

DEBORAH B. SYKES MURDER INVESTIGATION TIMELINE

Updated 08-24-2006

09-17-83 2:30 a.m.	Arthur Wilson reported murdered in the 1700 block of N. Claremont Ave. Case Detective was M. W. Wilkins. Complaint Report # 358533
12-06-83	The Arthur Wilson homicide investigation was closed inactive by Detective M. W. Wilkins pending any further investigative leads. There were no suspects developed.
06-14-84 3:31 a.m.	Linda E., white female, reported she was raped in the 500 block of West Fifth St. by a black male about 25 years old, 5'3" to 5'4" tall, slender build, wearing a large silver ring. Complaint Report # 435452 (Time frame of crime is from 06-13-1984 at 9:00 p.m. through 6-14-1984 at 3:31 a.m.)
06-15-84	Linda E.'s case was referred to the Criminal Investigations Division. Case was assigned to Detective T. H. Hicks.
08-10-84 6:53 a.m.	911 Call Caller identified himself as Sammy Mitchell and reported an attack on a female near the downtown fire station and Crystal Towers. Police Communications dispatched officers to Claremont and I-40 area. Officers did not find anything at that location. Caller Sammy Mitchell is later identified as Johnny Gray. Deborah Sykes was murdered.
08-10-84 11:12 a.m.	Fred Flagler, managing editor of the Winston-Salem Sentinel, reported concerns that Ms. Sykes had not reported to work.
08-10-84 12:00 Noon	Lieutenant Raker directed Detective J. I. Daulton to contact Mr. Flagler because Ms. Sykes had not reported to work.

* denotes updated item

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08-10-84 1:55 p.m.	<p>Body of Deborah Sykes was located in the 00 block of West End Boulevard.</p> <p>Body located by Brian Keith Watts, black male, birth date 08-08-59, of 1616 Attucks St. He reported this discovery to Detective Daulton who was in the area to start an investigation into Sykes' absence.</p>
08-10-84	<p>Thomas Murphy told police he saw Ms. Sykes before her death on the morning of 08-10-84 with 2 black men, one with arm around her neck.</p>
08-10-84 4:00 p.m.	<p>William Hooper came to 00 block of West End Boulevard to report he saw two black males with a white female in the 00 block of West End at 06:20 hours. He reported one of the black males kissed her on the lips. He reported this to Detective D. J. Ingram.</p>
08-10-84 7:15 p.m.	<p>Bobby Upchurch told Detective Miller that he and a friend, Ralph Nash, observed a black male throw a white person to the ground at 06:15 hours. They saw the black male straddle the white person near a fence on West End near Seventh St.</p>
08-10-84 During the Evening	<p>Police first contact with Darryl Hunt relative to the Sykes murder investigation.</p> <p>Detectives R. C. Patterson and T. V. Bowen spoke with Hunt. Hunt indicated Sammy Mitchell did not report crime to police and that Mitchell was with him.</p>
* 08-15-84	<p>Officer A. T. Stover authorized the destruction of the clothing in the Linda E. case.</p>

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08-22-84 1:49 p.m.	<p>Johnny Gray reported to Corporal Archer that he observed the murder suspect board the bus. The suspect was Terry Thomas.</p> <p>Officer M. Jenkins arrested Terry Thomas for Possession of Marijuana.</p> <p>Thomas was transported to the Detective Division to be interviewed by Detective Daulton relative to the Sykes case.</p> <p>Johnny Gray came to the Detective Division and identified Terry Thomas as the murderer of Sykes.</p> <p>Thomas stated he was in jail on 08-10-84. Detectives confirm Thomas was in fact in jail.</p>
08-22-84 4:00 p.m.	<p>Detective Daulton interviewed Johnny Gray. Gray stated he called the police to report the black male assaulting Ms. Sykes. Gray was given a polygraph which indicated he did witness the murder.</p>
08-22-84	<p>Johnny Gray received the first of eight payments, from police totaling \$355. Payments ended on 08-19-85.</p>
08-24-84 1:30 p.m.	<p>Detective Daulton spoke with Dr. Mark Nelson, of the State Bureau of Investigation Laboratory, who told him the sperm collected from the area of Ms. Sykes' vagina was analyzed. The blood group type for the sperm was Type "O" secretor.</p>
08-28-84 9:00 a.m.	<p>Thomas Murphy contacted Detective Daulton and told him he saw the same black male suspect today at Sixth and Spruce St. at 06:30 a.m. as he did the morning of the Sykes homicide.</p>
08-29-84 10:00 a.m.	<p>Detective Daulton spoke to Darryl Hunt regarding the Sykes case. Hunt told him on 08-10-84 that he was with two women, Mary McKee and Cynthia McKee at 1905 Dunleith Avenue until 10:30 a.m.</p>

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08-29-84 11:00 a.m.	Detective Daulton interviewed Sammy Mitchell relative to the Sykes Case. Mitchell stated he was with Darryl Hunt, Mary McKee, Cynthia McKee and Angel (last name unknown) at 1905 Dunleith Avenue until 10:00 a.m. on 08-11-84. (Daulton's report indicates 08-11-84.)
08-30-84 10:30 a.m.	Brenda Morino told Detective Daulton, relative to the Sykes case, that she was with Darryl Hunt and Sammy Mitchell at the Motel 6 on 08-09-84 and 08-10-84.
* 09-05-84	The rape kit in the Linda E. case was destroyed.
09-06-84 3:00 p.m.	Detective Daulton confirmed Brenda Morino was, in fact, Margaret Marie Crawford, a runaway from Eden with two outstanding Secure Custody Orders.
* 09-08-84	The clothing in the Linda E. case was destroyed.
09-08-84 11:46 p.m.	<p>Darryl Hunt shot Dennis Speaks in the upper thigh because Speaks called Hunt the "Twin City Rapist". Speaks did not want to prosecute.</p> <p>At the scene, Hunt and Sammy Mitchell were both arrested for Disorderly Conduct and Resisting Arrest. The trial date set for both is 09-13-84.</p>
09-09-84 9:50 p.m.	<p>Dennis Speaks approached Officer R. T. Masten and stated he wanted to prosecute Darryl Hunt and Sammy Mitchell for the shooting that occurred on 09-08-84.</p> <p>Officer Masten assisted Speaks in obtaining Summonses against Hunt and Mitchell and served both papers on them. Trial date set for 09-24-84.</p>

* denotes updated item

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09-11-84 4:00 p.m.	<p>Detective Daulton interviewed Margaret Crawford regarding the Sykes Case. Crawford stated that on the night of 08-09-84 and the morning of 08-10-84, she spent the night with Darryl Hunt and Sammy Mitchell at the Motel 6.</p> <p>Crawford went on to say that Hunt left at 6 a.m. for about 3-1/2 hours, returning at 09:30 a.m., nervous with dirt and grass stains on the knees of his pants.</p> <p>Crawford also stated Hunt told her Mitchell killed and raped Sykes.</p>
09-11-84 7:00 p.m.	<p>Detective Daulton obtained a warrant against Darryl Hunt for Indecent Liberties with a Minor and arrested him the same night.</p> <p>Indecent Liberties with Minor referred to the sexual relationship with Margaret Crawford, age 15.</p>
09-11-84	<p>After Hunt was arrested for Indecent Liberties, Detective Daulton interviewed him about the Sykes murder. Hunt stated that on 08-09-84 and the morning of 08-10-84, he was with Margaret Crawford until 09:30 a.m. at the Motel. They left together and met Sammy Mitchell, at which point they got drunk together for the day.</p>
09-12-84 before 11:00 a.m.	<p>Darryl Hunt took a polygraph regarding the Sykes case.</p> <p>The results showed he was inconclusive to two questions. He was inconclusive on, "Did he know who killed Ms. Sykes?" And the other question was pertaining to the knife.</p>
09-12-84 11:00 a.m.	<p>Detective Daulton re-interviewed Darryl Hunt again referencing the Sykes case. Hunt had no new information.</p>

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09-12-84 2:15 p.m.	Detective Daulton, Sgt. F. E. Mason, and Darryl Hunt met with District Attorney Don Tisdale in Tisdale's office about the Sykes case. Hunt waived his right to council at this time. Records are unclear regarding what happened during this meeting, but after this meeting, Hunt appeared in a line-up.
09-12-84 4:00 p.m.	Hunt was in an in-person line-up in the Forsyth County Jail. It was a five person line-up. Thomas Murphy viewed the line-up and identified Darryl Hunt as the black male who had his arm around Sykes' head.
* 09-13-84 12:45 p.m.	<p>Hunt attempted to contact his attorney, Kenneth Babb, before the line-up. Hunt could not reach his attorney, then he agreed to be in the line-up without his attorney.</p> <p>Hunt appeared in another in-person line-up. It was a six person line-up for the Sykes Case.</p> <p>William Hooper viewed the line-up, but he could not identify anyone in it.</p> <p>Johnny Gray viewed the line-up, and he identified Darryl Hunt.</p> <p>Johnny Gray wrote 1 . 4 referring to the line-up identification.</p>
09-13-84 5:30 p.m.	Detective Daulton initiated a report of Indecent Liberties with a Minor, Complaint Report # 457996. The report was based on Margaret Crawford stating she engaged in sexual activity with Darryl Hunt. Crawford was 15, and Hunt was 21.
09-14-84	Darryl Hunt is charged with the Murder of Deborah Sykes.

* denotes updated item

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09-18-84	Detective Daulton had a telephone conversation with Roger Weaver and Danny Holt, both employees of the Hyatt House. Both stated they identified Hunt from a newspaper's photograph as the person they asked to leave the Hyatt House on 08-10-84 at 7:00 a.m. Weaver also noticed pink-colored water spots in the bathroom sink after Hunt used the bathroom. The trash also had some paper towels that appeared to have blood on them.
10-16-84	Although a rape kit was collected as it relates to Linda E., none of Detective Hicks' reports indicated any results. Hicks closed the Linda E. rape case as Inactive. Hicks documented that the victim left town and was unable to be located.
10-29-84 10:30 p.m.	Detective Daulton interviewed James Combs, a security guard for the City of Winston-Salem parking deck next to the Hyatt House. Combs told him he observed two black males in the deck drinking beer on 08-10-84 at about 12:15 a.m. Combs also stated Roger Weaver, desk clerk at the Hyatt House, saw a photo of Darryl Hunt in the newspaper after he was charged with the murder. Combs further stated Weaver saw Hunt in the Hyatt the same morning Sykes was killed.
11-19-84	State Bureau of Investigation report stated Darryl Hunt's blood was type "B" secretor.
01-01-85 8:45 a.m.	Kathleen D, white female, reported she was raped at 155 N. Hawthorne Rd. by a black male, 19 years old (approximate), 5'3" to 5'5" tall, very thin build. Complaint Report # 435452 (Time frame of crime occurred at 01-01-85 at 0800 hours.)

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* 01-02-85	<p>A white female reported she was approached by a black male in the Food Fair grocery store on W. 1st St. on 12-30-84, and he asked her about plumbing.</p> <p>The black male was described as being 5'3" to 5'5" tall, light-skinned with dark spots on his face and wearing a large silver ring on his left hand.</p> <p>This was documented by Officer M. G. Kirkman on 01-02-85 in the Kathleen D. case.</p>
01-02-85	<p>Kathleen D. case was referred to the Criminal Investigations Division.</p> <p>Case was assigned to Detective T. H. Hicks.</p>
01-31-85	<p>Detective Hicks closed the Kathleen D. case Inactive, due to the lack of investigative leads.</p>
* 02-02-85 7:50 a.m.	<p>Regina K. was kidnapped from the Integon parking lot at Fifth and Poplar Streets and forced to drive to the 2500 block of Old Greensboro Rd., and was then raped.</p> <p>Regina K. completed a composite of her attacker. Composite was constructed by Identification Technician K. R. Hutchens.</p> <p>Complaint Report # 507249.</p>
02-02-85 9:30 a.m.	<p>The Regina K. case was a Criminal Investigation Division call-out. Case assigned to Detective W. G. Miller.</p>
02-12-85 2:00 p.m.	<p>Detective Daulton went to 1905 Dunleith Avenue and spoke to Cynthia and Mary McKee referencing the Sykes case. They both stated Darryl Hunt and Sammy Mitchell were at this residence the night of 08-09-04 and the morning of 08-10-84. They declined a written statement.</p>

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02-15-85 2:30 p.m.	Detective Daulton goes to Raleigh Central Prison where a Search Warrant was served on Sammy Mitchell for blood and saliva samples for the Sykes case. The samples were then delivered to the State Bureau of Investigation Laboratory. Mitchell was in prison from 01-16-85 until 04-01-85 for Resisting an Officer.
03-11-85	State Bureau of Investigation report stated Sammy Mitchell's blood was type "A" secretor.
03-12-85	Johnny Gray arrested for the Common Law Robbery of Robert Lathan Davis that occurred on 02-05-85. Complaint Report # 508121.
05-14-85	Detective Hicks conducted additional investigative follow-up on the Kathleen D. case and documented it in a supplement report. Detective Hicks showed Kathleen D. composite of Regina K.'s attacker. Kathleen D. did not identify the sketch. Detective Hicks closed the case Inactive, again stating there were no investigative leads. Evidence collected in this case has since been destroyed.
05-13-85 3:30p.m.	Darryl Hunt was in a six person line-up at the Forsyth County Jail reference the Sykes case. Mr. Weaver viewed the line-up and identified Darryl Hunt as the person he saw in the Hyatt House on 08-10-84 at 07:00 a.m.
05-15-85	Regina K. case reassigned to Detective W. C. Crump.

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05-23-85	<p>Detective Miller had given a photograph of Williard Brown to Detective Crump reference the Regina K. case.</p> <p>Detective Crump created a photo line-up to include Brown to show Regina K.</p> <p>Report gave no explanation as to how Brown became a suspect.</p> <p>Regina K. identified Brown as possible suspect.</p> <p>Detective Crump was unable to locate Brown.</p>
* 05-25-85	<p>Detective Crump documented in a supplement report for the Regina K. case dated 06-03-85 that the SBI lab report found no evidence from the suspect.</p>
05-28-85	<p>Darryl Hunt went on trial for the Sykes Murder.</p>
* 06-03-85	<p>Detective Crump's supplement report for the Regina K. case documented the SBI lab did not find any evidence of sperm or seminal fluid on Regina K. or her belongings.</p>
06-12-85	<p>Johnny Gray's \$50,000 bond for Common Law Robbery was reduced to \$5,000 unsecured and he was released from jail.</p>
06-14-85	<p>Darryl Hunt convicted of First Degree Murder of Deborah Sykes; appealed.</p>
08-12-85	<p>Reverend Leonard V. Lassiter submitted a letter to Alderman Vivian Burke that listed numerous concerns with the Police Department's handling of the Sykes murder investigation.</p>
08-15-85	<p>A second composite was made of suspect in the Regina K. case.</p> <p>* Composite was constructed by Identification Technician M. T. Rumble</p>
09-85	<p>Common Law Robbery charge against Johnny Gray was voluntarily dismissed.</p>

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11-20-85	City Manager's report was released.
* 12-10-85	The Winston-Salem Police Department began an internal investigation into the Police Department's handling of the Deborah Sykes' murder investigation.
01-03-86	Detective W. C. Crump began a review and conducted additional investigation into the Sykes' murder. Detective Crump wrote a supplemental report dated 01-10-85. It appeared he used 1985 repeatedly in report, when he must have meant 1986.
01-06-86	Detective J. K. Dorn reopened Arthur Wilson Case and developed Sammy Lee Mitchell as suspect.
02-03-86	Detective Crump closed the Regina K. case as Inactive. He stated he has been unable to locate Williard Brown. Brown is currently wanted on an outstanding Housebreaking and Larceny Warrant.
* 02-13-86	The Winston-Salem Police Department completed the internal investigation.
02-18-86	Regina K. case re-opened by Detective Crump because a possible suspect, Darrell Sturdivant was arrested on other charges. Regina K. was unable to identify Sturdivant as her attacker.
02-19-86	Detective Crump interviewed Margaret Marie Crawford. Ms. Crawford gave new account of events in the Sykes Case on 08-10-84 during the morning hours. Ms. Crawford stated she returned to Motel 6 around 05:45 a.m. on 08-10-84, went to sleep, and did not wake until "All My Children" was on television. Ms. Crawford stated she saw Darryl Hunt at 11:30 p.m. - 12:00 midnight on 08-10-04.

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02-27-86	<p>Detective Crump interviews Detective T. H. Hicks regarding the Sykes case. Detective Hicks stated she was called to the Syke's murder scene on 08-10-84 because she was investigating a rape, which occurred in the same general area several months earlier.</p> <p>Detective Weavil interviewed Detective T. V. Bowen and documented in a supplement report dated 03-05-86, that Bowen met with Darryl Hunt on 08-10-84 during the evening and that Darryl Hunt identified himself as Sammy Mitchell's brother.</p>
03-10-86	<p>Detective Crump closed the Regina K. case as Inactive. Sturdivant refused to be interviewed and Williard Brown still had not been located.</p>
03-12-86	<p>Detective Crump documented in a supplement report to the Sykes homicide, dated 03-18-86, that Williard Brown had been arrested on unrelated charges. Detective Crump interviewed Williard Brown in reference to the Sykes case. Brown denied involvement in this case and other cases. Crump did not document what the other cases were. Crump told Brown his name came up as a result of a Crimestoppers tip.</p>
04-01-86	<p>Williard Brown was in jail.</p> <p>Detective Crump conducted an in-person line-up in the jail in which Williard Brown is included.</p> <p>Regina K. identified Williard Brown as her attacker.</p>
04-08-86	<p>Merrit Drayton, who was in the Forsyth County Jail, told Sergeant Thomas Spillman of the Forsyth County Sheriff's Department he knew two people that "stomped" a man to death. Drayton was referring to the Wilson homicide.</p>

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04-09-86	Detective T. H. Hicks documented in a supplement report, dated 04-23-86, that Merritt Drayton saw Sammy Mitchell and Darryl Hunt beat a man with a stick (an axe handle).
04-11-86	First supplement report that indicated the Arthur Wilson Case was assigned to Detective T. H. Hicks. No supplement report was written to indicate when or why case was reassigned to Hicks.
04-15-86 8:50 a.m.	In a supplement report written by Detective T.H. Hicks dated 04-23-86, she documented that Mattie Davis, identified both Sammy Mitchell and Darryl Hunt as being involved with the assault on Arthur Wilson. Detective Hicks also documented that Patricia Williams identified Sammy Mitchell and Darryl Hunt as assaulting Arthur Wilson. Williams was unable to identify Merritt Drayton or the victim, Arthur Wilson. Detective Hicks showed Jerry Lee Roan, a witness, line-ups of Mitchell, Hunt, and Drayton and he stated all three were at the Ezell Clowers' drink house at 1816 N. Claremont Ave. on 09-17-83.
04-15-86 9:12 p.m.	Detective R. C. Spoon documented in a supplemental report dated 04-17-86 that Ezell Clowers identified Sammy Mitchell and Darryl Hunt as leaving the drink house shortly after Arthur Wilson.
04-15-86 10:25 p.m.	Detective R. A. Spillman documented in a supplement report dated 04-16-86 that Milton Peoples identified Sammy Mitchell and Darryl Hunt as being at the location of the Wilson homicide on 09-17-83. Peoples also identified Merrit Drayton as being at the same location.

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04-17-86 17:30 p.m.	Detective T. H. Hicks went to the Clerk's Office and obtained First Degree Murder warrants against Merrit Drayton, Sammy Mitchell and Darryl Hunt for the murder of Arthur Wilson.
04-18-86	Merritt Drayton, who was already in custody in the Forsyth County Jail for Involuntary Manslaughter, was served with a warrant for First Degree Murder of Arthur Wilson. Sammy Mitchell was arrested for the murder of Arthur Wilson.
04-22-86	Darryl Hunt, already in prison, returned to Forsyth County Jail to be served a warrant for First Degree Murder of Arthur Wilson.
04-24-86	Detective Crump obtained a search warrant for the person of Williard Brown for the Regina K. Case investigation. Search warrant was served on this date. Samples were collected, and then placed into property control. Evidence was then sent to the State Bureau of Investigation Laboratory.
05-19-86	Detective Crump received the State Bureau of Investigation report of samples sent. SBI report stated Williard Brown's blood type was "O" secretor. These results were for the Regina K. case.
* 05-20-86	Regina K. told Detective Crump she recognized the suspect's voice. Detective Crump asked Regina K. to write down all of the quotes she remembered so a voice identification test could be made with Williard Brown. Detective Crump documented this in a supplement report for Regina K. on 06-10-86.

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* 05-22-86	In a supplement report written by Detective Crump, dated 06-03-86, he documented an interview with Kevey Coleman on 05-22-86. Coleman was developed as a witness as a result of a CrimeStoppers call.
* 07-02-86	Detective Crump met with Winston-Salem Police Department Public Safety Attorney Claire McNaught to review the Regina K. case. As a result of this meeting, voice identification was not done. Detective Crump documented this in a supplement report for Regina K. on 07-08-06.
01-22-87	State Bureau of Investigation Laboratory Report of samples collected in the Regina K. case did not reveal any transfer of hair from suspect to Regina K.
02-12-87	Detective Crump went to Wilkes County Prison Unit to interview Williard Brown in reference to the Regina K. case. Brown raised his right to an attorney. Detective Crump did not conduct an interview.
05-04-87	Regina K. contacted Detective Crump and told him she did not wish to prosecute the suspect solely on her testimony with no other physical evidence.
05-05-87	Detective Crump closed the Regina K. case, "Exceptionally Cleared".
10-87	Hunt convicted of Second Degree Murder of Arthur Wilson; appealed.
10-18-88	N.C. Court of Appeals ordered a new trial for Hunt, convicted of Second-degree murder of Arthur Wilson (<u>State v. Hunt</u> , 372 S.E.2d 744)

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05-04-89	<p>Supreme Court of North Carolina ordered a new trial for Hunt, convicted of first-degree murder (based on felony murder doctrine) of Deborah Sykes (<u>State v. Hunt</u>, 378 S.E.2d 754) because of an error in jury instructions.</p> <p>Basis for reversal was that the trial court improperly admitted unsworn prior statements by Marie Crawford for impeachment purposes when such statements were more prejudicial than they were probative.</p>
11-22-89 approximately 4:49 p.m.	<p>Darryl Hunt was released from custody after National Council of Churches paid the \$50,000 bond.</p> <p>Source: Case Report # 449402, supplemental report of Detective Nifong, dated 12-04-89.</p>
* 01-16-90	<p>Sammy Mitchell was served with a Grand Jury Bill of Indictment for the murder of Deborah Sykes.</p>
03-90	<p>Hunt acquitted in second trial re: Murder of Arthur Wilson.</p>
10-90	<p>Hunt was again convicted of first-degree murder (felony murder doctrine) of Sykes; Hunt appealed.</p>
1990-1994	<p>With the appeal pending, Hunt filed two motions for appropriate relief. The motions for appropriate relief were for new trials based on alleged <u>Brady</u> violations and newly discovered DNA evidence.</p> <p>The trial court heard both motions and denied them. The Supreme Court of N.C. upheld the trial court's denial of both motions (orders entered by Judge Morgan on August 12 and November 10, 1994) in its opinion on Hunt's second appeal. Citation (<u>State v Hunt</u>, 457 S.E. 2d 276)</p>
12-30-94 and 3-2-95	<p>Supreme Court of N.C. upheld Hunt's conviction at second trial (<u>State v. Hunt</u>, 457 S.E. 2d 276)</p>

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02-25-00	Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the federal district court's dismissal of Hunt's federal habeas corpus petition (in which Hunt argued his actual innocence based on DNA evidence and <u>Brady</u> violations for failure to disclose exculpatory and impeachment evidence).
10-16-00	U.S. Supreme Court denied Hunt's petition to review the 4 th Circuit's decision.
12-03 – 01-04	Advances in DNA and subsequent investigation identified Williard Brown as the rapist of Ms. Sykes. Darryl Hunt exonerated and pardoned.

Special Note:

The State of North Carolina issued a Certificate of Parole for Williard Brown on 06-11-84.

Williard Brown's "Inmate Summary Record", reflects he was released from prison on 06-14-84 at 12:43 a.m. from Forsyth Correctional Center. This date and time may not accurately reflect his actual release date and time.

There are no records or documents available from the Department of Corrections to determine when Williard Brown was released from prison as it relates to the 06-11-84 Certificate of Parole.