

# Killer convicted, jury sentences him to death

**United Press International**  
HOUSTON — A Vermont hitchhiker, sentenced to death for stabbing an Alabama man, licked the blood of his victim from a knife and from his hands,

a prosecutor said on Tuesday. Harris County Assistant District Attorney Eric Hagstette won a conviction of Robert Drew, 23, of West Pawlett, Vt., and a jury Friday sentenced him

to die by injection in Texas' death chamber.

During the investigation of the case, Hagstette said a second man in the car when Jeffrey Leon Mays, 17, of Birmingham, Ala., was killed told of Drew's actions. Evidence indicated Mays was stabbed 13 times and dumped by the side of a road in Baytown.

The second victim was identified as runaway Bee Eugene Landrum, 18, of Alabama.

Authorities said Ernest Purleaski, 33, of Chicago was hitchhiking with Drew across country, and that the two teenagers picked them up in Louisiana. "The older men began beating the two teenagers, and then it became a robbery. They started taking their possessions," Hagstette said.

He said Landrum told lawmen "Drew was showing the other hitchhiker the knife, and as he was showing off he licked the blood from the knife blade and from his hands."

May's body was found 30 miles east of Houston, court records showed. Police in Houston stopped the car with the three men because it was spattered on the outside with blood and because they could see Landrum was hysterical.

# Offices 'incompatible'

**United Press International**

AUSTIN — The state attorney general's office said Tuesday a Fort Worth woman relinquished her seat on the Texas College and University System Coordinating Board when she was re-elected to a junior college board.

In an advisory opinion, Attorney General Jim Mattox said Dr. Gwendolyn Morrison cannot hold two civil offices which are incompatible.

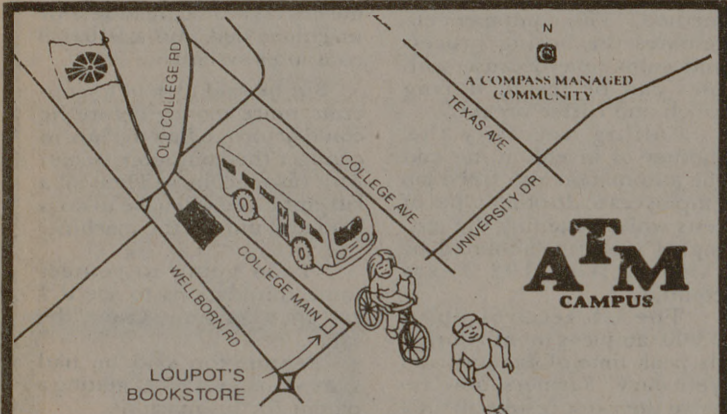
Morrison was appointed to the coordinating board by former Gov. Bill Clements in October 1979 for a term that was to expire August 1985.

But, against Clements' advice, she continued to hold her seat on the Tarrant County Junior College Board, and was re-elected to a six-year term in April 1982.

Gov. Mark White, taking the position that Morrison was not qualified for the coordinating board, appointed Dal-

las lawyer George Bramblett Jr. to replace her.

Mattox's opinion said Bramblett is the proper holder of the position. The opinion said it would be improper for Morrison to serve on two state boards that might come in conflict.



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# Child abuse problems real, often overlooked too long

by Chris Cox

**Battalion Reporter**  
The Harris County welfare case on Merica Moss closed when she was pronounced dead at a hospital emergency room. Cause of death: ruptured kidney, adrenal gland, and abdominal injuries, or simply child abuse. Two days later her unemployed parents were charged in connection with her death.

The Harris County Child Welfare Division had been watching the family for more than two years. Merica had been placed in a foster home once before her death. Case workers noted that the parents were also victims of overdiscipline.

A baby sitter for the girl said she was not completely surprised by her death. Dora Matthews said when the mother would come and bring the child to her, she would always explain how the child got "another new scar."

For some in Harris County it brought home the reality of what child abuse can do. To others, the event went unnoticed.

Like Merica, 1 million U.S. children will be victims of abuse this year. Out of these, about 2,000 children die, 2,000 per year... that's five a day — or one child every five hours. In 1980 alone, Texas reported 110 deaths from child abuse.

Closer to home in Brazos County, 389 families received protective services in 1981 to prevent the reoccurrence of child abuse. That same year, 729 children received protective services to prevent the reoccurrence of child abuse. Also in

1981, 50 children were in the custody of the Department of Human Resources in Bryan because of child abuse and/or child neglect.

The Texas DHR reported last year at least 76 child deaths were caused by abuse or neglect. Of the 39,476 reports of suspected child mistreatment, 13,885 were found to be valid. In the reports found valid, at least 1,510 children had been victims of sexual abuse.

These figures reflect only reported cases. Studies have indicated that each year in Texas at least 8.5 percent of the state's children are in danger of being abused or neglected. Relatively few abused children from this state are being brought to DHR's attention.

guilty of professional negligence.

Several forms of child abuse exist, including physical abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse and neglect. Often a child is the victim of more than one form of abuse.

Susan Leuking, child protective services specialist at the DHR in Bryan, is one person who investigates allegations of abuse and neglect.

Leuking, who is also responsible for placing children in foster homes, says reports usually come in through the phone and others walk in to give a complaint. Once a person calls and DHR determines it is valid, the situation will be investigated if it falls under abuse or neglect, she said. It is often hard to determine if the call is real, she said.

Leuking said the DHR investigates by going out and meeting with the family. She said the DHR is specific on telling the parents what the visit is for.

"The DHR gets many different reactions from parents," she said. "Some of the reactions are hostile, some are just kind of in shock, and some say thank God you're here. The majority, however, are upset."

Leuking said if there is resistance, DHR always has the option to come back with the police since the department has a court order. By that time the parents usually let us in, she said.

"If the DHR feels a child's life is in danger, a court order will be given and the child will be removed," she said. "If one is granted that order, the child comes into the custody of the DHR. After this, there is a 10-day hearing to determine what happens to that child. If it is an emergency removal, the district judge then decides, based upon a court report and parent's testimony, if the child should return or not. If the child doesn't, the DHR will place the child in a foster home or institution."

Leuking said the removal of child is very rare since the removal can be as dramatic for the child as the abuse itself. The DHR removes the child only when the child's life is in danger, she said.

"Much of child abuse is situational," she said. "There is nothing actually wrong with the parent mentally. The action just culminates through one direct abuse because of unemployment of one of the parents or

economic stress. These kind of people appreciate any kind of help offered."

Patricia Bush, head of the child protective service at the DHR, said 99.99 percent of the time it is not the parent but the child who thinks there is something wrong personally. The child feels "that Mommy and Daddy abuse me because I'm bad," she said. She says parents have unrealistic expectations of their children.

Bush also commented on sexual abuse. Children now know that it is not socially acceptable. Moreover, children are coming into contact through television explaining that sexual abuse is wrong. Bush said one in four individuals has been sexually abused sometime in their life. And, she added, men are the ones who really ignore their sexual abuse because they're too shy to think it was the way they learned about sex.

Anthony Arden, who has a Ph.D. in psychology, gets most of his child abuse referrals from the DHR. The Bryan psychologist provides services not only to children but abusive and neglectful families as well.

"Working with child abuse is an extremely difficult job," Arden said. "The community would be amazed at some of the horrible abuse workers have account for on a daily basis. It's very emotional and draining job."

Arden said it is not easy to get up to someone's door and find that there has been a report someone is abusing a child. They feel someone is wanting to take their child away, he said. But, he said, the goal of DHR is to keep families together, apart.

"One of the important things is to find strengths in the family," Dr. Arden said. "We try to build on their strengths by making realistic goals. The family often need support structure put in place, especially parents with a retarded child because support will be needed the rest of their lives."

Dr. Arden says abused children come from a "variety" spectrum. In the families involved with most are lower middle, lower class. Most of the abusers are Caucasian because most of the population is Caucasian. However, DHR has helped with abuse from every income bracket and profession."

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Parents who abuse or neglect children can be found at every social and economic level and in all ethnic and religious groups. Their victims range in age from infants to adolescents, and almost half are 6-years-old or younger. They are most often their own children, or those of a close friend or relative.

Not until the late 1960s and the 1970s did most states adopt laws requiring the reporting of child abuse cases and providing immunity to those who file the reports. There are now laws defining a physician's legal responsibility in reporting child abuse.

A Texas law that went into effect January 1, 1974, requires everyone who suspects child abuse or neglect to report it to the proper authorities and assesses a penalty for not reporting a suspect. In 1976, the Supreme Court of California ruled that any physician who fails to identify and report a child with historical, physical and radiologic findings that indicate abuse is

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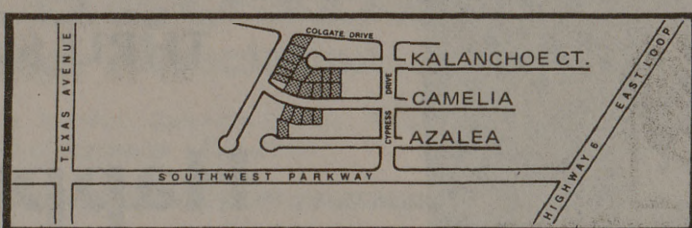
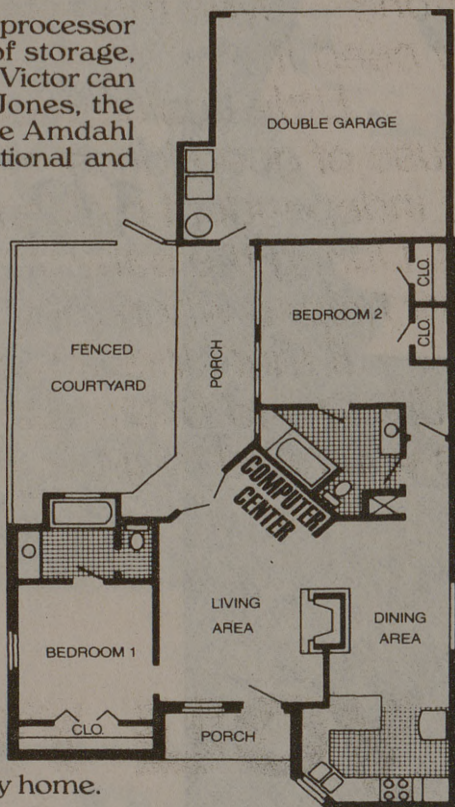
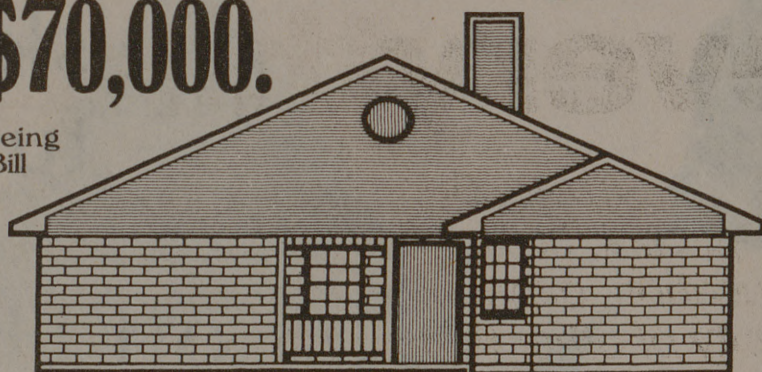
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