

# 2 sisters feigned death after mother was slain, jury told

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After their mother was stabbed and left dead on a bedroom floor, two young sisters feigned death until the killer left their Hyde Park home, a prosecutor said Wednesday in the capital murder trial of Rodney L. Lincoln.

Lincoln, a 38-year-old truck driver, has been charged with two counts of first-degree assault in the stabbing death of 35-year-old Jo Ann Tate and the wounding of Mrs. Tate's two children on April 27, 1982, at an apartment in the 1400 block of Farrar Street.

ASSISTANT CIRCUIT Attorney Joseph L. Bauer Jr. said Lincoln was identified in a police lineup several weeks after the slaying by Mrs. Tate's daughter, Melissa Davis, now 8.

Both children recovered from their wounds and are living with foster parents.

Lincoln, of 8116 Minnesota Ave., has denied the charges. He has been in jail in lieu of \$1 million bond since his arrest in May 1982.

The prosecution is seeking the death penalty on the capital-murder charge. The trial is in the court of St. Louis Circuit Judge James J. Gallagher.

Lincoln's attorney, Robert Hampe, asked the jury to "keep an open mind. The evidence will show Rodney Lincoln is not the man who committed the crime."

**BAUER SAID** Melissa will testify that Lincoln was in their apartment when she and her sister, Rene Tate, now 5, awoke and found their mother lying face down on the floor. She had been stabbed in the chest.

Lincoln took Melissa into her mother's bedroom, disrobed her and then stabbed her 10 times with a steak knife, Bauer said.

Melissa played dead and Lincoln went into the kitchen to clean the knife, Bauer said. Melissa then went back into her bedroom and hid under her sister's bed, Bauer said.

When Lincoln could not find Melissa, he asked Renee where her sister was. When she refused to say, Lincoln stabbed her three times in the neck, Bauer said.

Bauer said that several weeks after the murder Melissa helped a police artist make a composite drawing of the killer.

**AFTER THE** drawing's release, Daniel Clenney, a brother of Mrs. Tate's, identified the suspect as a man he introduced to his sister while playing pool with him at a South St. Louis tavern in the summer of 1981, Bauer said.

Mrs. Tate's other brother, Nathaniel Clenney, and her boyfriend, Gerald R. Woodward Jr., testified that the victim had told them she was afraid of another man who had stayed with her at times the month before her death and that she was afraid of other men in the area.

Clenney and Woodward testified that they found Mrs. Tate's two children in their beds after the slaying.

## News digest

**Vitaly V. Fedorchuk:** 'The organs of internal affairs are being cleansed of people immature in an ideological and moral way.'



## Soviet official demands crackdown on corruption

MOSCOW (AP) — Interior Minister Fedorchuk demanded a tougher crack on corruption and alcoholism Wednesday. Soviet police force was being cleansed and moral misfits.

In a lengthy article in the Communist Pravda, Fedorchuk, who took over from Yuri V. Andropov in May 1982 as interior minister seven months later, criticized police for laxity.

He hinted that some officials have a police cleanup that was presaged in Fedorchuk met top judges and security officials in Moscow.

Fedorchuk reported Wednesday that the organs of internal affairs are being cleansed of strange people, immature in an ideological and moral way.

## Alaska land trade to allow oil base on wildlife refuge

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Interior Department completed a land swap that will allow an oil port, and oil storage facility to be built in a wilderness area off the Alaska coast.

The National Audubon Society and other environmental groups took issue Wednesday, suing Interior Secretary Donald Hodel, contending that the land exchange would destroy one of the largest seabird nesting areas in the world.

Interior Department officials said the decision to allow development on the island, a national wildlife refuge, allowing development of 4,110 acres of land. The department received 14,175 acres of land, mostly on the mainland.

Italy scandal figure