



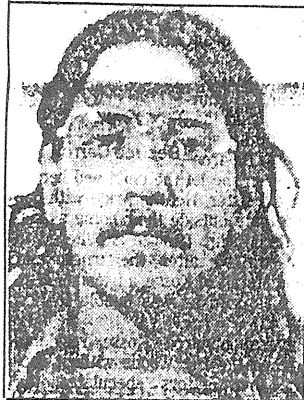
Muneer Mohammed Deeb



David Wayne Spence



Anthony Melendez



Gilbert Melendez



Police remove bodies from Speegleville Park on July 14, 1982.

# 1983 sees arrests in triple slaying case

When *Tribune-Herald* reporters and editors picked the top stories of 1982, the list was headed by the deaths of three teen-agers whose bodies were found July 14, 1982, in Speegleville Park near Lake Waco.

The saga of the Speegleville Park killings also was a major story during 1983, culminating in November with the indictment of four men for capital murder. The upcoming trials probably will be major news during 1984.

The victims were Kenneth Franks, 18, of Waco and Jill Montgomery and Raylene Rice, both 17 and of Waxahachie. They were kidnapped and stabbed to death July 13, 1982, and their bodies found the next day. The girls were sexually abused.

As 1983 began, only one suspect — Jordanian national Muneer Mohammed Deeb, a grocery store operator — had been arrested in the case, and he was freed after passing a lie detector test. Deeb's name would surface again, but not before a year-long investigation that occupied the minds of many Wacoans during 1983.

1983's chronology in the Speegleville Park killings follows:

• Jan. 13: On the six-month anniversary of the deaths, police Lt. Marvin Horton said that despite investigating hundreds of leads and calling upon the assistance of the FBI, an arrest in the case was "not imminent."  
• Feb. 22: James Russell Bishop, a former Wacoan who was a groundskeeper at McLennan Community College in July 1982, was arrested in California and charged with kidnapping and assaulting two teen-age girls in Coronado, Calif., near San Diego. The girls were sexually assaulted; one of them, a Japanese exchange student, was paralyzed.

• Feb. 24: Three Waco police officers flew to California to question Bishop concerning the Lake Waco killings, but were refused permission by Bishop's attorney to question him



Kenneth Franks



Jill Montgomery



Raylene Rice

• Feb. 28: Police Lt. Marvin Horton said Bishop is being considered as a suspect in the lake killings, adding that he "pretty well fits" a personality profile of the killer prepared by the FBI.

• March 3: The McLennan County district attorney's office assumed control over the Lake Waco investigation. Two Waco police officers were assigned full-time to the DA's office.

• April 6: Bishop pleaded guilty in San Diego municipal court to nine felony charges in the California case.

• April 13-15: Waco police, granted permission to question Bishop in California, said the former Wacoan denied involvement in the Lake Waco killings.

• May 23: A spokesman for the district attorney's office said a suspect could be indicted "in perhaps three to five weeks," or by late June or early July. Four suspects, the spokesman added, remain under investigation.

• June 3: District Attorney Vic Feazell said Bishop is no longer considered a "primary suspect." Bishop was sentenced to 79 years in prison for the California assault.

• June 22: The district attorney's office said an indictment in the kill-

ings would be delayed until the completion of an unrelated capital murder trial. Investigators said they were "confident that we will have a secure indictment and a successful prosecution" and implied that the suspect or suspects were already behind bars.

• July 13: The first anniversary of the deaths of Kenneth Franks, Raylene Rice and Jill Montgomery.

• July 14: After the defendant in the, unrelated capital murder trial pleaded guilty, the district attorney's office resumed its investigation into the Lake Waco killings.

• Aug. 12: Police and investigators with the district attorney's office traveled to Huntsville to check out "key elements" in the case, but refused to disclose details.

• Aug. 31: District Attorney Feazell and prosecutor Ned Butler flew to Albuquerque, N.M., to investigate an "integral element" of the Lake Waco killings.

• Oct. 3: The district attorney's office said it had uncovered "several new areas of evidence" that led them to "redirect the flow of some aspects of the investigation."

• Nov. 14: Muneer Mohammed Deeb, a 24-year-old Jordanian nation-

al, was arrested in Dallas and charged with capital murder in the death of Kenneth Franks. Deeb, who formerly co-owned the Rainbow Drive Inn at 1423 Herring, also was arrested in September 1982, but was released after passing a polygraph test. Feazell said grand jurors also would be asked to indict three other suspects.

• Nov. 21: Grand jurors indicted Deeb and three other suspects on three counts each of capital murder. Also indicted were David Wayne Spence, 25, Gilbert Melendez, 28, and his brother, Anthony Melendez, 24, all of whom were in Texas jails or prisons for other offenses.

• Nov. 22: District Attorney Feazell said at least one of the dead teen-agers was a victim of mistaken identity, "and it seems the children were just in the wrong place at the wrong time." Murder for hire, he said, "is a possibility."

• Dec. 7: Five Waco attorneys were appointed to represent Spence and the Melendez brothers. Gilbert Melendez and Spence are being held without bail since they were in Texas prisons at the time of their arrest. Anthony Melendez also is held without bail; bail for Deeb was set at \$600,000. State District Judge George Allen said the first trial will be held "somewhere in the neighborhood" of March.

• Dec. 13: The parents of Deeb arrived in the United States from Saudi Arabia and said they are confident their son will be acquitted. "In God we trust, like on the American coin," Mohammed Deeb told reporters.

• Dec. 15: Deeb's parents said they want their son to be given sodium penathol, or "truth serum," so he can prove his innocence. District Attorney Feazell said such a test is unlikely, since the results could not be admitted as evidence in court. A sixth attorney was appointed to represent the defendants; Deeb remains the only defendant without legal counsel.