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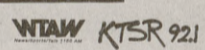


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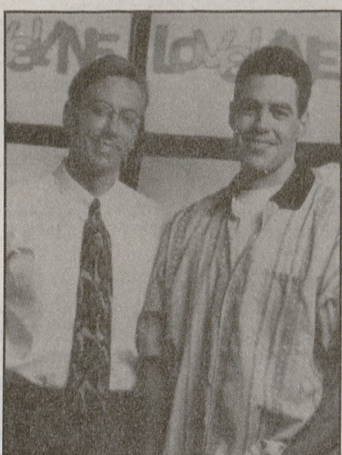


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Thursday, January 20, 2000

# STATE

THE BATTALION

## DNA links '96 teacher murder and two '99 sexual assaults

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Forensic evidence and an unusual scar have provided a connection between the 1996 deaths of two teachers and two sexual assaults in the Arlington area last year.

Sgt. James Hawthorne, spokesperson for Arlington police, said yesterday that DNA evidence confirms that the same person is responsible for the crimes against the four single women, all of whom lived alone. Police have not identified the suspect, however.

Investigators said last year the 1996 murders of Christine Yu and Wendie Prescott were linked with the February sexual assault of a student at the University of Texas - Arlington. The student escaped her attacker by biting him in the groin.

The second sexual assault was revealed yesterday.

A woman who was sexually assaulted in her Grand Prairie apartment in October told investigators that there was a noticeable scar on the genitalia of the suspect.

"Now we have a total of four offenses that can be linked forensically to the suspect. We are still no closer to making any type of arrests, we haven't identified any suspect."

Police from Arlington and Grand Prairie, who have worked together on the case since October, said they wrestled with releasing additional information. But they decided to do so in hopes of generating new leads and finding possible suspects.

"This is a very sensitive description, but it is also a specific description," said Grand Prairie police Sgt. Alan Patton. "He is uncircumcised, he does have a noticeable knot on his genitalia."

"We are hoping that there is someone out there who recognizes that description and can provide us with information to help us continue our search for this murderer."

Vu, 25, a teacher at Morton Elementary School in Arlington, was found dead Sept. 17, 1996, at the Peartree Apartments. She was found naked and face down in her partially filled bathtub, having been bound, strangled and beaten.

Three months later at the same apartment complex, Prescott, a 23-year-old teacher's aide at Erma Nash Elementary School in Mansfield, was found slain in a similar way. She was discovered in her partially filled bathtub on Christmas Day.

**"Now we have a total of four offenses that can be linked forensically to the suspect. We are still no closer to making any type of arrests, we haven't identified any suspect."**

—Sgt. James Hawthorne  
Arlington police spokesperson

## Outbreak largest in 20 years

HARLINGEN, Texas (AP)—Last year's dengue fever outbreak in which 63 Texans died with the tropical disease.

The latest figures released by the Texas Department of Health show 56 Texans have acquired dengue since July 1. The most recent confirmed was from Dec. 5, but officials continue to review cases that number could rise.

"I would not be at all surprised we meet or surpass the 1980 numbers," said Julie Rawlings, a demologist with TDH.

The majority of the 1999 cases were travel-related, but 23 were believed to have acquired disease in Texas. In the latest break, 17 people are believed to have acquired dengue within the state.

Dengue, which includes symptoms like fever, severe headache and joint and muscle pain is fatal, although one South Texas man died last year of dengue hemorrhagic fever, a variation marked by internal bleeding.

Leading the pack in overall deaths last year is Webb County, which reported 31, TDH reported. Eight of those people were believed to have contracted the disease in Webb County. Nationally, a Bexar County resident, a Nueces County resident and a person in the Laredo area died of dengue in the Laredo area.

But Laredo-Webb County Director Jerry Robinson said he was spared, considering that it is estimated 4,000 to 5,000 people were infected with dengue just across the border in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. That let however, Webb County's largest break since a public health department was created in 1943.

Laredo is out of the woods for Robinson said. No new cases of mosquito-borne illness have been nosed in the area since November.

## Police confirm 3 boys killed in crash

FORT WORTH (AP)—Several of a fatal wreck's victims identified by police as members of a nomadic Irish clan were under the age of 15 when their truck became airborne, flipped and slammed into another vehicle.

Police have confirmed the ages of three of five young cousins killed Jan. 2 when the truck—driven by a 14-year-old—careened out of control. Some had carried identification indicating they were 20 years old.

The accident, which happened at midday on Interstate 30, puzzles police who say they still haven't talked with parents of the boys, part of a clan of nomads known as Greenhorn Irish Travelers.

"They've insulated themselves well," Sgt. Anne Cummings of the Fort Worth Police Department's traffic division said Tuesday.

However, Cummings said at least nine vehicles carrying people who said they were family members showed up at the wreck site before authorities had even identified the victims.

"I've been on the scene of over 150 to 200 fatal accidents ... the probability of having one family member drive up on (the scene of an accident) is maybe one out of 10," said Cummings. "But they were pulling up in droves. It just blew my mind."

Authorities began questioning the ages of the victims after a funeral program indicated the boys were 12 to 14 years old.

Police confirmed Friday that the driver, Edward Jennings, was 14 years old. He carried a Texas driver's license issued on Dec. 20.

It listed the correct day and month of

his birth, but had a year that made him appear to be 18.

Authorities also obtained birth certificates confirming the ages of cousins John McDonald, 13; and James McDonald, 13. Police are still seeking information on Harry Gorman, believed to be 13, and Martin McDonald, who is believed to be 12.

All of the boys were killed instantly in the accident. It took authorities hours to determine how many victims were in the truck, said Cummings.

Ruben Molinar of Plano, the other pickup's driver, has been released from the hospital.

Relatives initially told authorities the boys were on their way to do some work for an uncle. The victims' parents have now said they didn't know the boys were behind the wheel.

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DATE: Monday, January 24, 2000

TIME: 4:00 PM

WHERE: Locker Room - West Side of  
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