

Wilson Planned To Die At School

By JOHN LINDSAY

Sentinel Assistant City Editor

Busnap suspect Thomas Benton Wilson planned to die at the Baha'i School in Bonny Doon Wednesday night but "became confused" and instead surrendered to police.

Wilson, suspected of hijacking a bus and later holding 63 hostages at the religious school, today told The Sentinel in an exclusive interview that "when the thing was completed at the school, I was supposed to die. But for some reason I let those people talk me out of killing myself. It was important for me to die at the end of it . . . it will be corrected eventually."

Wilson repeatedly said he never wanted to hurt anyone but said he "had planned to take my own life or force the police to shoot me."

Instead, county sheriff, Santa Cruz Police negotiators and five hostages — Baha'i members — convinced Wilson to lay down his gun and surrender, terminating a six-hour ordeal which started when Wilson commandeered a muni bus in downtown Santa Cruz.

"I didn't complete my mission . . . eventually it will be completed," said the 26-year-old Bakersfield man from his Santa Cruz County Jail cell.

His mission, he said, was twofold: to force the police to investigate an alleged murder by a

former friend, and to bring attention to the Baha'i faith and expose "what it really is."

Wilson contends that Jack Kimbro, a 39-year-old Mariposa man, should be investigated for the murder of Shaun (sic) Kimbro — who Wilson claims was Jack Kimbro's 14-year-old son who died in 1974.

Kimbro, however, Thursday told The Sentinel: "I have three children and none of them are dead."

Wilson tells this story: "I used to live with the Kimbros in Cathy's Valley and I became very close to their oldest son" — Shaun. After the Kimbros moved to Mariposa, "Shaun called me

and told me his father was beating him and he wanted me to come get him. I didn't have a car to get there so I told him to hold on and I would figure something out. Two hours later I found out he was dead."

Wilson said the alleged death was ruled a suicide, that Shaun had jumped off a bluff near his home. "But he didn't jump," claims Wilson; "he was pushed."

When asked how he knew Shaun was pushed, Wilson said, "I just know; I can't tell you how I know, I just know."

The busnap "idea came to me a long time ago . . . a year ago . . . I've been thinking about it every since. Last week I decided it was

time to do it. I did a lot of praying and felt that God was with me," said Wilson.

Wilson said he chose to direct the bus driver to the Baha'i School in Bonny Doon "to draw the world's attention to the faith, to let them know that they are not followers of God . . . their prophet was anti-Christ . . . I know through prayer and studying . . . the faith is growing and it must be stopped," he said.

Wilson claims he "used to be a Baha'i and found out later what the Baha'i faith really is." He claims he was a Baha'i member for "four or five years . . . most of the time when I lived in Bakersfield. I was a member of the

spiritual assembly there," he said.

Wilson said, "Although I don't believe in the Baha'i faith, I have much respect for the people I held hostage. They believe in something, but they believe wrong. They were very co-operative and beautiful people. I'm thankful that no one was hurt."

Wilson reiterated that he "had no desire to hurt anyone. I have been marked down as a violent man in the past. I never hurt anyone. I do have a criminal past," he said.

Drugs, he said, caused him to be violent in the past. "I used to use drugs and they messed up my

SEE BACK PAGE

Weather

Fair Through Saturday
Except Patchy Low Clouds
And Fog Night And Mornings
Details Page 2

Santa Cruz Sentinel

Friday
Afternoon

121st Year No. 195

Friday, August 19, 1977

Santa Cruz, Calif. 95060

58 Pages 15c

12—Santa Cruz Sentinel — Friday, August 19, 1977

Wilson Planned To Die At School

FROM PAGE 1

head for awhile. But I'm on medication now . . . as long as I take tranquilizers, I'm okay. Sometimes I get a feeling inside, a very terrible feeling, and become very tense and work into a rage. On two or three occasions I attacked people but I never hurt them seriously. Once I tried to strangle a girl and another time I started hitting a couple of people. It was because of drugs — marijuana and LSD. I have not used LSD in about two years. I'm happy not

using it. The stuff is no good for you . . . messes up your mind," said Wilson.

Wilson bought the .22 caliber rifle in Bakersfield on Monday, he said. "The law says people like me can't own guns, but I can get a rifle anytime . . . just fill out a questionnaire and lie . . . say 'no' to all the questions, give 'em my money and walk out of the store with my gun. I'm not allowed to own a gun because of my record. Occasionally I pick one up; I enjoy them . . . not to kill people.

. . . I just enjoy them," he said.

He said he used a gun just once before. "When I was 16 years old, I held one guy at gunpoint. He was my best friend . . . I became angry at him and some other people. I went into his home and stole a gun, then left and went back and waited for him. I held him at gunpoint for awhile. I told him I was going to kill him but I changed my mind before anything happened. I left and was arrested," Wilson said.

The 26-year-old suspect said he

was never frightened or nervous on the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District bus, but "at the school, I became very confused, not frightened because I felt that God was with me. I felt that He wasn't going to let anything happen to me. "I didn't want to hurt anyone . . . I knew the cops were there . . . I didn't see them but I knew they were there. I didn't start shooting because I didn't want them to shoot at the building. I didn't want anyone hurt. I didn't want any children hurt so I

let them go first, then some of the older people. I didn't want nobody to die except myself," Wilson said.

Wilson said that talking to sheriff's negotiator Charlie Weaver helped him. "Weaver seemed okay. They wanted me to give up . . . his talking to me helped. I liked the man on the phone (Weaver). Right before I gave up he told me that he would talk to me. When I gave up, he didn't talk to me . . . he just said, 'I'm Weaver.' I was a little disap-

pointed. I wanted to talk to him," said Wilson.

"Another cop I talked to — I didn't like the dude . . . he got me mad; I may have shot him because he was lying to me," he said.

Wilson said since he's been in the county jail, "I've just been wondering if I accomplished what I wanted. I think I drew attention getting the message out. I'm just hoping it was worthwhile, maybe."