



NEWSDAY PHOTO / THOMAS A. FERRARA

Xavier Morris of Scott's Beach says he's a changed man.

The molester next door

BY INDRANI SEN
STAFF WRITER

Children now play inside and the narrow roads of the wooded enclave of Scott's Beach are empty as parents discuss in hushed tones what to do about the convicted child molester who moved in down the block earlier this month.

In a Sound Beach community decked out for Halloween trick-or-treaters, where kids used to ride bikes and shoot hoops in driveways, residents say Xavier Morris should leave.

But in his ramshackle ranch house at the edge of the neighborhood, Morris, 22, a newlywed and first-time father, said he just wants a normal life. He

His life among neighbors who abhor him

admits he sexually abused three young relatives when he was a teenager, but only after he himself was damaged by years of sexual abuse.

"I would kill myself before I ever did anything like that again," Morris said.

When he returned home Sunday afternoon from the hospital with his wife and their newborn baby boy, he found

what has become a familiar sight for him — irate neighbors yelling on his front step. They waved a printout from the state's sex offender registry with Morris' mugshot on it. Police were called, but arrested no one. Three days later, the "high risk" level 3 sex offender was notified that he's being evicted for the fourth time since he was released from prison in September 2003.

Morris said when previous neighbors in Mastic Beach, Shirley and Selden found out who he was, they slashed his tires, fired shots at his house and chased him out of a store with baseball bats.

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Some new heat on a cold case

BY JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER
STAFF WRITER

Jennifer Wustenhoff was a carefree teenager when her father, undercover Suffolk narcotics Det. Dennis Wustenhoff, was murdered.

Fifteen years later, Jennifer Wustenhoff is a 30-year-old woman, an office manager, an aunt to her younger brother's two children. Yesterday, she served as her family's voice in a public plea for anyone with information

about her father's death to come forward.

Wustenhoff was killed Feb. 15, 1990, when a bomb exploded in his undercover police car, a Cadillac Eldorado, as it was parked in front of his Patchogue home.



Det. Dennis Wustenhoff

No arrests have been made. Suffolk detectives announced yesterday that they have recently learned there are people who have information that may help solve the case. But Homicide Det. Lt. Jack Fitzpatrick would not elaborate.

"We would like to hear from those people," he said. "Perhaps the people who have this information, their conscience

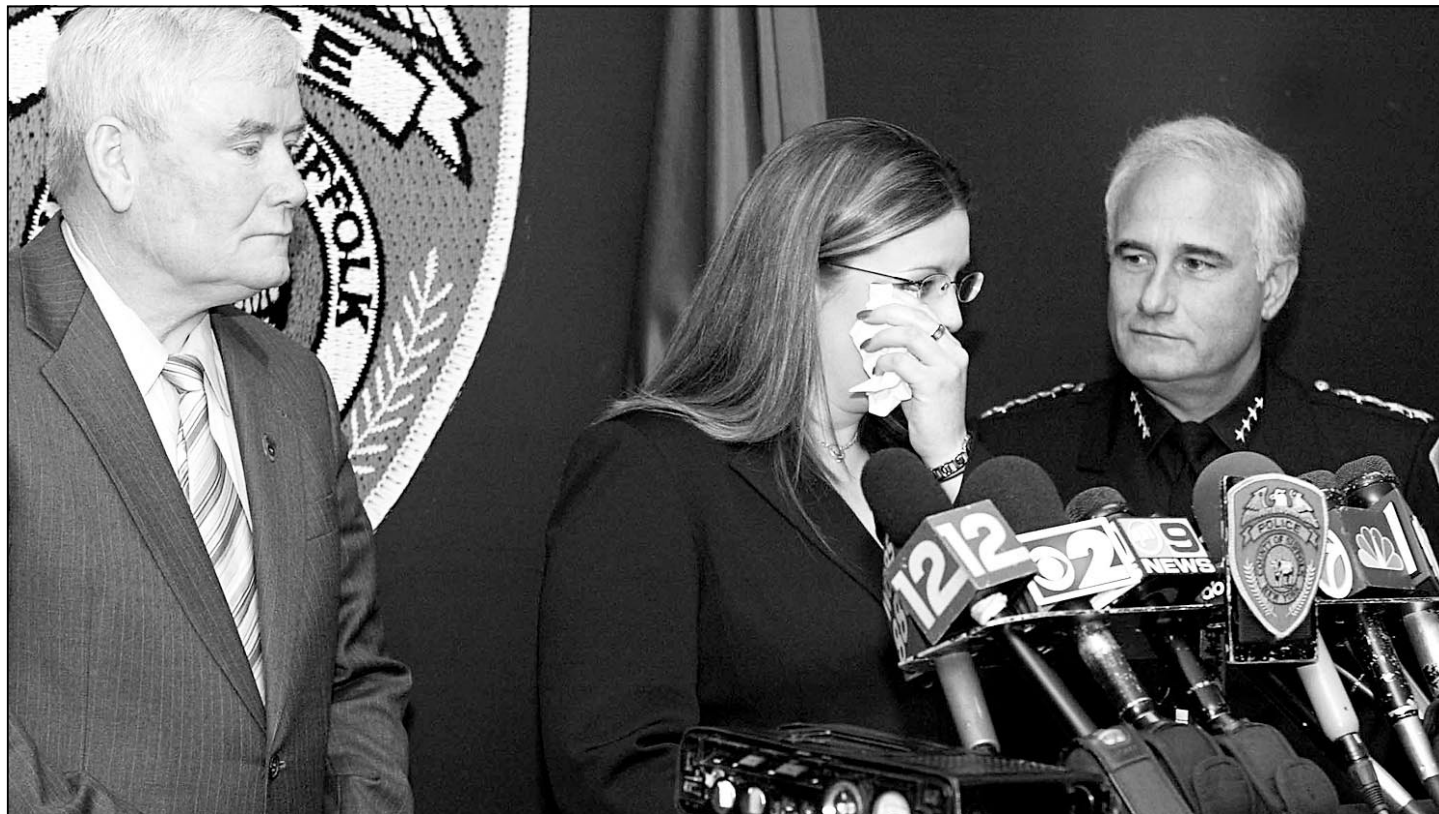


PHOTO BY JOSEPH D. SULLIVAN

Jennifer Wustenhoff with Commissioner Richard Dormer, left, and Suffolk Chief of Department Robert Moore yesterday.

has been bothering them all this time."

Yesterday, Jennifer Wustenhoff recalled the afternoon she was pulled out of school and told her father was hurt. He spent about three hours in a hospital before he died, she recalled, but she never got to see him.

"It was all very traumatic and public," she said, adding

that those same feelings returned yesterday.

Before Wustenhoff's death, the dangers of a parent working in law enforcement wasn't something the 14-year-old really thought about.

To Jennifer and her younger brother and sister, their father was a man who mowed their lawn, jogged daily, had several tattoos.

"I grew up without my dad," she said, starting to cry as Homicide Det. Vincent Stephan handed her a tissue.

Jennifer held up a framed picture of her smiling father, his shaggy hair shown long the way he wore it for his undercover work. Police said the picture had not been made public in the past for fear that it would compromise the safety of his

partners and others in the unit.

Stephan, 10 years Wustenhoff's junior, worked in narcotics with him at the time. Since Wustenhoff's death, Stephan and other members of the department have stepped in and served as paternal figures to the Wustenhoff children.

"He's looking down at us now saying, 'They did good,'" Stephan said.

Family dies in apparent murder-suicide

■ A relative of the dead finds four bodies and police say the father was depressed over failed business venture

BY MARLENE NAANES,
LUIS PEREZ
AND ROLANDO F. PUJOL

A mother, father and their two young children were found dead in a Morningside Heights apartment last night, overcome by carbon monoxide set off by six pots holding burning charcoal in a sealed bedroom in an apparent mur-

der-suicide, police said.

The body of the father, Fred Wang, 42, was found on the floor of the bedroom, its door draped with a blanket, and the mother, Christine, also 42, was found together on the bed with her children, Dennis, 8, and Serena, 6, police said. It appears that they had been dead for a few days, police said.

A cousin of the dead mother discovered the grisly scene at 6:30 p.m. after being alerted to a troubling letter a relative received in Taiwan about the family, police said.

A building superintendent said the letter was received by

another daughter of the dead woman. A police official told The Associated Press that the father was depressed over a failed business venture and planned to commit suicide.

Neighbors said the father ran a New Jersey-based commodities trading firm, and the woman stayed at home with the children.

Last night, the cousin tried to enter one bedroom and found she couldn't get in, and then entered the apartment's second bedroom, where she found the mother, 85, of the dead woman, who was ill after being overcome by the smoke, but apparently not

aware of what had happened to her family, police said. She was being treated at St. Luke's Hospital.

The cousin alerted authorities to the scene in the 21-story apartment building, 549 W. 123rd St., just blocks from Columbia University.

Neighbors said the children attended the prestigious St. Hilda's & St. Hugh's in Morningside Heights.

Another building superintendent said school employees contacted him Wednesday morning about the children's absence.

He said the grandmother answered the door that morning

but he had to find a neighbor who could speak her dialect.

The grandmother said she had seen the family that morning, but that she didn't want to say anything else to strangers.

Another resident said his children attended school with the young victims.

"They were cute. They were so smart. They rode their bicycles down here" in the building courtyard.

Marlene Naanes is a freelance writer. Luis Perez and Rolando F. Pujol are staff writers. This story was supplemented with an Associated Press report.

Community revolt against molester

MORRIS from A8

As sex offenders try to adjust to life in a society that abhors them, parents struggle with how to keep their children safe. Sex offender notification laws tell parents about potential predators that live in the neighborhood, but give no guidance on how to live alongside them.

"The sex offense area is really super-charged," said Joseph Abramo, supervising probation officer for Suffolk's sex offender unit. "If we were able to take everyone away from the community and lock them up forever, which is not possible . . . it would be different."

Morris' assurance that he's changed is not enough to reassure Kathy Disunno, who lives a few doors from Morris but was not among the group that confronted him.

"I don't want him anywhere where he can walk near my kids," she said. "I'm not going to take a chance with my kids for . . . [him] or anybody else."

Even Morris' landlord, Segundo Salinas, has felt the pressure. "The neighbors, they're calling me on my cell, they're cursing me," he said. "They want me to get him out of there tomorrow."

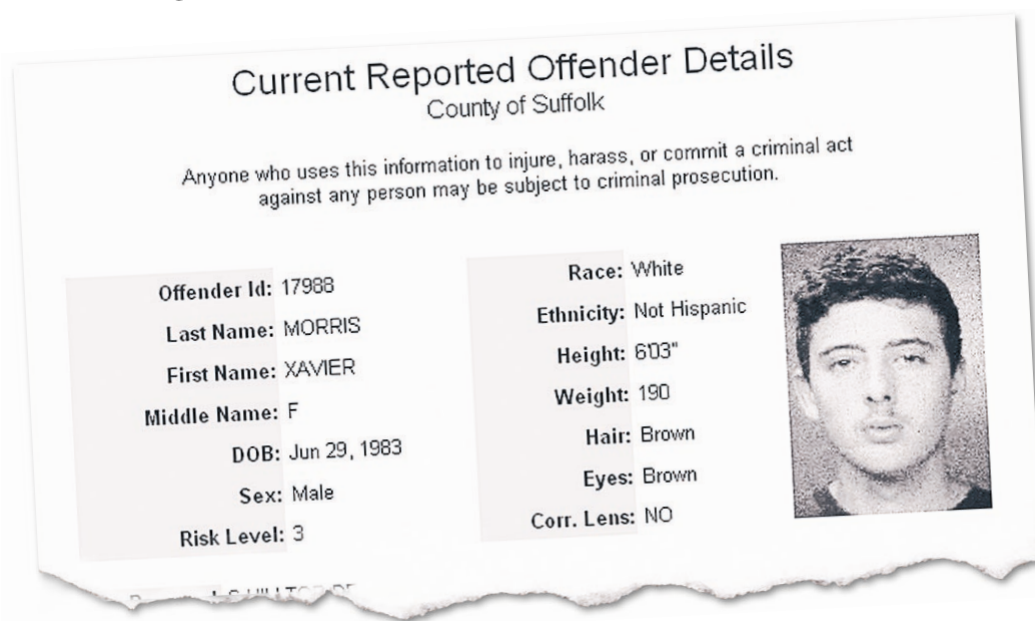
He said he's putting the house on the market and wants Morris out.

Barbara Bernstein, executive director of the Nassau chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union, questioned the eviction.

"How is this man supposed to become a useful member of society if he cannot become established, have a home, have a job?" she asked. "He has to be allowed to be rehabilitated."

Laura Ahearn, executive director of Parents for Megan's Law, a child advocacy organization, said confronting Morris "is completely unacceptable."

"Megan's Law information does not give a community the right to harass an offender, but only to take necessary precautions" and stay away, she said. "That kind of behavior serves only to undermine the hard work that we've been doing for



Xavier Morris' details on state's sex offender registry, www.criminaljustice.state.ny.us

years."

Under the 10-year-old Sex Offender Registration Act, New York's version of Megan's Law, offenders are classified by their risk of re-offense. Level 3 offenders, considered most dangerous, are listed online with

their addresses. There are about 180 level 3 sex offenders registered in Suffolk County and 80 in Nassau. Suffolk police say they notify neighbors close to the offender's residence, as well as nearby schools, day care centers,

churches and other organizations dealing with children.

Morris said he regrets the harm he did to two younger female relatives, then aged 7 and 9, by abusing them when he was 17, and to another he molested when he was younger.

Halloween warning to predators

BY BRANDON BAIN
STAFF WRITER

As parents prepare their children to trick-or-treat on Halloween, Nassau and Suffolk County probation officers will randomly visit the area's most dangerous sex offenders to ensure they stay away from minors.

Probation officials and Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi announced yesterday in Mineola that they would double their resources to monitor sex offenders, sending out 10 two-officer teams on Sunday and Monday to visit all convicted offenders in Nassau County who have a history of assaulting children.

Halloween is Monday night. "Clearly there is a potential

for things to go horribly wrong whenever a child knocks on the door of a sexual predator," John Fowle, supervisor of the Sexual Probation Unit of Nassau County, said. "It takes the offender only a few moments to learn a child's name . . . or ask what superhero he likes."

Probation officers will visit offenders to make sure they are not violating terms of probation, which include placing Halloween decorations on their homes, wearing costumes or responding to trick-or-treaters.

Operation Safe Sweets, as Nassau's initiative is called, started last year to keep sex offenders from partaking in Halloween activities, reducing the chances they would commit new crimes against minors. Nassau current-

ly has 278 sex offenders, 170 of whom committed sex crimes on children under 18, officials said.

"We want to make sure that children are not going out into places where they can put themselves into harm's way," Suozzi said.

Suffolk County probation officers sent letters to its sex offenders this month, reminding them not to open their doors on Halloween. Probation officers there will randomly visit offenders Monday to ensure they don't violate the policy.

Laura Ahearn, executive director of Parents for Megan's Law in New York, said parents should use the state's online sex offender registry, which includes details of the offenders' crime and home address.

He described a harrowing childhood, in which he said he suffered sexual and physical abuse by older relatives since he was 4. Even now, Morris said, he suffers from constant anxiety, and showers several times a day because he feels dirty.

"If I had come from a family that this hadn't happened in, I know for a 100-percent fact that I would never have done this, it would never have entered my mind," he said. "I don't consider myself a child molester or a pedophile because I wouldn't have done what I did if I'd understood."

Married in May, Morris can spend time with his son only while his wife is present.

Morris has so far complied with the conditions of his 10-year probation, said Abramo of the county probation department.

"Is Xavier out raping and looting and we're finding him in places he shouldn't be? No, he's not," Abramo said. "But I never like to give you an assurance that he's not going to re-offend."

For neighbors, that's the key question. "He can't sit there, in his mind, and say, 'These people are being mean to me,'" said Laurie Kaessinger, 35. "Because he did something horrible and he can't be treated as a normal person in society. . . . He molested children. He ruined their life."

The people who went to Morris' house on Sunday could not be reached for comment because police did not release their names.

"I don't think you're going to find anyone who wants him here," said Elizabeth Pappas, 42, who lives three doors from Morris and has two small children. "But I think you have to handle it legally, not through violence and threats."

Still, Pappas said she's told her kids to stay away from Morris, and understands why others were more confrontational.

"When it comes to children, you do anything to protect them," she said. "You go to any extreme."