

Sherrill: McNamee not dealing drugs

By Mark Bonne
Herald staff writer

JOLIET — Since Timothy McNamee's murder last June, more than one former client has come forward with stories alleging Algonquin Police Lt. Steve Schinkel was trying to frame the Carpentersville attorney on drug charges.

Convicted burglar Michael Sherrill, the major source of such claims, said last week that Schinkel allegedly tried to gain his confidence by slipping him a handcuff key and placing long-distance phone calls for him while Sherrill was behind bars in the Lake County Jail.

Sherrill, who is now serving a 15-years in the state prison in Joliet, elaborated during a telephone interview Thursday on his earlier allegation that Schinkel offered him \$10,000 to incriminate McNamee and his law partner, Tim Mahoney, on charges they were selling cocaine.

"I played football with Tim (McNamee) way back in 1980 ... and I'm sure he didn't use cocaine. I've done so much cocaine, I know when person's on cocaine," Sherrill said. "As far as I know, they didn't deal cocaine either."

State police arrested Sherrill in December 1986, on charges he masterminded 1,500 residential burglaries in McHenry, Kane, Lake and Cook counties. Sher-

rill's arrested ended a two-month investigation by a task force of officers from 13 police departments, which including Schinkle from Algonquin.

Sherrill, who was tried first in Lake County, claims Schinkel visited him in jail there four times, twice in the company of state narcotics agent Larry Mason. Sherrill claims Schinkel made the

original offer in February.

"I think it was a personal thing. They were obsessed with getting McNamee and Mahoney," Sherrill said. "They said McNamee and Mahoney had embarrassed them in court. For some reason, Schinkel said he didn't like McNamee living near Algonquin. He said he didn't like it at all."

Police are optimistic crime will be solved

By Gerard Dziuba
Herald community editor

CARPENTERSVILLE — It has been six months since attorney Timothy McNamee's body was found dead in the parking lot of his law firm.

Even though no suspects have been arrested and police are not saying if they know of any motive for the crime, the optimism that the crime will eventually be solved has not dwindled.

"We are still working the case on full-time and over-time basis and we will continue to do so until have exhausted all leads," said Carpentersville Police Chief Leon Kutzke.

Days after the 34-year-old attorney was shot about 50 feet from his black Porsche, Kutzke put together a task force of local investigators, state police officers and FBI agents. Working from a Schaumburg location, their job is to follow every lead the local department receives. Four months into the investigation Illinois Attorney General Neil Hartigan joined the probe to help with those leads.

"We have a focus on the case, I will not explain what it is, but I am still optimistic that this case is solveable," Kutzke said.

Aside from the police task force, McNamee's family and friends are

During February and March, Sherrill claims he made at least eight collect calls to Schinkel at the Algonquin Police Department, who then connected Sherrill to his Carpentersville fiancée and let them talk for free.

Sherrill claims Schinkel and Mason returned in early April, saying they could negotiate a lesser four-year prison sentence if he cooperated. The convicted burglar also claims Schinkel gave him and handcuff key at this time.

"Schinkel said he's got a lot of power in McHenry County," Sherrill said, "That's when he really tried to gain my confidence."

Sherrill said Schinkel returned in June, alone, demanding "I make a taped statement there that day or all deals were off." Sherrill said he refused because McNamee and Mahoney "had been good to me throughout the years."

Sherrill said the law firm represented him for burglary in 1979, vandalism charges in 1981 and possession of stolen property in 1985, winning two of the three cases.

Sherrill came forward with the story in late June after learning of McNamee's murder. Sherrill said Carpentersville police gave him a polygraph test, which he claims he passed.

"I'm not doing anything for revenge against Lt. Schinkel," Sherrill said Thursday.

See McNAMEE, page 2

N.W. HERA 14 12-8-87

McNamee

Continued from page 1

also working to find the killer. They, too, hold the promise that the crime will be solved.

"I'll find the person," said the attorney's twin brother Thom. "Now matter how long it takes, I'll find him."

Months after the crime, Thom McNamee initiated a grassroots effort to have Gov. Thompson form an independent task force.

Even though task force was never formed, Thom McNamee said he is satisfied with the level of the investigation.

"Tim's friends have helped a lot. I am extremely grateful with the support Tim's friends have shown," Thom McNamee said.

It was the slain attorney's friends who helped distribute flyer's on the \$50,000 reward as well as petitions to have the governor form the task force.

Kutzke said he is not bothered that a private investigator may be called in, just as long as that person does not hamper his police investigation.

"As time went by it looked like there a number of possible motives. Now that we have focused it to one, we know the work we are doing has been profitable," Kutzke said. "It can be solved."

Correction:

N.W. Herald 12-8-87