

Andrea Yates thought children still alive

By Pam Easton
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON — Andrea Yates, who drowned her five children in 2001, was psychotic during a visit with her husband over the weekend and asked why he didn't bring the children to see her in prison, Yates' attorney said Wednesday.

"She thought the kids were still alive," attorney George Parnham said.

Yates was transferred from the Skyview Unit near Rusk to a Galveston hospital Monday night after refusing food and losing more than 20 pounds. Parnham said she voluntarily drank something Wednesday.

"She was really very sick, both physically and mentally," Russell Yates told The Associated Press of his bimonthly visit with his wife on Saturday. "Physically she was shaking uncontrollably and had lost a lot of weight, and mentally she was, I guess, I don't know how else to describe it, but overtly psychotic. ... She had said things in the past that were unusual, but when I saw her on Saturday she said some things that were clearly delusions."

Russell Yates confirmed Wednesday that his wife thought their five children, who ranged in age from 6 months to 7 years, were still alive.

"On top of the medication and her chemistry, and underlying illness, she obviously has a tremendous amount of guilt over her actions taking the lives of our children," Russell Yates said. "She had a hard time having hope, ... lost everything she loved."

Russell Yates said it was difficult for his wife to deal with the three-year anniversary of children's deaths on June 20, 40th birthday on July 2 and uncertainty of where they were going in our marriage.

"Couple that with her illness and her sensitive nature, in some sense, no big surprise she relapsed," he said.

Parnham said he had to visit with Andrea Yates Thursday. Russell Yates said she also would like to see her but finds it hard to see her when she is sick.

"Not only because I miss about her, but because it brings back memories of our tragedy," he said. "I do have mixed feelings about visiting her when she is sick. I do want to visit her, but I don't want to see her sick."

Address

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That's the only reason I'll be going to convocation." The convocation is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. in Rudder Theater will begin with an academic procession starting at Cushing Library. The procession, scheduled to begin at 1 p.m., will include faculty staff and students. Participants may wear academic regalia, although it is not required, which can be purchased or rented at the MSC.

"My father walked in the academic procession his last year and my brother did it in 1999," Faith Laisure, a senior education major, said. "It's almost as special as getting an Aggie Ring in your family. I can't wait to do it this year."

In addition to Gates' speech, the convocation will include comments from J. Martyn Gunn, speaker of the Faculty Senate. Also, the A&M Foundation will be presenting an annual symbolic check to the University. The new faculty and the newly tenured and promoted faculty will be recognized as well.

"It's very important for students to hear what (Gates) has to say about where we've been and where we're going," Sawtelle said. "(Gates) is a very good speaker, and convocation gets the year started in a very positive, forward-thinking way."

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