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Security is tight as former Boy Scout leader Jack Walls III leaves the Lonoke County Courthouse on Tuesday after pleading innocent to charges that he sexually assaulted six boys. At least six death threats have been made against Walls, authorities said.

## Ex-Scout leader pleads innocent of sexual assault

BY SANDY DAVIS  
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

LONOKE — Former Boy Scout leader Charles "Jack" Walls III pleaded innocent Tuesday to charges that he sexually assaulted six boys and solicited someone to kill a father and son.

Clad in a leather jacket and slacks, Walls stood stoically next to his attorney, Hubert Alexander of Jacksonville. Walls wore a bullet-resistant vest, as did officers protecting him.

"We've had at least six death threats against Walls," Lonoke County Sheriff Charlie Martin said. "I asked for officers from some of the surrounding towns as well as the state police to help with security today."

"There's a lot of people upset with Jack [Walls] right now. I kind of expected something would happen, but I was real relieved when it didn't."

Most spectators in the packed courtroom of Circuit-Chancery Judge Lance Hanshaw wore yellow ribbons on their collars or jackets.

"We're wearing these to show support for the families and their victims," one woman said, who asked not to be named.

"I live near Jack. I have a young

son, and I know my son went over to Jack's house when he was looking for something to do or some kids to play with," the woman said. "I've talked to my son. Really, he was too young to have been a victim, but I wanted to make sure. This whole thing has shocked everybody in this town. We all thought Jack was such a nice guy. Now, we're all here wearing these ribbons to let the families know we're behind them."

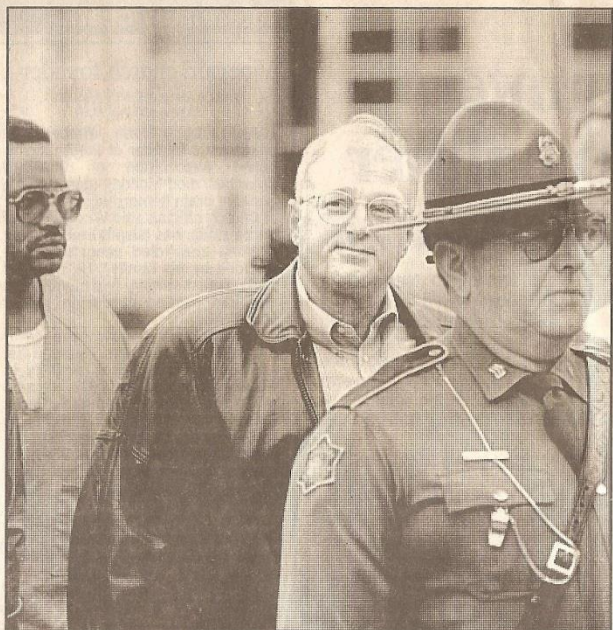
Conspicuously missing from a courtroom wall was a portrait of Walls' father, Charles Walls Jr., a former Lonoke County circuit-chancery judge.

"I don't know what happened to the picture," Jeannie Pack, administrative assistant to Hanshaw said. "It was here and now it's gone. I don't know what happened to it. I've asked the other case coordinator and she doesn't know. We haven't seen it."

Hanshaw was on the bench for other plea and arraignment hearings and was unavailable for comment.

After the brief hearing, Walls was handcuffed and, surrounded by officers, returned to the Lonoke County jail, where he is held in lieu of a \$1 million bond.

Alexander said he planned to See **WALLS**, Page 5B



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Former Boy Scout leader Jack Walls III of Lonoke (second from right) and other inmates are surrounded by law enforcement officers as they walk from the Lonoke County jail to the courthouse Tuesday.

## Walls

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file a motion for bond reduction this week. Special Prosecuting Attorney Betty Dickey said she will strongly oppose it.

"We'll have to have a hearing for that," she said. "I plan to put on some witnesses to show why Jack Walls should not be on the streets."

All of Walls' alleged sexual assault victims are under age 14 and identified as "John Doe." In addition to the six sexual-assault charges, he faces two counts of violation of a minor in the first degree and solicitation to commit murder in the first degree. He pleaded innocent to two sexual-assault charges last month, but those were amended by Dickey and included in Tuesday's charges.

According to affidavits, the two counts of violation of a minor in the first degree were filed because Walls is accused of continuing to have sex with two of the boys after they passed age 14.

Walls also is accused of soliciting someone to murder Clevis and Doug Hogan, a father and son who went to authorities in 1992 and 1993 after Doug Hogan, then 16 years old, accused Walls of soliciting sex from him during a Dec. 29, 1992, Boy Scout

outing on Walls' farm.

Walls was an assistant leader for Troop 103 in Lonoke and an adult volunteer in the Order of the Arrow, an honorary scouting group, until he was ejected from the Boy Scouts by the area council in January 1993. That action came after the Hogans told Boy Scout authorities of the alleged incident on Walls' farm.

Downstairs from the courtroom Tuesday, more people gathered, wearing yellow ribbons. Many said they tried to get into the courtroom but were told it was full.

"I took off from work to be here," said one woman, also on condition of anonymity. "This could have happened to anyone's children. I want these kids to know we're behind them."

Charles Knox of Lonoke said, "These ribbons are helping the victims. They know they're being supported by the community, and now maybe they'll be able to heal."

John Scheel of Beebe wore a ribbon on the lapel of his suit coat.

"My family is involved in this," he said without naming the victim. "It's so sad. This has been hurtful to everyone. I just don't know how this kind of secret was hidden for so long. I don't think anyone suspected this. I really don't."

Scheel said the victim he knew

was "in trouble."

"We have no way of knowing whether this has anything to do with his troubles or not," Scheel said. "But he's very much a troubled youth. He's in a whole lot of trouble."

Dickey, appointed by Hanshaw to replace Prosecuting Attorney Larry Cook of Cabot, said she expected more charges. Cook refused to avoid the "appearance of impropriety," saying he had practiced law before Walls' father.

"I anticipate filing more charges," Dickey said outside the courtroom. "There are more victims."

She said she was reluctant to talk about a plea bargain.

"A plea bargain is always an option, especially in a [sexual assault] case. You don't want to revictimize the victims. They've been through enough. I'm not saying we've been talking about a plea or not. It's just there. Right now we're planning to go to trial with this," she said.

Hanshaw set the trial date on the first two sexual assault cases for Feb. 3-5. Trial on the second two counts of sexual assault, the two counts of violation of a minor in the first degree and the two counts of solicitation to commit first-degree murder for Feb. 25-27. Trial on the last two counts of sexual assault is set for April 1-2.