

# Walls enters plea: 'Not Guilty' of rape, other charges

By Ed Galucki

Staff writer

Under tight security, more than 100 persons packed the gallery of Lonoke County Circuit Court for Tuesday's plea arraignment of Charles A. Walls III on six counts of rape, two counts of violation of a minor in the first degree and two counts of solicitation of murder.

Walls entered "not guilty" pleas to all charges. Circuit/Chancery Judge Lance Hanshaw set dates of Feb. 3-5, Feb. 25-27 and April 1 and 2 for jury trials.

Names of victims have not been used because of their ages at the time of the alleged incidents. The rape charges are for victims who were less than 14; violation of a minor charges are for victims between 13 and 18.

Documents list the victims as John Doe #1, #2, #3, #4, #5 and #6. At least two were members of an Explorer post and Boy Scout troop which Walls formerly led.

Sheriff Charlie Martin said he increased courthouse security because threats against Walls had been received. "These seem to be reasonable precautions, but I really sweated when we walked [Walls] over here."

Spectators at the arraignment had to pass through a metal detector, and handbags were not allowed in the courtroom. Officers of the Ward, Lonoke and Carlisle police departments bolstered the Lonoke County Sheriff's department.

Many of those attending the arraignment wore yellow ribbons in support of the victims, and their families, of Walls' alleged acts.

Walls' clothes, a bomber-crew style leather jacket, sport shirt and gray slacks, hid the body armor and handcuffs he was wearing. Prisoners appearing on other counts were also handcuffed, but wore either bright orange or black and white striped prisoners' coveralls.



CHARLES A. WALLS III

Martin said Walls' attorney, Hubert Alexander of Jacksonville, had requested Walls be allowed to wear street clothes. "It's a normal request; it was a court decision to allow it."

After arraignment, Walls was returned to the Lonoke County jail where he is being held on a \$1 million cash bond. Alexander said he expected to file a motion to reduce the bond within "a couple of days."

This was Walls' second plea arraignment in two months. On Oct. 6 he pled not guilty to two charges of rape and was released on a \$100,000 bond.

Also at the Oct. 6 arraignment, Hanshaw imposed a gag order at Alexander's request. The order prohibits release of information by court personnel, attorneys and law enforcement personnel.

Dorothy Stocks claimed after the Oct. 6 arraignment that her grandson, Heath Stocks, is a victim of Walls. Stocks is currently serving three consecutive life sentences for the slayings of his father Joe, mother Barbara and sister Heather in January of this year.

On Nov. 5, Special Prosecuting Attorney Betty Dickey filed additional charges, including solicitation to commit murder, and asked for a \$1 million cash bond. Two more charges of rape were filed by Dickey on Nov. 14.

In a telephone interview Monday, Dickey said she expected more charges would be filed. Citing the gag order and ages of the alleged victims, she declined to give further details.

On Oct. 20, Hanshaw appointed Dickey as special prosecutor to replace Lonoke County Prosecuting Attorney Larry Cook. Cook requested disqualification on Oct. 17, citing possible appearances of conflict, "because the prosecuting attorney and his staff have known the defendant's father and have appeared in his court when he was the circuit/chancery judge in this district."

Cook was referring to Charles A. "Jack" Walls Jr., who was appointed circuit/chancery judge by then-Gov. Jim Guy Tucker after the judge's position was created.

Walls Jr. served as judge until January of this year. Poignantly, his portrait was removed from its place on the courtroom wall for his son's arraignment Tuesday.

In a Nov. 7 telephone interview, Dickey said she was uncertain how much of the information forming the basis of the charges filed had been reviewed by Cook prior to his request for disqualification.

Staff writer Mark Buffalo contributed to this story.