

## TRAGIC STORY HAS MORE FATALITIES AFTER '75 DEATHS, MAN AGAIN ACCUSED OF MURDER

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Tuesday, January 25, 2000

Author: SHERYL JAMES FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Shortly after he allegedly killed his wife and 3-year-old son last October, **Paul Harrington** sat face-to-face with Detroit homicide detective Sgt. Felix Kirk, and told him the story -- the whole story.

"The same thing happened in 1975," **Harrington** said. "They should have put me away then."

**Harrington** had committed an almost identical crime in 1975. He killed his first wife and two daughters, then called 911 to confess. He was found not guilty by reason of insanity in 1977 and was released after two months in a psychiatric institution.

**Harrington** was ordered Monday to stand trial on two counts of first-degree murder and two felony firearms counts in the shooting deaths of his second wife, Wanda, and their son Brian in their Detroit duplex. His statement to Kirk was read aloud Monday at a preliminary hearing in 36th District Court.

**Harrington**'s comments to Kirk renewed questions about the 1977 case and why **Harrington** was not sent to prison then.

Donald Cutler, a Southfield attorney, was **Harrington**'s defense attorney in 1977. Cutler said Monday that two psychiatrists who testified at a hearing after the first killings agreed after examining **Harrington** that he was not criminally responsible. The law at the time, Cutler said, required then-Recorder's Court Judge Susan Borman to find **Harrington** not guilty by reason of insanity.

In court Monday, Kirk testified that **Harrington** told him he had recently run out of medications that eased his severe depression.

"I take Desyrel and Loxapine. It keeps me from hearing voices and helps me sleep. I've been out of the Loxapine for a week," Kirk said **Harrington** told him.

**Harrington** had been fired in April from Hercules Drawn Steel in Livonia after six years of employment. Kirk said **Harrington** told him: "I was told I got fired because everyone was scared to work with me. They said I had problems." **Harrington**, 53, a former Detroit Police Department detective and Vietnam veteran, said he had not slept the four nights before the shootings. He told Kirk he decided to kill his wife and son the night of Oct. 14, walked across the street and borrowed a gun from a man named "D."

"D" did not ask why **Harrington** wanted the gun, and **Harrington** did not offer the reason. Police have been unable to locate "D."

**Harrington** did not shoot his family that night, however. The following morning, he told Kirk, "everything seemed all right, but then in my head I just couldn't handle any more." He and his wife had not argued, he said. "It's just everything was going around inside my head. The welfare cut my check, I've been thinking about how I was going to take care of my family, I'm behind in the rent, and I didn't want to see them outdoors."

After his older son, **Paul Jr.**, left for school about 9 a.m. Oct. 15, **Harrington** walked back into his rented duplex at 1444 W. Grand Blvd. According to Kirk, **Harrington** said his wife Wanda, 45, was asleep on the couch when he shot her in the left temple. He then shot his son, Brian, who was playing in the dining room, and carried him to the couch. Brian was shot three times in the head.

**Harrington** then called 911. He told police the gun would be on the dining room table, and he would be on the porch. Police found both, along with Wanda and Brian on opposite ends of the couch, their feet touching.

Defense attorney W. Frederick Moore of Detroit said Monday that the issue in the case "is not about what **Harrington** did, but about his frame of mind." Both Moore and Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Ralph Elizondo expect **Harrington**'s case to center on psychiatric testimony.

Little is known about **Harrington**. He served in Vietnam and joined the Detroit Police force in 1972. He was undergoing psychiatric treatment in 1975 when he killed his first wife, Becky, 28, and daughters Pamela, 9, and Cassandra, 4, with his police service revolver. The couple had recently separated.

In court Monday, **Harrington** said little, rubbing his eyes as Elizondo read descriptions of his wife's and son's autopsies.

**Harrington**, who is being held without bond in the Wayne County Jail, has only one relative in Michigan, a cousin. No family members appeared in court on his behalf. Several members of his wife's family attended the hearing but declined to be interviewed.

SHERYL JAMES can be reached at 810-227-8009 or sjames@freepress.com.

Caption: Photo DAVID P. GILKEY/Detroit Free Press; Photo

Wanda and Brian **Harrington** were killed Oct. 15 at their Detroit duplex.

**Paul Harrington**, in 36th District Court on Monday, is accused of killing his second wife and son. In 1977, he was found not guilty by reason of insanity in the slayings of his wife and daughters.

Memo: CORRECTION RAN JANUARY 26, 2000

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 1B

Correction: A front-page brief Tuesday on former Detroit policeman Paul Harrington should have said that he was put in an institution in 1975 for the killing of his first wife and two daughters.

Index Terms: PAUL HARRINGTON; HOMICIDE ; MULTIPLE ; PSYCHOLOGY

Record Number: 0001250076

Copyright (c) 2000 Detroit Free Press