

Henry Louis Wallace: A Calamity Waiting to Happen

By Joseph Geringer

Between 1992 and 1994, nine young black women in Charlotte, North Carolina, were raped and strangled to death, the murders increasing in ferocity and rapidity. For almost two years the killer remained at large, causing what led to an angry hysteria in the city – especially within the predominantly minority community where the murders were occurring. Observed was a lack of adequate police patrolling in that area of town. However, the real reason that the murderer continued to run rampant was because the police were, simply, stumped.

Understaffed and overworked – there were only seven full-time investigators on roll call at the time (there are now 25) – the force was not ready to face a serial killer who crept up out of nowhere. Though eager, determined, tough and professional, the police were not used to a psychopath whose motive could not be labeled and whose *modus operandi* was too sloppy to categorize. Each of the murders was treated separately, with a different investigator assigned to each one. Notes were not compared and the cases went, for a long time, unlinked. The city cops finally sought help from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"But, even at that, the contact provided little information at first," proclaims Charisse Coston, Professor of Criminal Justice at the University of North Carolina. "The killer at large in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area did not fit the usual profile of a serial murderer. For one, he slew close friends and acquaintances, even co-workers, an exceedingly rare trait of this brand of killers."

However, Henry Louis Wallace, the eventual suspect, did share one common thread with all serial killers: He was able to hide his inner vehemence from the world. Says Coston, "The very people he killed trusted him. They had no forewarning of their death, even seconds before he struck at them."

A 1994 *Time* magazine article on serial killings, called "Dances With Werewolves," attests to this. Author Anastasia Toufexis says of Wallace, "Women, taken with his sweet smile, solicitous attitude and pleasant looks, trusted him...They invited him to their homes for dinner, watched while he cradled their babies in his arms, accepted his invitations to date."

In her classes at the university, Professor Coston hosts a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation on Wallace's 1992-94 homicides, highlighting the details of the investigation and the ultimate identification of Wallace. Conducting the presentation is Sergeant Gary McFadden, one of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's top investigators. Their help in sharing information with *The Crime Library* has been invaluable, providing this author with the ability to trace the case history of one of America's most dangerous, yet least recorded, serial killers.

Following is the frightening story of a violent chain reaction born from Henry Wallace's abstract, dysfunctional upbringing, exacerbated by a sexual drive and an abuse of drugs. A man whom the *Charlotte Observer* described as, "a calculated, cold-blooded killer who...hid his crimes by meticulously cleaning up murder scenes." A man whose impulsive crimes baffled a city, its police force, and had a population of

more than 400,000 checking over its shoulders on dark streets and byways for almost two years.

Serving as the spine-work for this article are two sources of data, both provided by Coston and McFadden; these are 1) the transcript of Henry Wallace's murder confession and 2) a copy of the authorized social profile of the defendant that was compiled just prior to his court trial. Together, this data proved vital in shaping Wallace in and out of control.

As well, I referred to several court and trial records, particularly the court dockets and "Appellate Report," the latter that details his case from its roots to its dramatic finale. Spotlighted are not only the history of the murders and energized investigations, but also the main players of the hunt, the arrest and indictment, the trial and the legal ramifications of the trial.

City records and local newspapers, too, provided insight into the contemporary landscape: the City of Charlotte, the County of Mecklenburg and the peoples' reactions to the scary things that were unfolding within their boundaries, sometimes as close as next door.

According to *Fortune* magazine, Charlotte, North Carolina, possesses the best pro-business attitude in the country. Its support of the corporate community and its belief in civic-corporate melding to sustain the livelihood of the metropolis are second to none. Nearly 14,000 new jobs were created in 1994 alone and, because of that, forecasters placed Charlotte eighth in a list of American cities destined to reach zenith economic growth over the next decade. That same year, 1994, the city earned recognition as the third largest banking center in the United States and was noted as the sixth largest wholesale center with \$11 billion in retail sales. Demographically, Charlotte's urban culture co-exists well with little friction. With records such as these, the council-manager form of government that rules Charlotte and the County of Mecklenburg can be proud.

But, Charlotte had its troubles, too, that year.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, like most big-city law enforcement bureaus, operates on a shoestring budget. Its efforts, despite the largesse of its civic headaches, have culminated in programs that have honed in on major problems. In short, the police force is, by record, winning its war on crime.

But, it had its hands full in the 1992-94 season when an elusive *someone* was preying on young women in East Charlotte – raping them, strangling them and, sometimes, stabbing them to death. On top of this, the police were trying (with limited numbers) to battle a mixed criminal element. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, Charlotte-Mecklenburg stats for 1993 indicate more than 51,000 incidences of crime, 9,102 of these falling under the description of "violent". Broken down, they cite 87 murders, 350 rapes, 2,713 robberies and 5,952 assaults.

The strangulation murders, however, because of their growing intensity, took center stage. As the volume of killings grew, Charlotte's alarm rose steadily along with them. What would become a 22-month killing spree of nine murders attributed to the same suspect began slowly – the first three over a year's time. The police did not anticipate a serial killer or the avalanche of public dismay that would come when his rage eventually

began to escalate. The first of the nine killings would not even be labeled a murder, in fact, for many months to come. No corpse had been found and, thus, victim number one was filed as a "Missing Person".



Carolin Love (Charlotte Observer)

This spree began undetected on June 19, 1992. The manager of Bojangle's Restaurant on Central Avenue contacted Kathy Love to tell her that her sister, Caroline, had not reported to work in a couple of days. He asked her to please check on her condition. Kathy, alerted, rushed to Caroline's flat. Not finding Caroline at home, or evidence of foul play, she left a note relaying her boss' – and her own – concern. Contacting Caroline's roommate, Sadie McKnight, to ask her where her friend might be, Sadie expressed that she too had become suspicious because it was not like Caroline to remain incommunicado for more than 48 hours, even if she was staying with friends. Together, Kathy Love and Sadie McKnight brought their suspicions to the police.

Investigator Anthony Rice questioned the Bojangles manager and learned that the last time he had seen Caroline was when she left work on the evening of the 15th. She asked if she could trade a \$10 bill for a roll of quarters so she could do a load of laundry when she got home. Her cousin, Robert Ross, who drove her back to her place that night, said he saw her go into her foyer and that she had seemed neither sidetracked nor nervous.

In searching the apartment, the police became suspicious; it bore appearances of a scuffle. The furniture seemed to be slightly repositioned, as if shoved aside during a fight. Curiously, the sheets from Caroline's bed were removed and were not in the laundry hamper, which was full. Rice determined that Caroline had never done the laundry, as she had planned, and that the roll of quarters she purchased from her workplace was not in the apartment.

Charlotte police continued to search for Caroline Love, but every lead met with a dead end. She was filed missing and became one of the many case cards of runaways whose fates remained a mystery. Her body would not be discovered for nearly two years.

Eight months later, on February 19, 1993, Mrs. Sylvia Sumpter came home from work, prepared to make dinner for herself and her teenage daughter, Shawna Hawk. Sumpter wondered where her daughter was; she should have been home much, much earlier from her morning commute to Piedmont Central Community College. The mother couldn't figure out why her coat and purse lay unattended in the dining room. Shawna never went anywhere without that purse and surely wouldn't have forgotten her coat during the wintry season! Placing a call to Darryl Kirkpatrick, Shawna's boyfriend, Sumpter learned that he hadn't seen the girl all day. She then phoned the local Taco Bell, where Shawna worked part time, to see if Shawna had been called in, but the counter clerk told her she was not listed on the evening's schedule.



Shawna Hawk (Charlotte Observer)

Mrs. Sumpter began to fret, especially when relatives called inquiring why Shawna had not picked up her godson at school as was her routine. Boyfriend Kirkpatrick, receiving another call from the distressed mother, jumped in his car and sped to her house to calm

her.

Rummaging through the house, hoping to find a clue as to where Shawna might have gone, Kirkpatrick wandered into the downstairs bathroom. There, he noticed that the carpeting was soaked and that the shower curtain was not tucked in place. Through the translucency of the curtain, he thought he could see something or someone crouching below the wall of the tub. Yanking the curtain back, he screamed. Shawna lay naked in a tubful of water, her head sunken below the surface, her eyes staring lifelessly upwards.

Shawna Hawk was pronounced dead at the hospital. Her skull had suffered lacerations and bruising caused by a blow from a dull and heavy object. However, while that object may have dealt unconsciousness, it had not killed her. The examining doctor diagnosed that she had been *strangled* to death. Forensic pathologist James M. Sullivan, who performed an autopsy, noted hemorrhaging in the conjunctiva (lining of the eyes), the face, the lips and across the voice box – all trademarks of ligature strangulation. According to Dr. Sullivan, a ligature is "a cord or a band, or something that's made into a cord or a band, then circles the neck and is used to forcibly compress the neck."

The hospital defined her death as a homicide. Police were called in. Co-workers, friends, classmates – all were interviewed, but the police failed to corner a suspect or a motive.

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Audrey Spain, 24 years old, was a dependable employee, so when she failed to show up two nights in a row – June 23 and 24, 1993 -- her manager at Taco Bell knew something was amiss. He phoned her, but got only her answering machine. Trying her sister, he encountered the same results. Twice failed, he decided to cruise by Spain's apartment building to check things out himself. Her car was in the parking lot, so he entered the building and knocked on the door that, according to the designated mailbox, was hers. There was no answer despite several firm-handed raps.

In the morning, still not being able to get a hold of Spain or her sister, he placed a call to the girl's janitor to plead his intervention. This time, results. When the janitor entered Audrey Spain's flat, his eyes fell on the open bedroom doorway and what looked like a naked woman sprawled across the bed. Edging closer, he knew that that clay-colored inanimate thing was once the vibrant tenant named Audrey who smiled at him so warmly whenever they crossed paths. Her face was now distorted, her eyes bulged, and her entire form lay maligned as if frozen while in the throes of anguish. Entwining her neck were articles of clothing, what looked like a T-shirt and a bra, tied together and knotted at the Adam's apple to cut off her air.

Medical examiners concurred that she had been both strangled and raped.

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Caroline Love, Shawna Hawk, Audrey Spain...one missing person, two nearly identical strangulations...months apart. Unfortunately, no witnesses had come forth to report suspicious characters hanging about at the advent of each crime; no one had seen the same green Maxima parked near the crime scenes; no one was yet able to piece the events together into one ultimately important clue: that each of the victims knew one particular man. As yet, neither the police nor the newspapers detected a serial killer. Life

went on. And the investigations of the three unfortunate women faded as police were forced to take on other crimes occurring across Charlotte- Mecklenburg in the heat of another summer.

Subject experts such as FBI Profiler Roy Hazelwood and Robert Ressler, the FBI agent who coined the term *serial killer*, agree that the man whom the Charlotte Observer began to call "The Charlotte Strangler" did not fit the niche of the defined "serial killer" image. In fact, it was Ressler who told the court at the killer's eventual trial, that if he had wanted to become another Ted Bundy, for instance, "he was going about it in the wrong way." The killer's *modus operandi* did not follow a set pattern.

Case in point: the murder of victim number four, Valencia Jumper.



Valencia Jumper
(Charlotte Observer)

Jumper was an ambitious 19-year-old college student, recently relocated from Columbia, South Carolina, who worked at Food Lion Groceries as well as at a clothing shop to help pay tuition. In August 1993, the same man who had already killed Hawk, Love and Spain snuffed her life. But, her murder was set up as so inordinately different that even the most practical of detectives would have missed the link.

On the night of August 9, a visiting boyfriend, Zachary Douglas, smelled something burning as he neared Jumper's apartment doorway; he then saw wisps of black smoke issuing from the threshold. Finding his friend's door bolted, he summoned a fellow tenant who called the fire department. A unit was there in no time to axe Jumper's door. Inside, firefighter Dennis Arney saw that the blaze, which had spread throughout the small apartment, had begun on the kitchen stove where a pot of something had been left over a lit gas burner. The flames had reached a connecting bedroom where, it appeared, Jumper had fallen asleep on her bed. She was severely burned.

The next day, the coroner examined the charred remains to conclude that the girl had died of (as he wrote in his report) "thermal burns".

It would not be until the Charlotte Strangler was apprehended and confessed to her murder that Jumper's remains would be reassessed. After the latter examination, the coroner amended his earlier, hasty diagnosis, changing her cause of death to strangulation.



Michelle Stinson
(Charlotte Observer)

The next victim, Michelle Stinson, met her death on September 15 – five weeks after Jumper's death – in a manner not matching Jumper and with a major variation from the other murdered females. While strangled, she was also stabbed. The murder weapon (an ordinary kitchen knife) had been shoved through her back. Her body was found in the kitchen by her two young sons, one three and one a year old, who had neither seen nor heard her assailant. When the older child ran for a friend, James Mayes, to tell him that his mother was "sleeping on the floor," Mayes hurried over to discover Stinson lying cold in a pool of blood. Her telephone had been ripped from the wall.

An autopsy revealed that the blade had penetrated the upper left side of her back, below the shoulder blade, and had caused mortal wounds to the heart and lungs. Stinson had

been raped, and then strangled with a ligature. This time, the strangling occurred *after* she had died from the knife wounds or while she lay dying and comatose.

As the police continued to question relatives and friends, neighbors and cohorts of the murdered women, they were drawing big-time blanks. Although the killings were starting to appear as *maybe* the handiwork of one man who got a kick out of strangling and raping women, and even though they all took place within a five-mile radius of East Charlotte, their diversity made it impossible to pinpoint any identifying traits beyond the garroting of the neck.

But, the black population in whose area the homicides were occurring began to rankle; the citizens interpreted the police department's no-show results as something else, something one-sided. While the local newspapers had been low-key – in fact, most of the earlier deaths had gone unreported – communication in the targeted area intensified. Under fire was a perceived lackadaisical attitude by local politicians and law enforcers who, claimed some, ignored problems occurring among Charlotte's 31- percent total black population.

East Charlotte was and is a busy urban area of hard-working people – mostly black, but with a checkerboard of other races – chiefly middle class. It is wrought with modest housing, modest living, and modest temperaments. It keeps on the move with strip malls, and shopping centers, and storefront businesses, and fast-food chains, and movie houses and small whatever-shops along its major avenues. It is the kind of neighborhood where people like to walk – where kids stroll to schools and women window browse. And where the populace doesn't like to think that maybe a strangler is watching their kids on their way to school or eyeing their wives and girlfriends doing a little light shopping.

Many in the neighborhood refused to understand why the police could not match fingerprints found at the crime scenes against any prints on file, nor could they fathom how an obviously male strangler and rapist could slip past supposed dragnets time after time after time.

"In defense, City Hall vowed they were doing the best they could; that the city's patrolmen were working night and day to solve the rash of murders and that patrol cars were stopping any and all suspicious characters," reports Charisse Coston of the state university.

At an emergency press conference, the department committed to results and assured the people that investigations would continue.

Homicide Detective Sergeant Gary McFadden, who had been appointed lead investigator by Assistant Chief Boger only hours before the press conference, suddenly found himself in the thick of battle. Although he had not previously been assigned to the Strangler case, his excellent record had earned him a tough and thankless position. Faced suddenly with the task of being *the* spokesperson and mediator between the police and the public, it was now up to him to explain why the murderer had not been caught.

A black man himself, McFadden found no understanding ear from his own people.

"The community hated me," he confesses, "and in a way I felt like a scapegoat. It was total conflict."

But, McFadden, being a professional, did his duty. Well. "I spoke with each of the affected

families personally," he relates, "and they calmed down. I expressed my sympathy as well as my determination to bring their loved one's murderer to justice."

Throughout the fall of 1993, the situation quieted. After Stinson's murder in mid-September, the remainder of the year into and past the Christmas holidays passed without another event. Because of the pressure put on them, the police had increased their patrols in the community and, now that things grew to a calm, wondered if they had scared off the killer or killers. (The police department at this point was still unsure if it was dealing with unrelated criminals or with an individual strangler.)

Incident-free nevertheless, both McFadden and the people he served felt an uneasy pause in the holiday air. Their apprehension proved not to be unwarranted.



Vanessa Mack
(Charlotte Observer)

On Sunday, February 20, 1994, Vanessa Mack's mother, Barbara, came to pick up her grandchild as she did every Sunday so Vanessa could go to her job at the Carolinas Medical Center. She arrived a little earlier than usual, as it wasn't quite the appointed 6 a.m. Barbara was surprised to find the door ajar. Assuming that her daughter and granddaughter were just inside, she called out, expecting to hear a familiar, "Come in, Mom!" No one answered her. Stepping into the foyer, Barbara knew something was wrong. Vanessa's four-month-old child was asleep on the sofa, still in her play clothes from the day before, but Vanessa was nowhere to be seen. Not in the kitchen, not in the bathroom, not in her bedroom. But – when Barbara did a double take at the bed she realized that that gray bundle of covers was not a bundle at all, but her daughter thrown partially dressed in a misshapen position across the mattress. Something was wrapped around her throat; it looked like a pillowcase. Her skin tone matched the dull fatigue of the morning sky outside her window, and, by the touch, her skin had become as cold as the pane of glass that faced the winter chill. Scooping the tot from the sofa, Barbara raced into the hallway where she pounded on a tenant's door for use of his phone.

Jeff Baumgarner was the first patrolman to arrive on the scene. One glance at the corpse and he knew, from hearing the stories his fellow police officers told after finding some of the other strangling victims, that the same killer – or someone like him – had struck again.

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Six-foot tall, 200 pounds, and with a very pleasant face, 29-year-old Henry Louis Wallace was, outwardly, a very affable fellow. He was chatty, bright, a go-getter and smiled, constantly – except at certain times, like the night after Vanessa Mack's murder, when he sat down before his TV set to affix himself to the dinnertime news report. But, he smiled again when the program ended and there had not been even the slightest reference to the latest strangling or to the manhunt that the police claimed was in full vigor.

He decided to stay indoors that night, for the same reason he kept out of sight after all the other murders – just in case someone had seen his face and the cops were on the streets with a composite drawing of his puss in their hands.

He felt remorse at what he'd done to Vanessa Mack – damn it, he always felt remorse! – but he figured it would wear away. It did all those other times, after he had killed Hawk,

Love, Stinson – all of them.

Time heals, said the cliché. It was true.

During the second week of March, 1994, things began to break open. There would be three more murders in three days, between March 9 and 11, culminating in the identification and arrest of the Charlotte Strangler. As a glut had overtaken Henry Louis Wallace, he went berserk and grew careless. The precautions he had previously taken to hide himself – spacing out the murders, wiping off fingerprints, even bathing some of his victims – were abandoned as he went on a joyride of killing.

"Early in 1994, Charlotte-Mecklenburg detectives sought the assistance of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in an effort to define the type of murderer or murderers they were looking for," explains North Carolina University Professor of Criminal Justice Charisse Coston, whose classes have studied the complexities of the Strangler case. "The elemental nature of each murder was repetitive in some respects, but diverse in others."

The FBI failed to slot the strangulations as those of a serial killer, a call that would prove erroneous. Although the Bureau missed its mark in this instance, it cannot be judged harshly. According to a 1994 Associated Press article, the black man who was finally arrested for the crimes did not fit the niche at all. "(The killer) is a black man who knew his victims," the article asserts. "Most serial killers are white men who kill strangers."

That the Strangler did indeed know each and every one of his victims would prove to be his undoing.

In the meantime, Sergeant McFadden was making attempts to tie together loose ends. His men interrogated possible area suspects – those with violent pasts who could move easily and unobserved among the black community where the crimes were being perpetrated. Detectives also reopened contact with families and friends of all the dead girls, hoping to find a continuous thread running throughout the case histories of the victims. Perhaps they hung out at a particular place where they might have come in contact with the killer. Perhaps they at one time worked together. Or attended the same school. Maybe they had all befriended the same man, one particular individual with a criminal record. Nothing, McFadden knew, was beyond possibility.

As the investigation steam-rolled forward, however, the killer struck twice in two successive nights.

On March 9, Betty Baucom did not report to work at Bojangles Restaurant where she served as assistant manager. Because it was the same eatery on Central Avenue where Caroline Love had worked before she disappeared from the face of the earth, Manager Jeffery Ellis became cautious. Phoning her at her home, there was no answer. Throughout the night he figured Baucom might appear with a reasonable explanation. She never showed up.



Betty Baucom
(Charlotte Observer)

The next day, she was again scheduled to work. When she proved truant a second time, Ellis called the police. Baucom was wholly reliable and acts of absenteeism, especially two in a row, were contrary to her efficient nature. Police officer Gregory Norwood responded to the call.

Obtaining access into her flat through the maintenance man, Norwood discovered Baucom fully clothed, face down on her mattress, choked to death by a towel twisted into a noose around her neck. She was stone cold, having been dead more than 24 hours.

This time, for the first time, the police believed the murderer had left them something to go on. Whereas the past victims' places of residence reflected only minor, if any, physical signs of disturbance, Baucom's apartment had been noticeably plundered. A bare entertainment center and cable wires leading nowhere told them that a TV and a VCR were missing. As well, Baucom's aqua-colored Pulsar was gone from the building's parking lot.

Squad cars were alerted to look out for the Pulsar cruising Charlotte's streets. Simultaneously, investigators checked local pawnshops to see if someone had tried to exchange the stolen goods for cash. But, while this was happening, a headquarters dispatcher summoned a patrol to the apartment of Brandi Henderson, whose boyfriend had just found her dead. When the police arrived, they realized it was the same apartment complex where Betty Baucom had just been found.

More than that, this latest scene was pure chaos, the worst aftermath of the Strangler's attacks to date. This time he had assaulted a baby as well!

The boyfriend who called the police, Verness Lamar Woods, lived with Henderson. He had just come home from his job's night shift to find a ravaged apartment, his girlfriend dead in bed with towels encircling her neck, and their 10-month-old toddler, T.W., in his room, barely alive and also garroted.

A court summary of the incident reads, "Woods immediately ran to T.W. to remove (a pair of) shorts, which were tied tightly around (his) neck." When Woods found Henderson, strangled and stiff, her face was a bluish tone. "He moved Henderson's body from the bed to the floor and began administering CPR pursuant to instructions from the 911 operator. When police officers arrived, it was clear Henderson was dead."

An ambulance rushed little T.W. to the Carolinas Medical Center where at first doctors feared the asphyxiation he suffered might have caused brain damage. Luckily, the child revived and tests indicated that he would recover without

permanent injury. Dr. Thomas Brewer wrote, however, that the child had endured great pain and mental distress because of the applied ligature.

Detectives could feel their blood boiling at this point; their commander Gary McFadden drew his squad together for a meeting early the next morning to compare the notes they had made during their interviews with the deceased women's acquaintances. The results of the reports were enlightening. They indicated that the girls did not seem to know each other – although some had crossed paths – or had never worked or schooled together. The clubs where they socialized differed. *But...* when asked to list names of people with whom each victim associated, all of the interviewees mentioned in their list the same name: Henry Louis Wallace.

Of the slain women, both Shawna Hawk and Audrey Spain had at one time worked at Taco Bell for the same manager, Henry Wallace.

Valencia Jumper was a good friend of Wallace's sister, Yvonne.

Michelle Stinson would often eat at Taco Bell and chat with Wallace.

Vanessa Mack was the sister of one of Wallace's ex-girlfriends.

Betty Baucom was a friend of Wallace's current girlfriend, Sadie McKnight.

Brandi Henderson was the girlfriend of one of Wallace's pals, Verness Lamar Woods, who found Brandi. In fact, Woods had told the police that Wallace was prone to visit with Brandi while he was at work.

Reaching back into the open case of "missing person" Caroline Love, detectives now realized that Love had also known Wallace well; she had been the roommate of Sadie McKnight, his girlfriend, whom Wallace visited regularly.

The puzzle pieces slid into place perfectly now. When pulling a rap sheet on the sudden suspect, Sergeant McFadden was surprised to find that, as he recalls, "An outstanding warrant was already out for Henry Louis Wallace for having failed to come to court on a recent larceny charge."

"When the police approached Sadie McKnight, she was very taken aback, very surprised that her boyfriend Henry was suspected of being the Charlotte Strangler," adds Charisse Coston. "But, the more she thought about it, the more sense it made. All along, Henry had been giving her presents – bracelets, rings and necklaces – that sometimes seemed to be very familiar. In retrospect, she now realized that she had been wearing dead girlfriends' jewelry!"

But, still Gary McFadden wondered: *Is it all just coincidence? So he knew the women...would he have an alibi?...Could it be proven he had been with the victims on the nights they were killed?*

And then it came, the evidence McFadden dreamed about. Betty Baucom's Pulsar was located, abandoned across town. Swipes of fingerprints found on the trunk lid matched Henry Wallace's file prints.

Police staked out Wallace's residence at the Glen Hollow Apartments on North Sharon Amity Road throughout the evening of March 11 and the following day. Officers Gil Allred and Sid Wright tracked him down at a friend's house, however, where he was cuffed at approximately 5 p.m. on March 12. According to the Report of Arrest, the suspect was sober, "very calm and collected," surrendered without a fight, and seemed "a little wrinkled". Following their supervisor's orders, the patrolmen delivered their catch not to the customary Intake Center, but to the Law Enforcement Center, or LEC, where a small brigade of plainclothesmen anxiously awaited his company. They had a few questions.

Wallace's arrest, with all its promise, had not come auspiciously. While the detectives gathered at the LEC to greet the alleged Strangler, another body had been found in Charlotte. Pretty Debra Slaughter had been discovered that afternoon raped, beaten, stabbed and choked, a white linen shoved down her windpipe.

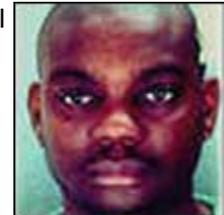


Debra Slaughter
(Charlotte Observer)

She had earned the inglorious title of Luckless, Final Victim.

And, yes, she too had been an intimate friend of Henry Louis Wallace.

At the LEC, Wallace was led into an interview room where several men stood around a long bare table under fluorescent lighting. They looked up when patrol officers Wright and Allred ushered Wallace through the door and came forth to introduce themselves. They asked the suspect if he knew why he was there, and at first he alluded only to the larceny charge. But, over the next several hours these men would take turns interviewing the suspect until he confessed to killing all nine of the Charlotte women – Caroline Love, Shawna Hawk, Audrey Spain, Valencia Jumper, Michelle Stinson, Vanessa Mack, Betty Baucom, Brandi Henderson and, less than 48 hours before he was arrested, Debra Slaughter. He also admitted murdering a prostitute whose name he never knew and whose body he concealed in a remote area not far from where he had dumped the cadaver of "missing person" Caroline Love.



Henry Wallace

At approximately 10 p.m., after the initial interrogation, Wallace was read the Miranda rights, and then asked if he would agree to taping his confession. In no way was he coerced. The prisoner nodded and replied that having already admitted to what he had done, "I feel like a big burden has been lifted."

Speaking into a recording microphone, Wallace led his listeners through many hours of sickening details. He verbally brought them from one murder scene to another, describing his thoughts as he killed the women, remembering their final words and actions, even their agony when he applied what he called the "Boston

choke" on them to render them powerless.

Though he robbed most of his victims before he killed them, the hard-line underlying motive for the murders was not theft, however, but sex. He fulfilled his sensual fantasies of power and control. The thefts funded his crack habit, but sex was the initiator. As the months progressed and he had been fired from one job after another, the only way he knew how to quickly get cash was through his friends, unwilling or otherwise. Robbing the women provided a more practical threshold to his more ultimate carnal desires.

Leading the interview was Sergeant Patrick Sanders who, according to the *Charlotte Observer*, "is known for remaining calm and logical...His rough-skinned face is open and kind, his soft frame non-threatening."

Accompanying Sanders were other Charlotte-Mecklenburg homicide detectives who took their shift during the ongoing series of confessions throughout the night, asking questions, clarifying points. Among them were Gary McFadden, Darrell Price, William Ward, Mark Corwin, Anthony Rice, and C.E. Boothe.

At one point, an investigator told Wallace that he did not seem to be a bad man by nature, and asked him if he thought he might be schizophrenic. "No," Wallace answered, "there's only one Henry – a {bad} Henry."

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Following are brief descriptions of what happened at the scenes of murder, interspersed with Henry Louis Wallace's own chilling words:

The Love Murder

He had taken a key to Caroline Love's apartment from his girlfriend and Love's roommate, Sadie McKnight. When he knew that Love would be alone, he entered her apartment and hid in the bathroom for her to come home from work. When she arrived home, he told her he wanted to make love. When she resisted, he put her in a wrestling hold.

"I kept the hold on her until she passed out. And at that time I moved her to her bedroom and removed her clothes, had intercourse with her, and at the same time I was still applying the chokehold. She began to fight (so) I used a curling iron that was near her bed and I placed the cord around her neck."

After she died, he folded the body in her bed sheets and placed the bundle in a large orange trash bag – "kind of like the city workers use" – and carried the deadweight to his car. Returning to her apartment, he grabbed a roll of quarters he saw lying on her dresser.

Securing the body out of sight from passersby, he drove to the city limits near dark Stevenson Road, passed some construction horses, and dumped the body off on the side of the road where he thought it wouldn't be seen.

"About two days later I went back, and the body had almost decayed to the point

where she looked just like leather, an ET doll, or something. Her body had decayed so bad. I went back about a week later and the only thing left was bones."

The Hawk Murder

Wallace claimed he had had no intention of killing young Shawna Hawk, but stopped by merely to chat with her. She had just come in from school – her mother was not home – and the two shared idle gossip for about an hour. She started teasing him, however, about a recent fight he had had with Sadie McKnight. Her remarks ruffled him.

"That's when I rendered the choke hold on her until she passed out. And then I filled the bathtub with water and placed her in it."

Before he left, he removed \$50 from her purse.

The Spain Murder

Audrey Spain had just returned from vacation when Wallace sought her out. His excuse for visiting her was to share a joint together. But he had another reason: robbery. After they finished smoking, he throttled her and pinned her to the floor. He demanded to know how much money she had in the apartment, and took what was available. As he choked her, she blacked out. He stripped her, dragged her to her bedroom, and raped her.

"She was coming to, and she begged me not to hurt her (so) I just performed sex on her, and (then) I told her to stand and put her clothes on. And as she stood up to put her underwear on, that's when I administered the choke hold."

After she became limp in his arms, he tied a nightgown and a T-shirt together to garrote her. Upon leaving, he stole her Visa MasterCard and Exxon gas card, using the latter to make several gas purchases.

The Jumper Murder

"(Valencia) was like a little sister to me. I don't know why I ever hurt her..."

Nevertheless, he had stopped by to see Jumper that night, telling her that he had had a fight with his girlfriend, Sadie, and badly needed someone to talk to. Jumper let him in. After they conversed a few moments, Wallace asked her to please call Sadie to inform her that he was over there so she wouldn't wonder where he'd gone.

When Jumper turned away from him to dial the phone, he drew her into a body lock. "She begged me not to hurt her. She said I'll do anything you want me to, just don't hurt me." Fearfully, she allowed him to molest her; she even performed orally for him, hoping to save her life.

While she was getting dressed afterwards, he managed to draw her attention to the other side of the room. "I put the towel around her neck (and) she just went out

real quick...And I went to her kitchen, and I noticed there was a bottle of rum, 151. And I poured the rum all over her body...And I went into the kitchen and opened a can of pork and beans...and put it on the stove. I took the battery out of her smoke detector and I turned the stove on high...(Then) I went back to her bedroom and I took a match and I threw it on the 151...I left and went home."

Before he fired her body, he removed some expensive pieces of jewelry from it. He later pawned them.

The Stinson Murder

Wallace dropped in unannounced on Stinson at 11 p.m. that night. His sole aim was rape. Chatting awhile, he pretended to be thirsty, and asked for a glass of water.

Watching Michelle turn to reach for a glass on a shelf, he made his move. Immobilizing her from behind, he began to unbutton her blouse. After forcing her into sex, he choked her until she swooned.

"I went to the bathroom and I got a towel, put it around her neck, and I strangled her...But, she kept moaning and groaning and so forth and so on, so there was a knife in her kitchen, and I think I stabbed her about four times."

The Mack Murder

By the time he killed Vanessa Mack, he admitted that his "primary motive" was money. Such was his drug addiction – crack, LSD, anything he could get his hands on, any way he could get it. Mack, he knew, had a good job, money in the bank, and always carried an ATM card.

Tonight, he carried a pillowcase, hidden under his jacket.

"She stood up to get me some soda in the kitchen. That's when I quickly put the pillowcase around her neck...I asked her for all the money she had because she had told me she had just gotten an income tax return back. I asked her for her teller card (and) PIN number."

After she turned those things over to him, he insisted on having sex. She was too afraid to object. When they were through, she mentioned that she needed to put her baby to bed; the child had been asleep on the sofa. He pretended to release her from his grasp, but as she rose off the mattress, he reached around her once more with the pillowcase and ended her life.

Later that evening, when using her ATM card, it did not work. "She gave me some fake PIN number."

The Baucom Murder

Since Betty Baucom was one of the supervisors at Bojangles Restaurant, Wallace figured she knew its burglar alarm code and possessed keys to its safe. His intention was wholly theft. Stopping by, he asked her if he could use her phone;

she consented and opened her door to him. He dawdled a few moments at the phone, pretending to be looking up a certain number. When she turned her back, he subdued her.

Ordering her to get naked, she desisted. Fighting, she inflicted scratches and a bite mark on his shoulder. Overcoming her at last, he angrily raped her.

"(Then) I told her to get up, put her clothes on. I placed a towel around her neck and asked her if she had any money. She said yeah, she did – she gave me the money that was in her purse. I took a gold chain from around her neck."

That done, he strangled her.

Not satisfied with the evening's paltry take, he decided to steal her television set and VCR. But, since he no longer owned a car – he had totaled his green Maxim – he took her Pulsar to transport the pirated items back to his flat. From there, he sold them for cash. Fearing that the police might be catching on, he abandoned the car hours later, wiping it clean of fingerprints. But, he confessed, he had forgotten to wipe off the trunk lid.

The Henderson Murder

After leaving Betty Baucom's flat he stepped down the hall straight to Brandi Henderson's apartment where he knew she would be home alone; his friend Verness Lamar Woods, who lived with her and their 10-month-old boy, was out working. Knocking on her door, he told Henderson that he wanted to drop something off for Lamar, so she invited him in. She suspected nothing.

Once inside, he squeezed her to him and demanded money. The only cash she had on hand was \$15 in her purse and loose change she kept in a Pringle's Potato Chips can. Taking that, he led her to her bed where he commanded her to perform oral sex. The more she pleaded, the more aroused he became.

"We had intercourse (and afterwards) she got on her knees and started praying...because she was scared. And I said, I'm not going to hurt you...I said, give me a hug, and she hugged me (but) I choked her out with (a) towel...until she was red in the face and unconscious." She died in his grasp.

Wallace had intended to steal Brandi's TV and stereo since he had a means of conveyance at his hands (Baucom's automobile). But, when little T.W., the tot, began crying, Wallace panicked. The last thing he wanted now was an angry neighbor waking up just as he was toting the stolen merchandise from her apartment. Lifting the baby from its crib, Wallace tried to calm him with a pacifier, but to no avail.

"I took a towel and placed it around the baby's neck, and I didn't want to tie it tight enough to choke him... (just) enough to make it difficult for him to breathe."

His crying sputtered, which afforded Wallace the quiet he needed to make off with the items from the apartment, uninterrupted.

The Slaughter Murder

Approaching Debra Slaughter at her apartment, he asked if she wanted to go in half with him on a purchase of cocaine. She told him that she didn't have enough money for that. Disappointed, he pummeled her and, in his customary manner, strong-held her with a towel at her throat. Forcing intercourse, he also made her turn over to him "roughly \$60" in cash.

But, Slaughter proved to be more obstinate than the other women Wallace had encountered, much more. She raged, telling him that her suspicions of him were now confirmed – that he *was* the man who had been strangling all those women across that part of Charlotte. He denied it, but she only became more vocal. When he reached to strike her, she broke free, screamed, called out for police, and reached for a knife she had hidden in her purse.

"I caught her arm and I grabbed the knife from her and I stabbed her about 20 times...It was a little knife...shaped kind of like a dagger."

After he killed her, he left to buy some cocaine. "(But) I went back to her apartment. While she lay on the floor dead, I went in her bathroom and smoked it."

Wallace also admitted to having slain a prostitute, whose name he did not know, back in 1992. But, said he, in that case she had been the aggressor.

"We had sexual intercourse. She demanded money and I didn't have any money, and we got into a scuffle, and it pursued into basically me beating her to death."

Stuffing her body in his car, he drove it to Old Mount Holly Road, a deserted area near railroad tracks, and there abandoned it out of sight.

The confession phase having ended, Inspector Sanders asked Henry Wallace, "Why have you told us what you've told us?"

"I've wanted to tell the story for a long time," Wallace responded. "If I wouldn't have told you, if I wouldn't have stopped, the killing would have continued and probably I would have killed myself as well. I've tried many times, but was unsuccessful."

Over the next couple of weeks, detectives followed up on Wallace's claims – names, dates, and times. They accompanied him to the spot where Caroline Love had been left. From her remains, County Pathologist James Sullivan was able to confirm that Love had been strangled.

On April 4, 1994, Wallace was officially indicted with nine counts of murder, as well as a battalion of other charges – various counts of first and second degree rape, various counts of first and second degree sexual offense, various counts of assault

with a deadly weapon, assault on a child under age 12, and several counts of robbery with a dangerous weapon.

According to a social profile done on Henry Louis Wallace in preparation for his trial, it appears that his problems stemmed from a dysfunctional upbringing. His mother grew up soured on life, her own beloved mother having died young and her father having deserted the brood shortly thereafter. Her resentment of life did not improve when she gave birth out of wedlock to two children – first Yvonne, then Henry – by a married high school teacher who then returned to his wife.

Wallace was born in Barnwell, South Carolina, on November 4, 1965, dirt poor. Carmeta V. Albarus, a certified social worker who interviewed, then profiled Wallace and his family for his trial's defense team, says that Wallace's mother "sought to control (her son) through violence, emotional abuse and other inappropriate means." Vacant in the son's formative years was a realized conception of family togetherness.

Aside from a lack of emotional comfort, the tumbledown house in which Wallace grew up claimed neither electricity nor plumbing. The Wallaces drank from a pump well and their bathroom was really a watershed with a set of chamber pots. Household members included young Henry, his sister Yvonne (three years older), the children's mother and great grandmother. Tensions ran high. The latter two did not get along and argued incessantly. As well, the matron was a strict disciplinarian.

Potty training for Henry was his first knowledge of hell. As a toddler, if he had an accident in his trousers, he was berated. The chastisement instilled little Henry with such terror that he would often go in his pants, then try to hide his mistake by concealing his soiled trousers.

Because the mother was the sole provider in the household and had to work long days to pay the bills, she demanded that her children grow up quickly. But, sometimes her discipline was severe. When she thought either of her two children deserved to be punished, she would make them pick their own switch by which to be spanked. If she was fatigued after a day's work, she ordered brother and sister to whip each other. When interviewed in jail by social worker Albarus in 1996, Wallace recalled how painful it was to have to hurt his sister – worse than being on the receiving end.

Wallace never argued with his elder about this matter or any other, even when he was forced to wear his sister's hand-me-downs or empty out the family's chamber pots, which was his daily chore.

The child yearned to be like his friends at John F. Meyers Elementary School. These kids had dads with whom to play stickball and fly kites, but little Henry had no dad. When he once asked his mom about his natural father – who he was, where did he go – the other told him to quit idling.

Something happened when Wallace was in sixth grade that would psychologically scar him for life. His father called on the phone, out of nowhere; he introduced himself and told the boy he had always wanted to meet him. He promised to stop by

during the week. The child became excited, wondering what his father looked like, how he would take to him when they saw each other for the very first time.

The following morning, Wallace rose early. "He recalled staying home from school so he would be there when he arrived," writes Albarus. "(He) watched from his mother's room, every car that turned the corner...He waited the following day, and the day after that." His father never appeared.

That memory pained him by day and by night, in his busy hours and in his quiet hours. Life went on, but it dragged for some time after.

Wallace began high school in 1979. These years moved uneventfully, his academic achievements sparse. However, schoolmates liked him, teachers thought him an obedient boy. Because his mother forbade him to join the football team, he did the next best thing: joined the cheerleading squad. That he was the only male on the roster – and at six feet towered over his feminine counterparts – didn't incite jeers; rather, he won admiration from students and school staff alike for his enthusiasm and creativity. The girl cheerleaders adored him for his politeness and upbeat attitude.

After graduating from Barnwell High in May, 1983, Wallace made a feeble attempt to pursue higher education. He attended South Carolina State College for a semester, then Denmark Technical College for another. He failed from both, not from lack of ability, but of drive. He expended more interest in his evening job that as a disc jockey at a small, local radio station, WBAW. Fashioning himself as a "Wolfman Jack" prototype, he tagged himself "The Night Rider". (Considering what was to come, this moniker lends an eerie afterglow.) Listeners enjoyed his humor, his easy-going manner; females liked his voice.

It may have been the roots of a career for Wallace were he not fired after a short time, caught in the act of stealing CDs. His college plans awash, his future in hiatus, his life a bugaboo, Wallace joined the U.S. Naval Reserve, shipping out to recruit training in Orlando, Florida, in December, 1984. He would remain in the Navy eight years.

In the Navy, Wallace shone. "Henry was described as an outstanding seaman who willingly followed all orders given to him and accomplished his assigned tasks in a timely manner," Albarus reports. "It was noted that his knowledge level was higher than expected of a seaman." He was eventually promoted to third class petty officer. Before he left service, his achievement ranking was nearly perfect.

While a sailor, Wallace married Maretta Brabham, a girl he had seen on and off since sophomore year at Barnwell High. Prior to their wedding, Maretta had had a child with another man, but Wallace opened his arms to the girl, nevertheless. Wife and child followed Wallace as he was transferred to the West Coast and back again. But, the union turned out to be a disappointment.

Wallace had adopted Maretta's child, Teondra, but he wanted one of his own, too. His spouse refused to bear any more children. This caused a strain that would continue to rend. Furthermore, as the relationship went on, their sex life ebbed. Wallace blamed her frigidity on the fact that she had been raped as a teenager. When he suggested they attend a counseling session, she blew up.

The year 1992 was the beginning of the end – for the marriage and for Wallace himself. In August of that year he was apprehended in a breaking-and-entry near the naval base and asked to leave the service. (Because of his until-then unblemished record, the Navy permitted him to exit on an Honorable Discharge.) Immediately after he re-entered civilian life, Maretta left him. Unemployed and heartbroken, Wallace moved back in with his mom and sister, who now lived near Charlotte, North Carolina.

During this time, Wallace dated other girls, though still pining for Maretta. He impregnated one of them, and even though the relationship did not last, he became a proud father when a beautiful baby girl was born in September, 1993. Despite Wallace's oncoming mania and downfall, the child, Kendra Urilla, remained the treasure of his life and the only enduring bright spot he had ever known.

But, his failures were mowing him down. Having experimented with drugs at an earlier age, he now turned to them for an escape, from memories of Maretta whom he still loved, from reality. As his consternation increased so did his drug habits. Jobs he took at Taco Bell and other places never lasted, simply because he just didn't care about them, or anything.

There had been a devil twitching inside of him, whispering bad recollections and unfulfilled dreams. At last, Henry Louis Wallace finally gave into the devil to create a piece of Hades on earth for nine Charlotte-area women and their families.

And for himself, as well.

Suddenly, in November, 1994, eight months after Henry Louis Wallace confessed to his crimes, he filed a motion to suppress the interviews. His claim was that he was coerced into making the confession. A hearing was scheduled to review his motion, which threw the court trial schedule into a dither. His trial date needed to be postponed pending further investigation.

Examiners studied the case and, in April of 1995, announced their findings. (These would be printed formally in a document to be published for Wallace's trial in 1996.) Wallace's argument rested chiefly on the objection that he was not administered the Miranda rights until 10 p.m., more than three hours into his interview the night of March 12, 1994. According to the published report, however, the attending officers who met with Wallace at the Law Enforcement Center (LEC) spent the earlier part of the night casually questioning him about his larceny charge, his drug habit and his whereabouts at the times the Charlotte women were strangled. He was charged only *after* the detectives felt there was enough suspicion warranting a charge and *before* he taped his official Statement of Confession. At that time, reads the summary, detectives "advised defendant of his Miranda rights, which defendant said he understood and chose to waive."

Officers had not asked questions that would "elicit an incriminating response," the report goes on. As well, Wallace had been given refreshments and snacks and allowed to take appropriate rest breaks. He was not brutalized, threatened or in any

way pushed into a predicament where he might have felt compelled to fear for his life unless he responded in a pre-designated fashion.

Once Wallace began confessing, he continued to take breaks, continued to be fed on a regular basis, and was given duration to sleep. According to the taped transcript, there is evidence throughout that the prisoner is speaking at his own will, at-random and at his own pace. His tone is neither beleaguered nor frightened.

Wallace's motion also cited that he was "induced" to confessing by a promise from the detectives to let him visit with his daughter, Kendra, and his girlfriend, Sadie McKnight. The interrogation team denied this accusation, explaining that Kendra and Sadie's names came up *after* Wallace had already agreed to talk. The transcript supports their explanation in the following taped dialogue between Sgt. Patrick Sanders (Homicide) and Henry Wallace:

Sanders: Has anybody threatened you or—

Wallace: No.

Sanders: -- coerced you or made you any special promises?

Wallace: No, I just want, I just want an opportunity to maybe for the last time to hold my daughter. I'd like to say goodbye to Sadie. I really can't speak with my family right now. I think I've caused them enough problems in my lifetime. My mother did the best job she could to raise me.

Sanders: You've asked, and I want to clarify that, you've asked us to see if we can arrange for you to see Sadie and your daughter and we've said that we will try to do that.

Wallace: Yes.

Sanders: But, aside from that, was that an exchange for you talking to us?

Wallace: Was that in exchange?

Sanders: Yes.

Wallace: It was a condition. I wouldn't necessarily say it was an exchange. I wanted, like I said, for the last time to say goodbye to those people.

Sanders: Do you feel like we've used that to get you to talk to us?

Wallace: No. No, I mean I hope not anyway. I mean, I don't feel that way.

A third charge alleged by Wallace concerned the delay in presenting him before a magistrate. He was brought before Magistrate Karen Johnson who came to the LEC just before noon on March 13, the morning following his confession. The defendant challenged that had he been taken before a magistrate earlier, he might not have felt cornered and, therefore, obliged to confess. The police stated that the delay was due to the fact that the transcripts of the confession required time to be made and

that the defendant needed time to sleep (which he did from 7:30 a.m. to almost noon of the 13th). After his appearance before Johnson, he continued to talk openly and without hesitation about his crimes.

The hearing concluded that 1) Wallace had been given the Miranda rights in due and proper time; 2) that he made his confession voluntarily, without any trickery from the police; and 3) that the delay in bringing him before a magistrate was not based on any off-handed motivation by the police.

* * * * *

Wallace's trial for murder, which took place at the Mecklenburg County Superior Courthouse, lasted nearly four months. Court convened in September, 1996, and concluded in late January, 1997, with the jury's judgment of death for all nine murders.

Heading the prosecution was Mecklenburg's tough female prosecutor, Anne Tompkins, fresh from her victory in sending high-profile child killer Fred Coffey to prison for life. Not an obstinate hardhead, Tompkins is noted among her peers as a believer in the truth. As she told her staff, "Our ethical obligation is to justice – not necessarily to get a win."

Public Defender Isabel Scott Day served as Wallace's chief attorney. According to the *Charlotte Observer*, "It's not unusual for Day to give clients money" to help them out. Her humanity towards those she defends sets her apart as a hero in the legal system. She once defended a woman charged with stealing meat in a grocery store. When she asked why she did it, the woman said she had never tasted steak before. Day handed her money to buy some. She told the *Observer* that, concerning her defense of Wallace, "All I could do is care about him as a human being...I did not see in him the monster that other people saw."

For Day, defending Wallace was an uphill, never-a-break, tiring task, and she had expected it to be. After her failed attempts to suppress her client's confession statement, there was little she could do but fight to save him from death. Assisted by the prestigious law firm of Kennedy-Covington, the team's strategy was to cast a doubt in the jury's mind as to Wallace's sanity. Two impressive witnesses for the defense included a pair of experts on the subject of serial killings, Colonel Robert K. Ressler from the FBI's Behavior Science Unit, and Dr. Ann W. Burgess, a specialist in psychosocial development. Ressler testified that he believed the defendant's actions displayed both organizational and disorganizational characteristics, which meant that Wallace exhibited signs of psychological instability. Burgess was of the opinion that Day's client was unable to separate reality from fantasy, thus suffering from mental illness.

But, the jury was unmoved. The defense could not weaken the impression made by the State, with its long line of official witnesses who talked about the fingerprints on Baucom's automobile, who played back the tape of Wallace's confession, who recalled Henderson's ten-month-old boy who was almost strangled to death, and who described in detail the ghastly expressions on the dead girls' faces.

On January 7, 1997, the twelve jurors found the defendant guilty of nine counts of first-degree murder, according to the Appellate Report, "each on the basis of malice,

premeditation and deliberation". Three weeks later, on January 29, the jury likewise ruled that Wallace should pay for his crimes with his life. Presiding Judge Robert Johnston's declaration of nine death sentences included in the punishment penalties for rape and the multiplicity of other charges for which he was convicted.

The *Charlotte Observer*, the *Fayetteville Observer* and other newspapers across North Carolina headlined Wallace's handwritten statement that he had read in court to the families of the deceased. In the statement, Wallace conceded to the horror he created, but asked the families for their forgiveness. Quoting the Book of Mark, he prayed,

"And when you stand praying, forgive if you have nothing against anyone: then your Father also which is in Heaven will forgive you and your trespasses..."

According to the *Fayetteville Observer*, the families who were in court the day that Henry Louis Wallace expressed his sorrow for what he had done "didn't buy it." The newspaper quoted Kathy Love, sister of Wallace victim Caroline Love, who told a reporter, "I don't believe he's sorry. He wouldn't have lied to me for two years while my sister was missing and then killed all those other women." Her sentiments reflected those of the other relatives present. Brandi Henderson's cousin, George Burrell, when asked what he thought, merely shook his head and simply wanted to know what made Wallace do what he'd done.

Defender Isabel Day's explanation to that was, "(Wallace) is very sick, very mentally ill." She wept when the trial ended, not for her court loss, but because the high emotion she needed to suspend over the months of trial could finally be released.

After his trial, Henry Louis Wallace was transferred to North Carolina's only death row unit, that in Central Prison, Raleigh.

His verdict was automatically appealed. The appeal was complex, but basically it resurrected some earlier issues – including Henry Louis Wallace's "involuntary" confession and the delay of the issuance of his Miranda rights – and contested some new ones – the possible illegality of the court's refusal to accept the defense's motion for change of venue to a less prejudicial locale and even the definitions of "premeditation" and "deliberation" as they applied to Wallace's crimes. On May 5, 2000, the Supreme Court of North Carolina filed its response: "We conclude defendant received a fair trial and capital sentencing proceeding, free from judicial error, and the sentences of death recommended by the jury and entered by the trial court are not disproportionate. NO ERROR."

For a man whose appeal cited coerced confessions, Wallace kept talking, talking, and talking, as if to dump guilt from every dark corner of his bones. Even before his trial, Wallace had confessed to other murders for which he was not charged. Besides the

prostitute he had admitted killing in Charlotte, he also claimed to have killed, while in the Navy, a woman named Tashanda Bethea in South Carolina in 1990.

"And there were more," Criminal Justice Professor Charisse Coston informs us. "After his incarceration, he told authorities of others. If all true, the estimated number nears twenty, all murdered across the world while he was on naval duty in various ports of call."



Henry Wallace in prison

In the meantime, the prisoner sits in Central Prison, a three-hour drive from Charlotte. According to Coston, "Officials need to keep him separated from other unit prisoners who drew him into fights the minute he arrived there." But, says she, some of those who at first picked on him might think differently now. "He was 180 pounds when arrested; he now weighs in at around four hundred."

All prison time hasn't been downcast for Wallace, however.

He married prison nurse Rebecca Torrijas on June 5, 1998, the vows being exchanged in a small room next to the death chamber. Although they were never allowed to consummate their marriage, the couple remains in communication; Torrijas is a constant visitor.

But, the memory of his wedding day almost assuredly lightens the daily load. If by chance he glances down the corridor where the death chamber sits, he probably remembers his wedding ceremony at that end of the hall, rather than the less-merry one he must some day experience.

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