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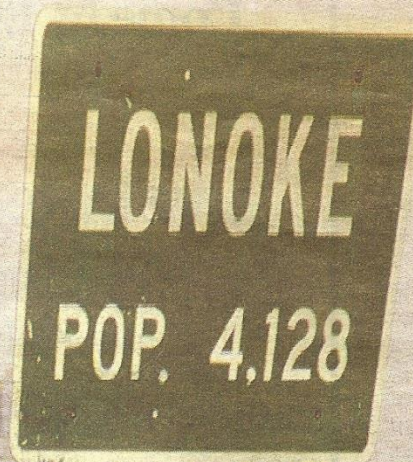
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## Nightmare *on the Prairie*

**The Boy Scout link  
in Lonoke molestations  
and murders.**

By Michael Haddigan  
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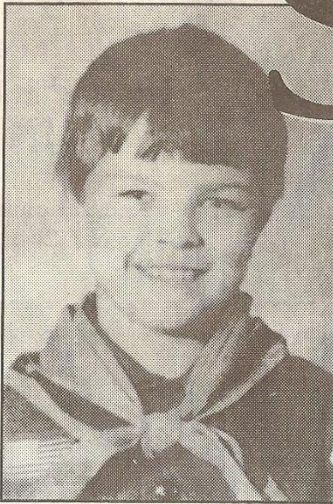
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# Scout's Honor

## Murders and molestation: Ex-Scout leader could link Lonoke's nightmares.

COVER STORY • BY MICHAEL HADDIGAN

**LIFE IN UNIFORM:** Heath Stocks, shown here in his Cub Scout uniform, says a former Lonoke Scout leader charged with sexually molesting at least four boys also molested him. Stocks is serving three life terms for the murders last year of his father, mother and sister.



■ LONOKE — When a politically connected Boy Scout leader was charged with molesting boys in his troop and trying to arrange a murder plot, residents in the quiet Grand Prairie town of Lonoke reacted with stunned surprise and anger.

A little more than a year earlier, they had similar reactions when college student Heath Stocks fatally shot his father, mother and 18-year-old sister.

Now, both cases have taken a disturbing turn.

Stocks, 20, who is serving a life sentence for the murder of his family, alleged in a recent prison interview with the *Arkansas Times* that the Scout leader, Charles A. Walls III, molested him while he was in Walls' Scout troop.

"Everybody trusted him," Stocks said of Walls. "Everybody trusted him, everybody in Lonoke. They trusted him with their kids."

Walls, the son of a respected former circuit and chancery judge, is charged with sexually molesting at least four boys, none of whom has been identified in court records. Walls is being held in lieu of \$1 million bond.

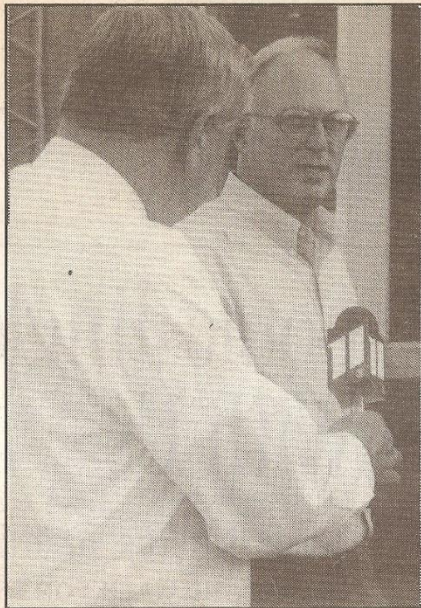
He faces four counts of rape, two counts of violation of a minor and two counts of solicitation to commit murder. Authorities say Walls tried to arrange the murders of a Scout, Doug Hogan, and the boy's father, Cledis. The younger Hogan had earlier accused Walls of trying to molest him during a 1992 campout, a charge that ended in acquittal.

To control pre-trial publicity, Circuit Judge Lance L. Hanshaw has issued a gag order in the case and has sealed many of the documents in Walls' criminal court file, which refer to the alleged victims as John Doe 1 through 4.

Cledis Hogan said this week that Heath Stocks told him in a letter that Walls had asked Stocks and others to hurt Hogan and his son.

During the hour-long interview at the Cummins Unit of the state Correction Department, Stocks reluctantly replied to questions about Walls, often with one- or two-word answers.

Dressed in a white prison jumpsuit and



COURTESY CABOT STAR-HERALD/LONOKE DEMOCRAT

**ACCUSED:** Former Scout leader Jack Walls denied charges he tried to molest a Scout during a 1992 campout. But he wrote a letter of apology to the boy's father days after the campout.

brown chukka boots, Stocks sat handcuffed throughout the interview in a conference room.

Speaking quietly in a trembling voice, Stocks at times seemed on the verge of emo-

tional collapse.

"Everybody out there thinks I'm a bad person. Nobody knew the truth," he said.

Stocks said he joined the Cub Scouts in elementary school and stayed with the program until he was an 18-year-old Eagle Scout. Walls was the assistant scout leader of Troop 103, which usually had 15 to 20 members from year to year, he said.

"A lot of fathers worked a lot and didn't have time to spend with their kids, teaching them to shoot guns or spending time with them in the outdoors," he said. "But Jack did."

Asked if Walls had sexually molested him, Stocks hung his head and answered quietly, "Yes."

Asked if he reported the incident, he said, "No. I couldn't."

Stocks said he suffered emotional problems after the alleged abuse.

Stocks said he believed Walls' prominence shielded him for years from scrutiny.

"It's a dirty system in Lonoke. I'm just hoping that this will all come out now," he said.

Did the emotional problems play a part in the murders of his father, mother and sister? Stocks swallowed hard.

"I'll wait on that one," he replied.

Citing the gag order, Stocks declined to answer further questions on the topic.

It remains unclear if Stocks is one of the John Does mentioned in the charges against Walls. Stocks' grandparents have attended court hearings on the Walls case, but both grandmothers declined to discuss the case with the *Times*.

Stocks would not talk directly about his family's deaths.

"I never meant for anything to happen," he said shakily. "That wasn't me that did it."

■ Cummins prison is about an hour's drive from Lonoke, but it is a world away from the town where Stocks grew up.

Named for a landmark lone red oak tree on the Grand Prairie, Lonoke was first settled when the railroad from Memphis pushed through to Little Rock in the the mid-19th Century.

During World War I, Lonoke was the second largest U.S. aviation training base. And it was the hometown of former U.S. senator and vice presidential candidate Joe T. Robinson.

With a population of 4,000, Lonoke is also home to the world's largest minnow farm and the nation's oldest warm water fish hatchery. Agriculture and bait fish farming are at the root of the city's economy.

**If rural Lonoke County had a social register, the Walls family would likely be on it. For generations, the Walls family "drew a pretty big bucket of water" around Lonoke, Finch said.**

These days Lonoke is perhaps better known as the hometown of Paula Corbin Jones, the former state employee who is suing President Clinton.

"We went for 100 years without anyone in Arkansas even knowing where Lonoke is, except for knowing about Joe T.," said Bennie Finch, lifelong resident and sergeant-at-arms for the state Senate. "Now, Lonoke's in the news all the time."

The town, Finch said, is divided over the Walls case.

"Everybody kind of tiptoes around it," he said. "There's some hard feelings, some awfully hard feelings."

Some residents say they fear Walls could escape full prosecution because of his family connections. The prominence of the Walls family has already had some effect on the

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case. Prosecutor Larry K. Cook disqualified himself to avoid the appearance of conflict. Prosecutor Betty C. Dickey of Pine Bluff, who covers a neighboring judicial district, has taken over as prosecutor.

Dickey declined to discuss the case. Walls' attorney, Hubert Alexander of Jacksonville, did not return phone calls from the *Times*.

Stocks' parents, Joe and Barbara, went to Lonoke High School together. Barbara was a majorette and was voted the year's most beautiful graduate. Joe, 46 when he died, was a truck driver, and Barbara, 43 when she died, worked in the high school's computer lab.

Growing up a few miles down the road from Lonoke, in the Furlow community, Heath Stocks said, he had few friends, but had loads of trouble at home.

"Me and my dad didn't get along. He used to beat me a lot. I guess it was an outlet for his anger and depression," the younger Stocks said. "Mom and Heather didn't get beat. I was sort of the man of the house so I caught it all."

Nita Colclasure, whose daughter Heath Stocks once dated, said the boy confided in her frequently, even after he stopped seeing her daughter. She said residents knew Heath's father as a man with an explosive temper. "Big Bad Joe" is what some people called him.

"He was inclined to be moody, all right," Finch said.

Colclasure recalled that Joe Stocks stormed out of a school function in anger when he learned his daughter had only placed second in competition for the school's yearbook queen, the honor her mother had won years earlier.

"His children had to be perfect," said Colclasure.

Heath's relationship with his father was so strained that Heather Stocks, the popular captain of the Lonoke High cheerleading squad, became active in a youth suicide prevention program, out of fear her brother would take his own life, Colclasure said.

As the father-son relationship crumbled, Heath Stocks began spending more and more time with Walls, she said.

"Heath was over there all the time," Colclasure said.

Stocks has also told her that Walls molested him, Colclasure said.

■ If rural Lonoke County had a social register, the Walls family would likely be on it. For generations, the Walls family "drew a pretty big bucket of water" around Lonoke, Finch said.

Circuit Judge C.A. Walls Jr., himself the son of a prominent lawyer, cut a powerful figure, on and off the bench. He was a Sunday school teacher and a school board member. And the judge owned prime duck-hunting land on a nearby bayou and frequently hosted important political figures, Finch said.

"He stood pretty tall around here," Finch said.

His son, Jack, wasn't as prominent politically or socially, but he was friendly with

many Lonoke families. A supervisor at the Remington Arms plant near Lonoke, the younger Walls was known as an outdoorsman and a strict father to his three girls.

"Little Jack wasn't all that well-liked. But he was nice-looking, educated and he married well," Finch said. "He'd do you a favor."

Walls said in a 1994 deposition that he first volunteered as an adult leader for the Scouts

## *Sexual abuse a societal problem, not just a Scout problem*

■ Youths in Scouting learn more than just wilderness skills and trailcraft. They also get training in handling sexual predators, Boy Scout officials say.

"We take every precaution we can to prevent child abuse," said Greg Shields, national spokesman for the Boy Scouts of America. "Virtually everyone in scouting has had some training."

The Boy Scouts' Youth Safety program teaches the nation's 4.4 million Boy Scouts and 1.2 million adult leaders youths to recognize, resist and report improper sexual approaches by adults, he said.

In addition, the organization has a "two-deep policy," that requires at least two adult leaders to be with Scouts at all times, he said.

"We cooperate fully with law enforcement, and we don't need a criminal conviction to remove someone as a scout leader," he said.

John Caman, executive of Central Arkansas's Quapaw Boy Scout Council, said the organization removed Jack Walls from its rolls as soon as allegations of sexual abuse were first leveled in 1993.

"Our concern is not whether someone is guilty or innocent. Our duty is to protect the kids," he said.

The scouting group conducts thorough screening of potential adult leaders, Shields said.

Scouting officials interview prospective leaders, review a detailed application and check references, he said. The Boy Scouts national office then checks the application against a list of adults who've caused problems in the past, Shields said.

"If he turns up on that list, he is denied a volunteer position," Shields said. "If there is any reason to be concerned then we run a criminal background check."

in 1971 or 1972 shortly after his discharge from the Army where he served as a communications officer in Vietnam.

Walls appeared to be a stable, middle-aged man interested in helping youths, Nita Colclasure says, but Walls was "a control freak" who "brainwashed" some of the scouts he led.

"Jack was really into guns and a uniform way of life," she said.

Charges against Walls allege he began sexual assaults on local boys in November 1986. Residents say some were suspicious of Wall's relationship with the Scouts, but it wasn't until 1993 that the rumors became criminal charges.

Doug Hogan told authorities in Carlisle that Walls proposed that the two perform sex acts during a Dec. 29, 1992, campout.

In a statement to police, Hogan said Walls invited him to his farm south of Lonoke for the campout. It was to be a get-acquainted event for those planning a trip to the Boy Scouts' "adventure base" at Philmont Ranch in Cimarron, N.M.

When everyone else went to sleep, Walls, Hogan and another youth stayed up talking around the campfire. Walls asked the boys if they wanted some wine and poured some for Hogan, the statement said.

About 1:45 a.m., Walls and Hogan were the only two awake.

"Jack Walls told me to lay back and take it easy," Hogan said. "He asked me who I was thinking about that night. This time we were



ALVIN POLK

*BMOG: A star football player and popular high school student, Stocks struggled to meet his father's high expectations, a family friend says. "We love you," his father, mother and sister said in an ad in the 1995 Lonoke High School yearbook. Stocks later shot all three.*

at the campfire. I told him no one in particular. Jack Walls lay beside me with his feet toward my head and my feet toward his head. Jack Walls started unbuckling my belt. I told him to stop."

Walls then proposed that they masturbate together. Hogan refused.

Walls then said it was time for bed.

"During this time," Hogan said. "Jack Walls didn't seem to be scared of getting caught. He was calm."

In court, Walls denied he'd ever proposed any sex acts. But two days after the campout, Walls wrote a letter to Cledis Hogan apologizing "to all of you for the incident at camp Tuesday night."

In the handwritten note, Walls said the incident "showed a flaw in my character that must be corrected, and I must begin to do that immediately."

"There is a great amount of trust placed in a man who works with young people as I did, and I violated it. I am ashamed of this as I have let everyone down, from the Scouts (to) my own family. It's now up to me to change my life."

But on April 8, 1994, Walls was found innocent of misdemeanor counts of third-degree assault of Hogan and contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Walls later said he was apologizing in the letter for having lost his temper with Doug Hogan at the campout, not for any sexual improprieties.

Cledis Hogan insists Walls used his connections to escape conviction. He later filed—and settled out of court for an undisclosed amount—a civil suit against Walls over the incident.

In any case, the Boy Scouts were finished with Walls.

## **"Lonoke is a good town, a quiet town," Stocks says. "But a lot of things happen behind closed doors."**

The organization kicked him out on Jan. 5, 1993, said John Carman, executive of the Scouts' Quapaw Council in Little Rock.

"Our concern is not whether someone is guilty or innocent. Our duty is to protect the kids," he said. "We withdrew his registration."

Walls unsuccessfully appealed the decision, Carman said.

The Scouts were through with Walls, but Walls wasn't finished with the Boy Scouts.

Bill Spice, Philmont's general manager, said Walls in June 1993 used another man's name to visit the Scout ranch for 12 days.

"There were five boys and five girls on the trip," Spice said.

And one of them was Heath Stocks.

Walls admitted in a deposition in the civil suit that he'd used the name of Joe Stocks, Heath's father, at Philmont to get around his expulsion.

He said his wife and a daughter went on the trip under their own names, as did Barbara and Heather Stocks. Everyone on the trip knew he had used a false name, Walls said.

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Heath Stocks was a dedicated Scout who earned merit badges in first aid and most of the outdoor activities.

He dreamed of joining the military's special operations forces — the Army's Green Berets, the Navy Seals or the elite counter-terrorist Delta Force.

Walls told Stocks he'd train him so he'd be ready, the inmate said.

"He trained those kids like a little militia," Colclasure said. "Heath was his star pupil. Jack took the place of Joe sometimes, as far as being a father."

And in Lonoke, Stocks was at the center of his generation's glory days. He was a star in the

constellation of high school football heroes and beauty queens that serve as a sort of temporary royalty in quiet, rural towns like Lonoke.

A starter on the 1994 State AA Champion Jackrabbit football team, he was popular with girls and was elected the school's homecoming king.

After graduation, Stocks entered Henderson State University in Arkadelphia where he majored in primary education. "I was going to be a kindergarten teacher. I love kids," he said in the prison interview.

But Stocks admitted he wasn't much of a student and "stayed drunk" most of his two years in college.

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On Jan. 17, 1997, for reasons that remain unclear he ransacked his family's home, got into a violent altercation with his father and then killed his family with a .45-caliber pistol.

When prosecutors announced they planned to seek the death penalty against Stocks, he pleaded guilty to three capital murder counts. He received a sentence of three consecutive life terms without parole.

Colclasure said she's convinced sexual abuse caused emotional problems that led to the Stocks family murders.

"I think Heath's been like a little time bomb," she said.

Others in Lonoke aren't so sure.

"Every mother and every father in this area

that has a child that went haywire, they are wanting to blame it on Walls," said a Lonoke man who asked not to be identified. "I don't think Jack Walls had a thing in the world to do with Heath Stocks killing his family."

Stocks, who will spend the rest of his life in prison, says he has nothing to gain by speaking up.

"There's nothing in this for me," he said. "I'm going to be here no matter what happens."

Stocks said he had no ill feelings toward the town where his life began and—for all purposes—ended.

"Lonoke is a good town, a quiet town," he said. "But a lot of things happen behind closed doors." 