

# Bernard “Barry” Barton Hunwick



**Classmate Port Huron High School, Class of 1963, yearbook photo.**

**Ancestry.com information as of Nov. 21, 2005**

**Bernard Hunwick in the United States Obituary Collection**

Name of Deceased: Bernard Hunwick

Age at Death: 67

Death Date: 1 Jan 2013

Obituary Date: 16 Sep 2014

Newspaper Location: Florida, USA

Birth Date: 23 Jan 1945

Residence (at time of death): Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA

**Bernard Hunwick in the U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014**

Name: Bernard Hunwick

BORN: 23 Jan 1945

Died: 1 Jan 2013

State (Year) SSN issued: Michigan (1962)

Tribute & Message From The Family

Bernard was born on January 23, 1945 and passed away on Tuesday, January 1, 2013.

Bernard was a resident of Fort Lauderdale, Florida.



## Infamous Fort Lauderdale hitman dies in prison

[Infamous Fort Lauderdale hitman dies in prison](http://www.sun-sentinel.com/search/dispatcher.front?Query=Hunwick&target=adv_all)

Taken from the SunSentinel:

[http://www.sun-sentinel.com/search/dispatcher.front?Query=Hunwick&target=adv\\_all](http://www.sun-sentinel.com/search/dispatcher.front?Query=Hunwick&target=adv_all)

By [Larry Barszewski](#), Sun Sentinel

**February 15, 2013** | By Larry Barszewski, Sun Sentinel

**Story** | February 15, 2013 | 3:48 PM

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Bernard "Barry the Bear" Hunwick, an infamous 1980s hitman and one notoriously bad dude on the rough beach bar scene in Fort Lauderdale during the 1970s, has died in North Carolina while serving a life sentence. He was 67.

Mr. Hunwick died Jan. 2 at the Butner Federal Medical Center in Butner, N.C., according to the federal Bureau of Prisons. He had been at the medical facility for federal prisoners since October 2009, officials said. No cause of death was released.

Mr. Hunwick received two life sentences in 1999 after being convicted in federal court in a murder-for-hire sting, then pleading no contest in state court to a 1982 murder.

Mr. Hunwick's tough-guy reputation at beach hangouts was sealed in 1982 when police fingered him as the leader of a six-man hit squad responsible for as many as 300 murders across the country.

Prosecutors were able to pin only one death – 17 years later – on Mr. Hunwick, when he pleaded no contest to the murder of convicted cocaine smuggler and bail bondsman Richard Diego Messina. Messina's throat-slashed body was found stuffed in the trunk of a stolen car in Wilton Manors.

In the federal sting using an accomplice-turned-informant, Mr. Hunwick was nabbed as he planned to murder an undercover FBI agent who posed as a drug dealer from Pittsburgh.

"He was one of those guys that was a stone-cold killer," said Pete Magrino, formerly a Broward assistant state attorney who prosecuted the Messina case.

Tim Schiavone, owner of the World Famous Parrot, worked with Mr. Hunwick in the 1970s at the then Parrot Lounge. He described the good-looking 6-foot-2, 220-pound

bouncer and bartender as "a folklore legend in the bad-ass community," unbeatable at arm-wrestling or in a fight.

Schiavone said he saw Mr. Hunwick methodically beat up guys to within an inch of their lives, then go about what he was doing as if nothing had happened.

"I've seen a lot of tough guys, I've never seen anybody as tough or mean as Barry Hunwick," Schiavone said. "He was good to me, but I was always a little bit scared of him, because I knew what he was capable of doing."

Police arrested Mr. Hunwick in 1982 when Allen Chafin survived a hit and pointed out Mr. Hunwick as one of two men who tried to kill him, shooting him and leaving him for dead near a canal along State Road 84. The arrest created an international stir when investigators said Hunwick had possibly committed more than 100 murders.

But Mr. Hunwick was acquitted. Several Broward Sheriff Office deputies were later demoted for lying at trial when they said they had obtained a search warrant before finding silencers, brass knuckles and an explosive device linked to Mr. Hunwick inside a locker.

More than 15 years later, the other hitman identified by Chafin, Reid Robert Hawley, became an informant for local and federal authorities in the murder-for-hire sting. Mr. Hunwick was arrested with a rare .22-caliber pistol with silencer designed to shoot underwater.

The evidence collected in the process turned up much more, including Mr. Hunwick implicating himself in the Messina murder.

Tapes showed Mr. Hunwick wearing his wife's colorful oven mitts to keep his fingerprints off a gun he was carrying as he walked around the house.

On tape, Mr. Hunwick bragged about having a man who owed money for drugs put broken pieces of glass in his mouth before Mr. Hunwick started punching him in the face.

"He's the type of guy they make movies about, that stare down the barrel of a gun and don't break a sweat," Schiavone said.

Mr. Hunwick had spent other time in prison, including for carrying a weapon while being a convicted felon and for possession of cocaine.

During the 1980s, Mr. Hunwick developed a flamboyant reputation, wearing lots of bling, driving around in a Jaguar and marrying a former Playboy bunny.

Despite his reputation, his last wife before entering prison said that wasn't the Barry Hunwick she knew. Lori Wheaton was married to him for about five years, divorcing him shortly after his 1999 convictions.

"I never saw the other side," said Wheaton, who worked for one of Mr. Hunwick's former attorneys. She would talk to him on the phone while he was in prison on earlier charges and read the mystery novel manuscripts he wrote from prison and sent to the attorney.

"He was always very nice, very kind, very talented," Wheaton recalled.

What would he tell her about his reputation?

"He would just kind of laugh it off," she said.

<https://www.inmateaid.com/famous-inmates/hunwick-bernard-barry-the-bear-handsome-hitman-from-ft-lauderdale>

## **Infamous Fort Lauderdale hitman dies in federal prison**

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[http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2013-02-15/news/fl-lauderdale-hitman-dies-in-prison-20130215\\_1\\_richard-diego-messina-hitman-murder](http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2013-02-15/news/fl-lauderdale-hitman-dies-in-prison-20130215_1_richard-diego-messina-hitman-murder)

Scott, who grew up with Chafin in Athens, Ga., has supplied police with detailed information about events surrounding the shooting, the newspaper reported.

The published report said Scott told authorities that the night before Chafin was shot, he and Chafin met with Henry W. "Scrappy" Duncan at a Fort Lauderdale restaurant.

Duncan has been named by Chafin in court testimony as the man who arranged a meeting with Hunwick and another man the next night that lead to his abduction and shooting.

# Police nab contract-murder boss

Press-Republican – June 10, 1982 page 1



Bernard Hunwick

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (UPI) – A hulking, high living man described by police as “one of the biggest hit men in the nation” was jailed Wednesday, accused of running a murder-for-hire ring that may have carried out as many as 300 contract murders.

Bernard Barton Hunwick, 37, arrested in his \$250,000 home in suburban Plantation shortly before midnight Tuesday, was charged with murder, kidnapping, attempted murder and armed robbery. He was held without bond, the Broward County sheriff’s office reported at a news conference.

The announcement touched off a flood of inquiries from law enforcement agencies all over the country, a sheriff’s spokesman said.

A search of Hunwick’s lavish canal-front two story home with swimming pool turned up an arsenal of weapons, including two “hit kits” containing automatic pistols, silencers, handcuffs and brass knuckles, detectives said.

And investigators reported the found list containing names of prospective victims – residents of Lafayette, Ind., Boston and south Florida. The list contained detailed descriptions of each person and that person’s lifestyle. Authorities declined to reveal the name on the lists.

“Thi guy was a professional – one of the biggest hit men in the nation today.” Said detective Sgt. Dale Adams. “He employed four or five other hit men. We are linking him directly to organized crime.

Adams said Hunwick had been linked to murders in Boston, Indiana and New Jersey.

He said Hunwick, a 6-foot-1, 200-pound, blond and blue-eyed “good looking guy,” employed “debt collectors” who actually were “freelance hit men” and that the group may have carried off as many as 300 killings in the past five years. “all contract murders, definitely.”

“He was very professional, he covered his tracks very well,” Adams said.

But Hunwick apparently botched one job, they said, and it led to his capture. Sheriff’s detectives began searching for Hunwick as the result of an intensive investigation into the attempted murder of George Chafin, 34, of Georgia.

Chafin was abducted from a Broward County bar May 19, shot five times, and left for dead west of Fort Lauderdale.

“Unfortunately for Hunwick, the guy he shot five times lived – it was a miracle, but he lived. Before that, no one was able to pin him (Hunwick) to a homicide, because he was such a professional, Adams said.

Chafin told investigators he was shot by “drug assassins” who told him they would next assassinate three well-known race car drivers.

That information led to 24-hour police protection for the drivers during a recent major race.

An undercover informant led investigators to Hunwick’s home, listed in the name of his wife Patty, a former Playboy Bunny and owner of a posh Fort Lauderdale dress shop.

“We got lucky on getting his address last night,” Adams said. “Up until the afternoon we had no idea where he lived.”

When detectives went to pick up Hunwick, who offered no resistance, they found a 9mm automatic pistol in his home. Then they obtained a warrant to search the house at 4:30 a.m. Wednesday.

In addition to the hit-kits’, officers said, they found three other handguns, a high-powered rifle and a pipe bomb containing two pounds of C-4 plastic explosive.

They also found the trapping of high living.

.”The guy’s wardrobe is unbelievable,” Adams said. “He was an incredible dresser. He had four \$5,000 Rolex Presidential wrist watches.

## **FLORIDA SUSPECT, 37, TIED TO 100 MURDERS BY CONTRACT KILLERS**

Published: **June 09, 1982**

**FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., June 9**— A man who the police say may head a hit squad possibly responsible for at least 100 contract killings around the nation has been arrested, the police announced today.

The suspect, Bernard Barton Hunwick of Plantation, 37 years old, was held without bond in the Broward County jail, charged with attempted murder, kidnapping and armed robbery in the shooting of Alan Chafin, 34, on May 19, the authorities said. Mr. Hunwick was arrested Tuesday.

No murder charges were filed in other cases, but Sgt. Dale Adams said that detectives were investigating reports that Mr. Hunwick was responsible for as many as 300 contract killings.

Statements from Mr. Chafin and other informers and letters found in Mr. Hunwick's home and car when he was arrested linked him to 100 to 300 homicides, Sergeant Adams said.

The police said that the suspect might be linked to 14 Florida cases over five years and possibly to killings in Boston, New Jersey and Lafayette, Ind.

"We have information that Hunwick is one of the biggest hit men in the nation today," Sergeant Adams said. Mr. Chafin was reported to have told investigators that Mr.

Hunwick and his men were responsible for 300 killings. "I think that a realistic figure is about 100," Sergeant Adams said.

A warrant was issued on the same charges for Reid Robert Hawley, one of four men Sergeant Adams said were believed to have worked for Mr. Hunwick. The three others were not identified.

Mr. Chafin was abducted from a bar, shot five times and left for dead, the police said. He recovered from his wounds, left the hospital and refused to tell the police his whereabouts.

## **Portrait of possible hitman paints him rich, handsome, deadly** **Lakeland Ledger – June 20, 1982 by David Chandler [AP]**



FORT LAUDERDALE – It is a case which the hunter as become the hunted, as a respected, bookish-looking detective seeks to prove that blonde, muscular Bernard Barton “Barry” Hunwick is a paid contract killer responsible for 100 or more murders nationwide.

Hunwick, a 37-year-old Nick Nolte lookalike, is being held without bond in Broward County Jail on charges of a single attempted murder.

“He isn’t charged,” his attorney points out, “with the multiple crimes alleged by Detective Dale Adams.”

But a tale told by his alleged victim, and evidence seized at Hunwick’s \$250,000 house, has caused Adams to label Hunwick the leader of a five-man, Murder Inc.-type “hit team”

Law-enforcement personnel say credence is lent to the allegations because they are made by Adams, 36, a quiet, cautious chief of homicide for the Broward County Sheriff’s Department.

“If we heard such a story from anyone else, we might write it off as cop-talk,” says David Casey, spokesman for the Broward State Attorney’s office. “But from Adams” That adds a lot of weight. He is very, very professional.”

The picture that Adams and others paint likens Hunwick to the professional killer in the novel “Day of the Jackal.” They say he is handsome and wealthy. He uses an



arsenal of rifles, bombs, grenades and silencer-equipped pistols to kill on contract. For his work, they say, he earns hundreds of thousands of dollars,

Since Hunwick, nicknamed “Barry” by his father, was arrested on June 8, Adams has received inquiries from 50 federal, state, and local agencies – from New York City, Philadelphia, Marion, Ind., London and Interpol.

“It is too early to say for sure what we have,” says Adams’ supervisor, Lt. Mark Schlein. “But potentially we are looking at one of the most explosive investigations Florida has seen.”

So far, Hunwick has been “linked, but not charged,” to 14 Florida murders, Schlein said last week. These included the May 15 death of Richard “Dickie” Messina, 45, of Levittown, N.Y. Messina was found stuffed in the trunk of a car parked in Wilton Manors, a Fort Lauderdale suburb.

Wilton Manor’s chief of detectives, Ken Kreulen, said Messina had associated with the Joseph Colombo Mafia family of New York.

Messina, he said, was a one-time mob enforcer working in Florida who interfered with something Hunwick was plotting.

Following Messina’s murder, said Kreulen, Wilton Manor police were tipped “by a man close to the mob” that Messina had been killed by Hunwick. The caller said, “you have 30 days to arrest (Hunwick). Do it the legal way, or they (the Colombo family) will take care of it.” Said Kreulen.

Hunwick is being held on charges that on May 19 he kidnapped and tried to kill Alan Chafin, 34. Chafin was shot four times and left to die in a canal on a remote stretch of Alligator Alley, which traverses the Everglades of South Florida.

At a June 15 bond hearing, Chafin, an alleged drug dealer, said he had gone to a bar to collect \$190,000 debt from a man.

He said he was met instead by Hunwick and by Reid Hawley, was forced in to a car, driven into the Everglades, shot four times and left for dead. But he managed to flag down help and was driven to a hospital, where police were called in.

Chafin eventually signed a statement saying “he personally knows since 1978 that (Hunwick) and his crew are responsible for more than 300 homicides, nationwide,” Adams said. He said 100 might be a more accurate figure.

It took Adams nearly three weeks to learn Hunwick’s whereabouts.

“He had been known to the department through organized crime investigation dating back to 1974.” Said Adams, but police did not have a current address.

They found him on June 9, in his new home. Adams and four other detectives went to the home. A new, powder-blue Lincoln Continental was parked in front. Inside was Hunwick and his wife, a former Playmate bunny who operates a fashionable dress shop.

Hunwick, who answered the door dressed in boating shorts and a polo shirt, “created no problem,” said Schlein. Hawley was not arrested.

Searching the upstairs of the house, Adams found a locked metal foot locker.

“Inside,” he said at the bond hearing, “were \$12,000 in cash, a .44. Magnum, a .357 Magnum, a .380-caliber automatic, brass knuckles, handcuffs, a pipe bomb with one-and-a-quarter pounds of ... explosives, a 30-06 rifle” and a home-made shrapnel grenade.

In the Lincoln, they found a .22-caliber automatic with a silencer, and a .38 caliber revolver.

“We also found a variety of documents,” said Schlein. Word spread that one of the documents was a hit-list, but Schlein said “that report isn’t entirely accurate.”

“We found a document with initials on it and dollar figures beside the initials,” he said. “In some cases, they were in the six-figure area. It represented a substantial sum of money.”

Adams also found a mysterious letter addressed to the attorney general of Florida. It was signed by a Fort Lauderdale man who stated that he was writing the letter in case something happened to him.

“Barry, a professional collector of illegitimate money, (threatened) me out of a fabricated drug debt of \$100,000 ...” said the letter. It said “Barry” buys debts for 50 cents on the dollar and has collected over \$3 million from various people recently.

“If and when you receive this letter, please rest assured that I (or) my family or associates have met some ill fate...”

Police originally feared that the letter writer had been killed.

“Since then,” said Schlein, “we have talked to and interviewed the writer. He is alive and well. It is a legitimate letter.”

Police don’t know how Hunwick came to have the letter.

Adams and Schlein say that based on the search of the house and car, Chafin’s statement and “other evidence,” they believe Hunwick is also linked to the killings of:

- Robert Keith Surgeoner, 37, and Jean Capella, 24, slain in Surgeoner’s South Florida home in January 1980. Surgeoner had a reputation as a drug dealer.
- Sherry Denise Hyde, 34, stabbed to death in September 1980 in her Coral Springs home.
- Joseph Olivetei, 43, shot three times outside a construction company in September 1981. He had originally been a suspect in the Hyde killing.
- Joseph Testa, 53, killed when a bomb exploded as he started his car in Fort Lauderdale in June 1981. Testa was allegedly connected to a Chicago organized family.

In addition, Marion, Ind., police said Hunwick’s photo matched a composite they had of a suspect in a March 1979 torture-slaying of Terry Headley, 22, who was found bound and shot in his Marion Home.

## **FLORIDA SUSPECT, 37, TIED TO 100 MURDERS BY CONTRACT KILLERS**

AP (The New York Times); National Desk

**June 10, 1982, Thursday**

Late City Final Edition, Section B, Page 8, Column 1, 289 words

A man who the police say may head a hit squad possibly responsible for at least 100 contract killings around the nation has been arrested, the police announced today. The suspect, Bernard Barton Hunwick of Plantation, 37 years old, was held without bond in the Broward County jail, charged with attempted murder, kidnapping and armed robbery in the shooting of Alan Chafin, 34, on May 19, the authorities said. Mr. Hunwick was arrested Tuesday.

# Hit Man Suspect Eyed by Police In Tulsa Killing

Taken from:

<http://newsok.com/hit-man-suspect-eyed-by-police-in-tulsa-killing/article/1986650>

Judy Fossett | Modified: **June 11, 1982** at 12:00 am | Published: June 11, 1982

While Fort Lauderdale authorities unravel information allegedly linking a Florida man to at least 100 contract killings nationwide, Tulsa police are waiting to see if the man's arrest might be the break they've been looking for in last year's unsolved slaying of Telex Corp. board chairman Roger Wheeler.

Wheeler was owner of World Jai Alai Inc., a multimillion-dollar pari-mutuel betting operation based in Miami, Fla., and shortly before his death had begun an investigation into the company's financial records.

Theories that Wheeler's death may have somehow been linked to organized crime activities in Florida caused authorities to direct part of their investigation to a search for a possible Florida connection.

In Fort Lauderdale, Broward County Sheriff's Capt. Robert Broadhurst said Thursday his office hadn't turned up anything that would link Bernard Barton Hunwick, arrested Tuesday, to the Wheeler slaying.

However, he said the investigation into Hunwick's alleged participation in as many as 100 to 300 contract killings is still in its preliminary stages. He said officers expect to learn more about the murder-for-hire operation with the arrest of a second man, Reed Robert Hawley, who is believed to have been a member of a four-man "hit squad" allegedly run by Hunwick.

Hawley remained at large late Thursday.

Meanwhile, Tulsa Police detective Richard Bishop fed the names of Hunwick and Hawley into the department's Wheeler case computer and said he came up with nothing to indicate the two ever had been mentioned by anyone questioned about Wheeler's May 27, 1981, slaying.

Bishop said the department has developed a 1,000-page case file on the Wheeler shooting and has interviewed more than 3,000 people since Wheeler, 55, was shot between the eyes in the parking lot of the posh Southern Hills Country Club.

"We're looking at it from 360 different degrees and have received information on every type of motive you can think of," Bishop said.

"We've narrowed a lot of stuff down and eliminated a lot of people."

Bishop said detectives believe they are getting closer to solving the slaying, but declined to elaborate.

As it becomes available, information about Hunwick and photographs will be compared with information already in police files about the Wheeler case. After that, Tulsa officers may contact authorities in Florida, Bishop said.

Broadhurst said his office has received inquiries from lawmen and the news media in virtually every major city in the country and from as far away as London since news reports of Hunwick's alleged murder-for-hire operation.

Authorities said Hunwick, 37, of Plantation, Fla., was believed to be linked to 14 slayings in Florida in the last five years, and slayings in Boston, New Jersey and Lafayette, Ind. Police arrested Hunwick, a husky, blue-eyed blond, late Tuesday in his

\$250,000 suburban home in Plantation. His wife, a former Playboy bunny, and their two children were home at the time, police said.

Hunwick was in jail Thursday pending a bond hearing on charges of attempted murder, kidnapping and armed robbery of Alan Chafin, 34, who police say was left for dead along isolated Alligator Alley last month.

The man survived, and told detectives Hunwick headed a hit squad responsible for 300 contract murders.

Florida detectives believe a hit squad directed by Hunwick is responsible for the May 15 slaying of Diego "Richard" Messina, a reputed member of a New York organized-crime family. Messina, his throat slit, was found stuffed in the trunk of a car here.

Fred Haddad, Hunwick's lawyer, said: "I think he'll be vindicated at trial. I've represented him before, but nothing like this," he said.

In their search of Hunwick's home, investigators said, they found a "hit list" and a black leather "hit kit," containing an automatic pistol, handcuffs and brass knuckles. Detectives also seized six more guns; three bombs, including a hand grenade made from a beer can; two silencers and \$12,000 in cash.

They also found information sheets about targets, including debts owed and planned "punishment."

Investigators said Hunwick and his associates bought debts for half the amount owed, then took the money from the debtors and killed them.

For some murders, Hunwick was paid fees of \$3,000 to \$5,000, police said.

Investigators released one letter, from an unidentified man, found at the Hunwick's home. Addressed to Florida's attorney general, it said a man named Barry, nicknamed "The Bear," was trying to collect "a fabricated drug debt of \$100,000."

The letter concluded: "If and when you receive this letter, please rest assured that I, my family or associates have met some ill fate at the hands of these above named persons." The man's fate was not known.

## **Bond Denied Man Suspected In 100 Underworld Slayings**

**AP -- Published: June 12, 1982**

. FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., June 11— A judge today denied bond for Bernard Hunwick, a 37-year-old man who is charged with attempted murder but who the authorities say may be responsible for 100 contract slayings.

Meanwhile, investigators said they had recently been warned by a person linked to organized crime that the Mafia would give the authorities just 30 days to arrest Mr. Hunwick, who allegedly had teamed with a "renegade" Mafia member for a planned challenge to organized crime groups in south Florida.

## **Ex-Dolphin names in hit man case**

Chicago Tribune – Aug. 23, 1982 —

By Dan Christensen and M. Anthony Lednovich

Ft. Lauderdale News and Sun-Sentinel

THE NAME of former Miami Dolphin All Pro safety Jake Scott, who was reported Sunday to be at the scene of a gambling raid in 1978, has also surfaced in the investigation into the activities of reputed hit man Bernard Barton Hunwick.

Scott, 37, is longtime friend of Allen Dean Chafin, 34, an admitted cocaine dealer who was shot five times and left for dead in a canal near Ft. Lauderdale on May 19. Police have charged Hunwick, a Plantation, Fla., man who is said to be the leader of a “hit squad”, with attempting to kill Chafin.

Hunwick, 37, has been accused of running a ring of four or five hit men and is a suspect in more than 100 murders across the U.S. He was arrested in his \$250,000 home and held without bail in June. At the time, Broward County [Fla.] detective Sgt. Dale Adams called him “one of the biggest hit men in the nation today.”

Chafin survived his shooting and was able to describe his assailant to police.

“Unfortunately for Hunwick, the guy he shot five times lived.” Said Adams. “It was a miracle, but he lived. Before that, no one was able to pin him [Hunwick] because he was such a professional.”

SCOTT, who grew up with Chafin in Athens, Ga., and has never been charged with a crime, supplied police with detailed information about the events surrounding the shooting;

- Scott said in sworn statement to police that the night before Chafin was shot, he and Chafin met with Henry W. Duncan at a Ft. Lauderdale restaurant. Duncan set up a meeting for the following night between Chafin and Hunwick and another man, Chafin has testified, and police believe Duncan had ordered the “hit” and was getting the hit man and his victim together.
- After Chafin was shot, Scott and Chafin’s wife Patrice, rushed to a nearby hospital where Scott told police that Chafin was carrying about \$12,000 -- \$7,000 of which was a loan from Scott – when he was shot. Scott told police the \$7,000 was part of a bonus check from the Dolphins he had just cashed.
- Scott, in a sworn statement taken at the hospital, told police that Chafin was going to use the money to recover a boat seized by police after it washed up on a Ft. Lauderdale beach five days before the shooting. The boat, a 34-foot Hatteras, was found to contain marijuana residue, according to police.

THE FT. LAUDERDALE News and Sun-Sentinel has made repeated efforts to contact Scott and Chafin over the past three weeks. Numerous attempts to contact Scott by telephone were unsuccessful and he was not at home when a reporter visited his Colorado home. Chafin’s whereabouts are unknown.

In statements to police, Scott said the meeting with Duncan the night before the shooting was purely social. “Scott said the meeting was a reunion between Chafin and Duncan, who were longtime friends,” a detective said.

Also present at the restaurant meeting, Scott said, was Bennie R. Fuqua, a convicted bookmaker and longtime friend of Scott’s and Chafin’s. Scott said he introduced Fuqua to Duncan.

The News and Sun-Sentinel reported Sunday that Scott and another active football player were present at Fuqua’s home on Dec. 18, 1978 when Georgia police conducted a gambling raid. Scott ended his career in 1978 with the Washington Redskins.

DURING THE investigation of the abduction and shooting, Chafin told detectives he has been involved in numerous drug transactions, a police spokesman said.

Chafin also told police that drug dealers had hired Hunwick to kill auto racing drivers Bill, Don and Dale Whittington. Undercover agents in Indiana were reportedly assigned to guard the brothers at the Indianapolis 500 last May because of Chafin’s tip.

There were on incidents, and the Whittingtons said they had no idea why drug dealers would want them killed.

THE SHOOTING is the most recent incident in Chafin's violent history.

On Feb. 4, 1981, the middle finger of Chafin's left hand was shot off during what police theorized was a bad drug deal in Georgia. Chafin told hospital workers it was an accidental shooting.

On June 11, 1977, the body of Chafin's first wife was found inside the charred wreckage of the couple's mobile home in Athens. An autopsy later disclosed the woman had died before the fire from a blow to the head.

No charges were filed in connection with her death.

After the fire, Chafin moved to Pompano Beach, Fla., and four years ago Chafin married Patrice, Fuqua's sister.

Chafin's only drug arrest was in the spring of 1976 when he was charged by Georgia police with distributing cocaine. U.S. Customs officials had tracked four books stuffed with 22 pounds of cocaine from the Miami International Airport to the homes of four persons in the Athens area. A jury later acquitted Chafin of the charge.

IN OCTOBER, 1974, Chafin was linked by police to the murder of David Fitts in Oconee County, Ga., in a suspected cocaine sale double-cross. Witnesses told police they saw Chafin and another man at Fitts' home the day of the murder. No charges were filed in the case and the killings remains unsolved.

Over the years, Chafin has been a frequent visitor at Scott's 57 acre ranch near Gypsum, Colo., which Scott purchased in 1974.

"They are close friends, Allen foes hurting in Colorado with Jake all the time. Before he was shot in Florida, we used to see Jake and Chafin together in Athens whenever Scott came for a visit." Said Athens [Ga] police narcotics division Lt. George Garrison, who attended high school with Scott and Chafin. "And when Jake is in Athens, he always stays at Fuqua's house."

## More ties are revealed between Scott, criminals

**Bangor Daily News – Aug. 24, 1982 —**

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) – Former National Football League All-Pro safety Jake Scott has close ties to the Georgian reputed "hit man" Bernard Hunwick is charged with trying to kill, a copyright report said Monday.

The Fort Lauderdale News and Sun-Sentinel report that Scott, who played with the Miami Dolphins and Washington Redskins during the 1970s, is a long-time friend of Allen Dean Chafin, an admitted cocaine dealer who was shot five times and left for dead in a South Florida canal three months ago.

Hunwick, of nearby Plantation, has been charged with trying to kill Chafin, 34, last May 19. At the time of his arrest, police described him as the head of a prolific "hit squad" responsible for dozens of killings, none of which Hunwick has been charged with.

Scott, who grew up with Chafin in Athens, Ga., has supplied police with detailed information about events surrounding the shooting, the newspapers reported.

The published report said Scott told authorities that the night before Chafin was shot, he and Chafin met with Henry W. "Scrappy" Duncan at a Fort Lauderdale restaurant.

Duncan has been named by Chafin in court testimony as the man who arranged a meeting with Hunwick and another man the night that led to his abduction and shooting.

## Former Dolphin may testify in alleged hit man's Trial

**Boca Raton News – September 20, 1982 —**

FORT LAUDERDALE (AP) – He was initially described as a “hit man” possibly responsible for hundreds of slayings when arrested four months ago. Now, 37-year-old Bernard Hunwick faces an attempted murder charge in connection with a May 19 attack on a Georgia man.

And among the potential witnesses in his trial, which is set to begin here today, is former All-Pro Miami Dolphins safety Jake Scott.

Authorities arrested the 37-year-old, ruggedly handsome Hunwick at his home June 8. While searching the \$250,000 house in suburban Plantation, authorities confiscated seven handguns, a high-powered rifle, three bombs, a hand grenade, two silencers, brass knuckles, handcuffs and what they described as “hit lists.”

Hunwick was charged with attempted murder, kidnapping and armed robbery in connection with a May 19 incident in which Allen Chafin of Georgia was abducted from a west Broward lounge, then shot and left of dead along Alligator Alley, the lonely state highway that crosses the Everglades.

At first, Broward sheriff's detectives said Hunwick headed a hit squad responsible for as many as 300 slayings, a figure they got from Chafin, who survived his wounds and will be the state's chief witness here.

At a news conference June 9, Sgt. Dale Adams said 100 slayings was “a reasonable number.”

Detectives said Hunwick's hit squad bought up debts – usually drug-related – then collected, while killing the debtors. Wilton Manors, Fla., detectives later said they believe Hunwick had teamed up with a “renegade Mafioso” for a bloody challenge to South Florida's established organized crime families.

Authorities in Indiana, New York, Massachusetts and Georgia then described Hunwick as a suspect in slayings there.

**In a seemingly unrelated story...**

## Furniture heir Gets Jail Term

**Sun-Sentinel --July 8, 1986|By DEBORAH PETIT, Staff Writer**

Furniture heir Gary R. Levitz was sentenced Monday to serve 18 months in prison and ordered to pay \$1 million for helping his buddies, race car drivers Bill and Don Whittington, conceal \$73 million in marijuana smuggling profits.

The Whittington brothers, who pleaded guilty in March to federal charges, also were on the judge's schedule for sentencing in U.S. District Court in Fort Lauderdale Monday morning.

But at the last minute defense attorneys announced problems had developed with the pleas they had negotiated, so the sentencings fell through.

U.S. District Judge Jose Gonzalez has ordered the pair to go to trial on Sept. 15, although that does not preclude further plea negotiations.

Apparently the hitch in the plea agreement concerned the \$7 million Bill Whittington had agreed to turn over to the government, rather than the 15-year prison sentence he was to receive.

The Fort Lauderdale brothers gained fame in racing circles when they won the 1979 24 Hours of Le Mans and Bill Whittington competed in five Indianapolis 500 races.

During those same years, between 1977 and 1981, government agents say Bill Whittington headed a smuggling ring that imported 400,000 pounds of marijuana from Colombia.

Witnesses told the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration that Bill Whittington was paid \$73 million for the marijuana and earned a net profit of \$20 million.

Under the terms of the March plea agreement, Bill Whittington was to receive a 10-year prison term for conspiring to import marijuana and a five-year sentence for tax fraud and income tax evasion. The agreement called for the 1966 graduate of Stranahan High School to serve a minimum of five of the 15 years.

His older brother, Don Whittington, who was named World Endurance Racing champion in 1979, was to receive an 18-month prison term, like Levitz.

Neither Levitz nor Don Whittington were directly involved in the smuggling, but helped Bill Whittington conceal the profits of the venture, IRS criminal investigator Al Monica testified in March.

Levitz once provided the brothers with a fictitious source of income by giving them ``jobs`` at a furniture company, Monica said, even though the Whittingtons never actually worked for him.

Levitz, 47, also of Fort Lauderdale, was given the prison time for one count of conspiring to defraud the Internal Revenue Service. The son of one of Levitz Furniture's founders is to report to prison next month.

**In another seemingly unrelated story...**

## **Auto-racing Brothers Sentenced For Smuggling**

**Sun-Sentinel -- January 6, 1987|By DEBORAH PETIT, Staff Writer**

Bill and Don Whittington, the Fort Lauderdale brothers who gained international fame on the auto racing circuit and notoriety for their roles in a \$73 million marijuana smuggling venture, were sentenced Monday to prison.

Bill Whittington, 37, told the federal judge he had nothing to say on his behalf before he was sentenced to a 15-year prison term, of which he will serve five years.

Whittington is required to give the government title to property, race cars, boats, planes, a Lakeland mobile home park and a Fort Lauderdale business worth a total of \$7 million.

His brother, Don, 40, was ordered to spend only 18 months in federal prison, for he had no active role in the smuggling.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Greg Kehoe told the judge Don Whittington was a key player, however, because he helped launder an alleged \$20 million in smuggling profits for his brother.



”This is a very significant case,” Kehoe said. “It’s a historical conspiracy going back to the `70s and `80s. Over the years (Bill Whittington) was an extremely significant trafficker.”

The property Bill Whittington is giving the government amounts to the largest voluntary forfeiture ever in Florida, Kehoe said.

The brothers were celebrated in racing circles in 1979 when they teamed to win the 24 Hours of Le Mans. That same year, Don Whittington was named World Endurance Racing champion.

Government witnesses said the brothers used some of the smuggling profits to finance their racing careers.

Among the assets Bill Whittington listed in court papers is a Porsche 935 race car, purchased in 1979, four Indianapolis race cars, a Colorado ranch, a Lear jet and two apartment buildings in St Louis.

The sentences came as no surprise to the brothers.

They negotiated the terms of their plea agreements with federal prosecutors nearly a year ago.

Yet it was touch-and-go for a while this fall as to whether the government would honor the agreement, or force the brothers to go to trial where they would be exposed to substantially harsher penalties.

Kehoe said during a November hearing that Bill Whittington had not made a good faith effort to put together a list of property worth \$7 million for forfeiture.

The brothers` lawyers blamed the government for the problems and delays both sides were having in finalizing the forfeiture list. The defense lawyers said the property they were willing to turn over was worth at least \$12 million.

Since that November hearing, a compromise was reached.

At the hearing in Fort Lauderdale Monday, U.S. District Judge Jose Gonzalez ordered Don Whittington to report to prison Feb. 11. His brother was given until March 5 to start his prison term.

**Yet another seemingly unrelated story of many many more...**

## **Ex-racer Ok After Crash**

### **Lauderdale Resident Ditched Plane In Gulf**

**Sun-Sentinel -- January 26, 1990|By RAY LYNCH, Staff Writer**

A former race-car driver from Fort Lauderdale was in good condition at a Galveston, Texas, hospital on Thursday, one day after running out of gas and ditching the World War II fighter plane he was flying in the Gulf of Mexico.

The Coast Guard in Galveston identified the pilot in Wednesday afternoon`s crash landing of a P-51 Mustang as Reginald Don Whittington, 44. He was expected to be released from John Sealy Hospital today.

A woman at World Jet Inc. at Executive Airport in Fort Lauderdale confirmed that Whittington is the ``boss`` of World Jet, a company that sells and leases aircraft and leases hangar space. She would make no further comment.

Whittington held the world speed record for a P-51 and teamed with his brother, Bill, to win the 47th running of the 24 Hours of Le Mans in France in 1979. He was named World Endurance racing champion the same year.

In 1986, Don Whittington pleaded guilty to conspiracy to defraud the Internal Revenue Service and was sentenced to 18 months in federal prison. At the same hearing, Bill Whittington pleaded guilty to conspiracy to smuggle marijuana, income tax evasion and filing false income tax returns. He later was sentenced to 15 years.

Lt. Don Merwin said the Coast Guard's Galveston station was alerted of a possible air crash on Wednesday, minutes after the P-51's pilot radioed Houston Air Control that he was running out of gas.

The plane crashed in a dense fog 1 1/2 miles off Galveston Island, Merwin said.

A 41-foot patrol boat and a five-member Coast Guard crew was sent to look for the wreck and any survivors.

Visibility was less than 200 yards when the rescue crew pulled alongside an offshore oil rig. Workers told them they had heard a "loud metal grinding" noise, then a splash.

The workers pointed in the direction they had heard the noise, and two hours and 10 minutes after the plane went down, the rescue crew discovered the Mustang floating in 25 feet of water.

Whittington, who was semiconscious and had cuts on his face and body and was suffering from hypothermia from the 58-degree water, was hanging onto a flotation cushion nearby, Merwin said.

FAA spokeswoman Gerrie Cook said the Houston FAA office is investigating the crash.

## **Man Charged Again In Murder-for-hire Case**

**December 24, 1998**|BY LARRY LEBOWITZ Staff Writer and Staff Writer Donna Pazdera contributed to this report.

Organized crime prosecutors, federal agents and local police are taking another crack at Barry "The Bear" Hunwick, who's been accused but never convicted of heading a crew of free-lance hitmen.

A federal grand jury on Tuesday indicted Hunwick, 53, on two counts of using interstate commerce to commit murder-for-hire, one count of using a handgun and silencer in a violent felony, plus two weapons counts.

The latest indictment comes a month after Hunwick and seven associates were charged in a 110-pound cocaine conspiracy. It's been 16 years since the legendary crime figure with the preppy name -- Bernard Barton Hunwick -- was last charged with heading the crew of Broward thugs.

Otherwise, little seems to have changed for Hunwick. His 6-foot-2-inch, 220-pound frame is still taut and muscular. The only signs of his advancing age are the wire-rimmed glasses and the close crop on his former shoulder-length mane of hair, which is now flecked with gray.

And unlike 16 years ago, when Broward Sheriff's Office investigators couldn't make a single attempted murder case stick after claiming Hunwick could be responsible for as

many as 300 murders, police and prosecutors are remaining very tight-lipped about the current murder-for-hire case.

But sources familiar with the two-year investigation say the newest charges center on a former Hunwick partner in crime turned informant, evidence contained on 269 previously disclosed court-authorized wiretaps, and 60 audio and video surveillance tapes.

Grand jurors say Hunwick participated in telephone conversations from Fort Lauderdale on Nov. 9 and Nov. 12 with someone in Tennessee regarding a murder-for-hire in Pennsylvania.

According to sources, those conversations were captured on the same wiretaps used in the cocaine case. The Pennsylvania "hit" was a government sting. Hunwick flew to Pennsylvania on the government's dime to arrange the murder. Unbeknownst to him, the intended victim was a federal agent.

Even more important, from the prosecutors' perspective, surveillance captured Hunwick carrying a .22-caliber Ruger Model MKII equipped with a state-of-the-art silencer. Under federal law, using a gun to commit a violent felony is punishable by as many as 10 years in prison; with the silencer, the maximum increases to 30 years.

Weapons experts say the Amphibian II silencer manufactured by AWC Systems Technology is one of the quietest and deadliest on the market. It was developed for amphibious special warfare operations. While most silencer-enhanced pistols also require special bullets using less gunpowder to reduce speed and sound, the Amphibian II is designed to work with traditional high-velocity, high-decibel ammunition.

It is unclear how Hunwick obtained the pistol and silencer, which the manufacturer outfits for \$1,050 for law enforcement, military and intelligence agency clients. It came as little surprise to agents and prosecutors that Hunwick had access to such a weapon, considering the automatic weapons, homemade bombs and assassination "hit kits" they discovered during a controversial search of his home in 1982.

Hunwick's subsequent arrest created an international sensation. Sheriff's investigators repeated unconfirmed secondhand reports from a less-than-credible victim that Hunwick's crew was responsible for more than 300 murders nationwide.

Hunwick already had a flair for the flamboyant. He cruised Las Olas Boulevard in a gleaming Jaguar to visit the upscale boutique he bought his wife at the time, a former Playboy model.

The victim, Allen Dean Chafin of Athens, Ga., claimed he was trying to collect a \$190,000 debt from longtime Hunwick associate Henry "Scrappy" Duncan when he was abducted from a Davie bar by Hunwick and associate Robert Reid Hawley, shot five times and dumped near U.S. 27 and State Road 84. Chafin claimed that Duncan had told him Hunwick's crew were responsible for at least 300 "hits" nationwide.

Investigators later admitted they couldn't back up the body count, but continued to claim Hunwick was probably responsible for 12 to 14 unsolved murders, mostly in South Florida. He was never charged.

Chafin's testimony wasn't even enough to persuade a Circuit Court jury to convict Hunwick on attempted murder, kidnapping and armed robbery. Four of the aggressive sheriff's investigators and supervisors who spearheaded the Hunwick task force were suspended after admitting they lied under oath about the search at Hunwick's home.

Even though he was acquitted of the most serious attempted murder charges, Hunwick was sent to prison in June 1982 for violating probation. In 1977, Hunwick had pleaded no contest to aggravated battery in connection with a brawl at the Parrot Lounge in Fort Lauderdale, where he tended bar. He was sentenced to four years probation.

But in 1979, while working as night manager of a notorious Pompano Beach lounge, police caught the convicted felon carrying a .25-caliber pistol in a leg holster. He was sentenced to serve five years for the probation violation but remained free on bond pending appeals. Hunwick was ordered to start serving the sentence after his arrest for Chafin's attempted murder.

In November 1982, another state court jury found the convicted felon guilty of possessing a 9 mm Browning automatic pistol and sentenced him to 15 years.

He served six years before qualifying for parole in 1988. He was discharged from probation in 1995.

Staff Writer Donna Pazdera contributed to this report.

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## Suspect To Remain In Jail

**February 12, 1999** | By DONNA PAZDERA Staff Writer

Reputed hit man Bernard Hunwick is the kind of guy who once bragged about forcing a drug debtor to hold shards of glass in his mouth while Hunwick punched his face, federal prosecutors said on Thursday.

He is accused of cutting a Wilton Manors bail bondsman's throat and stuffing his body in a car trunk in 1982. And he said on tape to a confidential informant that if he ever got sent back to prison, he would kill a police officer and escape.

But there is another side to the burly Hunwick. He was caught on videotape last year wearing his wife's wildly colorful oven mitts as he carried in a .22-caliber Ruger Model MKII equipped with a state-of-the-art silencer. He didn't want to leave his fingerprints on the pistol.

These tales and more were enough to convince U.S. Magistrate Judge Lurana Snow on Thursday to hold Hunwick without bail on two counts of using interstate commerce to commit murder-for-hire and one count of using a handgun and silencer in a violent felony, plus two weapons counts.

"He is a threat to the community," Snow said.

Hunwick, 53, nicknamed "Barry the Bear," has been held in a federal detention center since Nov. 17, 1998, when he was charged with seven others with trafficking cocaine. Hunwick recently was transferred from the center's general population into a special housing unit because Fort Lauderdale police had received tips that Hunwick was "reaching out" to friends, asking for cyanide -- either for himself or to be used as retribution against others, Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul Schwartz said.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, Hunwick was accused of, but never convicted of, numerous murders.

However, as a result of the work of a former Hunwick associate, Reid Hawley, a Broward grand jury is expected to indict Hunwick soon on murder charges stemming from the 1982 slaying of Richard Messina, a convicted cocaine smuggler and bail

bondsman whose throat was slashed and body left in the trunk of a stolen car, Schwartz said in court on Thursday.

Hunwick, long a suspect in that case, as well as that of an unidentified man whose body was buried in the Everglades, resurfaced as a primary suspect in 1997 when the Fort Lauderdale Police Department's homicide squad teamed up with investigators from the Broward Sheriff's Office, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the FBI and others to open up "cold" homicide cases, Fort Lauderdale police Detective Mark Breen said.

Investigators relied on Hawley, one of Hunwick's associates, to help them find out more about his involvement in two of the unsolved murder cases. Hawley, whose palm print was found on the trunk of the car where Messina's body was found, was given a choice by investigators: Fight murder charges or cooperate, Breen said. Hawley chose the latter.

Hawley, wearing a recording device, reunited with Hunwick in May 1998 at H2O, a swank Fort Lauderdale Beach eatery where Hunwick was the bar manager. The two hadn't seen each other in almost 20 years, but, according to court testimony, Hunwick brought up the old days without any prompting.

"We put Dickie in the trunk," Hunwick told Hawley, referring to Messina.

Dozens of tapes detail conversations between the two former comrades in crime, Schwartz said. They also talked about a pending cocaine deal that Hunwick was setting up.

It was here that Hawley drew Hunwick into a ruse: Hawley said he knew a man in Pittsburgh who had ripped off some of the same people they were dealing with in the South Florida cocaine deal. As a favor, Hawley asked Hunwick if he would kill the man in Pennsylvania.

"Good. That's what I know how to do," Hunwick said on tape.

Hunwick and Hawley flew to Pittsburgh to scope out the alleged rip-off man, who was actually an undercover FBI agent. Later, Hunwick bought the high-powered pistol -- which is used by the Navy SEALs -- for \$4,000 from a man who later reported it stolen. To be sure it could not be traced, Hunwick used a titanium drill to bore out the serial numbers on the weapon, Schwartz said.

Hunwick sported the oven mitts when he showed the gun to Hawley. He also was videotaped using the mitts to wipe off any fingerprints.

Just before he was to leave for Pittsburgh, agents charged Hunwick with planning the murder-for-hire, along with drug and weapons charges.

Hunwick despised returning to jail.

"You're better off going to hell," Hunwick told Hawley. "I don't know anyone in the other joint."

Thursday, before Hunwick was led back to the place he hated more than hell, his softer side emerged again.

He mouthed, "I love you," and blew a kiss to his wife, Lori.

# Suspect To Remain In Jail

February 12, 1999 -- |By DONNA PAZDERA Staff Writer

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# Hunwick Faces Life Term After Guilty Plea

March 31, 1999|By LARRY LEBOWITZ Staff Writer

"Barry the Bear" is no longer a reputed hitman.

Bernard Barton Hunwick Jr., 54, Tuesday pleaded guilty at U.S. District Court in Fort Lauderdale to carrying a sophisticated .22-caliber pistol with a silencer designed to shoot underwater as part of a murder-for-hire plot set up by a federal and local task force

Hunwick, 54, of Plantation, will serve the two prison sentences at the same time in federal detention. If he keeps up his record as a model prisoner and gets the usual credits for good time, he could become eligible for parole in 2024.

Although he knew his future was not looking too bright, Hunwick appeared to be in good spirits as Broward Circuit Judge Ilona M. Holmes sentenced him.

Hunwick jokingly remarked that he guessed a furlough was out of the question when the judge asked him if he wanted to say anything before she passed sentence.

He pleaded no contest to the 1982 murder of Wilton Manors bail bondsman Richard Diego Messina, who was also a convicted cocaine smuggler. Messina's throat was slashed and his body was stuffed in the trunk of a stolen car.

"Frankly, he didn't want to spend the next three years of his life in federal and state court," said John O'Donnell, Hunwick's defense attorney.

"He's got a possibility of getting out of prison sometime before the end of his life," O'Donnell said. "If he makes it to 80 [years old], he could be freed."

Hunwick was set up by a former associate, Reid Robert Hawley, who became an undercover informant for local and federal authorities.

The talkative Hunwick was captured on numerous wiretapped phone conversations, audio tapes and videotapes that helped to document cases against him.

He once bragged about forcing a man, who owed money for drugs, to hold broken pieces of glass in his mouth while the 220-pound Hunwick punched him in the face.

Hunwick was also captured on videotape wearing his wife's colorful oven mitts to avoid leaving fingerprints on a pistol he was carrying around his home.

In the federal case, Hunwick was arrested as he was planning to murder an undercover FBI agent who posed as a drug dealer from Pittsburgh.

Law enforcement officials consider Hunwick a suspect in approximately five other homicides, but he has not been charged in any of those cases.

Prosecutor Peter Magrino said the Broward State Attorney's Office would pursue further criminal charges against Hunwick, if evidence against him came to light in any other cases.

In a related case, South Florida celebrity hairdresser Jesse Briggs is expected to go to trial next month on a charge of selling a rare .22-caliber pistol with a sophisticated silencer to Hunwick. Police said Hunwick paid \$4,000 for the gun, which Briggs reported stolen to Fort Lauderdale police.

Hunwick set off an international stir in 1982, when he was accused of heading a group of free-lance hit men and debt collectors that the Broward Sheriff's Office said may have committed up to 300 murders.

Hunwick was acquitted of the most serious charges, but he went to prison in 1982 for a probation violation and weapons charges. He previously pleaded guilty in 1977 to aggravated assault charges in Fort Lauderdale and was caught carrying a .25-caliber pistol when he was a convicted felon.

## **Hunwick Receives His Second Life Sentence**

**July 07, 1999 --** By PAULA McMAHON Staff Writer

Infamous hit man Barry "The Bear" Hunwick picked up a second life sentence on Tuesday when he pleaded no contest to a state charge of murder.

Bernard Barton Hunwick Jr. is already serving a 30-year term in federal prison after pleading guilty to a murder-for-hire conspiracy earlier this year.

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**July 7, 1999|**By PAULA McMAHON Staff Writer

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## Hit Man Picked Up a Second Life Sentence



<http://alltimecrime.com/hit-man-picked-second-life-sentence/>

Even though it was unlikely he would ever again be a free man, Barry “The Bear” Hunwick of Plantation, Florida, still had a sense of humor when he stood in front of Circuit Judge Ilona Holmes before she passed sentence in Fort Lauderdale in 1999.

“I guess a furlough is out of the question,” he cracked when the judge asked if he wanted to say anything.

Holmes then handed him a second life sentence after he pleaded no contest to a state charge of murder in the 1982 killing of bail bondsman Richard Diego Messina, a convicted cocaine smuggler. Messina’s throat was slashed and his body was stuffed into the trunk of a stolen car.



## **Pittsburgh drug dealer**

The Bear was already in federal detention after he pleaded guilty to a murder-for-hire conspiracy earlier that year. In that case, he was arrested while planning to kill an undercover FBI agent posing as a drug dealer from Pittsburgh.

### **He could become eligible for parole in 2024.**

Hunwick was set up by a former associate, Reid Robert Hawley, who became an undercover informant. The Bear bragged in recorded conversations that he once forced a man who owed him money for drugs to hold broken pieces of glass in his mouth while the 220-pound Hunwick punched him in the face.

He was also captured on video wearing his wife's colorful oven mitts to avoid leaving fingerprints on a pistol he was carrying around his home.

### **As many as 300 murders**

Hunwick gained international fame in 1982 when he was accused of heading a Broward County crew of freelance hit men and debt collectors that may have committed up to 300 murders.

The media feasted on his flair for the flamboyant. Hunwick used to cruise around Fort Lauderdale in a shiny Jaguar and visit the upscale boutique he bought his wife, a former Playboy model.

During one controversial search of Hunwick's residence, investigators for the Broward County Sheriff's Office discovered automatic weapons, homemade bombs and assassination "hit kits."

He was also seen carrying a .22-caliber handgun with an Amphibian II silencer manufactured by AWC Systems Technology. The silencer was considered state-of-the-art at the time and was sold only to law enforcement, the military and intelligence agency clients.

# 10 Cold-Blooded Professional Killers (on list)

<http://listverse.com/2014/04/17/10-cold-blooded-professional-killers>

## At #5 Bernard Hunwick



Some estimates reckon that Bernard Hunwick, known as “Barry the Bear,” had notched up 300 kills by 1982. Even the most conservative tallies are around 100. Despite that, he was only convicted of a single killing—and that was in 1999. He was jailed for committing one murder and for planning another. An undercover FBI agent arrested him after paying him to kill a drug dealer.

Hunwick was married to a former Playboy bunny, herself a marijuana trafficker. A former employer said, “I’ve never seen anybody as tough or mean as Barry Hunwick,” describing how the hit man would happily beat a person to the brink of death before getting on with whatever he’d been doing. He was once recorded describing how he’d put broken glass into a man’s mouth before beating his face.

The one murder Hunwick confessed to was the killing of cocaine smuggler Richard Diego Messina, who was found with his throat cut. The case against him in 1982 had fallen apart because police had lied about obtaining a warrant before raiding Hunwick’s premises to collect evidence. The cops may have been under pressure, as Hunwick was said to have been planning to overthrow the local Mafia. Among the items they gathered were pistols, brass knuckles, a high-powered rifle, a homemade hand grenade constructed from a beer can—and a hit list. Hunwick’s going rate was around \$3,000 to \$5,000 per killing.

The botched search procedure got Hunwick another 17 years of freedom in which to ply his trade. He died in 2013, having served just over a decade for his crimes.

<http://www.fortlauderdalenews.net/index.php/sid/212611097>

### **RIP 'Barry the Bear:' Infamous Lauderdale hitman Hunwick dies Sun-Sentinel Friday 15th February, 2013**

... during the 1970s, has died in North Carolina while serving a life sentence. He was 67. Mr. Hunwick died Jan. 2 at the Butner Federal Medical Center in Butner, N.C., according to the federal Bureau of Prisons. He had been at the medical facility for federal prisoners since October 2009, officials said. No cause of death was released. Mr.

Hunwick received two life sentences in 1999 after being convicted in federal court in a murder-for-hire sting, then pleading no contest in state court to a 1982 murder.

Bernard "Barry the Bear" Hunwick, an infamous 1980s hitman and one notoriously bad dude on the rough beach bar scene in Fort Lauderdale during the 1970s, has died in North Carolina while serving a life sentence. He was 67.

Mr. Hunwick died Jan. 2 at the Butner Federal Medical Center in Butner, N.C., according to the federal Bureau of Prisons. He had been at the medical facility for federal prisoners since October 2009, officials said. No cause of death was released.

Mr. Hunwick received two life sentences in 1999 after being convicted in federal court in a murder-for-hire sting, then pleading no contest in state court to a 1982 murder.

Mr. Hunwick's tough-guy reputation at beach hangouts was sealed in 1982 when police fingered him as the leader of a six-man hit squad responsible for as many as 300 murders across the country.

Prosecutors were able to pin only one death – 17 years later – on Mr. Hunwick, when he pleaded no contest to the murder of convicted cocaine smuggler and bail bondsman Richard Diego Messina. Messina's throat-slashed body was found stuffed in the trunk of a stolen car in Wilton Manors.

In the federal sting using an accomplice-turned-informant, Mr. Hunwick was nabbed as he planned to murder an undercover FBI agent who posed as a drug dealer from Pittsburgh.

"He was one of those guys that was a stone-cold killer," said Pete Magrino, formerly a Broward assistant state attorney who prosecuted the Messina case.

## **Bernard Hunwick in the United States Obituary Collection**

Name of Deceased: Bernard Hunwick

Age at Death: 67

Death Date: 1 Jan 2013

Obituary Date: 16 Sep 2014

Newspaper Location: Florida, USA

Birth Date: 23 Jan 1945

Residence (at time of death): Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA

## **Bernard Hunwick**

Born: January 23, 1945

Died: January 1, 2013

Location: Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Tribute & Message from The Family

Bernard was born on January 23, 1945 and passed away on Tuesday, January 1, 2013.

Bernard was a resident of Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

## **Bernard Hunwick in the U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014**

Name: Bernard Hunwick

BORN: 23 Jan 1945

Died: 1 Jan 2013

State (Year) SSN issued: Michigan (1962)



# Find an inmate.

Locate the whereabouts of a federal inmate incarcerated from 1982 to the present.

Find By Number

Find By Name

First	Middle	Last	Race	Age	Sex
<input type="text" value="Bernard"/>	<input type="text" value="Barton"/>	<input type="text" value="Hunwick"/>	<input type="text" value="White"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

1 Result for search **Bernard Barton Hunwick**, Race: **White**

Clear Form



**BERNARD BARTON  
HUNWICK**

Register Number: 54749-004

Age: 67  
Race: White  
Sex: Male

Deceased: 01/01/2013

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