



Authorities closing on a killer?

Investigation centers on tightly-knit conspiracy

By Gerard Dziuba
Herald community editor

GENEVA — Kane County prosecutors and police know the group of people who may have been involved with Timothy McNamee's death, but they cannot pinpoint who actually pulled the trigger. And until the authorities know for sure who killed the 34-year-old attorney, they will not indict anyone.

Those are the words of John Barsanti, who heads the criminal division for the Kane County State's Attorney's office.

After a yearlong investigation, police have narrowed their probe to a close-knit group of fewer than 10 people, Barsanti explained.

"We have a better focus of this case. Now we are working to find enough evidence to indict someone," said Carpentersville Police Chief Leon Kutzke. "We have theories about what the motive may have been and we are investigating what it is actually was."

Both Kutzke and Barsanti would not disclose who is in the group.

"These people are very close. They know who did it (killed McNamee), but they are not willing to come forward and tell us. Other people who know are not willing to come forward and tell us. That's our problem, that's why we can't solve this case," Barsanti said. "They hang around together and they marry each other's ex-wives. They are not about to talk about each other."

Because sufficient evidence is lacking, an indictment will not occur in the near future, Barsanti said.

"It probably won't take another year, but it may take

months, though."

Police believe McNamee was most likely killed as a result of a conspiracy, where more than person was involved in the crime. Like Kutzke, Barsanti would not explain what motive investigators are working on. He did say, however, informants are reluctant to tell police who the killer is because they fear for their lives.

Not everyone has kept the killer's identity a secret,

though. Last year, Elgin resident Cedric Whiteside allegedly told police he knows who killed McNamee because he was with him the night the attorney was shot. The prosecutor said investigators are trying to determine whether Whiteside, a suspected armed robber, is a credible witness.

The evidence in the case has not helped lead

police to the killer. McNamee was gunned down June 8, 1987 in the parking lot of his Illinois Route 31 law firm. Since that time, "we have not received any breaks in the case," Barsanti said.

The day after McNamee was shot, a vintage 30.06 World War I rifle was found in bushes nearly 100 feet from where the body was discovered.

"There were no fingerprints on the gun, there were no fingerprints on the bullet and nobody seems to have heard anything," Barsanti said. "There are a lot of allegations out there. I'm not interested in allegations because they will not help indict anyone."

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Thom and JoAnne McNamee at their Carpentersville ranch Sunday following church.

William Valicenti / Herald staff

Tim's twin searches for a killer

By Amy R. Mack
Herald staff writer

When Thom McNamee looks in the mirror, pain slips across the handsome face, quickly replaced by the mask he's turned to the world since his twin brother died a year ago.

When his brown eyes look at his reflection, Thom sees his twin brother Tim gazing back. He remembers the spark in his twin's eyes, recalls Tim's laughter, and feels — but can no longer touch — the special bond they shared.

When an unknown gunman killed attorney Tim McNamee June 8, 1987, the bullet severed not only a strong brotherly bond, but the special tie which binds twins.

The bullet killed more than Thom McNamee's brother — it destroyed a part of him too, Thom says a year after his twin's body was found in the driveway of Tim's law office.

And it unleashed an anger that won't die until the killer is caught.

Thom is handling his grief by throwing himself into work, play, and family, the same way the brothers enthusiastically approached life before Tim's death.

And the drive which once went into careers and fun now is channeled into pursuit of a killer.

Thom McNamee said he can't stop tracking his twin's killer until he finds out why. He can't because Tim would do the same for him.

"Nothing really has much meaning for me now," Thom said quietly as he sat behind what once was Tim's desk at the McNamee and Mahoney Law Firm on Route 31.

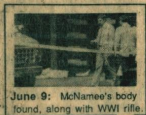
There, beneath the pictures of Huey, Louie and Dewey, across from the Mickey Mouse shirt and large brown cowboy hat, Thom McNamee is as vigorously chasing killers as his brother once defended clients.

"I'm consumed right now," Thom said. "I can't do any-

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Northwest Herald Special Report

McNAMEE MURDER ONE YEAR LATER



June 9: McNamee's body found, along with WWV rifle.

July 8: Citing possible conflicts, the family asks Gov. Thompson to form a task force.



Aug. 18: Family members say police lax in probe.

October 20: Atty. Gen. Neil Hartigan joins the murder investigation.



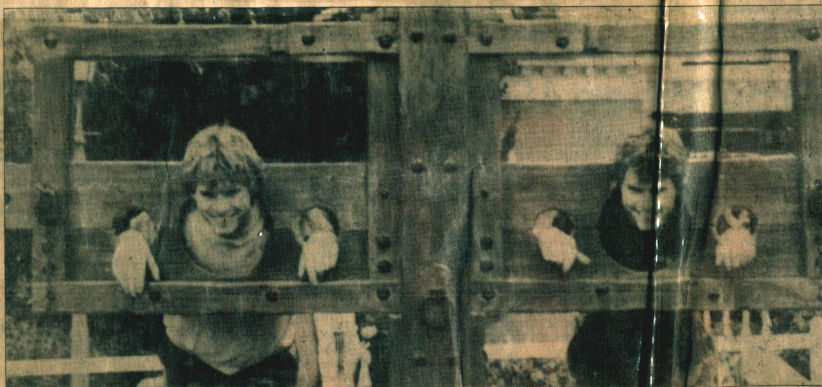
Nov. 12: Family sponsors gala fundraiser in Chicago.



April 8: Delaney appears before special grand jury.

June 3: Prosecutors say they are closing in on the man that killed Tim McNamee, but fear among the witnesses is hindering their investigation.

| JUNE 1987 | JULY 1987 | AUGUST 1987 | OCTOBER 1987 | NOVEMBER 1987 | MARCH 1988 | APRIL 1988 | JUNE 1988 |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| June 6: Attorney Tim McNamee is shot once outside his Route 31 law office. | June 11: Thom McNamee offers reward to find killer. | August 13: A burglar says Algonquin police tried to set up McNamee on drug charges. | Oct. 9: Kane Bar Ass. asks Atty. Gen. Hartigan to join on case. | Nov. 8: To further their role, family plans celebrity fundraiser at Field Museum. | March 1: Kane County prosecutors form special grand jury to hear evidence. | April 8: Members of the task force arrest Thomas Delaney in Memphis, Tenn. Witnesses link Delaney to the McNamee shooting. | June 3: Grand jury continues investigation. |



McNamee family photo

Thom (left) and Tim ham it up for the camera during their Australia vacation.

Brother

Young also didn't take care of Tim.

The agony of losing his brother goes far deeper than normal grief, just as their bond in life had been much stronger than most.

"My brother was my best friend — and I was his. We vicariously lived each other's lives. We were totally unselfish when it came to each other; we pushed each other, supported each other," Thom said.

Whether they were rafting, dueling on a baseball diamond or struggling to work days and make it through law school at night, Tim and Thom spurred each other on.

Tim was known as "Mackey." Thom was "Mac." If one lagged, the other pushed. They didn't compete with one another — they pushed for a common goal.

And they'd reached it, each on top of their chosen professions. Tim and partner Tim Mahoney had a thriving law practice. Thom was in demand as a highly-paid professional model.

The anger is directed at the police investigating the murder as well as at the person who pulled the trigger. Rumors of drug involvement infuriate the surviving twin, who said cops who can't solve the crime are unleashing innuendo to discredit Tim.

"If my brother was dirty, would I have raised the barn and yelled as loud as I have?" Thom asked. "He was a crusader against drugs. If we were doing drugs, we could never have accomplished our goals."

There are no regrets about the way they lived, Thom said of the twins' full-throttle lifestyle. "We played hard. We worked hard. We lived life at 110 miles per hour. My brother had more drive and ambition than any man I've ever

met. The fun is forced now. Thom's slowed down from the fast pace he and Tim kept. But he's not out of the game — Tim won't let him. "I'll get back — after this," Thom said soberly. "I have to hold up the legacy. If I didn't, Mackey would give me a swift kick."

The month before the murder, Tim had visited Thom, who was on a modeling assignment in Australia. As they



McNamee family photo

Young twin brothers: Tim and Thom McNamee.

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took the choppy three-hour boat ride back to the mainland, the two brothers had been the only passengers to brave the water-soaked deck, Thom said.

"I stood on the deck as the waves crashed over the bow and just talked. We'd both made it. 'I'd climbed out of the rut he was on top. We talked about how good life has been.'"

A month later Thom got a phone call he still can't accept. "I'd be lying if I tried to say I've faced the reality of what happened. It would devastate me. I tell myself he's on a long, well-deserved vacation."

And someday he'll be back. But Tim won't be back. And Thom knows he'll have to handle that.

He's just not ready yet. "Nothing will bring him back, nothing will return what's been taken away; but whoever stole my brother is going to pay."

"I sit here days on end going through it all, going through the pieces of the puzzle that I have."

For a moment, the pain passes across Thom's face as he looks at the files he's accumulated since his brother's murder. Once again, he pulls himself back under control.

"No matter what happens, I'll discover who did it," Thom said.

A mother remembers

By Amy R. Mack
Herald staff writer

The brutal murder of her son devastated JoAnne McNamee.

But the same electric personality which made Timothy McNamee the live wire in any group has helped make his loss more bearable.

From the unusual wake where hundreds viewed the murdered lawyer's body atop his red Corvette, to the media's piercing probe over the past year, JoAnne McNamee has realized her son's intensity in life has carried into his death.

And knowing he touched so many lives has helped her cope with his death. "Tim couldn't be in a room without you not be aware of it," JoAnne recalled as she prepared to face the first anniversary of her handsome, popular son's death.

"Whenever Tim was around, he livened things up. It was more exciting when he was there," she added. "He touched the lives of so many people — that's just the way he was. He touched a lot of people."

The attorney was only 34 when he was gunned down outside his law office. But he'd already made a tremendous impact on everyone in his large family and circle of friends, JoAnne McNamee said.

That impact makes his death harder to bear. "It takes time," the Elgin High School teacher said. "In the beginning you just exist, getting through the day. There's shock, disbelief, you can't believe it's happened."

Adjusting to his absence is difficult, the mother of 11 said, because Tim prominently

figured in any family gathering. The vibrant fireball just made things happen — sometimes with mischief, always with a grin.

"He kept things moving. It was never dull when Tim was there," JoAnne said, chuckling at the remembered antics of Tim and his twin brother, Thom.

Remembering brings pain. "Mother's Day was very, very hard this year. It really was," JoAnne said softly.

"Even harder than Christmas," she added as she paused, thinking back to what has always been a special day for the McNamee clan.

"And Christmas was pretty bad. That was hard for everyone," JoAnne recalled.

The shock of Tim's death hit immediately. The reality of life without him has come more slowly.

"It was devastating, a terrible shock, so sudden ... so final," JoAnne said quietly as she looked back to hearing the brutal news.

"It's the worst thing you could possibly think of happening. I'll be driving to work and sometime it just really hits — he isn't here, he's gone. "It's incredible someone took a life. It's even more incredible someone took the life of someone who was so full of life."

"He was always so busy doing so many things ... he had a lot of interests. A lot of energy. Tim never dabbled, never went at anything halfheartedly."

"He was always into whatever he was doing 100 percent," JoAnne recalled.

Proud of what her son had achieved, from his success in sports to the ambition which drove him to work his way through law school, JoAnne said she's glad Tim packed so

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Tim and Thom congratulate each other following their graduation from law school in 1979.



Family members pose at sister MariBeth's wedding.



Tim on an Australian holiday shortly before he was murdered.



Tim McNamee with his godchild.