

DEATH SUSPECT SEEN IN TAVERN

88-21-69
BURLINGTON, IA. — The man suspected of killing Mrs. Dorothy Miller, 48, Burlington real estate agent, was seen in a local tavern the afternoon of the murder, police said Wednesday.



The slaying occurred late Monday in a vacant Burlington house that Mrs. Miller was to have shown to a prospective buyer. Police say the murder



Suspect

Composite drawing of man suspected of killing Mrs. Dorothy Miller, 48, a Burlington real estate saleswoman late Monday, was prepared by Burlington police with the co-operation of Des Moines police. Authorities, who believe the man is from Des Moines, described the suspect as having dark hair, being about 5 feet, 9 to 5 feet, 11 inches tall, and weighing about 175 pounds.

took place between 7:45 and 8:45 p.m.

The suspected killer was seen in a tavern about 4 p.m. Monday, Police Inspector Jim Ewing said.

Officers described the man as dark-haired, 5 feet 9 inches to 5 feet 11 inches tall, and weighing about 175 pounds. Police said the man is "good looking" and has a "normal" haircut.

Authorities have been unable to identify the man, but they say they believe he is from the Des Moines area. Ewing said the man told Mrs. Miller he was from Des Moines when he telephoned her for an appointment.

The body of Mrs. Miller, 48, was found in an upstairs closet of the old two-story frame house by police.

Police said she had been sexually molested and stabbed 23 times. She was found lying face down on the floor of the closet, partly disrobed and with her hands tied in front of her.

Police also were searching for a black pick-up truck, believed to have been used by the killer. Ewing said the truck was "unusual" because the paint appeared to be rough "unlike a factory paint job."

The truck was last seen within a half a block of the spot where Mrs. Miller picked up the man from Des Moines, Ewing said.

Door open

She found the porch light on and the front door open.

Said Applegate: "I just don't understand it. She was very cautious. Even myself, if I went over to see her about something, she would talk to me through the door."

Brick Volkmer, 32, who works for a Des Moines food store and lives across the street, said, "I can't figure out why they'd beat her that way. She was just a little bitty gal."

Applegate's wife, Alene, said: "She always said she hoped to stay in her home until she couldn't see to take care of herself, and then she supposed she would have to go to a nursing home."

The Applegates' daughter, Beverly Rafschol, 25, visiting from Minneapolis, said everyone she grew up with liked Emma because Emma "liked all kids." Beverly said that just a few weeks ago Emma invited her 19-month-old son, Aaron, over to her yard to pick some flowers.

Applegate said there are a number of coal miner's widows living alone in Waukee, and many of them are upset and nervous about what has happened.

"We all are, and will be glad when they pick someone up. But I think it has to be hardest on the older women living alone, and there are at least five of them in our neighborhood," he said.

One widow in the neighborhood, Helen Leimer, 70, stays in her son's nearby home at night, and she will until the killer is found.

Mrs. Leimer, one of Emma's close friends, described Emma as a timid woman.

"I'd go to the senior citizen's center, but I never could get Emma to go," said Mrs. Leimer. "It made her nervous, the crowds. She wasn't one to go out.

"She was a very quiet woman. I don't

think she ever did anybody any harm. But she was very independent, too. She didn't want anything from anybody for free.

"I remember one time a young person took us into town (Des Moines) for shopping, and Mrs. Lewis gave me a dollar for the ride. I said, 'You give it to him.' And she said, 'Well, you know him better. You give it to him.'

"I always told the young people to take the money she offered because it made her feel better."

Emma was born Sept. 2, 1896, in Hiteman, a small coal mining town near Albia in Monroe County. Her father was killed in an accident in the Hiteman mine when she was 6 years old.

Her two surviving sisters — Sigurd Johnson, 82, of Albia and Vera Fisher, 70, of Newton — remember Emma as "a very shy person who never attended social affairs and never would have hurt anyone."

Emma married Ivan Lewis, a coal miner, in Centerville in 1921. They lived in various Monroe County coal mining towns before moving to Waukee in the mid-1940s. Ivan died about 13 years ago. They had no children.

"She was just one sweet little lady," said Applegate. "I don't know how else you could describe her."