

KENOSHA News

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Murder, arson probe begins

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Murder and arson are suspected in the death of Herman Bosman, 80, 6612 20th Ave. He was found Sunday on the dining room floor of his home by Fire Department rescue squad members about 1:40 a.m.

Rescue squad members reported that Bosman was fully clothed, and lying on his back. They said both his eyes were black and there were numerous lacerations on the top of his head.

There was no pulse and Bosman was pronounced dead on arrival at Kenosha Memorial Hospital.

No formal ruling on cause of death has yet been made by Kenosha County Coroner Thomas Dorff.

"If it's murder," said Deputy Police Chief Joseph Trotta, "it's another one of those sticklers."

Trotta said there appeared to be no motive. "Nothing was taken," said Trotta, "as far as we can determine. He still had his money. The house wasn't ransacked so it doesn't appear to be the work of burglars. There are some conflicting stories from neighbors."

One neighbor told police she keeps "an eye" on Bosman to make sure he's okay. She told police Bosman regularly went to bed at 8:30 p.m. each evening. She noted a dining room

light on in Bosman's home at 9 p.m. Saturday. "He never left his lights on," she said.

Sometime Saturday evening three men parked their car in the area of the Bosman home. Witnesses said two males got out of the car and walked toward the home but no one, Trotta said, saw them enter the home. "They were there after dark, probably about 10:30 p.m.," Trotta said, "and then a short time later they left."

The fire was noticed by a neighbor at 1:37 a.m. Sunday. Fires had been set in two rooms of the ground floor at the house. A stuffed chair in each room had been burned.

Dorff said Bosman died of smoke inhalation in conjunction with head and chest injuries. An autopsy revealed that Bosman suffered, along with the head injuries, five broken ribs, three on one side and two on the other.

Police are searching for an orange or rust-colored 1970 car which carried the three men. Trotta said a hand ax with a broken handle was found at the scene. That and other evidence at the scene was sent to the state crime lab at New Berlin.

Firefighters listed structural damage at \$3,000 and content loss at \$1,000.

The state fire marshal has been called in to assist in the investigation.

Few clues in Bosman death

Few clues have developed in the suspicious death of Herman Bosman, 80, 6612 20th Ave. Bosman was found dead at his home about 1:40 a.m. Sunday with five broken ribs and deep head wounds. Small fires had been started in two separate rooms of his bungalow.

Deputy Police Chief Joseph Trotta said, "We're working on the assumption right now that it's a homicide."

Trotta said a neighbor of Bosman saw a carload of youths pull up to the curb near the home around 10:30 p.m. Saturday.

Police were called to the scene after neighbors reported a fire in the home at 1:37 a.m. Sunday. The rescue squad found the door ajar.

"This guy lived alone, had no money because his son handled it for him, had

no enemies that we know of and did nothing out of the ordinary," said Trotta.

The separate fires were started in stuffed chairs. In the ashes of one of the chairs was found what remained of a hand ax. The handle had been burned up to the head.

That and several other blunt instruments in the home were sent to the state crime lab at New Berlin. "He was struck with some blunt instrument but that's about all we know," said Trotta.

Bosman lived on the first floor of his home. There were empty rooms upstairs. A roomer had moved out months ago.

According to Kenosha County Coroner Thomas Dorff, Bosman died of

the body wounds and smoke inhalation.

Police are still searching for the orange or rust colored car that pulled up to the curb. "We're not sure of the model or year of the car," said Trotta. "The people who saw it all have different stories. One tells us it was an old car and someone else tells us it was a newer car. One person tells us there were four youths in the car and another says there were only three. The only thing they seem to be agreed upon is that one of the males had long shoulder length hair."

Trotta is getting help in the investigation from the state fire marshal's office in Madison. Since a death was partially attributed to the fire, the state fire marshal has indicated an interest.

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Bosman's statements make suicide possible

Certain statements made by Herman Bosman, 80, 6612 20th Ave., shortly before his death Sunday indicate to police that the death may be a suicide.

Whether the death is a homicide or a suicide won't be determined until Kenosha County Coroner Thomas Dorff convenes an inquest panel. There was no statement on when an inquest would be held.

Bosman was found in his home by firefighters at 1:40 a.m. Sunday, apparently dead and with two small fires in two rooms of the house. Two chairs were burning and were scorching the nearby walls. An autopsy revealed that Bosman had five broken ribs besides three gashes on his head. Dorff said Bosman's death was attributed to the injuries and smoke

inhalation.

Deputy Police Chief Joseph Trotta said today that his department is investigating the death under the assumption that it is a homicide.

One officer said Bosman had talked of suicide a few days before his death. At least one neighbor reported that a car with maybe three or four occupants pulled up to the curb near Bosman's house around 10:30 p.m. Saturday and that two youths reportedly ran towards Bosman's house.

Police today indicated that the two youths could be members of a neighborhood family that was just returning home.

The investigation continued today with more questioning of neighbors and a retracing of Bosman's activities the few days prior to his death.