

Hearing on death of Spence's mother centers on bite patterns

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Bite mark evidence, similar to that used to put convicted murderer David Wayne Spence on Death Row, was the topic of a pre-trial hearing Thursday in the cases of two men charged with capital murder in the death of Spence's mother.

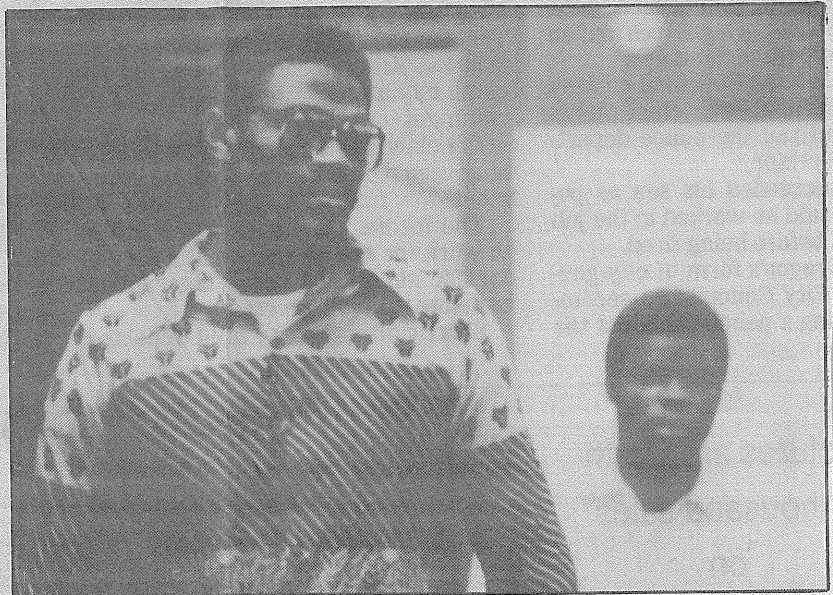
Calvin Earl Washington, 30, and Joe Sidney Williams Jr., 19, are charged in the March 2, 1986, beating and strangulation death of Juanita White, 1901 N. 15th St.

Mrs. White was the mother of Spence, who twice was sentenced to death for his role in the July 1982 deaths of three teens at Lake Waco.

Bite mark evidence is expected to be presented during proceedings against Washington and Williams.

During the hearing, a former dental laboratory owner, a McGregor dentist and a photogrammetrist testified about procedures used to take dental impressions from the two men, and how comparisons were made to bite wounds found on Mrs. White.

J.L. Crawford, an investigator in the McLennan County district attorney's office and former owner of a dental laboratory, said he assisted Dr. Walter Brinkman, who also testified Thursday, in taking the teeth impressions in July.



Staff photo — Steve Earley

Calvin Earl Washington (left) and Joe Sidney Williams at hearing

Witnesses were questioned all day by defense attorneys Rick Bostwick and Walter Reaves, appointed by 54th State District Judge George Allen to represent Williams, and Doug Henager and Ken Ables, appointed to represent Washington.

The attorneys have filed a motion to forbid bite mark evidence from being used against them. The judge will rule on that motion after testimony is completed.

The hearing continues today

with testimony from Dr. Homer Campbell. The forensic dental expert from Albuquerque, N.M. has testified in several McLennan County homicides, including the Lake Waco triple murder case.

Dr. Jim Ebert, a photogrammetrist from Albuquerque who works on many cases with Campbell, testified Thursday about how he electronically enhances photographs of bite wounds and teeth impressions in an attempt to determine if a defendant caused the marks.