

reporterherald.com

Publish Date: 6/3/2008

Arrest made in murder of Fort Collins woman

By Jon Pilsner
The Reporter-Herald

FORT COLLINS — Only a few hours after her family made an emotional plea for help from the public, police made an arrest in the murder case of a 20-year-old Fort Collins woman.

Fort Collins police have arrested Fort Collins resident Joseph Curl, 29, for the murder and sexual assault of Linnea Dick, Fort Collins Police Services spokeswoman Rita Davis announced just prior to 6 p.m. Monday evening.

Police took Curl to the Larimer County Detention Center and booked him on charges of first-degree murder and sexual assault. He is being held without bond.

"It's been a very demanding time with this homicide investigation," Davis said. "It's a wonderful sense of relief for the community and the Fort Collins police agency and the family."

Dick, from Fort Collins, was found strangled in her burning house on Friday at around 11:15 a.m. by Poudre Fire Authority firefighters who responded to a report of a residential fire at 124 Yale Ave., in central Fort Collins.

Firefighters fought two blazes in the house, one in the basement and one in an upstairs bedroom.

The Larimer County Coroner's Office ruled Dick was killed by asphyxiation due to someone or something choking her neck. She was also sexually assaulted, the coroner said.

Investigators were suspicious about her death from the onset

of their investigation because of the placement of the fires and the possible use of an accelerant, even before the manner in which Dick died was determined.

Police began to look at Curl as a possible suspect when leads and interviews began to point toward him, Davis said. Because the arrest warrant is sealed and the investigation is ongoing, Davis declined to say if Curl confessed or if police were looking at other suspects, but did say investigators and detectives were wrapping up what she called details before possibly closing the case for good.

Fort Collins police have also canceled the "be on the lookout for" alert for Dick's 1997 Nissan Altima with Colorado plates 015KFB, Davis said, although she did not say whether police had found the car.

Earlier in the day, Dick's family held a press conference at their north Fort Collins home, about an hour before Curl began a voluntary interview with police after being contacted by them.

Sometimes speaking from a prepared statement, sometimes from the cuff of their emotions, Dick's family made a passionate plea to the community to help find the person or people who killed her.

For about 20 minutes, family members briefly reminisced about their daughter, but mostly appealed to the public for help in solving the three-day-old case.



Members of the family of 20-year-old Linnea Dick, a Fort Collins woman who was murdered, comfort each other as another family member speaks to members of the media Monday afternoon from the front yard of their Fort Collins home. From left they are cousin Melissa Dick, aunt Rose Dick, sister Andrea Dick and father Don Dick. Fort Collins police made an arrest in the case later Monday. **Reporter-Herald/Jenny Sparks**