

Nokes home bugged during investigation

McCOOK, Neb. (AP) — The McCook home of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Nokes was bugged for 17 days late last year while the Nokeses were under investigation for the slayings of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Hoyt, according to The McCook Gazette.

Microphones were concealed in light fixtures in the living room and the bedroom, the newspaper said, quoting a source close to the investigation who asked to be unnamed.

Secreted in an unused attic was some \$6,000 worth of electronic eavesdropping gear.

Twenty-one miles of recorded tape were accumulated before the surveillance ended.

Nokes awaits sentencing for first-degree murder in the death of Wilma Hoyt, 56, and second-degree murder in the death of her husband Edwin, 55.

Nokes' wife, Ena, 44, is free on \$25,000 bond pending sentencing on two charges of illegally disposing of bodies.

The slayings came to light when dismembered bodies of the Hoyts were found in Harry Strunk Lake.

The electronic surveillance was first proposed by Dr. Charles A. Rymer, a Denver psychiatrist, who had been called into the case.

According to the newspaper's source, authorities at the time had little more than a "skeleton of facts" to link Mr. and Mrs. Nokes to the slayings.

A court-order was obtained from the Red Willow County District court, authorizing the surveillance, and Lancaster County officials and the State Patrol loaned equipment said to have been used for the first time in Nebraska.

To escape detection while the bugging equipment was being installed, the Nokeses were kept under watch at their jobs. An officer's home was used initially as the listening post, but the operation was switched later to a room at the Royal Motel in McCook.

The surveillance began Nov. 4, and according to the newspaper's source, 90 per cent of the conversations recorded between Harold and Ena Nokes dealt with the investigation and how it was progressing.

"They were amazing in their analysis of the case and how it was not going good for us—and they were right," the source said.

But nothing really incriminating was said, the source reported, adding, "They didn't have to come out and tell each other they'd done it."

At one time, Harold said he was sorry he had gotten Ena "into this." At another time, Ena remarked, "we should have taken the rings off and put them on the table." What was most helpful to authorities was the couple's intensive interest in the investigation.

At times the couple would go to bed early, as early as 7:30 p.m., and wake up at 4 a.m. to talk about the case, the source said.

Authorities got the jitters at one time when the electronic gear began interfering with television reception at the Nokes home. A TV repairman was intercepted before he could respond to a call, and the trouble was corrected by technicians.

On Dec. 20, the Nokeses were taken into custody for the slayings. Sixteen days later, on

Jan. 4, Harold Nokes told of the crimes in 158 page confession given in the office of Frontier County Atty. Fred Schroeder.

Nokes said a relationship with Mrs. Kay Hein, 30, daughter of the Hoyts, started with a kiss at a New Year's Eve party at the McCook Elks Lodge and grew into a sexual relationship that eventually involved not only Harold but his wife. According to the newspaper account, Nokes told authorities Ena entered into the three-way relationship because "she was afraid of losing me, I think, and she went along with it, and she thought a lot of Kay because her and Kay did a lot of things together."

The relationship with Mrs. Hein ended after she hit her head on a cupboard door and had to be hospitalized. "It seemed like after she had the concussion she had a change in attitude about everything," Nokes was quoted as saying.

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Nokes told of differences with Edwin Hoyt over the situation. Nokes said Edwin told him that, when Mrs. Hein was under sedation in the hospital, she said Nokes was blackmailing her.

The Hoyts also were disturbed that their daughter had chosen to stay at the Nokes' home after getting out of the hospital rather than going to her parents' home in rural Culbertson.

The Hoyts "felt like I was trying to take their place as a parent..." Nokes was quoted as saying.

Nokes denied demanding money from Mrs. Hein.

"I told her that it (lodging and food) had been quite an expense and she did bring over some money and I told her I didn't want it," he said.

Mrs. Hein threw the money on his TV set and would not take it back.

Nokes said he painted some of the obscene signs concerning Mrs. Hein which were seen in the area last summer, but said "but I didn't paint near all of them."

"I felt like she had hurt me an awful lot and I guess I tried to hurt her back a little," he explained.

He also admitted putting a defoliant chemical on Mrs. Hein's lawn and pouring sugar in her car's oil. He said his wife also sent Mrs. Hein a red light bulb.

In detailing the events the night of Sept. 23 when the Hoyts were shot and killed in the basement of the Nokes home, Nokes indicated some of the actions were dictated by the fact that he had an injured shoulder at the time.

He said he decided to dismember the bodies because, with his bad shoulder, "I couldn't drag them upstairs...I had no other way to get them out. That was the most inhuman thing, was to cut them up. I know, I shouldn't have done that."

He said he had decided to dispose of the bodies in Harry Strunk Lake because it was "the quickest way I knew of...I couldn't hardly have dug a hole very easily with my one arm."

Nokes was asked what he felt like that night in the basement.

"I don't know," Nokes said, "I just don't know. It was just kind of a nightmare. Kind of —numb, I guess, you would say."