

A4 Daily Press, Thursday, Sept. 24, 1987

Wallace suspended sentence was conditional

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scheduling a hearing to determine if the suspended sentence should be imposed.

Local court records show that Wallace's 1982 suspended sentence was conditional on his being "of peace and good behavior" through 1987 or face 18 years in prison. He was also convicted of using a gun in the robbery and sentenced to one year of jail, where he remained for four months, when he reached the mandatory parole date for the one-year freedom sentence.

On April 26, 1983, Wallace was found guilty in York County District Court of assault and battery. The judge suspended the sentence and ordered it dismissed if Wallace was on good behavior until Nov. 16, 1983.

York County Commonwealth's Attorney Martin M. Renne said he didn't alert Person because he wasn't aware of Wallace's previous conviction and probation.

On Nov. 28, 1983, Wallace was

charged in James City with burglary and grand larceny, according to court records. The magistrate ordered Wallace held without bond that night, citing his probation for the 1982 robbery conviction. Prosecutors later decided they lacked sufficient evidence to bring the case to court and District Judge J. R. Zepkin ordered Wallace discharged.

In 1984, 1985 and 1986, Wallace was charged with nine offenses and convicted by Zepkin, who gave him a mixture of jail time and suspended sentences along with two years' unsupervised probation in 1985.

The probation had ended by

May 28, 1987, when Zepkin found Wallace guilty of unauthorized use of a car, petty larceny, destruction of private property and failure to appear in court. Zepkin, who was not available for comment Wednesday, again placed Wallace on probation and suspended 66 months and 24 days of jail time.

He ordered Wallace to perform community service work and undergo a drug rehabilitation program.

When Wallace failed to attend the program and tested positive for cocaine, Zepkin ordered in July that he be jailed.

Some local prosecutors' offices have systems to keep track of these type cases, but each appears to differ.

In Hampton, each district court defendant's name is checked manually against an extensive card file by one of the eight attorneys or five clerks in his office, said Commonwealth's Attorney Christopher Hutton. Police also routinely supply district court judges with a defendant's criminal history.

The state Commonwealth's Attorney's Association hopes to ask General Assembly this year to supply state prosecutors with the kind of computers police use to track criminals, Hutton said.

This would allow them to check to see if a misdemeanor offender is a probation or parole violator, he said.

The Commonwealth's attorney's office in Newport News is one of the few in the state that already has a terminal for the computerized statewide criminal information system, said Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney David Olson.

Olson's office also has a computerized, in-house system. Between the two systems, Olson said, nearly all probation or parole violators are caught and frequently helps prosecutors in other localities catch violators.

Pair found dead

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meeting to organize the investigation was held late Wednesday at Newport News police headquarters.

This is the first double slaying in the county for at least 10 years and probably longer, said Commonwealth's Attorney W. Parker Council, who went to the scene to confer with officers.

He said it looks like a case of capital murder because it involves the premeditated murder of more than one person in the same act or crime.

A four-wheel-drive truck used by police to remove the bodies from the edge of the river became stuck when the tide came back up and the bodies were taken to Rescue by boat.

The pair were discovered by Louis Ford of Virginia Beach. He said he was not aware the two were missing and was simply walking the beach. At first he thought he saw a pair of clothing and then realized it was a girl's body. He said she was face down and appeared to have been washed up by the tide.

Ford said he touched nothing and went for police. When he returned with officers, Knobling's body was discovered about 50 feet away, a few feet from the water line.

Because of the unusual circumstances of how Knobling's truck was found, the victims' parents had been preparing for the worst after a State Police plane spotted nothing from the air Wednesday.

"I know my son and his truck. He'd never leave his truck like that. He'd lock his truck up in my back yard," Karl Knobling said of his son earlier in the day. "It's getting doubtful now. So many hours have passed."

Robin's mother, Bonnie Edwards, had said earlier Wednesday, "I'm very frightened at this time. We're still hoping for the best but are trying to prepare ourselves in case something's happened."

Edwards said she identified the tennis shoes found in the abandoned truck as belonging to her daughter.

The older Knobling spent much of the day Tuesday and Wednesday searching the game refuge. He said his son had gone there in the past.

Members of the Knobling family were at the game preserve when the bodies were discovered.

Knobling met Edwards, an eighth-grader at Huntington Middle School, for the first time Saturday night while she was out for a movie date with his cousin, family members said.

The girl was taken home by Knobling, his brother and his cousin but she apparently smothered out shortly after midnight to meet Knobling, Edwards said. Her daughter "seemed like she was anxious for her sister to be here" Saturday night, the last day her family had seen her.

Robin had run away from home twice since May, but returned both times, her mother said. She was gone for eight days in May and about eight days in July, she said. During the May incident, her photograph was published in the Daily Press in connection with her disappearance.

Until March, there had not been a murder in the county since Dec. 31, 1984. Those deaths mark the third and fourth slayings in title of "Wight" this year.

The others were in February and earlier this month.

Dioxin traces found

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how many of the nation's paper mills produced the contaminant paper.

Experts disagree over whether the traces of dioxin posed a threat to human health. The industry spokesman said that the data collected so far indicated that the dioxins posed little or no danger to public health because their levels were low.

The Environmental Protection Agency decided Wednesday that a congressional mandated study of dioxin contamination across the country had found less contamination than officials had expected in land and water. But data on water pollution from paper mills gathered in the course of this broader study led industry and government researchers to focus on the possibility of paper contamination.

Federal environmental officials said Wednesday that the contamination of paper products with dioxin needed further study and that it remained to be seen whether there was a public health problem that required regulatory action.

"It is at the low levels described by the industry it is not something to be ignored but it is not something to break out in a cold sweat about either," Dr. John A. Moore, assistant administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency for pesticides and toxic substances, said in a telephone interview.

Environmentalists contended that the presence of dioxin in products that come in contact with food or with sensitive parts of the body, where the chemical might be absorbed, presented a

possibly serious health threat.

Dioxin, an unwanted byproduct of many chemical processes, has been found to cause cancer, damage to the immune system and birth defects when administered to some species of animals, even in extremely low doses. Based on the animal tests, the federal environmental agency classifies dioxin as a "probable human carcinogen."

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