

'Wants 10 to 15 years'

Crown seeks stiff sentence for Holmgren

By JANET BAINE
Staff writer

Judge James Clarke was expected to hand down a sentence on Heather Holmgren Thursday, two years to the day after the death of Daniel Spencer, but the hearing is taking longer than expected and the sentence won't be handed down until Monday.

The Crown is asking for 10 to 15 years, while Holmgren's lawyer is asking for a penitentiary term of three to six years.

The forensic psychiatrist who assessed Holmgren, Graham Glancy, said Thursday she has some maladaptive personality traits, is quick to anger and egocentric.

Holmgren pleaded guilty to manslaughter and aggravated assault in shaking two babies, killing one and injuring another.

"She really seems to love children and identifies very strongly with children and really set upon a course of investing quite a bit of her life in children, including her own, until this happened," Glancy said. "I think she should never be in a position where she cares for chil-

dren again."

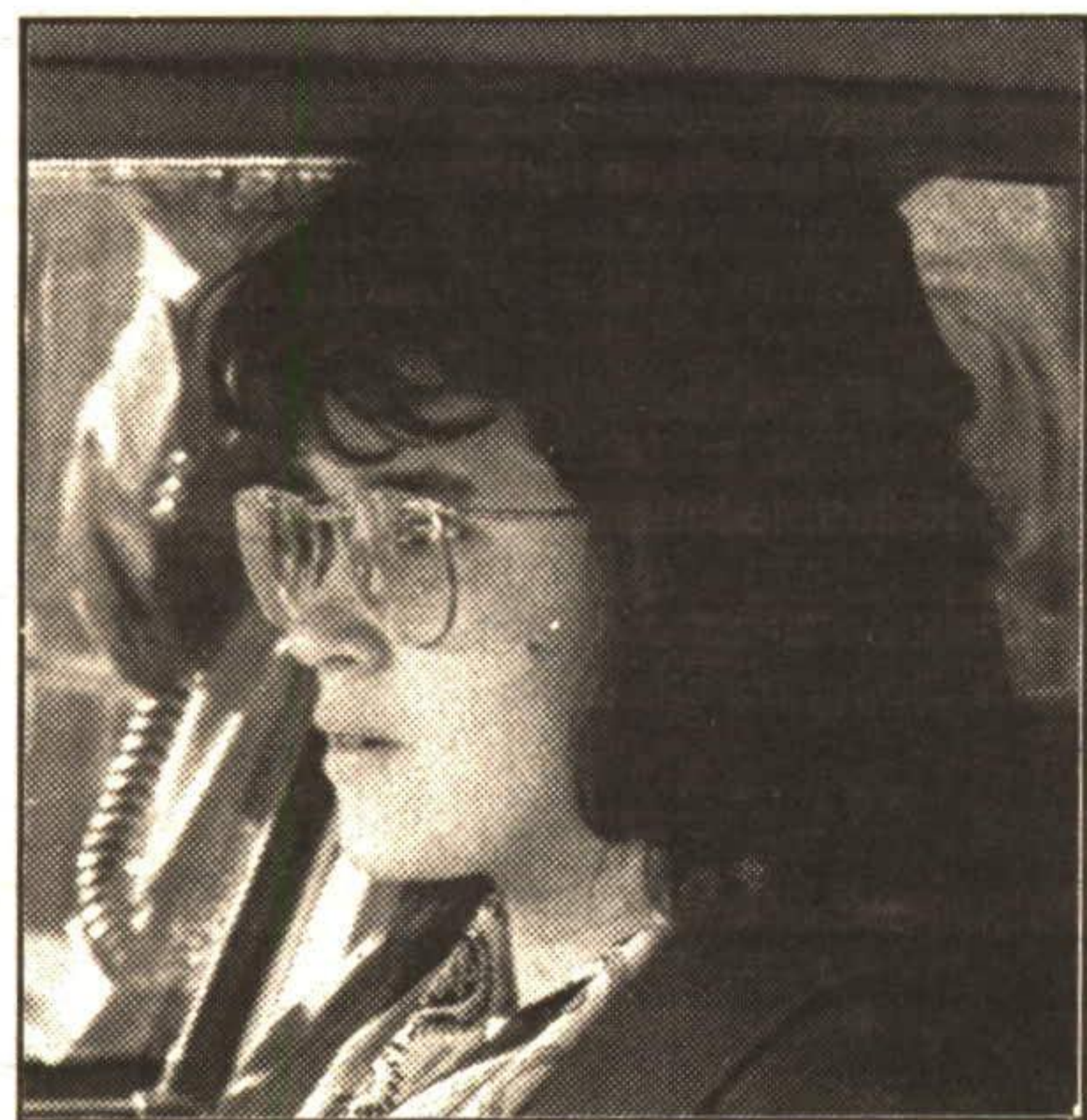
At first Holmgren denied remembering anything about what happened to Daniel Spencer when he was shaken twice, nor did she have any memories of shaking Colleen Maslen, who was hospitalized in March, 1993.

She told Glancy she felt terrible for the children and their families, but she didn't remember doing anything, and didn't understand how she could be charged.

On Oct. 11, Glancy administered sodium anatol, sometimes called "the truth drug" which lowers a person's inhibitions and allows them to talk more freely. This was an attempt to uncover Holmgren's memories, but Glancy said the results are not necessarily accurate. "There was some admis-

sion of shaking, but it wasn't really very clear," he said. "It was hard to understand her, but there was something about shaking Daniel and then going into another room and being frustrated and having to shout."

Any time Holmgren was asked directly whether she had shaken Daniel during this treatment, she said no. "I didn't feel any further ahead after the interview," Glancy said. Later under cross examination he said that during the treat-



HEATHER HOLMGREN

m e n t Holmgren, after picking up Daniel, said something like, "I don't even know you. What do you want from me?"

In November, three days into the trial by jury, Holmgren's mother told West privately her daughter said she shook Daniel after she

found him not breathing. That night Holmgren woke up, screaming, with a memory of shaking Daniel.

At this time, Holmgren told Glancy she "contributed to his death. She thought about it a lot every day", and cried genuinely and felt badly for the parents. When asked if she was suicidal, she said "not yet".

Glancy testified that Holmgren is from a fundamentalist Christian family, had a father who she perceived as very authoritarian and was envious of her two sisters, even in adult life. She had needed counselling in elementary school and high school, but seemed to be settling down in her adult life. She did, however, lash out at her husband and during the course of her marriage has attempted to strike him one to five times.

Glancy noted that Holmgren will have to be kept segregated from other inmates initially, since women who have harmed babies are "at the bottom of the barrel".

West made his closing remarks Thursday, and Cornish will speak Monday morning. Judge Clarke is expected to hand down the sentence Monday afternoon.

Teachers to vote

Halton Region's 320 Catholic high school teachers will vote on the Halton separate school board's final offer and also on the possibility of a strike Thursday, January 26.

Voting is to be supervised by the Education Relations Commission.

Una Mulder, acting president of Halton's Ontario English Catholic Teacher's Association (OECTA) secondary unit, says the teachers have been attempting to reach an agreement with the board for two years.

Although the date for the final offer and strike vote has been set, Mulder hopes that the continuing talks will produce a resolution before then.

The teachers work at six high schools in the Halton Region: Assumption and Notre Dame in Burlington, Bishop Reding in Milton, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Thomas Aquinas and the Adult Learning Centre in Oakville.

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