

One victim in triple murder was pregnant; 5-year-old unharmed



(Tom Gaard /Correspondent)

The three victims pictured on the left are, from the top, Nichole Cervantez, Monica Hudson and Michael Kevin Tucker. In the background, a cleaning crew finishes decontaminating the site of a multiple homicide in Lake City on Feb. 3, 2011.

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LAKE CITY — A Lake City man killed three people, one of them about five months' pregnant, and then drove to the police station with the child of one of the victims to turn himself in early Thursday morning, authorities say.



Alan Lucas Strattan

Alan Lucas Strattan, 25, of 1506 SE Baya Drive, was arrested on a first-degree murder charge for the deaths of Nichole Cervantez, 25, who is believed to have been five or six months pregnant; Monica Hudson, 27; and Michael Kevin Tucker, 32, all of Lake City.

"I cannot recall us having a triple homicide before," said Columbia County Sheriff's Sgt. Ed Seifert. "Essentially he has confessed to it. He didn't give us a motive."

Seifert said all the victims were shot in an open area of the house to the right of the front door. He added investigators believe they were each shot in rapid succession.

Strattan lived there with his parents, who were out of town at the time. The three victims were visiting the house, Seifert said.

Baya Drive is a busy thoroughfare and the house with a large gate is set off the road behind high vegetation. There are no neighboring houses.

Hudson was Strattan's on-again, off-again girlfriend, Seifert said. Family members of Tucker said he had been dating Cervantez for about four days, adding that Cervantez was friends with Hudson.

Tucker's mother, Cathy Ratliff, said she was told that her son was shot while trying to protect Cervantez from bullets.

"He was always protecting somebody. That's what happened here -- he was trying to protect (Cervantez) and stepped in front of her," she said. "We're calling him a hero. We told his oldest son he was a hero. I always raised him to have values and to protect women and children."

Tucker has three children ages 11, 5 and 4. He grew up in Columbia County and lived with his mom and stepfather, Cecil Ratliff, his family said.

Ratliff said the children were told of his death. His daughter, the youngest of the three, kept asking her grandmother to call her dad on the phone. Ratliff, speaking in their home north of Lake City, said the girl couldn't comprehend what was going on with her dad.

"It's such a shame. I just don't understand people," Cecil Ratliff said. "You're scared to trust anybody."

Seifert said an argument broke out and the shooting followed. He said he did not know what the argument was about. He said investigators will not know how many times each victim was shot until autopsies are complete.

No signs of a struggle were found in the home, Seifert said.

Strattan had a felony arrest in 2010 for battery of an emergency medical care provider for reportedly shoving a hospital nurse. He plea-bargained to a misdemeanor battery charge, according to a Columbia County court official. He had several previous misdemeanor domestic violence arrests.

Strattan was in court on Monday, where he was sentenced to a year of probation for a misdemeanor battery conviction from 2010.

In addition to being pregnant, Cervantez was the mother of the 5-year-old girl who was in the house during the shooting. Seifert said authorities believe the girl was in a different room at the time and did not witness the shootings. Strattan took the girl with him to the police station, Seifert added.

Detectives spoke to the girl after she was medically evaluated at a local medical facility. She is currently in the care of her grandmother, Seifert said.

Detectives were able to recover a firearm near the crime scene, which was possibly used during the homicides, Seifert said. The evidence will be sent to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for further forensic examination.

Strattan was being held Thursday at the Columbia County jail and was denied bond. Seifert said he could be charged with the death of Cervantez' unborn child.

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