

WOMAN'S SLAYING SHOCKS 2 NEIGHBORHOODS

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Source: Matthew Bowers, Staff writer

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CHESAPEAKE - A woman who was reported abducted from outside a Virginia Beach townhouse Tuesday morning was found dead hours later inside a home in Great Bridge.

Tuesday night, the home's owner and a guest were charged with first-degree **murder**. Police would not give a motive or say whether the two men knew the victim. The woman, Melissa M. Harrington, 27, a boatswain's mate second class, was apparently kidnapped about 6:15 a.m. from in front of the townhouse where she boarded. She was leaving the house in the 2400 block of Spinaker Court off Shore Drive for her job at the Norfolk Naval Base.

Neighbors heard screams and found her car door open and her lunch and clothes inside. "I heard loud voices," said Eugene W. Fitzsimmons, who had just gotten his newspaper from in front of his house next door. "I couldn't determine what was going on. . . . I could tell a woman's voice. She was semi hysterical, yelling 'No! No! No!'"

Neighbors saw a white Ford Taurus sedan speed away. Virginia Beach police traced the license number to Andrew J. Chabrol, 34, who lives in a brick ranch house in the 1400 block of Pamlico Blvd. in the Albemarle Acres subdivision of Chesapeake. In the house with him was Stanley J. Berkeley, 32, from St. Croix in the Virgin Islands.

Police got a search warrant and found Harrington's body inside, said Lewis B. Thurston, a Virginia Beach police spokesman.

Chabrol and Berkeley, who had been staying at the house for two weeks, were led outside in handcuffs and taken to Chesapeake police headquarters, said officer Lori A. Russo, a police spokeswoman. They were charged after hours of questioning and are expected to have bail hearings today in General District Court.

"Andy" Chabrol was raised in the Virgin Islands, where his parents still live. His wife, Ann, who is Irish, and their two young sons are visiting her family in Dublin, Ireland, neighbors said.

They said Chabrol, a former Navy lieutenant, left the service in February and was unemployed. Todd Davis, who moved across the street from Chabrol two weeks ago, thought him a "great guy." Others described him as quiet and meticulous about his yard. He would don coveralls and protective goggles to mow his grass.

Square-trimmed hedges and evenly spaced plots of flowers front the Chabrol home; in the back yard is a plastic pool and wooden swing set. A garden hose was neatly coiled in the open garage.

Davis said men in dark sedans began cruising by about 8:30 a.m., while he worked on his yard. They stopped to ask him who lived in the Chabrol house and whether a white car was parked in the garage.

Soon after, seeing Chabrol outside, Davis crossed the street to tell him about the questions

from the men, whom Davis didn't know were police officers. Davis also asked Chabrol about a deep cut on his chin, but Chabrol said little and went back into his house.

“I said, ‘You might want to get stitches for that,’ ” Davis said. “He seemed very occupied.” About 9 a.m., Chabrol backed his white Taurus out of the garage and parked it on the street, Davis said. About 10 a.m., Domino's Pizza made a delivery to Chabrol's house. About 11:45 a.m., neighbor Susan E. Casper watched two marked and three unmarked police cars pull up near Chabrol's house, and police poured out, taking up positions around the front and rear doors.

“The first policeman said, ‘You may want to put your kids inside,’ ” Casper said. She did. By mid-afternoon, Davis counted 32 police cars lined up and down the block.

Chesapeake police evidence technicians, wearing plastic gloves, came and went from inside the house while their Virginia Beach counterparts spread gray fingerprint powder over the exterior and interior of the white Taurus.

Police would not say where Harrington's body was found or how they believe she was killed, although no firearms charges were placed. Such charges are standard in shootings. Harrington's husband, Joseph, was called back to Virginia Beach from his Navy station on Wallops Island. The couple had no children. Neighbors recalled often seeing the 4-foot-10-inch, 100-pound woman playing with her black dog.

The dog was tied up alone Tuesday night behind the house. Harrington rented a room there after her husband went to the Persian Gulf early this year for Operation Desert Storm. They were preparing to move to California.

“There's a tremendous sense of shock,” said neighbor Thomas J. Goodall. “You never expect anyone to have personal harm, especially in the daytime. . . . This is not an area where we have things like that.”

Shock also was the word most used in Albemarle Acres.

“He's a super neighbor,” said James B. Simmons, who lives near Chabrol on Collington Drive. “I coached his son in Little League. They were a quiet family. Nothing remarkable about them.”

W. Berkley Gibbs, president of the Albemarle Acres Civic League, rode by on his bike.

“My wife said, ‘Some safe neighborhood!’ ” he said. “It could happen in any neighborhood, something like this.”

SUSPECT `OBSESSED' WITH VICTIM \ CO-WORKERS SAY WOMAN HAD RECEIVED THREATS

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Source: Matthew Bowers, Staff writer

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CHESAPEAKE - Melissa M. Harrington was tired of the married lieutenant in her office showering her with attention. Andrew J. Chabrol was ``obsessed," co-workers later told police, and he threatened the petite boatswain's mate when she filed a harassment complaint.

Today, Harrington is dead, and former Navy Lt. Chabrol and a friend are in the Chesapeake City Jail, awaiting trials for first-degree **murder**. Harrington, 27, was suffocated and strangled to death.

Police found her naked body wrapped in a blanket Tuesday afternoon in a back bedroom of Chabrol's home on a quiet, tree-shaded street in Great Bridge. A white plastic trash bag was bound with silver duct tape over her head.

As part of an autopsy, tests are being done to determine whether Harrington was sexually assaulted. Chesapeake police also took out search warrants Tuesday evening for samples of head and pubic hair, saliva, blood, fingernail clippings and clothing fibers from the two men.

Harrington's body was discovered 7 1/2 hours after she was reported abducted from in front of her Virginia Beach home. The time of her death could not be determined.

After Harrington was reported missing, co-workers told police that she had had problems with Chabrol. A supervisor told police that Chabrol was ``obsessed" with Harrington, who also was married.

She made a complaint over the harassment. An affidavit for a search warrant filed by Virginia Beach detectives says Chabrol threatened Harrington that if the complaint cost him any separation pay from the Navy, she ``would never live to tell about it."

Neighbors said Chabrol left the Navy in late January. A Navy spokesman said Chabrol was honorably discharged after more than 10 years in the service.

His last assignment was as Harrington's division commander in an office responsible for testing equipment on the naval base; he was not her direct supervisor.

Chabrol, 34, of the 1400 block of Pamlico Blvd., and a guest at his home, Stanley J. Berkeley, 32, of St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, are being held without bail. If convicted, they face life sentences.

General District Judge Stephen L. Comfort appointed an attorney for Berkeley, a draftsman with an artificial right leg who told officials he was in Chesapeake on vacation.

The judge, however, rejected Chabrol's request for a court-appointed attorney. He noted the defendant had \$23,000 in the bank, \$15,000 equity in his house and two late-model vehicles.

Harrington's husband, Joseph, has been called back to Virginia Beach from his Navy station

at Wallops Island, on the Eastern Shore.

Harrington apparently was snatched from in front of the townhouse where she was staying in the 2400 block of Spinaker Court off Shore Drive about 6:20 a.m. Tuesday. She had been headed for her job at Norfolk Naval Station. Her car was left on the street with a door open, and her lunch and other items were left inside.

A housemate and a neighbor saw a white Ford Taurus speeding away. Police traced the car's license number to Chabrol, but they couldn't see the car because it was in the garage. They camped near his \$80,000 brick ranch house.

About midmorning, Chabrol moved his white Taurus outside. Police then questioned him, but he refused to let them search his house without a warrant. Police also noticed fresh cuts on Chabrol's face and hands.

The warrants were obtained about 2 p.m.

CAPITAL MURDER CHARGED IN ABDUCTION

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CHESAPEAKE - A grand jury indicted two men Wednesday on charges of capital **murder** in the abduction and slaying of a Virginia Beach woman. The charges were upgraded first-degree **murder**.

Andrew J. Chabrol and Stanley J. Berkeley also were indicted on new charges of rape, robbery and abduction in the July death of Melissa M. Harrington, 27. Chabrol, 34, and Berkeley, 32, now could face the death penalty if convicted.

Berkeley's trial is scheduled for the first week of December; Chabrol's is set for Dec. 16. Testimony at a preliminary hearing in September for the two men indicated that Chabrol unsuccessfully pursued a romance with Harrington in 1990 when both were in the same Navy office. Harrington, who was married, rejected his advances.

; snatched from in front of her townhouse off Shore Drive as she left for work July 9. Hours r naked body, wrapped in a rug with a plastic bag over her head, was found in Chabrol's idge home.

Chabrol and Berkeley, a friend visiting from the Virgin Islands, also were in the home.