

# Family Of Murdered Teen Hangs On With Faith, Hope

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tan she wanted as a teenager. Childlike and trusting, she had never met a stranger.

She didn't think twice about picking flowers from a churchyard to bring a moment of pleasure to her mother or to an elderly friend. "God will forgive me," she'd tell them, "because I'm making you happy."

Family members and friends marveled at the compassion Amy had for children, for the elderly—for any of those society tends to forget or to mistreat. Any hint of injustice or cruelty could readily become the target of a temper that could be quick, and feisty.

Compassion was Amy's gift, and her onus.

As her eldest sister, Leigh Ann, recalled at Amy's funeral, "She cared deeply for everyone around her and felt responsible for sharing other people's burdens. She was always there for anyone who was hurting and she is here with me right now."

"...She is everywhere now and she is happy. She will never feel fear, pain, heartache, sorrow or frustration again..."

"She was our special child.

"She loved life, but she felt inferior, that she wasn't as smart as others," recalls her mother. "I think that's one reason she reached out so to children and to the elderly."

Amy was diagnosed early as having dyslexia, an im-

pairment in reading ability that is rare in females. It was the cause of much frustration as she struggled through school with the help of tutors that included Myra Speake, the Frinks' next-door neighbor and pastor's wife, and of a private center in Wilmington, The Learning Foundation.

From childhood on she also suffered from fevers, with temperatures running as high as 105 degrees; the bouts seemed to come more often and more severely after a benign tumor was removed from her urethra when she was about nine years old. Quite recently the Frinks had taken Amy to Duke University Medical Center for testing; doctors found she was suffering from a recurring rare viral infection.

She had missed too many days of school to finish with her class at West Brunswick High School. Amy enrolled in Southeastern Community College's Adult High School Diploma program in Whiteville and graduated in May.

Excited about the future, she had signed up for fall quarter classes at Brunswick Community College. Amy intended to eventually major in child development and someday operate her own day care center.

"She was a typical teenager for these days. She had been in some pretty rough spots," recalled her mother. "But over the past six or nine months she was trying to put her life in order. She was starting to get it together."

That evening of June 23 began like many others. After her shift ended at Crabby Oddwaters restaurant at Sunset Beach, Amy went for an after-work swim with friends, then returned home. She and her mother stayed up, talking and talking into the night.

"Anytime my children wanted to talk, we talked. It was nothing unusual in this household for us to be up and about at that time of night."

That night the discussion was serious. They talked about New Age beliefs and practices and their growing popularity with local young people, about God, and about religion in general.

"She told me, 'I want you to know I really do believe in God,'" her mother recalled. She paused, then spoke again. "It was like I was being prepared."

Amy was extremely close to her sister Jill, older by 2½ years, calling her "Mama Jill" until Amy was about 8 years old. After living on the West Coast for about 3½ years, Jill had recently returned home at her younger sister's urging. This particular week Jill was staying with a girlfriend in Cherry Grove, S.C.

That morning Amy decided she wanted to see Jill. Like most any mother would, Birdie Frink blames herself in part for what happened after that.

"While I told her I didn't think she should go, I didn't tell her 'No, you can't go,'" she says. "I told her if she did go, to sleep in that morning, then just to hang out at

the beach with Jill and (her friend), that I'd expect her back later that afternoon or evening."

Amy left around 2:30 a.m., with a quarter in her pocket and plans to call the Cherry Grove residence from a pay phone after crossing into South Carolina, which she did. The telephone at home was blocked; Amy was overdue paying her share of the bill.

Their last exchange was a familiar ritual played out whenever any one of the Frinks' daughters left the house to go anywhere:

"I love you, Mama."

"May your angels surround you, darling."

**Editor's Note:** Investigators have established a special number with a 24-hour answering machine to receive information from anyone familiar with Frink's "habits or hangouts," or who might have seen something suspicious the morning of June. Locally the number is 910-253-4797, or callers can use the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department's regular numbers, 910-253-4321 or 800-672-6379. In South Carolina, calls should be directed to the Horry County Police Department, 803-248-1250.

**CrimeStoppers** programs in both states are accepting anonymous tips about the case and offering rewards for information leading to an arrest or indictment. In North Carolina call 800-531-9845 and in South Carolina call 800-248-5000.

## Investigators Not Ruling Out Tie To Disappearance From Seaside

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early morning not far from the South Carolina line.

Asked about a possible relationship between the two apparent abductions, Horry County Police Lt. Bill Knowles, who is heading the Frink investigation, said detectives were "looking at the Melton case" but had found "no connection yet."

"The circumstances are a bit different," Knowles said. "She (Melton) was in a large crowd when she

disappeared after riding off with an individual."

Evidence released in the Frink case so far indicates that she encountered her assailant while alone en route to meet her sister in Cherry Grove, S.C.

Although he gave no indication that the two cases might be related, Knowles said, "We haven't ruled out anything yet."

The Brunswick County Sheriff's Department is continuing an investigation into Melton's disappearance.

On the night of June 24, detectives were scheduled to help dramatize the incident for a CrimeStoppers television commercial.

Unfortunately, some officers were called away and missed their chance to participate in the filming, because that was the evening Amy Frink's body was discovered.

Anyone who has information regarding Melton's disappearance is urged to contact detectives Charlie Miller or John Ingram at (910) 253-4321 or (800) 672-6379.

## 'Please Come Forward,' Parents Urge

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Investigators are still trying to piece together what happened to Amy Frink after 2:30 that Thursday morning, when she left her home in the River Heights subdivision near Shallotte to visit her sister Jill in Cherry Grove, S.C. Amy was last known to be alive at 2:49 a.m., when a message was left on Jill's answering machine informing her that her younger sister was on her way.

An aggressive two-county search effort was launched that afternoon, when Frink's 1988 Subaru was found abandoned off Shingletree Road near Hickman's Crossroads. Police immediately suspected foul play after finding blood stains on the front and rear bumpers of the car.

The following afternoon, SBI agents discovered Amy Frink's battered body lying beside a hunting club road off Cemetery Road near S.C. 211 outside Brooksville.

Horry County Police, who are heading the investigation, have released few details about what was found at the suspected murder site. They hope that a unique knowledge of the crime scene will help identify the killer.

"Beside us, there are two people who would know certain things

about this crime, the victim and her assailant," said Lt. Bill Knowles, who is heading the investigation. A murder weapon has not been recovered.

Frink's body was sent to Charleston for an autopsy, where a preliminary report indicates she died from a loss of blood from "multiple stab wounds" and "blunt trauma" injuries. Knowles said the latter wounds could have been inflicted by "anything from a fist to an ax handle."

"There is also strong evidence at the scene to suggest that she was sexually assaulted," Knowles said. The report and other evidence also indicate that Frink was run over by her own car.

According to the preliminary autopsy, the pathologist "felt she was killed shortly after making the call" to her sister, he said. Knowles would not comment about where police feel that call originated, saying only that "we have a good idea where it came from."

Still, Knowles said there remain "a lot of unanswered questions about the time frame" of events surrounding Frink's disappearance.

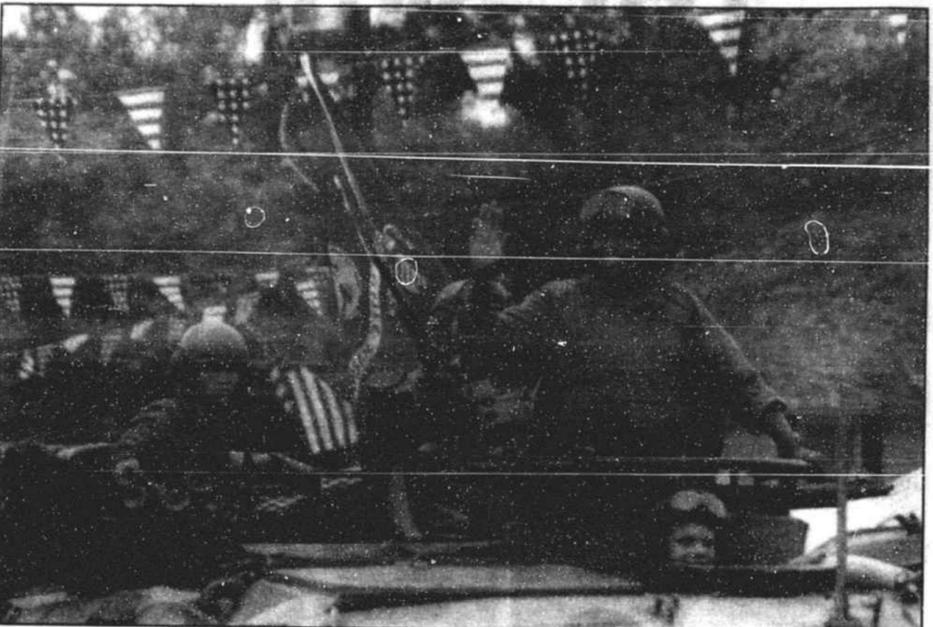
Using the Calabash Emergency Medical Service building as a base of operations, the joint task force

will continue conducting interviews this week. Data from these conversations are being fed into a Brunswick County Sheriff's Department computer for cross-referencing and analysis with help from the FBI.

Knowles praised local sheriff's detectives for their efforts in the investigation. He said numerous calls have been received from the public, offering information about the case, but more help is needed.

"Without the assistance of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department, there's now way we'd be in the position we're in today," Knowles said. "We're still hoping that someone who has just heard about this case will remember seeing something that might help us."

Anyone familiar with Amy Frink's travels on the night of her murder, or anyone with other information about the case is urged to notify authorities through Horry County CrimeStoppers at (800) 248-5000, North Carolina CrimeStoppers at (800) 531-9845 or through a special 24-hour telephone line set up at the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department specifically for the Frink investigation. That number is (910) 253-4797. All calls will be kept confidential.



Our Men In Green

U.S. Marines from Camp Lejeune wave to the crowd of onlookers as their armored personnel carrier rumbles through Southport during the N.C. Fourth of July Festival parade Monday morning.

## Boards Talk Money; No Results

(Continued From Page 1-A) other teachers improve their skills in subjects in which the schools have shown documented weaknesses. Commissioner Wayland Vereen said some of the teachers who have been contacted about the posts don't want to leave their classes and would rather other teachers visit their classrooms instead.

Superintendent Ralph Johnston presented the school board's basic appeal, then school board members, Finance Office Rudi Connor and Johnston answered a series of prepared and off-the-cuff questions posed by commissioners.

Johnston stressed the school system's efforts over the past two years to achieve greater accountability and cost effectiveness in use of its resources, saying the schools need to be operated "like big business."

"I believe the school system is being responsible and accountable to the citizens of Brunswick County and I'd like to correct that mistaken impression," Johnston told commissioners. He pledged those efforts would continue in 1994-95 as the school system goes to a proposed centralized purchasing and inventory system and begins using software to determine more efficient ways to utilize personnel.

Among the budget priorities cited: matching state salaries for locally-paid employees, establishing a site for an alternative school to provide concentrated assistance to "problem" students while removing their disruptive presence from regular classrooms; funding to maintain and continue school system gains in use of technology; and continuation of the high schools' extended day program using county money.

In setting its 1994-95 budget the county allocated an additional \$337,203 to the schools, an increase of 4 percent in current expense dollars over 1993-94. While County Finance Officer Lithia Hahn indicated in a memo to commissioners that the figure is \$25,867 more than the continuation budget increase the school board first sought, school officials say the figure is barely adequate to meet anticipated state-mandated increases in salaries and benefits and increases in routine costs such as insurance and utilities.

In an amended request, the school board said it needs \$9.72 million in county current expense money, or \$954,408 more than the \$8.76 million allocated by commissioners, plus another \$297,500, including \$150,000 for the alternative school, \$135,000 for 3.5 computer teaching/technology positions, and

\$12,500 to reflect increased local matching costs for two continuing programs, a Lower Cape Fear Arts Council arts in education pilot project at Southport Elementary and the UNC-W clinical teaching program.

The schools' local budget reflects the absence of last year's \$1 million special technology appropriation, the likelihood of a much smaller (about \$150,000 down from \$600,000) fund balance to draw from, and loss of a \$126,000 Job Training Partnership Act grant.

Last July the Brunswick County Board of Education joined a growing number of school systems statewide in appealing its county appropriation for the 1993-94 school year. After a joint meeting brought no budget change the appeal continued to Clerk of Superior Court Diana Morgan and on to a routine mediation procedure used in an attempt to resolve without trial most cases entering 13th District Superior Court.

Last Aug. 10, after approximately 14 hours of give-and-take, a consent agreement was reached by the two boards. The commissioners allocated, with conditions, \$500,000 toward construction of a new Leland Elementary School, with the possibility of advancing another \$365,000 for the project. The school board agreed to transfer \$556,000

from other capital outlay areas to meet its day-to-day operating expenses. Both boards agreed to "initiate staff contacts" hold joint meetings "from time to time" and to have their leaders meet regularly to discuss the county's educational needs.

Later in the year, commissioners bypassed the school board and, based on recommendations from the Brunswick County Principals' Association, allocated another \$250,000 for school equipment specified on wish lists submitted by each principal.

State law governing school system budget appeals requires that, before an appeal advances beyond the joint meeting, both commissioners and school board members must make "a good faith effort to reach agreement" after the schools' budget request has been "considered carefully and judiciously."

### Correction

Contrary to background information included in a June 30 article in *The Brunswick Beacon* on personnel transfers made by the Brunswick County Board of Education, Waccamaw Elementary School was not the only county school during the 1993-94 school term to have a principal and single assistant principal of the same race.

We regret the error.

## South Brunswick Area Gets 3 Inches Of Rain

After a very dry spring area residents received more than week's worth of rain over the past week and can expect more rain over the next few days.

Instead of the 1 inch to 1½ inches of rainfall typical this time of year,

meteorologist Jackson Canady measured 3.19 inches of rainfall at his Shallotte Point residence for the period June 28 through July 4.

"Finally some areas are getting some rainfall that had not received any," he said.

Near-normal temperatures and rainfall are expected over the next several days, he said. Area residents can expect at least 1 inch of rainfall coupled with temperatures averaging from around 70 degrees at night into the upper 80s during the day.

For the period June 28 through July 4, Canady recorded a high of 89 degrees on both June 28 and July 2, and he recorded a low of 69 degrees on June 29.

A daily average high of 87 degrees combined with a nightly average low of 69 degrees for a daily average temperature of 80 degrees, which he said is about 1 degree above average for this time of year.

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