

Blues artist on trial in brutal slaying

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Francis Clay, a South of Market resident who was planning to put them onstage and play behind them when he heard of Williamson's death. "I loved her. It's a shame."

CROWD PLEASERS

Chicago Brother and Sister played a mixture of blues standards: "Everyday I Have the Blues," "Sweet Home Chicago," "I've Got My Mojo Working," "Rock Me Baby," "Going to New York," "Big Boss Man," "Little Red Rooster," "Walking Blues" and even Chuck Berry's rocker "Roll Over Beethoven."

"We did a lot of different songs," said



Brooks and Williamson had a large following.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RANDY COHEN

Randy Cohen, a slide guitarist who worked with and recorded them, and more recently has become a fixture outside Pacific Bell Park baseball games. "Most of the time as soon as she started singing, 20-50 people would gather around. When we'd do festivals, we'd have hundreds."

"She did the best version of 'Ode to Billy Joe' ever," Cohen said, and he also recalled their originals such as Williamson's "You Reached Your Goal," "I

Followed You All Over Town," Brooks' "The Blues Follow Me" and a lyric she wrote to go with the Jimmy Smith instrumental "Chicken Shack" that went "Baby I Do Love/Need You."

"I was involved with those guys intimately for three or four years," Cohen said. "We took this really seriously and worked really hard. We were out there every day."

"I never had a problem with money, everything was on the up-and-up. It was a good living."

Earlier versions of the band had Brooks

covering the percussion duties with a one-man-band-type pedal contraption that allowed him to keep time on a high-hat cymbal and snare and bass drums. Brooks also would play bass and Williamson drums whenever the ubiquitous Carlos Guitarlos took over on guitar.

GOSPEL TUNES

Williamson would often close their sets with a gleeful "I'm a Woman." Other times, they'd do a version of the Mighty Clouds of Joy's gospel standard "Don't Let the Devil Ride."

"Can't play nothing else after that," Cohen recalled her telling the crowd afterward. "We did that one for the Lord. We can't top that!"

"She was very proud of the fact that we did that gospel tune," Cohen said. "She was religious."

Cohen also brought some drummers into the mix, among them Frank Samuels and Larry "The Flame" Hunt. Besides being a talented drummer, Hunt is a fire-eater, and would play with his drumsticks alight at the end of their sets.

"I was always hoping that they would have their day in the sun," Cohen said, but "those guys fought all the time. It was part of the daily existence."

Clay said the couple fought so much it made it hard for them to get or keep club work.

Indeed, in the last month of her life, Williamson, 50, was arrested for assaulting Brooks after allegedly biting his ear in an argument at Pier 41.

NEIGHBOR'S GRISLY TALE

Their car-camping neighbor, Herbert G. Anderson, testified at Brooks' preliminary hearing in September, saying that Brooks came to him and told him that he'd killed her, that he'd used a hammer and that "it took her a long time to die."

Anderson also testified that Brooks drove him to the Third Street drawbridge below Cesar Chavez Street, where Anderson said Brooks said he'd tried unsuccessfully to dump

Williamson's body. From there, Anderson said, Brooks drove him to a spot at the Hunters Point shipyard where Brooks said he ultimately tossed Williamson's body, weighted and wrapped in a blue tarp, into the bay.

Homicide Inspector Kervin Silas testified that Charlie Miranda, a musician who sometimes worked with Chicago Brother and Sister, told him that Brooks appeared at his door one May morning at 6 and said: "I finally did it. I killed Juliette."

Silas added that Miranda said Brooks had told him Williamson "had used a hammer to break a tape deck that had a tape that he was proud of, some group that he was in a long time ago, Gospel Minstrels or something like that."

According to Silas' testimony, Brooks told Miranda he'd followed Williamson from their van, which they used for work, into the bus they lived in, which was parked along Iowa Street, and struck her from behind with a hammer.

APOLOGY IGNORED

Williamson turned around and said, "Bruce, I'm sorry," Silas said Miranda had told him. The apology apparently was insufficient, as Dr. Glen Nazareno, a forensic pathologist in the medical examiner's office, who inspected Williamson's corpse, said she died from perhaps as many as eight blows to her head.

At Brooks' September hearing, Deputy Public Defender Jeff Barbour asked that the charges against Brooks be reduced from first-degree murder to manslaughter, based on Williamson's previous assault arrest and a "series of events constituting provocation" and Brooks' "voluntary intoxication," which in some cases "may negate any malice in a first-degree murder."

"There is ample evidence" of this in the case, Barbour argued. "Mr. Anderson, I think, puts it best with the knowledge, Mr. Brooks is always drunk."

Judge Charles F. Haines ruled, however, that the prosecution had adequately made its case for the first-degree murder charge. ■

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPECIAL MEETING

Code Enforcement Workgroup, Feb. 13 and Feb. 27, 2 p.m., 449 Turk. Sponsored by Central City SRO Collaborative, the sessions are for hotel tenants who want to improve the condition of their home and neighborhood. More information: 775-7110.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS (REGULAR SCHEDULE)

HOUSING

Consumer Housing Group, 1st Thursday of the month, 6-7:30 p.m., Mental Health Association, 1095 Market St., Suite 408. Contact: 241-2926.

Tenant Associations Coalition of San Francisco, 1st Wednesday of the month, noon, 201 Turk Community Room. Contact Michael Nulty, 339-8327. Resident unity, leadership training, facilitate communication.

Supportive Housing Network, 3rd Thursday of the month, 3-5 p.m., 111 Jones. Contact: Belinda Lyons, 241-2929.

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health Board, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., CMHS, 1380 Howard, Rm. 537. CMHS advisory committee, open to the public. Contact: 255-3474.

Hoarders and Clutterers Support Group, 2nd Monday and 4th Wednesday of each month, 6-7 p.m. Canon Kip Community House, Pool Room, 705 Natoma St. at 8th. Contact: 241-2926.

CMHS Consumer Council, 3rd Monday of the month,

5:30-7:30, CMHS, 1380 Howard, Rm. 537. Contact: 255-3428. Advisory group of consumers from self-help organizations and other mental health consumer advocates. Open to the public.

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill-S.F., 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Family Service Agency, 1010 Gough, 5th Fl. Contact 905-6264. Family member group, open to consumers and the public.

Supervisors' Health and Human Services Committee — Daly, Leno, Maxwell, 1st and 3rd Thursday 1 p.m.

SAFETY

S.F. Safe Kids, 2nd Tuesday of the month. Contact Ana Validzic, 206-3350. Child health and safety.

Tenderloin Police Station Community Meeting, last Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., police station Community Room, 301 Eddy. Contact Susan Black, 345-7300. Neighborhood safety

Tenderloin Futures Committee, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10 a.m., 121 Golden Gate. Contact Roscoe Hawkins, 592-2704, or Katie Mullin, 776-2151 for information. Network of residents, nonprofits and businesses sharing information and taking on neighborhood development issues.

Violence Prevention Network, last Tuesday of the month, 10 a.m., 220 Golden Gate, Rm. 4D. Contact Christina Goette, 554-2741, Violence prevention.

North of Market NERT, bimonthly meeting. Contact Tim Agar, 674-6142, or Lt. Juanita Hodge, S.F. Fire

Department, 558-3456. Disaster preparedness training by the Fire Department.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

Alliance for a Better District 6, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., 301 Eddy. Contact Michael Nulty, 820-1560 or sf_district6@yahoo.com. Districtwide association, civic education.

Tenderloin Community on Patrol, 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month, 165 Turk St. Office. Contact Jim Thompson, 673-5879. Neighborhood safety.

Mid-Market Project Area Committee, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 p.m., Ramada Hotel, 1231 Market. Contact Carolyn Diamond, 362-2500. Market Street redevelopment on Fifth to Eighth street.

North of Market Planning Coalition, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., 301 Eddy. Contact 474-2164. TL 2000, jobs, neighborhood planning.

Supervisors' Neighborhood Services and Recreation Committee — Newsom, Leno, McGoldrick, 2nd and 4th Thursday 2 p.m.

SENIORS AND DISABLED

Mayor's Disability Council, 3rd Friday of the month, 1-3 p.m., City Hall, Rm. 400. Contact: 554-6789. Open to the public.

Tenderloin Police Station Seniors and Disabled Meeting last Thursday of the month, 10 a.m., police station Community Room, 301 Eddy. Contact Susan Black, 345-7300. Concerns specific to seniors and the disabled.