



FUGITIVE ADAM WALSH (KIDNAP) DATE 3-12-03

OPERATOR TONY TIME 9:21 p.m.

- AMW
- FJ
- Other

LAST SEEN
10-15 YEARS AGO

When and where did you see him?

LEXINGTON, N.C.
IN COURT (DAVIDSON COUNTY DISTRICT)
FOR MOLESTATION

NAME → RICHARD LINCOLN

Why do you believe it's him?

MOLESTATION CHARGES AGE 35-40.
HT-TALL WT-THEW SACT + PUPPED HAIR (THEW)
CALLER THINKS HE WAS IN FLORIDA
HE HAD A MUSTACHE ALSO

What was he doing?

HE WORKED AT SAME MALL
WHERE ADAM WAS MISSING

Where is he now?

HE WAS WORKING AT K-MART
AS A SECURITY GUARD IN
LEXINGTON, N.C.

What else can you tell us about the fugitive?

HE MOLESTATED A KID AGE 16
WHO ^(USA) WAS ON PROBATION
HE WAS CITIZEN WITH A WORKMAN
THEY LIVED IN A APT IN LEXINGTON, N.C.

May we give your name and telephone number to law enforcement agents?
They may wish to call you back for more information.

- YES
- NO

Name TIM WEST

Please characterize the caller TRYING TO HELP

Location _____
Phone (336) 746-5293

WAS PROBATION OFFICER
FOR 33 YEARS



FUGITIVE ADAM WALSH (KIDNAP) DATE 3-12-03

OPERATOR TONY TIME 9:21 p.m.

- AMW
- FJ
- Other

When and where did you see him?

LEXINGTON, N.C.
IN COURT (DAVISON COUNTY DISTRICT)
FOR MOLESTATION
 NAME → RICHARD LEWIS

Why do you believe it's him?

MOLESTATION CHARGES AGE-35-40
HT-TALL WT-THEW SLEET (KIDNAP) (TITAN)
CALLER THINKS HE WAS IN FLORIDA
HE HAD A MUSTACHE ALSO

What was he doing?

HE WORKED AT SAME MALL
WHERE ADAM WAS MISSING

Where is he now?

HE WAS WORKING AT K-MART
AS A SECURITY GUARD IN
LEXINGTON, N.C.

What else can you tell us about the fugitive?

HE MOLESTATED A KID AGE-16
WHO WAS ON PROBATION

HE WAS CLOSER WITH A COUSIN
THEY WOULD SEE A MPD IN LEXINGTON, N.C.

May we give your name and telephone number to law enforcement agents?

YES

They may wish to call you back for more information.

NO

Name

JIM WEST

Please characterize the caller

TRYING TO HELP

Location

LEXINGTON, N.C.

Phone

(336) 716-5293

CALLER IS NOT A POLICE OFFICER

HE IS A MOTHER

DETECTIVE JOHN KERNS

John Kerns #0177

THIS DETECTIVE WAS FORWARDED A TIP FROM AMERICA'S MOST WANTED AND THE FOLLOW UP INVESTIGATION IS AS FOLLOWS.

04-14-03 1010 HRS.

THIS WRITER (J. KERNS) CONTACTED JAMES WEST W/M 3-17-40 OF 3864 PARKS RD. LEXINGTON, N.C. (336-746-5293). MR. WEST STATES THAT HE WAS A PROBATION OFFICER IN DAVIDSON COUNTY (LEXINGTON). RICHARD LINCOLN COMMITTED SEXUAL ASSAULT UPON TWO CHILDREN IN THIS JURISDICTION IN 1983. LINCOLN WAS CONVICTED IN 1985 AND RELEASED FROM PRISON IN 1987. MR. WEST WAS HIS PROBATION OFFICER AFTER LINCOLN'S RELEASE. MR. WEST STATES THAT DETECTIVE BILLY NAILS OF DAVIDSON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE WAS THE INVESTIGATOR. DETECTIVE NAILS TOLD MR. WEST THAT RICHARD LINCOLN HAD ALIASES, ONE FROM FLORIDA. DETECTIVE NAILS HAD TOLD MR. WEST THAT HE CONTACTED THE HOLLYWOOD POLICE AND AFFORDED INFORMATION ON RICHARD LINCOLN TO THIS AGENCY. DETECTIVE NAILS KNEW OF THE ADAM WALSH CASE DUE TO THE MEDIA COVERAGE. DETECTIVE NAILS RETIRED AND IS DECEASED.

MR. WEST RECENTLY SAW ON TELEVISION THAT THE ADAM WALSH MURDER WAS NOT SOLVED, BUT WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THE CASE HAD BEEN SOLVED.

04-16-03 1400 HRS.

MR. WEST CHECKED THROUGH LOCAL RECORDS LOCATING IDENTIFIERS FOR RICHARD LINCOLN W/M 02-04-46, NORTH CAROLINA D.O.C. #0241771, NORTH CAROLINA SID. #NC0336119A, F.B.I. #217898Z5, AND S.S.N. 030-34-5335. RICHARD LINCOLN WAS ARRESTED IN NORTH CAROLINA IN 1983 AND SENTENCED ON 10-10-85. LINCOLN WAS RELEASED ON 05-01-87 AND PLACED ON PROBATION.

DURING 1994 RICHARD LINCOLN WAS ARRESTED IN TAMPA, FLORIDA ON FOUR COUNTS OF SEXUAL BATTERY ON CHILDREN. A.S.A. DYANN BAITY OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA, (813-274-1428) HANDLED A CIVIL COMMITMENT HEARING REFERENCE THEIR JURISDICTION'S CASES AFTER HIS CONVICTIONS.

RICHARD LINCOLN IS CURRENTLY LOCATED AT THE FLORIDA CIVIL COMMITMENT CENTER, ARCADIA, FLORIDA.

THIS DETECTIVE THEN CONTACTED A.S.A. DYANN BAITY. TAMPA P.D. BEGAN INVESTIGATING RICHARD LINCOLN IN JANUARY 1994 FOR MOLESTING CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS OF AGE. FOUR CASES WERE INVESTIGATED. THE OFFENSES OCCURRED IN 1993 AND 1994. LINCOLN WAS ARRESTED IN 1994 AND CONVICTED ON TWO CASES FOR MOLESTING JUVENILES UNDER 12 Y.O.A. TWO VICTIMS WOULD NOT TESTIFY.

04-17-03 1144 HRS.

AN AUTO TRACK WAS COMPLETED ON RICHARD LINCOLN. A SISTER WAS LISTED BEING LOIS LINCOLN COOTS W/F 02-17-47 OF 6764 64 STREET PINELLAS PARK, FL. (727-544-7667). THE AUTO TRACK DID NOT LIST ANY ADDRESSES ASSOCIATED WITH RICHARD LINCOLN IN SOUTH FLORIDA. ADDRESSES LISTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH LINCOLN WERE TAMPA, PINELLAS PARK, CLEARWATER, AND LARGO FLORIDA. PARIS, TENNESSEE WAS LISTED ALSO. THE AFOREMENTIONED LOCATIONS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE DATES FROM MAY 1990 TO DECEMBER 2000.

07-28-03 1130 HRS.

THIS DETECTIVE ARRIVED AT 700 TWIGGS STREET, TAMPA, AND MET WITH A.S.A. DYANN BAITY AND A.S.A. JENNIFER PARKER. THIS WRITER WAS GIVEN THE CASE FILE ON RICHARD LINCOLN TO REVIEW.

THE REVIEW OF THE FILE CONFIRMED THE NORTH CAROLINA OFFENSES AND ARREST AND THE TAMPA OFFENSES AND ARREST. A SUBJECT CLINTON SAUNDERS W/M 08-03-76 WAS LISTED AS RESIDING WITH RICHARD LINCOLN DURING THE TAMPA OFFENSES.

A REVIEW OF THE CRIMINAL CASES AND INTERVIEWS OF THE HILLSBOROUGH PROSECUTORS REVEALED THAT RICHARD LINCOLN HAD CLINTON SAUNDERS RESIDING WITH HIM SINCE CLINTON WAS A CHILD. OTHER CHILDREN STAYED AT THE TRAILER LINCOLN AND CLINTON RESIDED AT IN TAMPA AND WHEN THE CHILDREN FELL ASLEEP LINCOLN WOULD MOLEST THEM. NO OTHER FORM OF ASSAULT OR VIOLENCE WAS A PART OF THE METHOD OF OPERATION LINCOLN DEMONSTRATED.

07-28-03 1800 HRS.

THIS DETECTIVE MET WITH LOIS COOTS, SISTER OF RICHARD LINCOLN. AT LOIS COOTS RESIDENCE AN EXTENSIVE INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED. LOIS STATED THAT SHE AND RICHARD WERE BORN IN KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE. THEIR PARENTS WERE DIVORCED WHEN SHE

WAS FIVE YEARS OLD. LOIS, RICHARD AND THEIR MOTHER MOVED TO MASSACHUSETTS UNTIL HIGH SCHOOL AGE. THEY THEN MOVED TO PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA APPROXIMATELY FORTY YEARS AGO. LOIS AND RICHARD LIVED THERE THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL AND RICHARD ENTERED THE AIR FORCE IN 1964 AND WAS DISCHARGED IN 1968. LOIS WAS NOT CLOSE TO HER BROTHER AND RECALLS THAT IN 1975 RICHARD WAS LIVING IN BRANSON, MISSOURI. LOIS VISITED RICHARD THERE. RICHARD MADE NO CONTACT WITH LOIS FOR YEARS. LOIS RECALLS THE NEXT TIME SHE HAD CONTACT WITH RICHARD WAS WHEN HE WAS ARRESTED IN DAVIDSON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA IN 1983 FOR THE AFOREMENTIONED CHARGES. LOIS STATES RICHARD RETURNED TO PINELLAS COUNTY IN 1987. AFTER HIS RETURN HE HAD A BOY RESIDING WITH HIM, BEING CLINTON SAUNDERS. RICHARD AND CLINTON MOVED TO MASSACHUSETTS THE FOLLOWING YEAR. RICHARD RETURNED TO PINELLAS COUNTY DURING THE EARLY 1990'S WITH CLINTON. LOIS DID NOT SEE RICHARD AFTER 1993 AND SHE DID NOT KNOW OF HIS ARREST FOR MOLESTING CHILDREN IN 1994. LOIS KNEW RICHARD WAS IN THE FLORIDA CIVIL COMMITMENT CENTER IN ARCADIA, FLORIDA.

LOIS STATES SHE HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF RICHARD EVER BEING IN SOUTH FLORIDA. LOIS KNOWS THAT RICHARD WORKED AS A PIPE FITTER AND MAINTENANCE AT A HOTEL.

07-28-03 2025 HRS.

ASSIGNED ARRIVED AT 6025 90 STREET PINELLAS PARK, FLORIDA. A DRIVERS LICENSE CHECK LISTED CLINTON SAUNDERS AS RESIDING THERE. THE OWNER OF THE RESIDENT, CATHLEEN OWENS, STATED CLINTON MOVED TWO YEARS AGO TO 6301 58 STREET, PINELLAS PARK.

07-28-03 2115 HRS.

ASSIGNED ARRIVED AT 6301 58 STREET #5 AND LOCATED CLINTON SAUNDERS WIFE, CLARISSA SAUNDERS. CLINTON WAS NOT HOME AND AN APPOINTMENT WAS MADE FOR 9 A.M. ON 7-29-03 FOR AN INTERVIEW.

07-29-03 0900 HRS.

CLINTON SAUNDERS STATED THAT HE MOVED TO TAMPA WITH HIS FATHER IN 1988. THEY LIVED IN A TRAILER PARK AND RICHARD LINCOLN WAS IN A TRAILER NEAR HIM. CLINTON'S FATHER WAS A DRUG ABUSER AND HIS FATHER WOULD LEAVE CLINTON WITH RICHARD LINCOLN. THE FATHER EVENTUALLY LEFT CLINTON WITH RICHARD LINCOLN AND CLINTON LIVED WITH LINCOLN FROM TWELVE YEARS OLD UNTIL EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD. CLINTON WAS SEXUALLY ABUSED BY

LINCOLN FROM TWELVE YEARS OLD TO FOURTEEN YEARS OLD. THE ABUSE WAS BY NON VIOLENT TACTICS AS THE OTHER VICTIMS WERE. CLINTON FOUND OUT LINCOLN WAS SEXUALLY ABUSING THE CHILDREN THAT WERE STAYING OVERNIGHT AT THEIR TRAILER (DURING 1993 AND 1994). CLINTON STATES THAT HE REMEMBERS THAT LINCOLN WOULD BUY THE VICTIMS CANDY AND ALIKE BEFORE THEY BECAME VICTIMS.

CLINTON STATES THAT WHILE HE WAS LIVING WITH LINCOLN, LINCOLN HAD SAID HE USE TO LIVE IN NEW ENGLAND. CLINTON HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF LINCOLN RESIDING IN OR TRAVELING TO SOUTH FLORIDA. DURING THE SIX YEARS OF LIVING WITH LINCOLN THEY NEVER TRAVELED TO SOUTH FLORIDA, BUT TO TENNESSEE, NORTH CAROLINA AND MASSACHUSETTS.

07-29-03 1300 HRS.

ASSIGNED ARRIVED AT THE FLORIDA CIVIL COMMITMENT CENTER, 13613 S.E. HIGHWAY 70 ARCADIA, FL. (863-491-6100). AN INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD LINCOLN WAS CONDUCTED. LINCOLN AGREED TO GIVE A TIME LINE OF WHERE HE HAD LIVED. HE WAS BORN IN KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE. AT FIVE YEARS OF AGE HE MOVED TO SAINT PETERSBURG, FL. HE MOVED BACK TO NEW ENGLAND, MASSACHUSETTS, DURING MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL. AFTER GRADUATION HE ENTERED THE AIR FORCE (1965) AND WAS DISCHARGED IN 1969. IN 1969 LINCOLN RETURNED TO SAINT PETERSBURG UNTIL 1972. LINCOLN THEN MOVED TO BRANSON, MISSOURI, LIVING THERE FROM 1972 UNTIL 1980. LINCOLN THEN MOVED IN 1980 TO SAINT PETERSBURG UNTIL 1982. IN 1982 HE MOVED TO LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA AND LIVED THERE UNTIL MID 1984. LINCOLN MOVED TO LEXINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA IN 1984 (ACTUALLY 1983). HE STATES HE WAS ARRESTED FOR THE AFOREMENTIONED CHARGES IN NORTH CAROLINA AND SENTENCED TO PRISON. UPON HIS RELEASE IN 1987 HE LIVED IN TENNESSEE FOR SIX MONTHS AND THEN MOVED BACK TO SAINT PETERSBURG. LINCOLN HAD TRAVELED TO COLORADO SPRINGS AND NEW ORLEANS BETWEEN 1988 AND 1993 AND THEN MOVED BACK TO TAMPA. IN 1994 HE WAS ARRESTED FOR THE CHILD MOLESTATIONS AND SENTENCED TO PRISON. HE WAS PAROLED IN 1996. LINCOLN MOVED BACK TO TAMPA AND IN 1998 HIS PAROLE WAS VIOLATED AND SENT BACK TO PRISON, THEN TO THE FLORIDA CIVIL COMMITMENT CENTER WHERE HE REMAINS INCARCERATED.

IN THE COURSE OF THIS INVESTIGATION, THE INFORMATION COMPILED FROM THE AUTO TRACK, THE STATE ATTORNEY FILE, THE INTERVIEWS AND LINCOLN'S CRIMINAL HISTORY, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT RICHARD LINCOLN WAS IN HOLLYWOOD OR THE SOUTH FLORIDA AREA.

RICHARD LINCOLN'S METHOD OF OPERATION WAS NOT OF VIOLENCE
OR GROSS VIOLENCE. NO LINKS WERE ESTABLISHED TO THIS CRIME.

ADAM WALSH TIP

DETECTIVE JOHN KERNS
REPORT PREPARED 01-04-05

AN E-MAIL WAS RECEIVED ON 12-17-04 FROM A PATTI RELCHEL USING AN E-MAIL ADDRESS PBAKER155@AOL.COM. PATTI REFERS TO A SUBJECT JOHN RODNEY MCRAE WHO WAS CONVICTED OF MURDERING AN 8 YEAR OLD IN MICHIGAN DURING THE YEAR 1950. HE WAS RELEASED DURING 1972 AND SUSPECTED OF ADDITIONAL MURDERS OF CHILDREN IN CENTRAL FLORIDA (BEVARD COUNTY).

THE DETROIT FREE PRESS WROTE TWO ARTICLES ON NOVEMBER 29TH AND 30TH, 2004 CONCERNING MCRAE. IN REVIEWING THE ARTICLES DETECTIVE GARY HARRELL OF BREVARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT FLORIDA (321-454-7004) WAS MENTIONED AS THE DETECTIVE INVESTIGATING THE MURDERS IN THAT JURISDICTION. MCRAE IS THE SUSPECT.

ON 1-3-05 THIS WRITER SPOKE WITH DETECTIVE HARRELL. HARRELL STATES THAT THE TWO MURDERS MCRAE IS SUSPECTED OF COMMITTING WERE COMMITTED DURING 1979. HARRELL PROVIDED A TIME LINE AS FOLLOWS:

MCRAE WAS WORKING AS A CORRECTIONS OFFICER IN OPA LOCKA, FLORIDA FROM 1975 TO 1976.

FROM 1977 TO FEBRUARY 1980 MCRAE WAS IN BREVARD COUNTY WORKING AS A CORRECTIONS OFFICER.

FROM FEBRUARY 1980 MCRAE LEFT FLORIDA AFTER BEING QUESTIONED ABOUT THE BEVARD COUNTY HOMICIDES. HE FLED TO ST.CLAIR SHORES, MICHIGAN WHERE HIS MOTHER LIVED (SUSPECTED OF AN ADDITIONAL MURDER IN ST.CLAIR SHORES DURING 1987).

ADAM WALSH'S DISAPPEARANCE OCCURRED 7-27-1981, NOT WITHIN THE TIME FRAME JOHN MCRAE WAS PRESENT IN FLORIDA. ALSO DETECTIVE HARRELL STATED THAT IN ALL OF THE MURDERS MCRAE COMMITTED OR IS SUSPECTED OF COMMITTING, HE BURIED THE VICTIMS, NOT BEING CONSISTENT WITH THIS CASE.

COPIES OF THE DETROIT PRESS ARTICLES AND THE E-MAIL RECEIVED FROM PATTI RELCHEL ARE ATTACHED TO THIS REPORT AND THIS PACKET IS TO BE PLACED IN THE TIPS FILE OF THE CASE FILE.

 #0177


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Michigan news

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50 YEARS OF HORROR: Convicted killer returns to state and another boy disappears

A 10-year-old skeleton leads to charges, but case is overturned

November 30, 2004

BY JOE SWICKARD

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

John Rodney McRae hadn't been around Clare County for a decade, and he was still a bother.

Vicki Hudson's horses kept banging into the cement block rat wall, a relic from the nasty compound McRae had on Larch Road before vanishing in the night 10 years earlier. The trash-filled trailer had been long since hauled off and the barn and shed leveled, leaving just those cement blocks that were a menace to Hudson's horses.

"I was tired of doctoring them," Hudson said.

On a late fall afternoon in 1997, Hudson told Clinton Goodenow to scoop a pit with the backhoe and just tip in those blocks and cover them up. Goodenow went at it, but soon he was pounding on Hudson's door.

"I found what they're looking for," he told Hudson, and led her to the mound he'd scooped.

"It was on the dirt like somebody planted a prop," Hudson said. "It was a skull. I said 'Let's just go on and tell the sheriff.'" "

Folks now knew that Randy Ray Laufer hadn't run away from home in September 1987.

"It took us 10 years to find out that Randy had been dead for 10 years," said his older sister Kandy

THE STORY SO FAR

In 1950, John Rodney McRae was a 15-year-old kid next door -- until he was arrested for killing 8-year-old Joey Housey in St. Clair Shores. Joey's autopsy said he was killed by "a sexual aberrant," and warned: "If the murderer is not found, he will probably repeat the performance."

McRae was sentenced to life in prison, but a commutation led to his release in 1972. He moved to Florida, where he was suspected in the disappearance of three boys. Then McRae settled in Clare County, Mich.,



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Laufer. "That was hard."

It was also hard, Laufer said, knowing that the man accused of killing her brother was McRae, a former neighbor, and that her brother was buried about 15 feet from his door.

It was hard knowing that McRae's son, Martin, was Randy's friend, and that she and the boys rode the same school bus.

It was hard learning that McRae had killed another boy, 8-year-old Joey Housey, in 1950 and that he'd been released with a reduced sentence. It was hard knowing he was a suspect in the disappearances of three boys in Florida before moving to Clare County.

It was hard sitting through the trial hearing how her brother, 15, was killed and hacked apart. Witnesses said the knife gouges in his tailbone were from sexual torture.

Some measure of peace came in 1998 with the conviction and another life sentence for McRae

The pain returned in April when McRae's conviction was overturned.

"It's unfair that we've gone through all this when he should have been in jail for what he did in 1950," she said. "It's unfair for my brother, those Florida families -- and who knows how many others we don't know about."

Another missing boy

John McRae arrived in Clare County in 1984, settling in a trailer with his wife and son, Martin. They'd knocked around the country for several years since lighting out from Florida after he was questioned about three missing boys.

McRae seemed to spend his time caring for his invalid wife and raising angora goats in the ramshackle collection of buildings on Larch Road. He immersed himself in 4-H and Cub Scouts through Martin.

Hudson said her neighbor seemed to have a lot of free time, and keeping a tidy farm wasn't a priority.

"He asked me to feed the animals when they went away for a weekend," she said. "Goats were living right inside the trailer. I couldn't believe it. There were kittens in drawers."

That wasn't the only surprise.

"We had no idea he had any kind of a record," Hudson said. "We didn't have a clue as to who or what he was."

McRae was known as a guy raising goats, and as a father who kept a close eye on his son and got involved in kids' activities.

Then in 1987, Randy Laufer disappeared. The police were pretty sure he'd run away, even if his family insisted he hadn't.

and in 1987, another neighbor boy went missing.

■ **MONDAY:** Michigan convict suspected in Florida cases, but lawyer says proof is lacking

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"They told us not to worry, that he'd be back by the end of the week. And then weeks turned to months, and they said he'd be back after a year," Laufer said. "For the first six months, there was nothing in the newspapers or on TV -- just my mother and a friend passing out flyers. I was a senior in high school and going out everyday, looking."

There was another disappearance. McRae, his wife and son were suddenly gone in January 1988.

"One day McRae was buying some used tires from me, saying he'd pay me later," Hudson said. "The next morning his dog, a black Lab, is tied to a tree in my yard with a note on his collar asking me to take care of him. They were gone."

Clare County Sheriff's Detective Lt. Mark McClellan said that at first, McRae had been questioned like other parents about the missing boy.

But a call from police in Brevard County, Fla., changed things, McClellan said: "They were following up on the whereabouts of John Rodney McRae. And then they asked if we had any missing boys. And then they said we had reason to be concerned."

Investigators returned to the McRae home armed with his background and the open Florida cases.

"Let's say he soon left the state in a hurry," McClellan said. "We found him down in Arizona where his mother was. We were pretty sure, but we could never develop enough evidence to make a case."

Tracking dogs went over the site repeatedly without luck. The abandoned trailer was searched and flyers for the missing boy were found in the litter.

The county officials turned to the Michigan attorney general, and veteran prosecutor Mark Blumer was handed the case. Blumer was no stranger to tough cases -- he successfully prosecuted David Davis years after the Hillsdale man killed his wife with a supposedly undetectable poison. He also won a conviction of Melvin Garza for abducting and murdering his girlfriend Robin Adams in Caro -- the charges had been brought even before the body was discovered. "By 1997, Blumer thought we had enough to prosecute even without the boy's body, then lo and behold! The skull turns up," McClellan said. "I tell you, it was an awesome thing."

McRae and his son, then in his 20s, were charged in the killing.

The men were returned to Michigan. The case against Martin was dismissed, but John McRae was held in the county jail pending his first-degree murder trial. While there, he told his wife to ask their old neighbor Dean Heintzelman to visit him. Their kids had been buddies.

Heintzelman dropped by the jail about 11 p.m. one night. What happened next was either small town informality or police cunning.

'It was bad'

Heintzelman also was a volunteer auxiliary deputy, and he was in uniform when the jailer let him into the cellblock. Heintzelman turned their talk to the killing, first bringing up efforts to charge Martin. He then asked: "John, did you

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do it?"

Heintzelman, in later testimony, recalled the scene: "And he just hung his head down and said, 'Dean, it was bad. It was bad.' "

Despite defense efforts to keep it out, jurors heard the testimony during the four-day trial in 1998.

The Michigan Court of Appeals agreed the testimony was proper and not unconstitutional police interrogation. But this spring, the Michigan Supreme Court said it was and ordered a new trial.

The uniform- and badge-wearing Heintzelman had special access to McRae in a maximum security area late at night and persisted in trying to get him to talk about the case -- all clear signs of official sanction and action, the high court ruled.

While McRae -- who remains in custody -- has gotten legal breathing room, his son, Martin, is in his own world of trouble.

Martin, now 30, pleaded guilty in Reno, Nev., in 2000 to molesting his daughter and her friend on a four-wheeling trip in the desert. He is serving 10 years to life.

The U.S. Supreme Court has asked for written arguments on John McRae's case.

The prosecution maintains that Heintzelman was a friend and not a deputy when he spoke with him.

But Marla McCowan, McRae's lawyer from the State Appellate Defenders Office, asked: "Do you think that just regular old you or me would have had access to Mr. McRae at 11 p.m.? The man repeatedly questions him and then when he gets an answer, he told his supervisor."

McCowan said this isn't legal nit-picking: "People may say this is a terrible child killer trying to sneak through some loophole. I don't think the right to an attorney or the Miranda Rights is just a technicality. I don't like the idea of fudging on the Constitution. You can't just sort of comply with the rules."

Clare County Prosecutor Norm Gage said the justices just don't get the local informality.

"I guess the court doesn't appreciate small town America yet," Gage said.

Gage and defense attorney Paul Pemberton are preparing for a retrial in January. If the U.S. Supreme Court takes up the case, the retrial will be delayed. Pemberton said there's plenty of reasonable doubt -- more than enough to acquit McRae.

For starters, he said, McRae was at a 4-H meeting the night Laufer disappeared. Pemberton said Laufer was seen a year later at a fair and said he was staying in a nearby town.

Whatever happened to the boy took place after McRae left, Pemberton said.

"That property was open and abandoned after he moved in 1987, and they ran over that area several times with cadaver dogs who never smelled a thing," he said. "There's 20 to 30 percent of that skeleton missing, and we're talking big bones like femurs. And the last place to bury a victim would be in your front yard. How much crazy is that?"

"Randy had a pretty sad life," Pemberton said. "He'd even tried to run off with the circus."



"If we can keep Joey Housey and 1951 out of the courtroom, we have a pretty fair chance," he said.

But Gage said Joey will be in the trial because he shows McRae's lethal pattern.

Kandy Laufer said another trial is another layer of heartache.

"It's hard," she said. "My mother's passed away and my father's ill. Yes, it feels unfair to have gone through this when he should have been in jail for the rest of his life for what he did to Joey Housey."

Contact **JOE SWICKARD** at 586-469-4913 or swickard@freepress.com.

 
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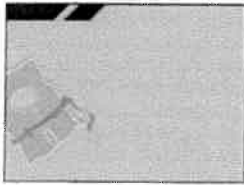
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Michigan news

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50 YEARS OF HORROR: 'A very scary man amongst us'

Michigan convict suspected in Florida cases, but lawyer says proof is lacking

November 29, 2004

BY JOE SWICKARD

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

First of two parts

Boys have a way of disappearing around John Rodney McRae.

Joey Housey in St. Clair Shores.

Kip Hess, Charles Collingwood and Keith Fleming in Florida.

Randy Laufer in Clare County, Mich.

Some stay missing; others surface as mud-caked corpses or as bones.

It might be his bad luck, but cops and prosecutors in Michigan and Florida insist that McRae is just bad.

"What can I say? Essentially Randy Laufer was butchered after he was befriended by John Rodney McRae," said Clare County Prosecutor Norm Gage. "It's a pattern of his history. He is a very scary man amongst us."

McRae had twice been convicted of first-degree murder in Michigan and sentenced to life in prison without parole. But one sentence was commuted and the second conviction was overturned on appeal. He remains in custody pending the resolution of the case.

RELATED CONTENT

- Trail of missing and slain boys (Adobe Acrobat PDF file, 773K)
- Part Two: Convicted killer returns to state and another boy disappears

THE MISSING FLORIDA BOYS



Keith Fleming disappeared from Cocoa Beach, Fla., shortly after John McRae relocated to Florida.



Kip Hess was saved from bullying at a Florida church carnival by McRae. He disappeared a few days later.



Charles Collingwood has not been seen since he escaped



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Now, Gage and the Michigan Attorney General's Office are preparing for a retrial, tentatively set for January, in Laufer's slaying. They say McRae, even at 70 and in poor health, should never be free.

from a Florida prison in 1979. Police say he was McRae's lover.

Defense lawyer Paul Pemberton said authorities are determined to demonize McRae using the missing kids in Florida but have never filed charges.

And in the Laufer case, he said, they've "gone way off the top" to try to convict McRae using a half-century old crime and circumstantial evidence stitched together with innuendo.

"Somebody killed and buried Randy Ray Laufer, but it sure wasn't John Rodney McRae, goat farmer," Pemberton said.

A half-century ago

In 1950, St. Clair Shores was ready to explode beyond its sleepy village existence. Soon hundreds of families a month would move to the subdivisions carved from farmland, lakefront cottage sites and woods.

The vacant lot near Martin's Drain at 10 1/2 Mile and Jefferson was a kids hideout and a teenagers drinking spot and lovers lane. It was fenced, but that didn't keep anyone out of the overgrown lot.

As investigators would later pace it off, it was 600 steps from there to McRae's home at the foot of Madison Street.

At 15, McRae was a husky high schooler and a reserve on the football team. He was also known as a petty thief who went joyriding with his pals in stolen boats and cars.

On Sept. 9, Joey Housey was seen on Jefferson fooling with an auto sealed beam headlamp, a relatively new innovation with the headlight lens, reflector and filament in a single unit.

The 8-year-old boy never made it home for supper.

"We didn't waste any time in starting to look," said brother Jim Housey, then a 17-year-old high school student, now a retired police officer living in northern Michigan.

Police, neighbors, service clubs like the Kiwanis and his dad Joseph's union friends from his days at the now-defunct Kaiser auto plant on Detroit's east side all turned out. Among the searchers were McRae and Gus Blumline, who was on the waiting list to join the police department. Blumline was an amateur gardener who often traded tips and plants with Joey's mom.

"Joey was last seen at Fresard and Jefferson with that headlamp," said Blumline who would later rise to lieutenant in the St. Clair Shores Police Department. "My mother had seen him that day at Jefferson Beach."

There was no sign of the boy as the search parties worked through the vacant lots and any place a little boy might hide or be hidden.

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After two weeks, the parties regrouped and set out on Saturday, Sept. 23. It was muddy going after a Friday night downpour.

Jim Housey was with the search crew going through the land by the Martin Drain when an adult sat down for a breather on a slab of broken sidewalk. He looked down and saw part of a child's right arm in the mud. There was a silver Cub Scout ring on the middle finger.

It was Joey, his throat and genitals slashed with a straight razor.

Dr. Richard E. Olsen concluded his autopsy report with this note: "The wounds present are characteristic of murder by a sexual aberrant....If the murderer is not found he will probably repeat the performance."

"My mother never got over it, and she lived to age 84," Jim Housey said. "Mom and Dad, they burned a candle 25 years for Joey. You know, we'd once gone for a weekend and never even locked the doors. After they found Joey, they locked the doors."

Donald Housey was 12 and saw his mother change. "The thought never really goes away," said Housey, a retiree still living in St. Clair Shores. "You're at dinner and suddenly you think of Joey. Why it pops in your mind, you just never know."

Days passed before the killer was identified. It was McRae, whose mother was Joey's kindergarten teacher.

According to investigators at the time, McRae went to his father with a story of a dream in which he might have killed the boy. His father took him to the lakeshore at their home and told him to swim into the darkness and not return if he had anything to do with the killing.

Rodney plunged into the water, but circled back, stole a boat and made his way to relatives in Canada. His flight was brief. He soon was arrested and made several confessions.

McRae said he'd left Joey exposed at first, but went back and buried him in a shallow pit. He then muscled the 75-pound slab of concrete over the grave. He said he was drinking with his buddies at the lot about a week later.

A juvenile, McRae was tried as an adult. Pathologist Olsen testified the wounds were the work of a "specific type of sexual deviate. The entire act was that of an abnormal sexual personality."

McRae was convicted, and both Housey brothers remember the judge's promise to their mother: John Rodney McRae, with a mandatory sentence of life without parole, would never walk the streets.

The Houseys remained in St. Clair Shores, keeping a candle-lit vigil with a colorized portrait of Joey in his Cub Scout uniform. Later, Jim -- detesting his well-paying job as a tool designer -- joined the St. Clair Shores police force so he could work outside. He didn't hide the connection with the city's notorious crime, but he didn't volunteer much about it.

In prison, McRae, inmate No. 76537, was examined by Dr. Richard Nordlund.

Nordlund reported that McRae lacked "guilt feelings and remorse," but the

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doctor said "I think he can be reclaimed."

McRae said he got caught because he didn't keep his mouth shut. He also explained how he dealt with his conscience.

"I just didn't think about what happened," he told Nordlund, "and I slept good that night."

Rehabilitated and released

McRae fit well into the prison system and became a trusty with use of a car to run errands on prison grounds at the Michigan Reformatory in Ionia. In late 1971, when the teenage killer was 37, then-Gov. William Milliken commuted his life sentence, making him eligible for parole. He was freed Feb. 2, 1972. McRae had an exemplary record in prison and was thought unlikely to be the menace he had been as a teenager. At the time, the Houseys were unaware he was let out.

Three years later, McRae -- now with a wife and son, Martin -- finished parole and moved to Florida where he became a prison guard. By some accounts, he hid his record; others maintain he was hired under a Florida program to employ rehabilitated ex-cons. He later transferred to a youthful offenders facility in Brevard County on the Atlantic coast.

In the spring of 1979, Kip Hess was a 12-year-old Boy Scout whose troop worked out a deal with a church -- the boys could camp on the grounds and attend a church carnival in exchange for helping clean up. Kip was a slightly built youngster and some other kids were picking on him when a security worker came to his aid.

It was McRae, moonlighting at the fair. McRae had his son, Martin, pal around with Kip.

A few days later, Kip left for school one morning never to be seen again. A concerned volunteer, McRae joined the searches.

Meanwhile, McRae, investigators said, was having an affair with 19-year-old inmate Charles Collingwood.

Collingwood escaped in December 1979.

Questioned, McRae denied the affair and said that Collingwood was his snitch, keeping him informed about other inmates. He said he had no part in the escape. Homicide investigators, aware of his past, weren't convinced. They thought Collingwood was threatening to expose the affair.

As the police focus intensified, McRae and family pulled up stakes one night and left Florida, ultimately landing in Clare County in central Michigan. Afterward, cops found a flyer for the missing Kip taped inside his work locker.

Going through other missing child reports, cops noted 14-year-old surfer Keith Fleming vanished from Cocoa Beach in 1977 soon after McRae arrived.

Despite repeated searches using dogs and ground probes, no traces of any of the young men were ever found, and Florida authorities decided not to charge McRae.

Nonetheless, Brevard County homicide agent Gary Harrell, who still pursues McRae's trail, said he believes "we have a pretty strong case" against McRae for Collingwood and Hess.

McRae's lawyer, Pemberton, said cops are long on speculation but short on evidence: "If they've got a case in Florida, damn it, charge him."

Still, Harrell said he thinks McRae buried the bodies nearby, as he did with Joey. He also noted that as in the 1950 case, McRae joined the searchers.

"I think he helped search for the kid and took pleasure in the parents' pain," Harrell said.

Harrell said McRae seems to enjoy the sparring of police questioning: "He laughs. He told me, 'If you don't have a body, you don't have me.' "

But eventually, a body would surface.

Contact **JOE SWICKARD** at 586-469-4913 or swickard@freepress.com.



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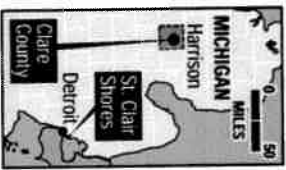
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TRAIL OF MISSING AND SLAIN BOYS

1950: John McRae, 15, arrested for sex-slaying of Joey Housey, an 8-year-old neighbor in St. Clair Shores.

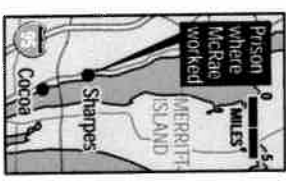
1951: Convicted of first-degree murder, sentenced to life in prison without parole.

1972: Paroled.



March, 1979: Kip Hess, 12, goes missing from Merritt Island, Fla. Never found.

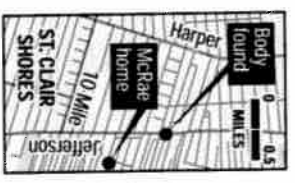
December, 1979: Charles Collingwood, 19, goes missing from prison in Sharpes, Fla. Never found.



1987: Teenage neighbor Randy Laufer, 15, disappears; McRae moves his family to Arizona after questioning.

1998: John McRae convicted of first-degree murder, sentenced to life without parole.

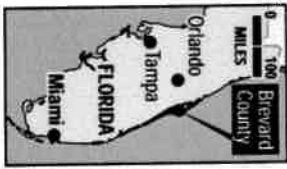
2004: Michigan Supreme Court overturns murder conviction; state appeals to U.S. Supreme Court.



1971: Gov. William Milliken commutes sentence; McCrae becomes eligible for parole.

1975: Parole ends; moves to Florida, becomes prison guard, eventually working at a youthful offenders facility in Brevard County.

1977: Keith Fleming, 14, goes missing from Cocoa Beach, Fla. Never found.



1980: Questioned about the three missing teenagers in Brevard County, including one from prison where he works; leaves Florida.

1984: Moves to Clare County, Mich., with wife and son Martin; active in 4-H and Cub Scouts.

1997: McRae and son Martin arrested in Arizona after Laufer's skeleton found under McRae's old driveway. Case against Martin/McCrae dismissed.

2001: Martin sentenced in Nevada to 10-years-to-life for molesting his daughter and her friend.

January, 2005: Tentative date for retrial.

FROM: PBaker155@aol.com
DATE: Fri, 17 Dec 2004 19:04:17 EST
TO: Hollywoodptips@fcjn.netMIME-Version: 1.0
SUBJECT: Adam Walsh Case

I am writing to possibly give a lead on the serial killer who may have made Adam Walsh one of his victims. I had sent information regarding John Rodney McRae to America's Most Wanted. They had said the information was forwarded to Hollywood PD.

I think this man is worth the look into. He is being held at Clare County Sheriff's Dept, Harrison, MI. There is a possibility he could be released do to a legal snafu. He was suspected of having something to do with 3-5 boys missing from Cocoa Beach, Merrit Island and Sharpes, FL. Those towns are in the same vicinity as Vero Beach where Adam's body part was found. There is a possibility he could have still been living in FL but moved south in FL. His trail is not clear after 1980. He was known to torture and decapitate young boys.

I have a contact at the Clare County Sheriff Department who mentioned him to me and the two newspaper articles written about him in the Detroit Free Press. From that information I came up with Adam Walsh. It is worth a shot, no rock should be left unturned when it comes to this little boy's murder.

I am including links to the newspaper articles:
[50 YEARS OF HORROR: 'A very scary man amongst us'](#)

[50 YEARS OF HORROR: Convicted killer returns to state and another boy disappears](#)

These articles will give you some insight into this monster. Maybe you have looked at him before or maybe not...but it is better to investigate for the Walsh family sake than not at all and to keep him behind bars for the rest of his natural life.

Patti Reichel

From: John Kerns
To: PBaker155@aol.com
Date: 1/3/2005 9:24:12 AM
Subject: Hollywood Police Detective J.Kerns

Patti,

I am the detective assigned to follow up tips on this case. I need you to call me or provide your phone number so an interview can be conducted about your tip, before further investigation is initiated. Looking forward to hearing from you.