

Answers at Last in Asia Bell Murder

continued ▲ from Front

ments were held on Monday for Alexander Daniel Klein, 28 and DePrince Romey Hale, 29, each facing one count of murder with a firearm, two counts of attempted aggravated murder with a firearm and conspiracy to commit murder.

Police said there is a possibility of more arrests.

A large crowd of Bell's supporters, many wearing Rest in Peace shirts with her photo, flooded the Justice Center on Friday to attend the first arraignments, held shortly before a press conference announcing the arrests.

Bell's husband James arrived just minutes after being notified of the events.

Portland detectives called Perlia on Thursday night with news of the

suspects in custody. They told her to go downtown because they needed to talk to her in person.

"I knew this was big," she said. "I walked in and saw ten detectives, two of the original ones from the case, and I broke down. I said is it what I think it is?"

They told her yes, we found your daughter's killers.

She had not expected the breakthrough, but had recently paid detectives a phone call at least once a week.

"It made us feel bad that we couldn't tell her what was going on," said Sgt. Wayne Svilar, head of the Cold Case Unit.

She spoke at Friday's press conference, and was credited by the cold case squad for her tireless work since her daughter's death.

Svilar made it clear that after-

noon that if not for Perlia, they would not be announcing the arrests.

For Bell, the press event was one of happiness mixed with relief.

"From day one I haven't lost faith," she said with much emotion while standing at the podium. "I am

an emotional roller coaster, Bell said there were clues in her personal life leading her to this moment, particularly with other local cold cases.

Her cousin Isaiah Strickland was fatally shot a year after Asia, and between the two, Bell believed closure was on its way.

From day one I haven't lost faith...this is just the beginning.

Perlia Bell, mother of Asia Bell

overwhelmed... and emotionally touched. This is just the beginning."

Describing the past five years as

"2007 is a year of completion for me," she said.

Svilar said in the past six months

the cold case unit focused almost exclusively on Bell. Her case required help from the Drug and Vice Squad, Gang Enforcement Team, Tactical Operations Unit, U.S. and District Attorney's office and the rest of the detectives at the police bureau.

"The bureau used more resources for Bell's case than any other," said detective Sgt. Paul Weatheroy, who was assigned to the case about a year ago. Weatheroy joined his brother Sgt. George Weatheroy, one of the initial investigators in the case.

There have been 270 unsolved murders in Portland since 1996. In 2004 former police chief Derrick Foxworth instated the cold case unit, the first of its kind in Portland.

The squad has solved eight

cases so far, and Bell's has remained among the highest profile.

The distinction of "cold" applies to cases older than two years, but "I don't know if Asia's case ever went cold," Svilar said. "Her case was one of those that keep us up at night."

Would Bell's murder have been solved without the cold case unit? "Honestly, no," Svilar said.

"These cases require a lot of support and money for travel," police chief Rosie Sizer said.

Weatheroy agreed. He said long lapses in time - which can be costly - often work in detectives' favor.

"People who weren't willing to cooperate originally can change their associations or mature," he said. "Asia's case was a combination of persistence and people willing to come forward."

A Mother's Loss Eases a Father's New Grief

continued ▲ from Front

When they confirmed him as Moaning's son she contacted her old friend. She knew she could help prepare him for the mental and financial burden, and the physical changes the trauma would create.

"It's hard on the body," Bell said. "People you haven't seen in 20 years come around and you have to tell your story over and over again."

She sat quietly through Davis' funeral service on Jan. 9, and then gave the grieving father a hug and a card stating her services.

From family friend to advocate, Bell has continued to support Moaning as he talks with the media, keeping the community aware of his son's death, just as Bell has done in Asia's case.

For years she carried a torch for her daughter through her unwavering advo-

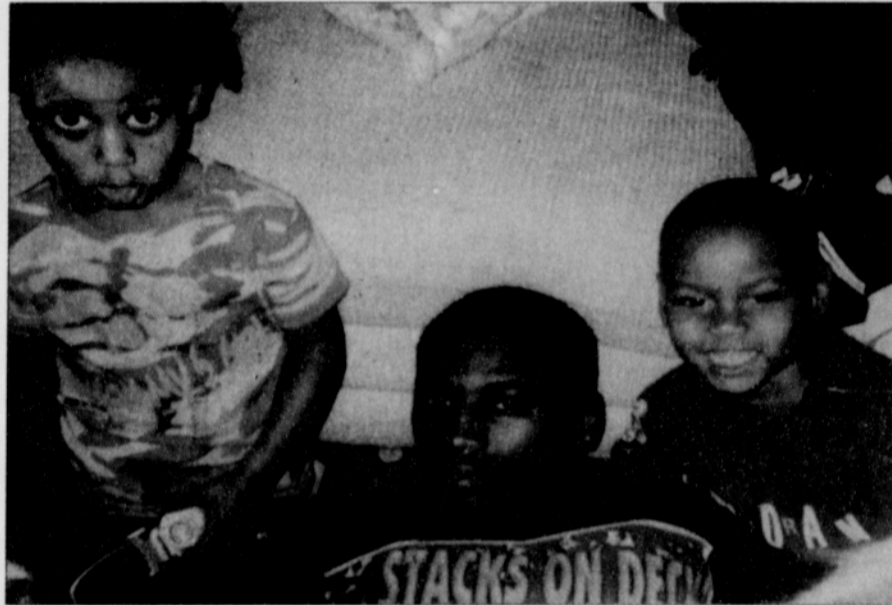
cacy. Her daughter had no criminal record and no known enemies, and a police investigation provided no arrests for nearly five years. Bell's murder had become a cold case, but her mother refused to let the tragedy fade from the community's memory.

Then a phone call just three days after speaking with the Observer illuminated how meaningful her life's work is.

Detectives with the Portland police told her they had arrested four individuals involved in her daughter's murder.

It is too soon to say what will happen to her daughter's killers, but Bell has pledged to carry on her non-profit and continue helping friends like Moaning find closure.

"It's important for me to advocate for families going through scary situations," she said. "We've been taught not to say too much and sit in the back, but what happens is that we get forgotten fast if you don't keep



Jermaine Nyron Davis, pictured with his three-year-old twins Amariah and Aaron, shortly before his death.

it abreast in the community."

As Moaning awaits information in his son's case, Bell's success story gives him optimism.

"There is hope that there can be justice," he said.

Bell has set up Moaning with grief counseling, and he said he is ready to return to work. He knows someone will come forward, but he's not sure those answers will diminish the pain of his loss.

"I love him so much. I still wake up in the pitch black night to look for him," he said. "I look for his spirit."

Crime Stoppers is offering a reward of up to \$5,000 for information leading to an arrest in Davis' murder. Call 503-823-HELP(4357). Also, donations benefitting Davis' twins can be made to an account at all US Bank locations, under the name "Children of Jermaine Nyron Davis."

Women's Day Call to End Violence

continued ▲ from A3

key lessons learned from her tribunal's probe of sexual violence during the Balkans wars of the 1990s.

One of the key lessons learned, she said, was that "the commitment to fully addressing violence

against women must be enshrined in the governing documents of the courts that are charged with the task of achieving justice for women."

She urged a reassessment of "our traditional approach to witness protection" to make it less invasive for

women" seeking justice for violent crimes but for whom cross-examination is a traumatic experience amounting to "a sort of torture, double suffering."

In The Hague, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour turned the spot-

light on what she called "rampant" sexual violence against women in Sudan's strife-torn Darfur region.

There is a "very clear pattern of systematic recourse to gender violence. I see very little sign that there is any improvement," she noted.

A worrying trend is that rape of women is increasingly used as a weapon war, UN and human rights officials note.

The World Health Organization meanwhile released a report saying one girl in five is a victim of sexual violence before the age of 15.

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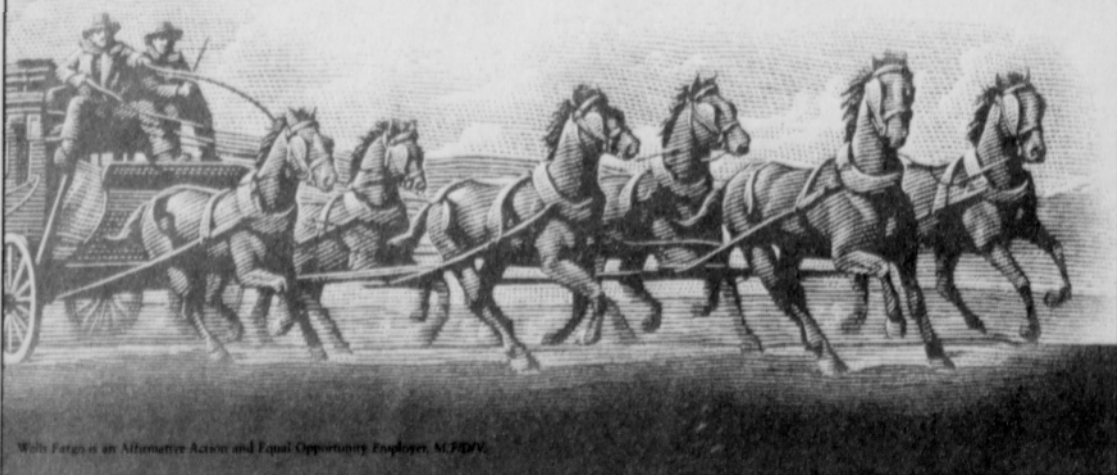
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