



TheState.com | News | Business | Sports | Entertainment | Living | Classifieds | Jobs | Cars | Homes |

State, The (Columbia, SC)

1988-03-27

Section: METRO/REGION

Edition: FINAL

Page: 1D

WOMAN ACQUITTED IN KILLING HUSBAND SHOT THREE TIMES

From Staff Reports

A Hopkins woman was found innocent of murder Saturday in the shooting of her husband, who, according to testimony, had terrorized the woman and their children for several years.

Sam McKnight, 50, was shot three times in the back with two guns about 3 a.m. Aug. 24. Richland County deputies charged his wife of 26 years, Lula, with murder.

Defense attorney **Jack Swerling** said McKnight, a state highway department employee, led a responsible life with the exception of weekend drinking bouts, during which he often abused his wife and children. About midnight Aug. 24, McKnight came home and threatened the family. He left the home after one of his sons stepped between him and his wife, but returned shortly before 3 a.m.

"I'm going to kill you. I'm going to kill you tonight," **Swerling** quoted McKnight as telling his wife when he returned.

Mrs. McKnight retrieved two pistols she had hidden from her husband and shot him in the back.

McKnight was not armed when he was shot, but testimony showed he may have been attempting to get a nearby weapon.

An autopsy showed McKnight had been shot twice with a .22-caliber pistol and once with a .32-caliber pistol. He had a blood-alcohol level of about 0.157 percent when he died -- well over the limit for legally intoxication.

Testimony showed that McKnight had tried unsuccessfully to solve his drinking problem through a church, Alcoholics' Anonymous and a local hospital, **Swerling** said.

Assistant Solicitor Creighton Coleman argued that though there may have been violence in the house, Mrs. McKnight had alternatives.

The jury, which could have found Mrs. McKnight guilty of murder or voluntary manslaughter, deliberated about an hour before announcing the innocent verdict.



News | Business | Sports | Entertainment | Living | Shop Local | Classifieds | Jobs | Cars | Real Estate
 About TheState.com | About the Real Cities Network | About the McClatchy Company
 Terms of Use | Privacy Policy | Copyright