

The Record

Woman who pleaded self-defense found innocent in husband's death

By Anne Marshall
Staff writer Thursday, October 6, 1983

A Columbia woman who claimed she was a battered wife has been found innocent of charges that she killed her husband during a domestic dispute.

Mae McCalla, 34, was found innocent on the basis of self-defense after a Richland County General Sessions Court jury deliberated about four hours Tuesday.

She had been indicted on a murder charge in the Feb. 26 stabbing death of her husband, Neville McCalla, 40, at their apartment on Fort Jackson Boulevard.

According to testimony, McCalla died during a fight with his wife. A SLED agent testified that he was intoxicated at the time of the incident.

He fought with Mrs. McCalla and "tossed her" about the kitchen. He left once during the dispute, but later returned and started fighting again.

Mrs. McCalla stabbed him, and he died several hours later at Moncrief Army Hospital, according to testimony.

The reputed murder weapon, a kitchen knife with a 12-inch blade, was offered into evidence during the trial by 5th Circuit Assistant Solicitor Terry Wooten.

Wooten argued that an examination of Mrs. McCalla showed no indication that she was battered. He also said that she first claimed she found her husband bleeding from stab wounds after she got out of the shower.

There was no record that Mrs. McCalla had ever reported being beaten by her husband, Wooten said.

According to reports, McCalla weighed about twice as much as his wife, who is 4 feet 11 inches tall and weighs about 100 pounds.

Columbia attorney Jack Swerling represented Mrs. McCalla.

Woman Acquitted Of Killing Husband In Self-Defense

By PETER O'BOYLE III
State Staff Writer

A jury has found a Columbia woman not guilty of murder in the stabbing death of her husband.

Mae Lula McCalla had contended that she acted in self-defense when she thrust a 12-inch kitchen knife into her husband's chest on Feb. 26.

The 5th Circuit Court jury deliberated about four hours before returning its verdict at 8:30 p. m. Tuesday in the two-day trial. Mrs. McCalla, 34, had been charged with

murder. She was defended by attorney Jack Swerling.

According to defense testimony, Mrs. McCalla was cleaning a chicken in the kitchen of the couple's Jackson Boulevard apartment when her husband, Neville, 40, began arguing with her about the loudness of a stereo.

McCalla began hitting his wife and throwing her around the kitchen, said Mrs. McCalla, who is 4-feet, 11-inches tall and weighs 100 pounds. Her husband weighed nearly 200 pounds.

McCalla walked away and then returned to begin fighting again. This time, she stabbed him.

He was taken to Moncrief Army Hospital at Fort Jackson and was operated on and received 19 units of blood. He died about four hours after the stabbing.

An autopsy showed that McCalla was highly intoxicated at the time of the stabbing.

Judge Julius H. Baggett gave the jury the option of convicting Mrs. McCalla of

murder or manslaughter, or finding her not guilty by reason of self-defense.

Assistant 5th Circuit Solicitor Terry Wooten, who prosecuted the case, tried to discredit Mrs. McCalla's testimony. He noted that she originally denied killing her husband, saying she had gotten out of the shower and found him bleeding.

Wooten also said that Mrs. McCalla had never reported the alleged abuse incidents and that a physical examination of her after the incident failed to turn up any recent bruises or injuries.