

Saturday, December 7, 1974 – Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page B15, Column 4

Murder Defendant's Trial Set March 3

Park Journal Estep pleaded innocent in district court Friday to six counts arising out of the slaying of a massage parlor attendant September 19. Judge Hunter D. Hardeman set March 3 for trial.

Estep, 25, of 3280 South Academy Boulevard, and Fort Carson is charged with the murder of Sun Ok Cousin, 36, the operator of the Suezzy Oriental Massage Parlor, 934 South Nevada Avenue.

He is further charged with first-degree assault as he allegedly stabbed Elizabeth Yon Cha Ye lee, 32, another masseuse in the massage parlor, who was wounded twice.

The remaining counts are armed robbery, first-degree arson, rape, and deviate sexual intercourse by force. According to a report, the defendant robbed both women, and set Mrs. Cousin on fire by pouring a flammable liquid on her after tying her hands behind her back. The remaining counts say he raped and sexually assaulted the dead woman.

A coroner's report said Mrs. Cousin was set afire before she was shot in the right temple. The massage parlor also caught on fire and Miss Lee, despite the fact she had been slashed in the neck and stabbed in the back, managed to free herself and take refuge in another room.

She was still trapped inside, however, and two security guards saw smoke pouring from the building, saw her trying to get out, and after breaking a glass in the door, pulled her to safety.

Saturday, September 22, 1984 - Colorado Springs Sun – Page 3, Column 1

Estep to be freed to attend funeral today

Park Estep, who was convicted for a 1974 murder in Colorado Springs is being investigated, will be freed from prison today long enough to attend a close friend's funeral, a governor's aide said.

Although such occasions generally are limited to funerals of blood relatives, Governor Richard Lamm felt the "extraordinary circumstances surrounding Estep's friendship with Nancy Ruth Rose warranted special treatment, aide Kenneth Torp said Friday.

Funeral services for Ms. Rose, 54, will be at Highland Park Baptist Church, 2315 North Circle Drive, at 11 a.m. Burial is to follow at Memorial Gardens Cemetery.

Estep, 35, was convicted of the 1974 slaying of Sun Ok Cousin, owner of a local massage parlor.

Mrs. Rose, who died Wednesday at a Colorado Springs hospital, belonged to the same congregation as Estep, a soldier at Fort Carson, when he was arrested for murder.

In the years since, Mrs. Rose once said, she became a "mother" to Estep and a "grandmother" to his daughter. She visited Estep regularly at the Cañon City prison and let his daughter stay wither each summer when she came to visit her father.

When Torp announced Lamm's decision Friday, he described Mrs. Rose as Estep's "stepmother."

Estep is serving a 45- to 68-year prison sentence in the state penitentiary, but has continued to insist he is innocent.

District Attorney Robert Russel said he would reopen the case after receiving reports earlier this month that confessed mass-murder Ottis Toole has claimed responsibility for the slaying.

Toole has admitted killing hundreds of women across the country, and reportedly told defense investigators who interviewed him in a Florida prison that he killed a woman in a massage parlor here in 1974.

Richard Tegtmeier, who is representing Estep, has said he soon would file motions for a new trial in the case.

Mrs. Rose had said she was "thrilled" with the Toole confession that gave Estep new hope. I have never doubted him, she said of the "stepson."

El Paso County Sheriff's Detective Gary Brown interviewed Toole in February, at which time Toole reportedly said he didn't think he had ever been in Colorado Springs.

Saturday, February 16, 1985 – Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page B4, Column 1 – By Joyce Trent

Court asked to force judge to step down from Estep case

Attorneys for convicted killer Park Estep have asked the Colorado Supreme Court to force 4th Judicial District Judge Hunter Hardeman to disqualify himself from the case.

To also Hardeman to continue handling Estep's case would "erode the public's confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary," attorneys Richard Tegtmeier and Lance Sears say.

Hardeman refused the attorneys' request this week, which was based on their belief that the judge is prejudiced against Estep and cannot fairly consider the man's motion for a new trial.

Homicide

Thursday, September 19, 1974

VICTIM(S):

Sun Ok Cousin

SUSPECT(S):

Park Journal Estep

Estep has served 10 years of a 48- to 67-year prison term in connection with the murder of massage-parlor operator Sun Ok Cousin and an attack on her assistant, Yon Cha Yi Lee in 1974.

The grounds for the new trial are that another man, serial murderer Ottis Toole, confessed to the crime last summer. Toole later recanted. But the defense says it was under pressure.

In the Supreme Court petition, the attorneys repeated their statement that Hardeman made disparaging comments about the credibility of the key witnesses and Sears, and had made statements in support of the district attorney.

Hardeman has indicated the remarks either were not made, were taken out of context or were misinterpreted.

The Supreme Court petition states that attorneys had to wait eight weeks for the judge's response to their motion to disqualify and that when it came it "more closely paralleled an adversarial brief than a ruling."

The petition alleges Hardeman erred by spending his time in the ruling "vigorously defending his own conduct and statements" and in making his own determination of the various parties' credibility and by making his own factual findings concerning the allegations in the motion to disqualify. The attorneys also said Hardeman apparently believes they conspired to force him to become prejudiced.

Thursday, January 23, 1986 – Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page B5, Column 1 – By Joyce Trent

Judge says he won't travel to Florida for Toole hearing

Fourth District Judge John Gallagher won't be going to Florida to hear Ottis Toole testify about his confession to a Colorado Springs murder for which Park Estep is imprisoned.

Gallagher ruled Wednesday a Colorado judge "doesn't have the authority to conduct a hearing in other states."

Where that leaves attorneys Dick Tegtmeier and Lance Sears, who need Toole's testimony in Estep's hearing on a motion for a new trial, was not immediately ascertainable.

"This ruling was not expected," Sears said when he was contacted later at his office. He said he thought it unusual since the attorneys for both sides had agreed.

"We are researching right now to see what alternatives we have," Sears said. He said he thought a deposition before a Florida judge would not be possible.

Florida Circuit Judge John Crews has already ruled that Toole cannot come to Colorado Springs to testify.

Toole, facing execution for a Florida murder, has said he committed scores of other murders across the country, but he has retraced some of his confessions, including that involving the 1974 slaying of Colorado Springs massage-parlor operator Sun Ok Cousin.

Gallagher's ruling also means that other Florida witnesses will have to come to Colorado Springs for the motion hearing which is scheduled for February 6. The attorneys said earlier Wednesday they expected Toole to stand by his confession to the murder of Ms. Cousin.

Of the recantation that then District Attorney Robert Russel believes he obtained in 1984, attorney Sears said Toole explained that "he said what he said to get them off his back. They were bugging him."

Tegtmeier said Toole was "under tremendous pressure from law enforcement and jailers to recant."

During another part of the hearing the defense accused the prosecution of "shenanigans" in the way it was providing addresses for the list of prosecution witnesses.

But Chief Deputy District Attorney Royal Martin said he thought the defense had received addresses from a police officer and so he hadn't paid much attention to the written list.

Friday, February 7, 1986 – Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph – Page B1, Column 1 – By Joyce Trent

Killer's role as author aired

Attorneys for convicted murderer Park Estep, who are seeking a new trial based on a Florida killer's confession, battled Thursday to see documents that prosecutors have acquired concerning publishing rights sold to Estep's story.

District Attorney Barney Iuppa, who apparently plans to use the documents to try to discredit the defense case, has denied them access to the material, attorney Lance Sears told 4th District Judge John Gallagher.

Gallagher said he would rule this morning on the issue, which sparked one of several skirmishes that delayed the start of the hearing on Estep's request for a second trial.

Another issue concerned allegations that a Florida police agent for the prosecution warned two witnesses not to talk to investigators for the defense. Gallagher ruled there was "no credible evidence" the prosecution had acted improperly, and he refused to bar the witnesses from testifying.

And the defense told the judge an effort might be made to disqualify Iuppa and his staff from taking part in the hearing because Iuppa interviewed convicted killer Ottis Toole and another witness.

Homicide

Thursday, September 19, 1974

VICTIM(S):

SUSPECT(S):

Sun Ok Cousin

Park Journal Estep

That will depend, they said, on what they see on the videotape of the district attorney's interview last weekend. Both sides on Thursday traded videotapes of their most recent encounters with Toole. A drifter who has "confessed" to dozens of slayings, Toole was convicted for a Florida murder.

Estep was convicted in 1975 of first-degree murder and three other charges in the 1974 slaying of Colorado Springs massage parlor operator Sun Ok Cousin.

Estep always has maintained his innocence. In late 1984, two private investigators who had read about Toole's confession to many killings around the country went to Florida and questioned him about Ms. Cousin's slaying. Bob Brown and Fred Cope obtained a confession from Toole that became the basis for a motion for a new trial for Estep.

Iuppa said Thursday Deccalon Publishing Company of Australia has turned over a box of documents to the prosecution. He said some documents detail "contractual arrangements between Deccalon and Estep for substantial sums of money and between Deccalon and Toole and other arrangements made by Deccalon concerning their involvement in the Park Estep matter."

Other documents, Iuppa told the judge, "are to be used for impeachment purposes pertaining to the activities of Mr. Brown and Mr. Cope."

He described some of the documents as "peculiarly sensitive."

Saturday, February 8, 1986 – Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph – Page A1, Column 2 – By Joyce Trent

Iuppa calls Toole story sham in Estep retrial bid

Two private investigators fed information to Ottis Toole for a false murder confession, and their motivation was ". . . fame, notoriety and lots and lots of money," District Attorney Barney Iuppa said Friday.

Iuppa, who is fighting Park Estep's efforts to get a new trial based on Toole's confession to the slaying of which Estep was convicted, produced documents in 4th District Court that he said showed Estep's investigators, Bob Brown and Fed Cope, received "in excess of \$25,000" from a publisher for the rights to the story.

About \$7,300 was paid to Toole and his sister. But Deccalon Publishing Company of Australia had contracted for an additional \$128, 500 to be placed in escrow for investigative services and court costs, and "anticipated revenues in excess of \$1 million" from films and books developed along the story line of "Crazed mass murderer confesses and innocent man convicted of a crime spends 10 years in prison," Iuppa said.

The publishing firm was poorly financed, Iuppa said, and the money never was paid.

Estep signed over the exclusive rights to his autobiography to Brown, Cope and attorney Lyle Robertson a week before they contacted Ottis Toole on August 27, 1984 to see if he would confess to the murder of Colorado Springs massage parlor operator Sun Ok Cousin on September 19, 1974, Iuppa said.

On September 1, 1984, a day after the first recorded confession was obtained from Toole, representatives of Deccalon flew to Jacksonville, Florida, where Toole was incarcerated, Iuppa said.

On September 7, the attorney and investigators signed over their rights on Estep to Deccalon and on September 21 Deccalon signed a contract with Toole, the district attorney said. Meanwhile, Robertson had withdrawn from the case and become a director of Deccalon, Iuppa said.

On September 27, Estep signed a contract with Deccalon, Iuppa said.

Iuppa said the investigators had two discussions with Toole before they had a court reporter to take down what he said.

Last weekend, Iuppa said he talked to Toole and when he asked the man about the Colorado Springs murder, Toole again said, "He didn't do it and was in Jacksonville at the time.

"Secondly, he tells us how he got the information (about the murder) he states he had given to the defense," Iuppa said. "He got copies of pictures and was shown pictures of the crime scene and was able to deduce certain things.

"He was fed information and shown pictures by the defense team prior to any record made with any outside witnesses present," Iuppa said. "Present was himself, Mr. Brown and Mr. Cope.

"Why and how was there this whole occurrence. How did we get here?" asked Iuppa.

"We have to start by looking at book and movie rights. There was the promise of fame. Notoriety and lots and lots of money. Ottis Toole had absolutely nothing to do with this offense. His confession is a sham."

Cope admitted later in testimony that his firm obtained rights to Estep's autobiography in August but said he and Brown believed the man was innocent and they knew from experience that to investigate a "case with the dynamics of this case would require a good deal of money for travel and interviewing equipment." Estep was indigent.

The investigators hoped "someday there might be a way" to be recompensed for their efforts, but were donating their services at that time, Cope said.

He admitted that the story of an innocent man spending 10 years in prison would be more valuable to him than the story of a guilty man spending 10 years in prison.

He testified that he and Brown were very careful not to provide information to Toole when they questioned him.

The bulk of Cope's testimony was recounting numerous, accurate details of the crime that Toole knew, and that are backed up by a transcript by a court reporter who sat in on the third interview.

Cope said no recording was made of the first short discussion because prison officials would not allow it and none of the second because Toole had said he did not want it recorded. On the third occasion, Toole allowed it.

Homicide

Thursday, September 19, 1974

VICTIM(S):

Sun Ok Cousin

SUSPECT(S):

Park Journal Estep

Estep's current defense attorneys, Lance Sears and Dkick Tegtmeier, who stepped into the case after Robertson withdrew, said Ottis Toole this month had confirmed he killed Ms. Cousin. And they promised a woman would testify that 10 years ago on the night of the murder she saw Toole in the street a block away from the massage parlor.

Tuesday, February 11, 1986 – Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph – Page B1, Column 1 – By Joyce Trent

Estep probers got \$24,500, witness admits

Private investigator Fred Cope admitted Monday that his firm received \$24,500 for services involving convicted killers Park Estep and Ottis Toole, but said he knew nothing of the \$250,000 his firm had a contract to share if Estep were freed.

Cope said in 4th District Court that until last week he had not seen the contract with a publishing company that District Attorney Barney Iuppa handed him Monday during a hearing on Estep's motion for a new trial. The motion is based on Toole's "confession" to the Colorado Springs murder of which Estep was convicted in 1975. Estep has been in prison since his conviction.

Cope and his partner, Bob Brown, obtained Toole's confession in August 1984 after obtaining the publishing rights to Estep's story. Iuppa says it is a false confession motivated by promises of riches from selling publishing rights.

Estep has not been at the hearing, which started last Thursday. Toole is awaiting execution for a murder in Florida.

Estep's attorneys, Lance Sears and Dick Tegtmeier, said one reason Estep was not at the hearing was that he had received a threat that if he came to the El Paso County Jail he would be killed during a staged escape attempt. But he is expected for part of the hearing later, they said.

In other testimony, Cope admitted Toole was shown photos of the scene of the murder of one woman and the beating of another on September 19, 1974, in a massage parlor, but he said Toole provided the details of the crime before being shown the photos.

The photo session, he said, was "just a recap of what he (Toole) had said earlier" when his statements were not recorded.

Cope was under cross-examination for most of the day.

Iuppa plans to introduce the contract into evidence later. Attorney Lyle Robertson signed it with Deccalon Publishing Company of Australia on September 7, 1984, on behalf of himself, Cope and Brown.

The contract transfers the rights of the three in Estep's story to Deccalon and contains a provision that some money would be placed in escrow immediately for investigative services and that \$250,000 would be paid within 180 days of Estep's release from prison.

Cope said he had never heard of Deccalon Publishing until September 1, when its representatives showed up with Robertson in Jacksonville, Florida, where they were interviewing Toole.

Toole confessed on the record on August 31 after he had had two off-the-record discussions with Cope and Brown.

Cope said he had heard talk later of the Toole – Estep story's being worth a possible "\$100,000, \$500,000 or \$1 million," but at that time "there was no talk of money."

He said he and Brown had become convinced Estep was innocent.

The \$24,500 was all the firm received, Cope said - \$10,000 for services in the Estep case and the rest for information about Toole's other exploits. Toole had confessed to numerous murders around the country.

Only the third of the probers' interviews was recorded, Cope had testified, because the prison would not allow it the first time and Toole would not allow it the second time.

Cope admitted Toole was shown a picture of the lamp cord that was used to tie up one of his victims, but said that was after Toole had already said he used telephone cord.

The transcript states, "Does this picture make you think of anything?"

Toole answered, "Well, when I ain't got no rope, I generally cut the cords, and use it to tie up people."

Wednesday, February 12, 1986 – Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph – Page B1, Column 2 – By Joyce Trent

Money aspect of Estep case 'exciting'

Attorney Lyle Robertson testified Tuesday he as excited about the monetary prospects for the confession his associates obtained from Ottis Toole to the murder for which Park Estep convicted.

"I think everyone was," he said, referring to the atmosphere at a dinner meeting he had with representatives of Deccalon Publishing Company on August 31, 1984, the same day Toole put the confession to the Colorado Springs killing on record.

Toole has since recanted the confession.

Called as a witness in Estep's 4th District Court hearing on a motion for a new trial, Robertson – Estep's former attorney – said it was "extremely exciting" to return home with Deccalon representatives after traveling to Florida to view the confession first-hand "because of all the press that wanted to talk to me."

Estep was convicted in 1975 of the September 19, 1974, slaying of massage parlor operator Sun Ok Cousin. He is asking for a new trial.

Homicide

Thursday, September 19, 1974

VICTIM(S):

Sun Ok Cousin

SUSPECT(S):

Park Journal Estep

The attorney obtained the autobiographical rights to Estep's story before he and investigators Bob Brown and Fred Cope went to Florida to see if Tolle would confess. He decided to ask for the rights while en route to the prison to see Estep on August 20.

Brown had got him to believe in Estep's innocence and ignited his interest in trying to prove it.

Estep had agreed to pay him if the case had a successful outcome, but in the meantime, "We were wondering how in the world to finance the investigation."

They had the autobiographical rights but no idea when they went to Florida where they might sell the story. Then on August 31, the day the confession was recorded, Deccalon suddenly entered the picture.

Robertson was in Colorado Springs at the time and Paul Schilling, a promoter for Deccalon, had asked him to lunch, Robertson said. But the business to be discussed was not about Estep and Toole, he said, and he had never heard of Deccalon until that time.

"We were fairly good friends," he answered in response to a question from District Attorney Barney Iuppa.

The luncheon meeting was to explore the prospects of Robertson's serving as a corporate attorney for the Australia-based Deccalon, which was trying to set up a company in Colorado Springs and offer stock to the public.

The publishing people asked about his practice and Toole's two earlier off-the-record confessions were mentioned briefly, he said.

After lunch, Brown and Cope phoned from Florida with the news that they had the confession on record, Robertson said. He had dinner with the Deccalon people at the Penrose Room of the Broadmoor and they discussed the possibility of book rights, he said.

At first Robertson testified that he didn't know whether anyone at the dinner meeting was excited about what could come from the confession. Then he admitted they all were.

Of Deccalon, he said, "They were just a cookbook company and they needed something to spice up their prospectus."

Robertson said that large figures – "hundreds of thousands" – were thrown out later as possible earnings from the publishing rights.

Then it got down to written promises. The figure \$50,000 was to be paid into escrow. Into a September 7, 1984, agreement the figure \$250,000 was written as the amount which would be paid on Estep's release from prison as a free man, Robertson said.

"I said if you want the rights on Park Estep then we need some money and however you do it in the publishing world, maybe a royalty structure, let's do it."

Asked what the money was to be for, he said. "For legal investigation and fees on the Park Estep case."

But he said the September 7 document, which Iuppa terms a contract, was only an intent agreement, not a solid contract. That was to come later, but didn't.

"Every agreement with Deccalon was breached, he said, including the one that was to have made him a \$15,000-a-year director. He said the stockholders never ratified it, so he never actually held the post.

Thursday, February 13, 1986 – Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph – Page B3, Column 1 – By Joyce Trent

Judge views tapes of killers during hearing in Estep case

Fourth District Judge John Gallagher spent Wednesday watching videotapes of the notorious Ottis Toole and his former companion Henry Lee Lucas talking to Colorado Springs law-enforcement officers.

Videotapes of conversations with the two convicted murderers who have confessed to more than 100 murders – were the only evidence presented during Wednesday's session of Park Estep's motion for a new murder trial.

The tapes were made after Toole had confessed to the September 19, 1974 slaying of Colorado Springs massage parlor operator Sun Ok Cousin, for which Estep has been imprisoned for the last 11 years. That confession is the basis for Estep's argument that he was wrongfully convicted.

Two private investigators for Estep obtained Toole's confession on August 31, 1984, in the Florida State Penitentiary. Colorado Springs police detective Lou Smit and El Paso County sheriff's detective Gary Brown interviewed Toole on videotape on September 12, 1984.

The private investigators had also talked to Lucas on October 3 in another prison and obtained a statement from him that Toole told him he murdered a Colorado woman in a "white house set on a sort of a hill and that he burned her."

Two days after Smit and Brown talked to Toole they also interviewed Lucas.

Estep's lawyers went to show the judge how the interviews were handled.

The videotapes of Toole's first recorded confession, his recanting soon afterward, his recent affirmation of the original confession and subsequent re-recanting have not been played yet in court.

The last interviews with him were a defense interview on January 13 and a law enforcement interview on February 1, just before the start of the hearing in 4th District Court.

On Wednesday a series of witnesses from Florida, including several of Toole's relatives, are scheduled to testify about Toole's whereabouts on the day Ms. Cousin was murdered.

The prosecution has used a tire-slashing incident the Toole family knows about to try to show that Toole was in Jacksonville at the time Ms. Cousin was killed.

Saturday, February 15, 1986 - Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page B1, Column 1 – By Joyce Trent

Estep identification criticized by expert

A massage-parlor employee who survived a killer's attack in 1974 might have been a victim of "post-event suggestion" when she identified Park Estep as the assailant, an expert in eye-witness identification testified Friday.

Estep was convicted of the first-degree murder of Sun Ok Cousin, who owned Suezy's Oriental Massage Parlor, and of an assault on employee Yon Cha Yi Lee, largely on the basis of Ms. Lee's identification of him.

Dr. Elizabeth Loftus said that identification may have been tainted.

A psychology professor at the University of Washington, where she has conducted extensive experiments about identification, Loftus was called as a witness for Estep Friday in his hearing on a request of a new trial.

The request is based on the 1984 confession to the crime by Florida serial killer Ottis Toole, who Loftus says from a photo comparison "looks remarkably like Park Estep."

When an extremely traumatic event occurs, Loftus testified, "the human mind suffers an impairment in mental function." Her experiments show that up to two minutes before the traumatic event can be blocked out, she said.

If new information becomes available and the victim is impressed with the source of that information, there is a potential for changing a person's recollection, Loftus said. That is called "post-event suggestion,"

"We have been able to convince people that a car that went through a red light went through a green light," Loftus said. "You can move memories around if it is done in a clever way."

"I see indications of this with Ms. Lee."

The witness said Lee originally described the assailant as driving a white vehicle. "Some time later this vehicle into a red vehicle."

"It is suggested in the record that the reason for this memory change is because she was supplied with new information," Loftus testified.

She was referring to a transcript of the trial testimony in which the defense asked Ms. Lee if police told her they had a description of the truck and the truck was red.

The first-time Lee said, "No, I told them it was a red pickup" but when asked again if police told her about a red truck, she replied, "Yes."

Police have said the policeman who took her statement the night of the crime as she lay in the hospital with her throat slit had misunderstood her and wrote down a white truck when the woman meant the vehicle was red with a white toolbox.

Lee viewed 65 photos to try to identify the assailant. From some of the photos she identified features that were like the assailant's and finally from a group of 14 photos she picked Estep as the attacker.

Loftus said Lee looked at Estep's photo and told police, "That looks like him. Detective (Lou) Smit then says, 'Are you sure this is the man?'" New words were put in her mouth."

By the time Lee had picked Estep in a live lineup, his face was in her mind, Loftus said, and by the time she got to trial she was positive.

"If a photo is viewed before (a live lineup), the chances of mistaken identity are about 20 percent," Loftus said.

The difference in race plays a role in misidentification, too, Loftus said.

Lee is very likely to select Estep again today if she were to see both him and Toole, the witness said.

Under cross-examination from 4th District Attorney Barney Iuppa, Loftus could not say how much more than two minutes prior to the crime would be lost in memory. Lee testified the assailant come into the parlor twice and was there for awhile.

Iuppa got the witness to admit that if someone first said a victim wore a white smock, as Toole did in his unrecorded confession to Estep's investigators, and were shown a picture of a red dress from then on.

Loftus said her opinion that Estep and Toole looked alike came from side-by-side photos published in a newspaper article and supplied her by the defense. She has not seen the two men in person and does not know whether they talk alike or walk alike.

Saturday, March 8, 1986 - Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page B4, Column 1 – By Joyce Trent

Estep had no cell mate, former prisoner testifies

Robert Leon Dotson, who said he was in the cell next to Park Estep's in March 1975, testified Friday that Estep had no cellmate at the time, contradicting earlier testimony by Donald Langlois.

Langlois testified Wednesday he was Estep's cellmate then. He told the court that Estep confessed to him he murdered massage-parlor operator Sun Ok Cousin.

Estep was convicted of the 1974 crime and is trying to get a new trial on the grounds that self-proclaimed Florida murderer Ottis Toole has confessed to it. Toole's statements have changed depending on who was interviewing him. Estep is serving a 48- to 67-year prison sentence.

Dotson, who was in jail in connection with the death of his 5-year-old stepson, had taken a look at Langlois on Wednesday when Langlois testified. Dotson said Friday in 4th District Judge John Gallagher's court that he "didn't know him."

Homicide

Thursday, September 19, 1974

VICTIM(S):

SUSPECT(S):

Sun Ok Cousin

Park Journal Estep

"The only cellmate I can recall him (Estep) having was Noodles," Dotson said. He later identified Noodles as Roger Lewis Moore.

Langlois had mentioned Dotson as have a cell in the area when he testified but he placed the three of them on the fourth floor of the jail.

Dotson said he and Estep were on the second floor.

Langlois had said the confession came sometime during the lunch hour during Estep's trial, but Dotson said when defendants were in trial they were not fed in their own cells. Sheriff's Sergeant Steve Brady recalled those in trial were fed in a courthouse cell or a holding cell in the jail basement.

During cross-examination of Brady, District Attorney Barney Iuppa attempted to show that Langlois could have been in a cell with Estep at lunch time. He tried to get testimony from the jailer that other inmates who had court appearances on a day Estep was in trial, could have ended up in a courthouse or holding cell with him at noon.

But Estep's attorney, Dick Tegtmeier, established that those cells did not have bunks. Langlois had said he was on a bunk reading when Estep started to confess.

Dotson admitted under cross-examination that he did not remember all of his own cellmates. He recalled one named Red but did not know his last name and another "who went to Buena Vista" whose name he did not know at all.

Dotson admitted a lot of people came in and out of the cellblock and that being somewhat of a loner, he did not always go out of his way to meet them.

Toole's sister, Vaughnette Sypurs, of Jacksonville, Florida, testified Friday that Toole told her on September 2, 1984, he killed the massage-parlor operator.

She had been visiting Toole, she said, when a jailer came to get him for a talk with Colorado Springs private investigators Bob Brown and Fred Cope who had obtained the confession from him earlier.

When Toole returned to the visiting room, "He told me about the murder that he did commit at the massage-parlor.

"But I would like to add at that time he was telling me of all sorts of murders he had committed and I don't believe it. He really had my head all messed up."

She said Toole later told her that he had not committed the Colorado Springs murder.

She admitted that a sheriff's deputy, Johnny Miller, was in the room and that Miller told Toole if Estep were freed Toole's family might be in danger.

She also testified about a tire slashing which the prosecution has used to place Toole at home in Jacksonville at the time of the murder.

Although she had no knowledge of it, she said her stepfather, Frank Powell, Jr., told her that Toole was in Jacksonville when it occurred.

Asked about her dealings with Decalon, the firm that planned to publish the Toole and Estep stories, she said Paul Schilling told her, "There was to be \$5,000 up front and a lot of big money was mentioned that we could make off this."

She got \$7,000 from their representatives. Toole was to get \$100 a month for three years but only two of those payments were made.

She said she did not recall Toole ever having a white Chevy truck that the defense maintains Toole drove to Colorado.

Attorney Lyle Robertson, who got Estep's autobiographical rights, testified that he did not know of Schilling's connection to Decalon until after the confession was obtained August 31, 1984, although he may have started representing Schilling's girlfriend in a child-custody case in July.

Brown took the witness stand again and denied ever telling Debra Schillings he believed Estep was guilty. Paul Schilling was the one who was always saying that, Brown testified.

Friday, July 11, 1986 - Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page B2, Column 4 - By Kathryn Martin

Judge delays ruling to reduce killer Park Estep's sentence

Fourth District Court Judge John F. Gallagher delayed a ruling Thursday on whether to reduce the prison sentence for Park Estep, who was convicted in the 1974 murder of a Colorado Springs massage-parlor operator.

"This issue is a lot more complicated than it would appear on the surface . . . I want to take some time to think about this. I think I can assure you I will be a lot quicker this time," Gallagher said, referring to his decision in May denying Estep a new trial.

Gallagher denied the new trial three months after a six-week hearing that began in February.

Defense attorneys Lance Sears and Richard Tegtmeier said Thursday that Estep's prison sentence, imposed in 1975 by now-retired Judge Hunter Hardeman, is excessive and does not comply with the jury's recommendation for leniency.

District Attorney Barney Iuppa said Estep's sentence is "correct and the court should not interfere and (should) leave the sentence intact."

Estep was sentenced to 30 to 40 years for felony murder, six to nine years for first-degree arson and six to nine years for aggravated robbery. The judge ordered the terms run consecutively.

Sears said Estep's sentence is "far worse" than that of a life sentence. During 1975, when Estep was sentenced, a person given a life sentence would be eligible for parole in 10 years. However, Estep must serve at least 13 years and seven months before he will be eligible for parole under his current sentence, Sears said.

Homicide

Thursday, September 19, 1974

VICTIM(S):

Sun Ok Cousin

SUSPECT(S):

Park Journal Estep

Estep said during testimony Thursday that a reduced sentence would help him get out of prison before his current release date of 2009, if he maintains a good record in prison.

"I do not anticipate ever being paroled. My chance of getting out of prison is based on my discharge date," Estep said.

Gallagher asked Estep if he felt Thursday's proceedings were futile.

"I hope not," Estep said.

Sun Ok Cousin, 36, was tied up, set afire and shot at her Suzy Oriental Massage Parlor, 934 South Nevada Avenue, and an employee, Yon Cha Yi Lee, 32, was stabbed, but survived to identify Estep.

Estep, then a Fort Carson soldier, was convicted by a jury and has served 11 years of his sentence.

The 38-year-old has maintained his innocence, which is one reason he has remained in prison, he said. Estep said he has appeared before the Department of Corrections Commute Board in 1977 and 1982. Each time, he said, he has stated his innocence.

"They asked me what I could tell them about the case and I said nothing except what was in the police report and they said, 'Fine, no point in talking to you,' and that was it," Estep said, referring to the 1977 encounter with the board.

"I came to the conclusion that out of self-preservation the only thing I could do is go in to the commute board and confess to everything since the Lincoln assassination I went there with every intention, but when I opened my mouth, I couldn't do it."

Estep testified that he has been disciplined once in 11 years when officials found in his possession a one-pound bag of coffee from the prison kitchen. Otherwise, Estep said, he has been a model prisoner, receiving numerous promotions in a variety of jobs at the prison.

"You know, when I think about it, it seems that most of the jobs I've had at the prison are now done by civilians," Estep said, grinning for the first time during the hour-long proceedings.

Estep said he wants his prison sentence reduced so he can get out of prison, go to college and work in the legal profession.

day, February 2, 1990- Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page B2, Column 3

Convicted killer Estep dealt setback in bid for freedom

day, March 25, 1990- Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page B1, Column 1

Man maintains he's innocent of 1974 murder

day, March 30, 1990- Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page B4, Column 1

Appeals court ruling favors convicted killer Estep can file motion for new trial or release

day, April 3, 1990- Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page B2, Column 1

DA will ask court to refuse new trial for convicted killer

day, August 22, 1990- Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page B2, Column 1

Estep has waited too long for parole, attorney says Murder committed in 1974

Homicide
Thursday, September 19, 1974

VICTIM(S):
SUSPECT(S):

Sun Ok Cousin
Park Journal Estep

day, September 20, 1990- Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph - Page B5, Column 1

**Judge upholds ruling making killer Estep eligible for parole
Suthers vows fight 'to the last day' to keep murderer behind bars**