

Family, Police Can't Explain Grissetown Murder-Suicide

(Continued From Page 1-A)

There were two spent .380 cartridge cases found on the floor and one live round lying at the feet of the murdered woman, Hunter said. The television was still on, tuned to a public broadcasting station, when the deputies found the bodies.

"It looks like he shot her and the gun jammed. The live round fell on the floor when he jacked the slide to clear it," the detective said. "When we found the gun in his hand, there was another shell jammed in it."

Originally from Wisconsin, Love moved to Brunswick County about 15 years ago and was an employee at the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point for about 12 years.

Wright's mother was a native of Brunswick County. Wright had been living in Baltimore, Md., until she returned to this area about six months ago. She had one daughter and four grandchildren.

The murder-suicide came as a shock to Wright's friends and family, who live mostly in the Grissetown and Longwood areas. According to Thelma Hill of

Grissetown, Wright and Love had known each other for about 18 months when the two moved into the trailer owned by her uncle.

Wright had been attending several churches in the area and was working part-time at local hotels this summer while looking for a steady job, Hill said. She was aware of no major domestic problems between Wright and Love.

"It was a surprise to everybody. It's really shaken up the community," Hill said. "We all thought things were going so well. Nobody expected anything like this."

Seeking some insight into the motive for the killing, detectives on Tuesday listened to an answering machine tape found in the trailer. There were several requests for return calls from a woman identifying herself as Love's sister, but nothing that seemed out of the ordinary.

Wright's recorded message on the tape was clear and polite, delivered in a cheerful voice with careful attention to pronunciation. She advised callers to leave a message and closed with the following advice: "Remember, this is the day that the Lord has made."



MOURNERS GATHER at the Old Shallotte Road home where police believe 48-year-old Ernest Love murdered Julene Hill Wright, 47, before committing suicide.



NICHOLAS SMITH (left) answers questions about his plea bargain with prosecutors in the murder case of Charles Wayne Davis Thursday morning. With Smith is court-appointed attorney Benedict Del Re.

Smith Joins 5 Others In Bargain, Probation

(Continued From Page 1-A)

District Attorney Lee Bollinger told Superior Court Judge Jack Thompson Thursday morning.

"Nicholas was in the car up until right after the shot was fired and Mr. Davis fell to the ground," Bollinger said. "Someone in the car told him to go get his cousin. He got out, came over and said, 'Let's get out of here,' or words to that effect. Then he nudged the body with his foot to see what condition it was in and heard a moan."

Smith's more active role in the killing earned him a two-year suspended prison sentence instead of the 12-month term given to the other five "peripheral players" who also agreed to a plea bargain with prosecutors Aug. 22. Smith was ordered to perform 100 hours of community service. The co-defendants who pleaded guilty earlier were required to perform 50 hours.

Entering pleas two weeks ago

were Kevin Kenyatta Mitchell, 18; Victor Conway Randolph, 22; Anthony Alex Smith, 19; and Archie Lee Williams Jr., 17, all of Bolivia and Jessica Lucille Stencil, 17, of Ocean Isle Beach.

All six defendants were placed on supervised probation and ordered not to associate with each other. They were ordered to testify truthfully in the upcoming trials of four co-defendants.

The first to appear in court on a first-degree murder charge will be Frank Lenail Ford, 22, of Oakley Trail, Bolivia. His trial is scheduled to be heard in a three-week superior court session beginning Sept. 19. Investigators say Ford led the gang to Davis's home, helped drag him from the car and shot him in the back with a .380 caliber pistol.

Also facing murder charges are Byron Henry Knowles, 25, of Wilmington and Terrance LaQuinn Jones, 19, of Randolphville Road, Bolivia. They are accused of helping

to remove Davis from the vehicle and with kicking and beating him as he lay on the ground fatally wounded.

Knowles, who allegedly hit Davis in the head with a machete, has not been apprehended and is believed to be in the Bahamas. Police are still not sure if he can be returned to the United States for trial.

A tenth suspect in the case, Jeremy Javon Smith, 17, of Tobes Road, Bolivia, remains under indictment on charges of conspiracy to commit assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill inflicting serious injury, accessory after the fact to the felony of robbery with a dangerous weapon, aiding and abetting an assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill inflicting serious injury, first-degree kidnapping and conspiracy to commit kidnapping.

Besides accompanying the group to the murder scene, Jeremy Smith is also accused of helping Jones avoid arrest by advising him "concerning the disposal of the wallet"

that Jones is alleged to have taken from the victim.

Investigators have said the ten acted with a "gang mentality" when they piled into two cars and drove to Davis's home with the intention of exacting revenge for a dispute that occurred earlier that evening.

Attorneys for defendants who plead guilty last week claim their clients "thought they were going to see a fight" and were unaware that a murder was about to be committed.

Bollinger said the state's evidence will show that some—if not all—the defendants knew that one of the assailants brought a gun to Davis's home. At least some of them heard talk of getting another gun on the way.

All of the defendants who agreed to accept a plea bargain in the case have cooperated with the investigation since their arrest, Bollinger said. However, none of the 10 told authorities about the murder until they were interviewed by police.

Funds Ruling To Be Appealed By Board

(Continued From Page 1-A)

County allocated \$9.2 million as its share of the board of education's \$43 million budget. Most of the school system's expenses are funded by the state and federal government.

The board of education took the county to court, saying it needed another \$5 million to run the schools

and to make needed improvements. After a three-day trial that ended July 28, a jury awarded the board of education \$14 million.

Commissioners say the county will have to add a supplemental 10-cent tax to this year's tax bills to pay for the award. The additional money must be on hand to pay the schools immediately if the county's appeal fails. The board plans to refund the money if county wins the legal battle.

After the unanimous vote to appeal Friday, Commissioner Jerry Jones praised the other board members saying, "It's good that we're all in this together." Jones said he felt the board's action reflects the wishes of a majority of citizens and if not, the voters could let them know in November.

"I feel people elected us to manage county government and that's what we've tried to do," Jones said. "I feel we allocated enough money to the school system. We tried to give them more (during pre-trial negotiations) but they wouldn't take it."

"The people who served on that jury are fine people, but they're not the ones who have to listen when people call to complain about their taxes going up," Jones said. "We have to make hard decisions some times. If we don't try to address this issue now, I don't know when we can."

"There's an election coming up. If people don't feel we've funded the schools properly, they have an opportunity to make a change," Jones said.

(Continued From Page 1-A)

non-resident property owners without voting privileges, Zetts acknowledged, but with government leaders "who live on the island and are more attuned to the needs and interests of island property owners."

His committee calculated a new island town could provide all current services, including start-up costs, and have a budget surplus at the 1994-95 tax rate.

Suggestions for flexing property owners' influence to achieve the change ranged from legal action to force secession, Knapp's idea of a "taxpayers' revolt" and withholding payment of town taxes, to a proposal by Ted Hayne of Columbia, S.C., of a coordinated effort to not rent homes over a specified period.

The committee's "Proposal for Independent Government" identifies Sunset Beach as the only barrier island on the North Carolina coast with a significant area of mainland within its borders and asserts the two areas were joined in 1963 in an "unnatural union" in order to have sufficient population to justify incorporation of the town.

While providing most town income, islands have had "a minority voice" on council, a continuing source of friction, disputes and lawsuits because of the area's differing interests.

The island has less than 125 year-round residents; approximately 80 of the town's 400-plus voters are islanders.

Sunset Islanders Discussing Secession



RAY ZETTS (left), who led the committee proposing an independent island government, chats with property owners Buddy Putnam and Penny Hayne after Saturday's meeting of the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association.

Barber said the committee's claim that the island has not had adequate representation on the town council is "without merit".

He estimated that while a majority of the town's income is derived from the island, an even larger percentage (he estimated 75 percent) is spent on the island because of needs

related to the long tourist season, such as twice-weekly trash pick-up and beefed-up policing.

"I guarantee it's better garbage pick-up and that they see the police more often than in the towns they live in."

"If there's a need we try to meet it. We don't ever sit down and say

we need to do this for the mainland and this for the island.

"I don't know how they could get a better deal," he said. "I don't think they have looked to far ahead in terms of developing a town hall complex on the island or that anyone has sat down and really figured the entire cost. They're star-gazing."

Comfortable Weather Ahead

A rainy late week led into a sunny Labor Day holiday across the South Brunswick Islands, and more pleasant weather is in the offing.

Weather watcher Jackson Canady said the outlook calls for near-normal temperatures, averaging from the upper 60s at night into the mid-80s during the daytime, with about three-quarters of an inch of rainfall expected.

For the period Aug. 30 through Sept. 5, he recorded a high temperature of 91 degrees on Aug. 30 and Sept. 1, and a low of 56 degrees on Sept. 5.

A daily average high of 84 degrees combined with an average nightly low of 69 degrees for a daily average temperature of 76 degrees, about 2 degrees below the long-term average.

Canady measured 2.53 inches of rainfall at his home near Shallotte Point.

Wreck Involving Shallotte Ambulance Injures 5

Five persons were injured Sunday afternoon in a two-vehicle accident involving a Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad ambulance.

Responding to an emergency call at Ocean Isle Beach with sirens and lights going, ambulance driver Regina Gore had begun to pass a series of vehicles on N.C. 179 near Maple Hill Road when one of the cars, operated by Christy Warren, 25, of Shallotte, attempted to make a left turn onto Maple Hill.

The ambulance struck the Warren vehicle in the driver's side, reported Trooper R.E. King of the N.C. Highway Patrol. Both vehicles ran into the ditch, and the Warren vehicle overturned, coming to rest on its top.

Following the 2:55 p.m. accident Warren was transferred to New Hanover Regional Medical Hospital with a broken leg, a compound fracture, said King. One of her four passengers, a child, was also taken to New Hanover with serious injuries.

Rescue squad member Adam Stanley, 16, of Shallotte, and two other children in the Warren vehicle were treated in The Brunswick Hospital emergency room for minor injuries.

King was still investigating the accident Tuesday evening. No

charges had been filed.

Two similar accidents happened just hours apart Monday at the intersection of U.S. 17 and N.C. 904 at Grissetown. Both involved collisions between a northbound vehicle on U.S. 17 and an eastbound vehicle attempting to cross all four lanes of U.S. 17, with charges filed against the drivers of the crossing vehicles.

In the 10:20 a.m. collision, William Martin Marshburn, 31, of Jacksonville, N.C., was traveling north on U.S. 17 in a 1995 Chevrolet.

Betty Stephens Henson, 55, of Ash, was traveling east on N.C. 904 in a 1985 Mercury. She crossed the southbound lanes of U.S. 17 and stopped at the median. As she pulled out across the northbound lanes she struck Marshburn's Chevrolet in the left front fender, reported Trooper C.E. Ward. The sides of the two vehicles swung together, with the Chevrolet traveling east into a northbound lane and the Mercury coming to rest in a northbound lane also.

Marshburn and Henson's son, Rockwell Henson, were treated for minor injuries at The Brunswick Hospital and released.

Ms. Henson was charged with a safe movement violation, for failing to see a safe movement before enter-

ing a line of traffic. "She said she stopped at the median but just didn't see the car," said Ward.

Both vehicles were total losses, with damages to the Chevrolet estimated at \$12,000 to \$14,000 and to the Mercury, \$1,800.

New Hanover County Sheriff Joe McQueen, his wife and two children were seen at The Brunswick Hospital for minor injuries received in the second accident at the intersection, which happened about 2:30 p.m.

McQueen, 49, was traveling north on U.S. 17 in a Dodge van when a front corner of the vehicle was struck by a 1981 Chevrolet Citation as it attempted to cross the northbound lanes.

Roberto Drakeo, 23, of Ash, pulled out of N.C. 904, crossed the two southbound lanes of U.S. 17, then crossed the median without stopping, reported Trooper H.R. Smith. When his Chevrolet struck the van, the van spun out of control, struck the median and overturned twice, coming to rest in the median.

Smith charged Drakeo with failing to yield and driving without a license.

"Sheriff McQueen said he had been vacationing with his family and had allowed plenty of time for

the trip back. He was driving 50 to 55 miles per hour and he and his wife had their seat belts on, yet somebody still hit his van and threatened the lives of his family. It makes you stop and think," said Smith.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

POST OFFICE BOX 2558 SHALLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA 28459

NOTICE: Reliable or consistent delivery cannot be guaranteed since this newspaper must rely on the U.S. Postal Service for delivery. We can only guarantee that your newspaper will be submitted to the post office in Shallotte on Wednesday of the week of publication, in time for dispatch to out-of-town addresses that day.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES BY MAIL:		Sr. Citizen
In Brunswick County		
N.C. Sales Tax	\$6.30	\$5.30
Postage Charge	.38	.32
TOTAL	3.68	3.68
TOTAL	10.36	9.30
Elsewhere in North Carolina		
N.C. Sales Tax	\$6.30	\$5.30
Postage Charge	.38	.32
TOTAL	8.18	8.18
TOTAL	14.86	13.80
Outside North Carolina		
Postage Charge	\$6.30	\$5.30
TOTAL	9.65	9.65
TOTAL	15.95	14.95

Complete And Return To Above Address

Name
 Address
 City, State
 Zip

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Established Nov. 1, 1962
 Telephone 754-6890
 Published Every Thursday
 At 4709 Main Street
 Shallotte, N.C. 28459

SUBSCRIPTION RATES IN BRUNSWICK COUNTY	
One Year	\$10.36
Six Months	\$5.55
ELSEWHERE IN NORTH CAROLINA	
One Year	\$14.86
Six Months	\$7.90
ELSEWHERE IN U.S.A.	
One Year	\$15.95
Six Months	\$8.35

Second class postage paid at Shallotte, N.C. 28459. USPS 777-780. Postmaster, send address changes to:
 P.O. Box 2558, Shallotte, N.C. 28459-2558