

# Witness: Didn't supply Cullor information

By Roland Krekeler  
Gazette court reporter

A witness Wednesday testified that she did not supply Charles D. Cullor with information about three April 6 murders that he appeared to have before it was made public.

Ann Baker, now of Clear Lake, but a Tama resident at the time of the murders, testified during Cullor's murder trial in Linn District Court that she phoned the 35-year-old defendant at the St. Anthony home of his parents, where he was living, about 6:30 or 6:45 a.m. that day.

The bodies of Linda Cullor, 31; Mark Curtis, 24, and his sister, Roseann Curtis, 19, were found in Mrs. Cullor's second-floor apartment that Easter morning just before 6 a.m. They had been shot to death.

The Curtises shared Mrs. Cullor's apartment. The trial is being held in Cedar Rapids on a change of venue.

An earlier witness in the trial, John Jutte, special agent for the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation, testified that Cullor told him Mrs. Baker had reported there had been a multiple homicide at his wife's residence and that there was a statewide bulletin out for him.

However, Mrs. Baker said she had not mentioned anything about a homicide or a statewide bulletin mentioning him by name. She also indicated that she did not know at that time that anyone had died.

She said that just before 6 a.m. she heard on a radio that picked up police broadcasts that police had been summoned to the apartment building where Mrs. Cullor resided.

Since Mrs. Cullor was as close as a sister to her, she said, she went over to the building, where the acting police chief said she could not go into the apartment and that he could not tell her what had happened.

A little later, she said, she remembered that Cullor had left a message for her the night before to call him, so she made a collect call to his residence at St. Anthony in Marshall County.

She said she told him "something terrible" had happened and that police were looking for a car that apparently had his license plates on it.

In other testimony Wednesday afternoon, a second person testified that Cullor had talked about killing his wife to put an end to his marital problems.

In the morning, a Tama police officer had testified about such a conversation in early February. In the afternoon, David Reny of Toledo testified about such a conversation the previous August.

He said he had met Cullor at the local Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and that he was helping him that August with replacing a tire on his car.

He said Cullor was quiet while they were driving some distance, but that when they got to where Cullor's car was, the defendant said he wanted to kill his wife.

He said he could not recall whether he used the word kill or shoot, but that he was staring at the floorboard at the time and was not smiling.

A daughter of Mrs. Baker, Donna Lucy, testified she had been baby-sitting with the two Cullor children the night of the murders until a little after 2 a.m., when Mrs. Cullor and the Curtises returned.

She said Cullor had called during the evening, indicating he wanted to have custody of the children for several days and that he wanted his wife and Mrs. Baker to call him in the morning.

She said she told him Mrs. Cullor and the Curtises would be back about 3 or 4 a.m.

Under cross-examination she at first denied that Mrs. Cullor was under the influence of alcohol or drugs when she returned.

However, when defense attorney Barry Kaplan read from an earlier sworn statement she had given about Mrs. Cullor appearing to have smoked marijuana, she said she had told the truth then.

In that statement she also referred to Mrs. Cullor as being "all drugged up" and said that was her "usual way after a couple of bolts."

She said Wednesday she saw marijuana and a capsule "filled with speed" at the apartment that evening and that she had seen Mrs. Cullor with drugs when the Cullors were living together.

Testimony this morning linked spent cartridges found at the Cullor residence to a bullet found on the floor at the murder scene.

Robert Harvey, criminalist for the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation, said he found a bullet near Linda Cullor's feet. He said that although he was not testifying as a ballistics expert, he could identify it as being .38-caliber or .357-caliber.

Wednesday morning Tama Deputy Sheriff Bruce Bolin said that during a search of the Cullor residence the afternoon of the murders he found some spent .357 Magnum cartridges in a drawer in a gun rack in the living room or dining room.

He said that ammunition was too big for a rifle found at the residence and too little for some shotguns found there. He said no gun that could have fired the ammunition was found.

Harvey also testified today about the position and conditions of the bodies when he arrived at the scene. He said all three were fully clothed.

Mrs. Cullor, he said, was seated in a chair with a great deal of bleeding from her head. On a nearby couch, he said, Roseann Curtis was seated, also with a large amount of bleeding from the head.

He said Mark Curtis was on his back on the floor bleeding from his nose and mouth. He said there was no evidence of any assault on any of the three other than the bullet wounds.

Unburnt gunpowder on Roseann's hands indicated the gun that was fired at her was within 6 feet of her,

he said. She was shot directly on the top of her head, he said, and there was a bullet wound on her left ring finger.

Bullets and fragments from her body and that of Mark were admitted into evidence without any testimony about the caliber. Bullets were taken from his forehead and brain, Harvey said.

Harvey also testified about a white powdery substance all around the apartment and a similar substance found in Cullor's hair and on a coat found in his car and shaken loose when a portion of ceiling tile from the murder scene was shaken.

Harvey said the powder from all the sources was composed of the same material and there was nothing in any of the samples that was different. He said the substance was rock wool and various bindings.

He said sound waves from the firing of a bullet as large as that found in the room would likely have shaken the suspended ceiling and caused powder to fly from it.

He also said a combination of chemicals and lead found on Cullor's hands and the jacket sleeves that morning would not be found together in any source except firearms and ammunition.

When found together, he said, the substances indicate a person has handled or fired a gun.

Harvey was to undergo cross-examination this afternoon.

## Vinton teachers seek \$12,315 base

VINTON—The Vinton Education Association proposed a base salary of \$12,315 at the initial bargaining session with the Vinton school board Wednesday night.

The proposed modification in the master contract would increase the base salary approximately 8.8 percent.

Currently, the 102 staff members represented by the association are paid on a salary schedule that ranges from \$11,315 for teachers with a bachelor's degree and no experience to \$21,838

for teachers with a master's degree and 30 graduate hours and 17 years experience.

Dr. Everett Hildebaugh, school superintendent, said the board will present its counterproposal Oct. 22.

The association's proposed contract modifications also include increasing the life insurance policy from \$7,500 to \$15,000, adding the classification of BA plus 30 hours to the salary schedule.

## No progress noted in 2 murder probes

"The leads are getting slim," Keith Whitlatch, Cedar County sheriff, said of the continuing investigation into the death of Sandra Pittman, 17, of Davenport.

Miss Pittman's body was found Sept. 17 in a roadside park about a mile west of Clarence. Death has been attributed to a blow to the head, possibly from something similar to a hammer or crowbar.

The sheriff said the investigation has yet to turn up a murder weapon or a person believed to be one of the last to see her alive. It is the belief of lawmen that Miss Pittman was murdered elsewhere and her body dumped at the park.

In yet another murder investigation in Eastern Iowa, that into the deaths of a St. Joseph, Mo., couple at the Amana Holiday Inn on Interstate 80 near Williamsburg, little also is new.

Rose Burkart, 22, and Roger Atkinson, 32, were found slain in Room 260 of the hotel. The backs of their skulls were slashed and caved in by repeated blows, apparently from a hatchet-like instrument.

Gerald Shanahan, director of the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation, and agent Tim McDonald expressed little optimism in that case. "I am afraid we are in for a long investigation," McDonald said, adding that it is not focusing on any one individual or theory.

There are five agents working on the case, McDonald said, who are working "on tons of leads."

Shanahan said if there is any focus, it is attempting to determine whether there is a connection between the two slayings and a June 25 slaying in Galesburg, Ill., of a 25-year-old Peoria man in a motel along Interstate 74.

The Galesburg motel slaying was similar in that death was caused by an instrument that could have been a hatchet, Galesburg police said.

## Competition

### Bridge

Bob's Club

Mitchell movement winners Wednesday of the YWCA were: North-south — Virginia Storm and Ken Hixon, first; and Margaret Blencoe and Diane Vinquist, second; east-west — Mike Rosen and Jim Boardman, first; and Mrs. Don Engel and Viola Schenck, second. The next game will be Wednesday at 7:30 at the YWCA.

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