100 per week to make the same net as last year, what with property taxes increasing three to four times over last year as a result of revaluation and insurance increasing similarly.

Debbie Fox, of Sloane Realty, Ocean Isle Beach, told commissioners, "I think this will be detrimental. I think it will make a difference in people vacationing in

Brunswick County and whether they'll come back."

Other speakers referred to the added work and expense involved in notifying renters of the increase, reprogramming computers and reprinting promotional material.

"We'll have to notify them ahead," said one spokesman for Emily Willetts Realty in the Southport-Oak Island area. "When you have five hours to check in thousands of people, you don't have time to argue with them over the counter."

Rae Sloane, of Sloane Realty, Ocean Isle Beach, questioned whether the companies could legally pass on the tax increase to those vacationers who had already paid deposits and signed rental agreements.

Several speakers suggested delaying the tax until after Labor Day, at the end of the prime season.

"You should have been around when we had our public hearing," commented Chairman Grace Beasley, adding, however, that the board would take the group's concerns into consideration.

Commissioners began discussion of the half-cent sales tax last summer, but delayed consideration until their first meeting in February. At an August hearing, the handful of persons who spoke were equally divide for and against the tax.

SBI Joins Investigation Of Brunswick Tech's Continuing Ed Program

BY TERRY POPE AND SUSAN USHER

The State Bureau of Investigation has officially joined a state probe of the continuing education program at Brunswick Technical College.

A SBI agent arrived at the Supply campus last Monday to begin working with state auditors, who are now in their sixth week at the school. The auditors are conducting a review of the continuing education program's finances.

BTC President Joseph Carter said the SBI investigation is a "spin-off" of the recent allegations and charges of fraud involving continuing education classes at Cape Fear Technical Institute in Wilmington. Carter said he expects the investigation to be completed this week, though an SBI agent wasn't sure how much time the investigation might require.

Dave Marshall, supervisor of the SBI's coastal district, said Tuesday

his office was brought into the investigation by the state auditors. "As a result of their audit work, they referred three possible—irregularities to us since it involves state funds," he said. "The allegations primarily center around scheduling conflicts wherein it would be impossible for a student or instructor to be at two different places at the same time."

Marshall added that further investigation may show the discrepancies are due to computer error, drop/add activity or some similar reason.

Both District Attorney Michael Easley and BTC President Joseph Carter have been briefed on the investigation, he said.

Sheriff John C. Davis confirmed Tuesday that his office had been asked to help with the investigation. "We are involved in a very small way," he said. One night last week, he said, of-

ficers were asked to show the SBI where several continuing education classes were located.

"They have not requested any other assistance," he added.

Marshall was hesitant to estimate how long the SBI's investigation would continue. "It could be very involved or it could be a matter we can resolve quickly," he said.

The SBI investigation of Cape Fear Technical Institute began four months ago, he noted, and the end is not in sight.

One agent has been assigned full-time to the Brunswick Tech case, though he has already been pulled temporarily to work a higher-priority investigation. The work will be completed as expeditiously as possible, he said. If needed, additional agents may be assigned to BTC as they are freed from the CFTI case.

At the end of last Wednesday's board of trustees' meeting, board

member James Rabon had already made a motion to adjourn when the investigation was brought up by board member Eugene Hewett.

Hewett asked Carter about a letter the trustees had received in their information packets prior to the meeting.

The Beacon has obtained a copy of the letter, which asks all board members to "refer media inquiries to our Public Information Officer, Mrs. Connie Powell, for response."

Carter told the board that the SBI agent he had talked with would be working with the two state auditors to survey the school's continuing education program.

"Is that the only thing they're checking, as far as you know?" Hewett asked.

"That's the only thing, as far as I know," Carter replied.

The memo sent to the board members was drafted by Chairman

David Kelly and dated Feb. 13. It states, "President Carter informed me yesterday that Mr. Michael Lewis, SBI agent, had visited him at the college. During the discussion, Mr. Lewis told Dr. Carter that the SBI would be investigating the Continuing Education Program at the College beginning Monday, February 16."

"I have been assured that the faculty and staff will fully cooperate in the investigation and assist the agents in every way."

"As information is made available, every effort will be made to share it with you on a timely basis," it concludes.

Last November, the SBI announced it would conduct an investigation of Brunswick Technical College and Coastal Carolina Community College to pursue allegations made against the two schools.

The charges were made after agents allegedly uncovered

fraudulent classes taught by Cape Fear Technical College in Pender County, resulting in \$1.4 million having been paid to phony instructors. One former CFTI official has been indicted on more than 400 charges of obtaining property by false pretenses. Fifteen others have also been charged in the scam.

Carter said he expects no fraudulent classes to be found in Brunswick County. The SBI agents, he said, were obligated to investigate since accusations against the school were made and also publicized.

Last month, the state auditor's office sent two auditors to Supply to review financial records of the continuing education program at BTC. The auditors were expected to finish their study by early February, but are still on campus.

In other business last Wednesday, the board:

(See OTHER, Page 2-A)