

## Teen gives birth at prom, leaves baby in trash bin

FREEHOLD, N.J. (AP) — The music played on, and the young woman in the dark, loose-fitting dress danced with her prom date, looking as if she were having lots of fun.

But in the marble-tiled ladies' room at the catering hall, a maintenance worker was making a horrible discovery: blood all over a stall, a newborn baby dead in a trash bin.

Authorities are awaiting test results before deciding whether to charge the 18-year-old mother with killing her newborn son and then returning to the dance floor at the Lacey Township High School prom Friday night as if nothing had happened.

"The baby was alive during the birthing process," Robert Honecker, a Monmouth County prosecutor, said Monday. "The medical examiner must deter-

mine, could the baby have existed independent of the mother."

Among other things, investigators are testing the toilet water to determine whether the full-term, 6-pound, 6-ounce boy was drowned.

The Star-Ledger of Newark and WCAU-TV in Philadelphia identified the mother as Melissa Drexler of Forked River. Although authorities are treating the case as a potential homicide, the teen-ager was allowed to remain in the custody of her parents.

"They're very upset," a woman answering the telephone at a Drexler residence in Forked River said. She said that she is Melissa's grandmother and that she hopes the teen is getting some help. She hung up without giving her name.

No one emerged Monday afternoon from the Drexlers' one-

story house in a neighborhood of modest homes. Flowers hung from planters around the entrance of the home, a brown wood-sided house with a blue-gray door and shutters.

At the high school Monday, students said they had been unaware the 5-foot-7, 130-pound girl was even pregnant.

"She really didn't look pregnant to me at all," said Becky, a junior who saw the girl at the prom. She would not give her last name.

Nor did anyone realize when she returned from the ladies' room at the Garden Manor catering hall in Aberdeen Township that she had just given birth.

"She was sitting near me and my friends, talking and laughing. She looked like she was having fun," said Jamie Dries, 16. "She looked like nothing was wrong."

## McVEIGH

Continued from Page 1

Capt. Jesus Rodriguez, his chest loaded with medals, took the stand to describe McVeigh as "an outstanding soldier" who helped save a fellow soldier's life and was cool — and accurate — under enemy fire.

"He did what he was told," said Rodriguez, who chose McVeigh as his personal gunner. "He anticipated what had to be done, took pride in his work. He had a genuine care for how we looked in front of the company."

And, a grinning Rodriguez said, McVeigh liked strawberry Pop-Tarts, which he would get in the mail during the war and share with Rodriguez, to the ribbing of other soldiers who joked that McVeigh was kissing up to the boss.

Under cross-examination, the veterans acknowledged they had not seen McVeigh since at least 1992 and knew nothing about his life, thoughts or plans in what prosecutors say is the critical year before the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

But they did detect warning signs. Bradley gunner William Dilly said under cross-examination McVeigh was always urging him to read *The Turner Diaries*, a racist novel that begins with

the bombing of a federal building by revolutionaries. He also described how McVeigh had an odd habit of taking battlefield pictures of dead Iraqis.

And one defense witness, McVeigh's childhood friend Vicki Hodge, hinted at McVeigh's changed personality when he left the Army in late 1991 after a failed effort to qualify for the elite Special Forces.

"He seemed maybe just a little bit disillusioned," said Ms. Hodge, who hasn't seen McVeigh much since that time.

When she did know him — from fourth grade until they parted ways after high school — McVeigh was the class clown and a gangly teen who had the nickname "Chicken McVeigh," a play on Chicken McNuggets. It was later shortened by friends to just "Chicken."

"I loved Tim," she said. "He's my second brother. And I still always will love him."

Two teachers testified McVeigh was a bright, friendly and outgoing student who got high test scores and was voted "most talkative" by his senior class.

Vincent Capparra also spoke of McVeigh's friendliness as an employee at an armored car service in the mid-1980s. But the testimony took a dark turn when he told how McVeigh caught children throwing egg-filled snowballs and warned one that he

"could really blow up his house."

The defense penalty phase is expected to wrap up with witnesses explaining McVeigh's anger over the government siege at Waco, which came exactly two years before the federal building bombing that killed 168 people.

The same jury that last week convicted McVeigh of murder and conspiracy in the blast is expected to begin deliberating as early as Wednesday whether he should die by injection or be sentenced to life in prison without parole.

The defense presentation must counter 2 1/2 days of gut-wrenching testimony from survivors describing their shattered lives, and the portrayal of McVeigh as a cowardly, angry bomber willing to kill children to avenge Waco and spark a second American Revolution.

Lead attorney Stephen Jones made it clear McVeigh would not take the stand, nor would his sister Jennifer. But their father, William McVeigh, would.

Among those testifying Monday was former Army buddy Howard Thompson, who said he found McVeigh to be outspoken about current events, but who never forced his views on others.

"He was a soldier's soldier," Thompson said.

## Clinton fears 'malevolent' cloning

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton said Monday he wants to ban the cloning of human beings but allow some cloning research while Americans debate the moral implications.

The president proposed legislation that would ban cloning "for the purposes of creating a child." It would direct the National Bioethics Advisory Commission to report in 4 1/2 years on whether the ban should continue.

Clinton stopped short of banning the cloning of animals and certain human genes for important biomedical research. "There is nothing inherently immoral or wrong with these new techniques, used for proper purposes," he said during a Rose Garden ceremony to receive the commission's report.

Rep. Vernon J. Ehlers, R-Mich., has said he would introduce stronger legislation than Clinton's. His plan would forbid human cloning and human embryo research related to cloning.

Clinton urged private researchers to avoid attempting to clone a human baby, saying that threatens "the sacred family bonds at the very core of our ideals and our society."

"At its worst, it could lead to misguided and malevolent attempts to select certain traits, even to create cer-

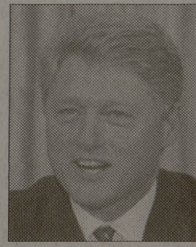
tain kinds of children, to make our children objects rather than cherished individuals," Clinton said.

Clinton's proposal is based on the bioethics panel's conclusion that it is "morally unacceptable" to create a child through somatic-cell nuclear transfer cloning and implant it into a woman's body for delivery.

Scottish scientists used such a process to create Dolly, a sheep, the first mammal cloned from adult cells. Before Dolly was born healthy and normal, her creator had failed 277 times. Some of the duplicate lambs were born with severe and lethal birth defects.

Dr. Harold Shapiro, chairman of the bioethics panel, said commissioners had difficulty weighing whether their moral and ethical reservations about cloning "were sufficient for us to suggest a legislative solution for the moment."

"We all understand there are moral views that many of us have, which we do not want to translate into law out of respect for those who have totally different views," Shapiro said. "We are very sensitive to that issue."

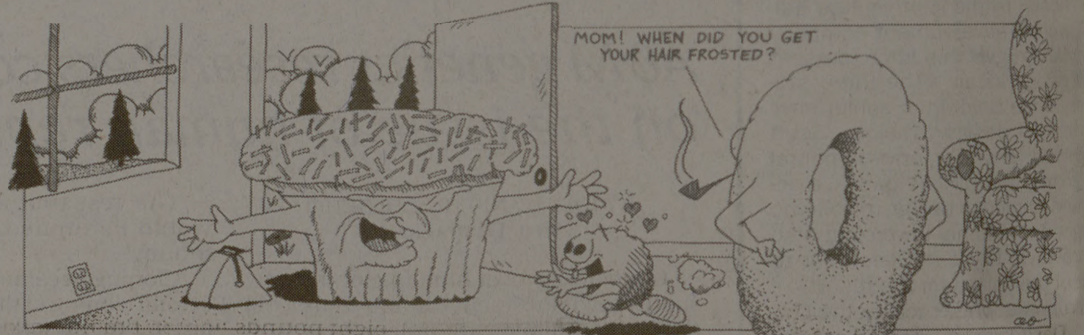


Clinton

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THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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