

Woman is found dead in car trunk - 20-year-old arrested in mother's slaying

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RICHARDSON -- A 20-year-old man who police believe beat his mother to death in his parents' Richardson home, then drove her car to Commerce, was arrested early Friday after police found her body in the car's trunk.

Tim [REDACTED], who neighbors say has been in and out of drug rehabilitation programs for years, was being held without bond in the Richardson City Jail late Friday, charged with his mother's death.

Barbara [REDACTED], 46, died from 'multiple blunt-force head injury,' said Dr. William Rohr of the Collin County medical examiner's office.

Police believe Tim [REDACTED] killed his mother at his parents' home in the 1100 block of Brandy Station, then drove her car to Commerce with her body in the trunk.

He was arrested early Friday outside a hotel in Commerce, about 70 miles northeast of Dallas, after Commerce police, alerted by Richardson police, spotted the car and found the body.

Police had been searching for Mrs. [REDACTED] since about 10 p.m. Thursday when her husband reported her missing. Ned [REDACTED], 47, told police that his younger son, Tom, told him that Tim had said he killed their mother.

Mrs. [REDACTED] car, a 1985 Oldsmobile Toronado, also was missing, Ned [REDACTED] told police.

Investigators found evidence of a struggle in the [REDACTED] home's master bedroom, said Capt. David Golden of the Richardson Police Department's criminal investigation division. Detectives believe that Mrs. [REDACTED] was killed during that struggle.

At a news conference Friday afternoon, police said they were questioning family members but didn't have a motive behind the woman's slaying.

"The investigators are still trying to interview all principal parties involved in this and have not determined a clear motive,' Capt. Golden said.

Neighbors said that the [REDACTED] had rented an apartment several months ago for Tim, their oldest son, and urged him to get his life in order.

The couple had gone "above and beyond what other parents would do' for their son, one neighbor said.

Merrill Hinton, who lives across the street from the [REDACTED], said she had known the couple about nine years. "They were like family to me,' said Ms. Hinton, 43.

Ms. Hinton said the [REDACTED] led an almost perfect life.

"I used to call her Mrs. Beaver Cleaver,' Ms. Hinton said. "Her house was immaculate, dinner was always ready on time -- she was just a neat personality. When you walked into her house, it was spic and span.'

Ms. Hinton said she and Mrs. [REDACTED] shared the same birthday, July 24, and they always went out to lunch together on that day.

"She was like a sister to me,' Ms. Hinton said. "She was an effervescent redhead. People couldn't help loving her because of her personality.'

Ms. Hinton said the [REDACTED] had spent "thousands of dollars' on rehabilitation programs for Tim. She said that as far as she knew, Tim had never been violent toward his parents.

"We don't know why people do things,' she said. "But she was the best. She didn't deserve anything like this.'

A neighbor who asked not to be identified said Mrs. [REDACTED] enjoyed playing bridge and often played in tournaments out of town. Mrs. [REDACTED] also enjoyed racquetball and tennis, neighbors said.

One neighbor said Tim played with her nephew when the boys were in the seventh and eighth grades. She said that at that time, "Tim was

just a really good kid.'

Other neighbors recalled seeing Tim playing with other children in the neighborhood. But most said they had not seen Tim for several years.

Police said Richardson officers had answered several family disturbance calls at the [REDACTED] home in north Richardson.

"We have had a history of some disturbance calls at that location,' Capt. Golden said. "Several of our investigators and patrol officers have had past contact with this individual.'

Tim [REDACTED] has no prior criminal convictions, police said.

Richardson police sought the help of several North Texas law enforcement agencies, including the Commerce Police Department, Thursday night after Mr. [REDACTED] reported that his wife was missing. After learning that Tim has several friends attending East Texas State University in Commerce, investigators believed he might go there, they said.

Capt. Golden said that Tim was picked up by Commerce police as he left his room at the University Inn.

Police said that Tim and a friend, Steven Michael Bennett, had used one of Mrs. [REDACTED] credit cards to check into the hotel. Commerce police also arrested Mr. Bennett, 20, of Richardson, on a charge of credit card abuse, but he later was released and the charge was dropped.

Investigating the crime taxed the resources of Richardson's police department, which assigned 14 officers to work the case through the night, officials said.

The killing was this year's first in Richardson, which usually sees no more than four or five murders each year, police said.

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