Haunted past finds shooter after friend confesses

MURDER, from Page 1

children from a previous marriage. Both Schlicher's wife and Patton's were at the trial, he said. Schlicher's wife stayed with his parents near Hoxie during the trial.

Helen Patton has since died, and no one here knows where Schlicher's wife and the children live now. Patton and his wife didn't have any children.

Warren said in 1980, Schlicher was living in Pointe-a-La-Hache, La., and worked for Nickels Drilling Co. on oil rig No. 20 in the Gulf of Mexico.

Haunted past

The killer's past finally caught up to him on Feb. 28, 1980, when two Louisiana state police officers, Emile Bourgoyne and Don Connor, showed up at the rig with the outstanding parole violation warrant. Warren said the officers had to fly to the rig in a helicopter.

They told Schlicher he was wanted for skipping his parole, Bourgoyne later testified, but the killer said he knew the real reason he was being arrested.

"No, that's not it," Schlicher reportedly said. "They want me for something that happened 10 years ago. I know what the deal is. It's either my partner copped out on me or this is all

Connor testified that Schlicher made a few incriminating comments, congratulating the officers for finally tracking him down.

"It doesn't seem fair after 10 years, all this time, that I finally get caught," Connor said Schlicher told him. "I don't know how you found me, but you did good. It's just a bunch of hick cops back in Kansas who have been after me for about 10 years."

Schlicher was right about his partner telling on him.

Warren said the murder had haunted Seigrist for a decade, and the man lived in fear that Schlicher would come for him some day. Seigrist finally cracked in early 1980, he said, after he thought Schlicher had showed up at his mother's home.

Warren said Seigrist lived in Wichita, near his mother, and was an informant for the KBI. He said the man kept Doberman pinschers to protect himself.

One day, Warren said, a man rang the doorbell at his mother's home and asked her if she knew where her son was. Because she didn't know the man, he said, she lied and said she had no idea.

But she did know, and she immediately called her son.

"Evidently he looked like Bill," Warren said, "and Marvin Dale (Seigrist) was convinced at the time that he was. He couldn't get to the KBI fast enough to tell them about the murder."

Armstrong and Warren said Seigrist knew things about the killing that had never been in the newspaper. He knew what Patton was wearing, about the beer and soda bottles (the ex-sheriff remembers them as cans), where the body was found, how many shots had been fired and other details.

"I was totally convinced he was there," Armstrong said.

Warren said the visitor turned out to be an off-duty city police officer who was looking for Seigrist because one of his dogs had gotten loose. Still, the KBI had a confession and enough evidence to bring Schlicher and Kauffman in.

"That's how we caught Bill Schlicher," Warren said.

Well, they didn't have him quite yet. Rounding up a murderer

After Seigrist confessed, Armstrong



By Rachel Miscall

The Goodland Daily News William Schlicher, sentenced to life in prison in 1980 for murdering a Goodland gas station attendant in 1970, is up for parole this month and could be released in February.

A clerk for the Kansas Parole Board said Schlicher's hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 16, and if he is granted parole he will be released on Thursday, Feb. 28, the date his sentence began. He is being held under medium security at the Norton Correctional Facility.

The board will consider letters about the crime or criminal at anytime, but the clerk said it's best if he said, it's best if letters arrive at comments are received at least a week before the hearing.

Bill Miskell, spokesman for the state Department of Corrections in the Kansas Parole Board; Landon Topeka, said Schlicher hasn't been "written up" for a rules violation in more than a year and has been punished five times since 1997 for minor, non-violent offenses. Schlicher jumped parole before when he was released from prison in the 1970s for committing burglary in and around Sherman County.

Colene Seidel, parole board administrator, said the board considers seven areas when deciding whether to grant parole including the crime, criminal history, program participa-

said, it was just a matter of finding them back to Goodland. He said they Schlicher and Kauffman and bringing found Schlicher in Louisiana and Louisiana officers that he had never termine whether a killer goes free.

tion, parole plan, disciplinary record, comments from victims and the public and prison capacity. Miskell said Schlicher first saw the board in 1995 and has been denied parole three times, the last time in January 2000.

The month before the hearing, Seidel said, the board holds public sessions to gather comments about the prisoner up for release. The last session was on Friday, but people can still send letters.

The clerk said members review all letters they receive, and will consider any information, even if it comes after the hearing. However, least a week before, which would be next Wednesday, Jan. 9.

Seidel said letters can be mailed to State Office Building; 900 S.W. Jackson Street, Room 452 S; Topeka, KS 66612-1220 or faxed to 785-296-7949. The clerk said letters should include the inmate's name and number. Schlicher's is 24626.

Because he was sentenced to life, Seidel said, Schlicher will probably be supervised by a parole officer for the rest of his life if he is let out. She added that the board has released some sentenced to life from parole, but only if they have exemplary behavior on the outside.

Kauffman in Syracuse, Kan.

While Kauffman was back in Goodland almost immediately, Armstrong said it took longer to get Schlicher here because they had to go through the process of extradition from one state to another.

A newspaper article from March 4, 1980, says Schlicher was being held in a jail in Pointe-A-La-Hache and Kauffman was in the Sherman County Bastille. It said Jack Burr, associate district judge, had issued first-degreemurder warrants for both on March 2 and set bond at \$300,000 each. Court records say both were charged with first degree murder on June 2.

Jerry Fairbanks, now the lawyer for First National Bank, helped Warren with the case. He said Kauffman was never tried because psychiatrists found him incompetent to assist in his own defense.

Warren said when Kauffman, who was originally from Kendall, a small town near Lakin, was younger, he was working in a field one day and watched as his mother and sister were killed by a train.

"It scrambled his brain," he said.

Warren and Armstrong said Schlicher showed signs of mental instability and violence when he was younger.

Warren said the boy, raised north of Hoxie, had been sent to Larned State Hospital because he threatened to kill a banker in Hoxie when he was vounger. The banker had run over mal. Schlicher's dog, he said, so he went into the bank and threatened the man. Records also indicate that Schlicher planted a bomb in a teacher's home when he was in high school.

Goodland and had attended school here, Armstrong said, Schlicher told

been to town. The sheriff said Schlicher appealed his extradition three times, and he made three trips to Louisiana to testify that this was the same Bill Schlicher wanted for Patton's murder.

An article printed on April 16, 1980, said Armstrong had returned from Louisiana without Schlicher.

It said the governor had signed extradition papers, but the parish court would now review the decision and could overrule it. (A "parish" in Louisiana is the same as a county in Kansas.)

The court apparently upheld the warrant, though, because Schlicher was in Goodland when his week-long trial started on Sept. 15, 1980. There were nine women and three men on the jury and Keith Willoughby was the judge.

Murder trial

Warren said it was a challenge to gather evidence because the events happened 10 years before, but it wasn't as hard as he thought it would be.

He said many people who had contact with Schlicher were still living in the area and were willing to testify. They even found the car Schlicher had been driving that night, he said, and it had been protected from the elements in a ravine.

Traces of blood were found in the car, Warren said, but scientists who tested the stain couldn't determine whether it was from a human or an ani-

Warren said it was important for the prosecution to have as much evidence as possible to back up Seigrist's testimony.

"Our witness wasn't the most cred-Though he grew up 60 miles east of ible person in the world," he said.

Friday: Hearing this month will de-

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