

# The Wise murder case — one year later

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FAIRFIELD, Calif. — Time has softened his anger and good feelings are gradually overcoming the pain.

But Claude Wise is still a man alone in his grief when the force of what happened a year ago overcomes him and he lets go. He's an introvert, not one to cry on someone else's shoulder for comfort.

During a recent interview at his home here, Wise, 26, an Air Force sergeant, talked about the nightmarish events of last March 30 when he found his wife, Beverly, 26, brutally murdered in the living room of their San Bernardino home.

Stacey Wise, the couple's 8-month-old daughter, was sitting in the hall. But Tiffani Wise, 2, and Beverly's daughter by a previous marriage, Brandi Jondell Summers, 5, were nowhere to be found.

"I still think about it quite a bit," he said. "I've definitely had my states of depression. The first six or nine months, I really

dwelled on it a lot. There were periods where I was drinking quite a bit. But I realized it was getting me nowhere. I was looking for a means of escape. I would do anything for excitement."

He said he has gone hang gliding and now rides a big motorcycle, two things he wouldn't do if his wife and kids were still with him.

And, he has settled into a routine of going to work and coming home. Until recently, he rarely socialized with other people.

But a few weeks ago, he joined an air base softball team — his first involvement with other people in a year — and says he's just going to "see how it goes."

He remembers that horrible evening last year when he returned home from work at Norton Air Force Base.

"I found Stacey laying in the hall whimpering," he said. "It seemed like she had been there for a long time. At first I was perturbed. It was something that normally wouldn't happen. Normally when I came in



the house I was attacked by the kids greeting him).

"In about 30 seconds, I realized something was wrong. I picked up Stacey and saw Bev in the living room. She was covered with blood. I just freaked out and ran to a neighbor's house. I knew she was dead but I didn't want to believe she was."

Until that day, life had almost been perfect.

"I felt I had a lot going for me," he said.

I was doing a lot for the community coaching a swim team. I liked my job a lot. Everything I was living for, you know, was taken.

"I had a little more goals and motivation a year ago. Whoever did it decided to disrupt our lives."

Soon after the crime occurred, San Bernardino police formed an 11-member task force to check and recheck every possible lead and began a massive search for the children. The urgency for finding them was heightened because Jondell (the name Brandi answers to) suffered from cystic fibrosis and needed frequent doses of medicine to digest her food properly without becoming ill.

Several weeks without the medication would cause her death, doctors said.

More than 200 persons were questioned by police and the FBI, some of whom were hypnotized to give the most accurate information possible.

The family consulted psychics and traveled to Mexico in search of the children, sent out leaflets nationwide and established a reward fund of \$1,000 for information about the children.

But neither the children nor their abductor were ever found.

For the most part, Wise believes that police did everything they could. And although he was questioned by officers numerous times — and was polygraphed twice — he said he never resented it because he was willing to do anything to help find the kids.

He was annoyed when he was asked to be polygraphed a second time, he said, because he felt that some of the police didn't believe he was innocent. If they weren't sure of his role in the case, they might not be "giving their whole heart into the investigation," he said.

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