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CRIMINAL MINDS & METHODS

UPDATE: Former Pastor Convicted of Murder Found Dead in his Cell

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According to Michigan Department of Corrections authorities, John D. White the former pastor who confessed and was sentenced in April 2013 to 56 years in prison for the second-degree murder of his fiancée's daughter, [Rebekah Gay](#), 24, hanged himself in his cell. He was [pronounced dead](#) at 4:38 a.m. on August 28, 2013.



John D. White

White, who though he had a criminal past was the pastor of the small Christ Community Fellowship church, was engaged to a parishioner, Gay's mother. He lived a few trailers down from the Gay and her son, 3, and frequently babysat for her boy. He was doing just that on October 31, 2012, when he bashed Gay repeatedly in the head with a rubber mallet until he knocked her out, then strangled her to death with a plastic zip tie as part of a morbid fantasy he had about having sex with her corpse. All this while the child was in the trailer.

He told investigators that [he forgot whether or not he carried out that fantasy](#).

Then he stuffed her in a garbage bag, dumped her in the woods, and returned to dress her son up in his Halloween costume. White was uncooperative with police until they found Rebekah's necklace in his truck. At that point he started to come clean with investigators.

The fact that [White had been in and out of prison](#) since 1981 has been troubling to many following the case. At that time White [pleaded no contest](#) to luring a neighbor's daughter, 17, to his basement, choking and repeatedly stabbing her in an unprovoked attack. He was sentenced to 10 years, but was paroled after only two. He went on to murder again. This time it was an unmarried young woman he was having an affair with, Vicky Sue Wall, 26, who he claimed was pressuring him about his marriage.

Her body was so decomposed when discovered after six weeks in the woods, that no cause of death was ever determined. In 1995 White pleaded guilty to Wall's murder, but never gave prosecutors any of the details. At his sentencing he called it an accident. White was denied parole on more than one occasion, but ultimately won an early release in 2007 after serving 12 years of a 15-year sentence.

Though it is tempting to lay the blame for this tragedy at the door of the parole board, it is also worth mentioning White's small church community, who naively granted an ex-con such a position of trust, without doing a background check. White reportedly told them that he was imprisoned for walking away from a woman who had overdosed. He lied.

Pastor Confessed to Murder of Rebekah Gay

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