

MOTHER, WIFE SEE SUSPECT IN DANCER SLAYINGS AS SCAPEGOAT

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Monday, February 18, 1985

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You could hear the affection in the mother's voice as she talked about the first time she saw the child who would become her son:

"He was only four," she said softly. "He was standing near a book rack, looking at the books in a room of about 15 other children -- white and black -- who were available for adoption. He seemed like the type of child we wanted. He was just a sweet, little boy."

The woman who married the child when he grew up, and who separated from him last month after 10 years of marriage, giggled girlishly as she recounted the first time she saw her mate:

"Yes, he swept me off my feet," she said. "I think it was love at first sight."

RECENT MURDER charges against that son, husband and father of three young children -- **Victor King Malone**, 38 -- haven't tarnished the sentiments or memories.

"I want you to know that I love my son," said his mother, Willa Mae **Malone**, who is in her 70s. "I love him very much. I can't imagine him hurting anybody."

His wife, Sheila **Malone**, 30, said: "He is not this man that runs around and kills women."

But police say that **Malone**, of Southfield, tied up, beat and then shot dead a 26-year-old woman last December, and that he strangled a 27-year-old woman last July before dumping her body on a Detroit street. Both women were dancers at Detroit area topless go-go clubs.

Malone was in Wayne County Jail in lieu of a \$1 million cash bond in the death of the 26-year-old, and was arraigned Saturday in the second slaying and remanded to the jail without bond. He is a suspect in numerous other unsolved slayings. Police have pulled files of 50 unsolved murders of women for an investigation that could involve cases dating back to 1972, they said.

A preliminary examination on the two murder charges is scheduled Feb. 19.

"THE PAPERS have been so mean," said Willa Mae **Malone**, who did not want to be photographed. "They've tried and convicted him already and almost sentenced him, I guess. The papers make him out to be a monster."

The son Mrs. **Malone** describes was an altar boy at the Episcopal church she, her late husband, Herman, and **Victor** attended. He "loves chess" and has won trophies in competition, and also is "a great jogger," she said.

"He is a good and loving father," said Sheila **Malone**, who likewise did not want to be photographed. "He cares for me; he loves his family."

Victor Malone attended Northwestern High School in Detroit -- as did his mother -- but graduated from Mackenzie, Willa Mae **Malone** said. He has a master's degree from the University of Michigan in social work. Sheila **Malone** said she has a degree in chemistry from Wayne State University.

"He was a very good student," his mother said. "He read just about everything. We believed in education."

After retiring from the Wayne County Juvenile Court in the mid-'70s, where she worked with delinquent girls, Mrs. **Malone** went to U-M to get her bachelor's degree. She graduated in 1981 at the age of 70, she said, and taught adult education in Ypsilanti for one year.

" **Victor** 's oldest child -- his eight-year-old son -- just won an award for an outstanding science project," she said proudly. "He has very beautiful and smart children."

Besides the eight-year-old, the Malones have two girls, five and three.

"You know," **Victor Malone** 's mother said, "we had a very beautiful family life. We were the ideal typical American family. We lived on the west side on Tireman. We made a nice living and took vacations together. We were a happy family. We had planned to adopt a boy and a girl, but we just got so involved with **Victor** . . . "

"AS FAR AS I know, **Victor** 's natural parents were dead when we adopted him." she said. "But even if they weren't, they'd have never been able to take away the love and care we gave him through the years. His dad was his dad . . . And his mom is his mom."

Herman **Malone** died in 1975 after retiring as a foreman for the City of Detroit Department of Public Works, she said. He was an accomplished tennis player and a member of the Motor City Tennis Club, which played at Northwestern High School, Willa Mae **Malone** said. She said she met her husband of 42 years on those courts.

Herman **Malone** , who was a president of a Democratic club in the 15th District at one time, according to his wife, ran in a Democratic primary for state representative back in the '60s, she said.

"He lost by 300 votes -- and we all cried," Willa Mae **Malone** said.

THE ELDER Mrs. **Malone** -- under the name of Willa Mae **King - Malone** , incorporating her maiden name for political reasons, she said -- ran for state representative from Detroit's 17th District in the 1982 Democratic primary. She finished third out of six candidates with 22 percent of the vote.

" **Victor** thought maybe in later years he might run," she said.

In some of those earlier years, though, **Malone** ran into trouble instead. He developed a criminal

record that included convictions for armed robbery in 1966, a narcotics violation in 1967, and bank robbery in 1972. He was charged with murdering a young woman in 1975 but the case was dismissed during a preliminary examination because of insufficient evidence, police said. Sexual assault charges in 1980 and 1983 were dismissed.

"I can't account for those," Mrs. **Malone** said quietly.

SHEILA MALONE said her husband told her about his past when they first met. "I never would have imagined that. I was really shocked. But he is a very honest person, open person. He told me all about it. But the past is there to haunt him."

His mother said: " **Victor** has had a mental . . . no, I shouldn't say mental . . . he has had some counseling. And he needs more counseling. If he needs psychiatric help, we'll help him get it."

Sheila **Malone** said that the counseling her mother-in-law referred to was for marital problems. "We both went," she said. "We've had our ups and downs, but we've dealt with those," she said.

His wife said: "This was the year for him. He was trying to establish a business, a non-profit organization for cancer." His motivation was intensified last October when his mother was diagnosed as having cancer, Sheila **Malone** said. Willa Mae **Malone** has been undergoing chemotherapy treatments.

"I think the police had to find a scapegoat -- and want to make one of **Victor** , for some reason," his mother said. "I have confidence in him. I do believe that he will be found innocent. I will stand by him. You print this and put it in your own words if you have to: His mother said he is innocent until proven guilty."

SHEILA MALONE agrees with her mother-in-law -- "I know sincerely in my heart that he is innocent," she said -- including the theory that her husband is being used as a scapegoat.

But she has more than that to worry about: She has to shield the children from the publicity. The oldest hasn't encountered any problems at school yet, she said.

"I limit myself to what I read because it's so disgusting," she said. "And I don't let my children get involved. I will eventually have to say something to them, but right now I keep the kids involved in other things. **Victor** gets to call them.

"I just tell them 'Dad's away'. "

Caption: Photo

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 1A

Index Terms: REACTION ; SPOUSE ; MOTHER ; MURDER ; FAMILY

Record Number: 8501070514

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