

08/13/2006

Allegedly cleaned girl's dead body in bathroom

Murder charge added for prostitute in Weehawken killing; alleged pimp proclaims innocence

By Jim Hague

A Connecticut runaway who allegedly fell into a life of prostitution has now been charged with felony murder and kidnapping for her alleged participation in the brutal murder of an 18-year-old Bergen County woman in a Weehawken hotel room two weeks ago.

According to Hudson County Prosecutor Edward DeFazio, Krystal Riordan, 20, was charged last Friday with kidnapping 18-year-old Jennifer Moore and assisting 35-year-old Draymond Coleman in the murder of Moore in the Park Avenue Hotel in Weehawken, after the Bergen County teenager spent a night of underage drinking in Manhattan.

Moore was savagely raped, beaten and strangled in a room in the Weehawken hotel on July 25. Then her body was tossed into a Dumpster outside a West New York apartment complex a few blocks from the murder scene.

The events

The events unfolded the early morning of July 25, when Jennifer Moore and a friend emerged from a bar in Manhattan after a night of drinking. The friend's car had been towed. At the tow lot, the friend passed out and was taken to the hospital. Moore began wandering around, and ended up in a car with Draymond Coleman, whom police believe told her he would give her a ride home to New Jersey.

Instead, Coleman allegedly brought her to the inexpensive hotel he had been living in in Weehawken.

Video tapes showed Coleman, Riordan, and Moore in the hotel at various times.

While DeFazio does not believe that Riordan was physically involved in the murder, officials now believe that Riordan was in the room at the time of the crime and that she allegedly assisted Coleman in first cleaning Moore's body in the hotel bathroom and then helped with the disposal of the body, making Riordan an accomplice.

"On further investigation through the use of the surveillance tapes from the hotel that have been enhanced by the New Jersey State Police, we now have sufficient probable cause to charge Ms. Riordan with murder and kidnapping," DeFazio said. "While Mr. Coleman remains the one who is charged with the actual murder, we do believe Ms. Riordan was a full accomplice. It's very clear that the two were partners in this crime. But we do not believe she participated in the assault."

DeFazio added, "But it is a felony when one is charged with being criminally responsible. The victim was lured back into the room, where she was held and confined. Ms. Riordan [allegedly] had something to do with that detainment."

After reviewing the surveillance tapes, law enforcement officials were able to determine that the murder did take place inside the room sometime after Moore used the community bathroom on the third floor at least twice.

The tapes also show Moore going outside of the hotel to attempt to make a call on her cell phone, but apparently the call did not go through. Both Coleman and Riordan are spotted on the tape watching Moore make the call.

No plea deal

When New York police first apprehended Coleman a few days after Moore was reported missing, it was believed that Riordan had decided to turn against her apparent romantic lover (and possible pimp) and provide the information necessary to locate Moore's body in return for some sort of plea arrangement.

DeFazio said there was no such arrangement made.

"She did give a statement to law enforcement officials that led to the discovery of the victim's body, but she offered that up on her own," DeFazio said. "She apparently had something she wanted to tell us, and that led us to the body. But there never was any plea deal made. She voluntarily provided the information."



DeFazio said that there was other information found from the surveillance tapes that led to the murder charges being placed against Riordan.

Cleaning the body

"The body of the victim was taken from the room [allegedly] by both Mr. Coleman and Ms. Riordan to the community bathroom, where the two [allegedly] cleaned the body," DeFazio said. "Ms. Riordan [allegedly] helped with cleaning the body."

It was believed that Coleman cleaned Moore's body with some sort of ammonia and alcohol in order to try to remove any DNA evidence. Coleman also allegedly clipped Moore's fingernails to remove any skin off Coleman that may have come off in the struggle with Moore.

"Unfortunately, by the time the two [allegedly] go to the bathroom to clean Ms. Moore, she is already dead," DeFazio said. "This was a very vicious and very brutal attack, even by our standards. It's very disconcerting."

Further reviews of the surveillance videos show Coleman and Riordan together leaving with a suitcase which is believed to have contained the body of Moore, who was only 5-foot-2 and weighed 100 pounds.

"You can see the two of them carrying the suitcase out together," DeFazio said. "It is clear that she [allegedly] helped Mr. Coleman with disposing of the body."

DeFazio said that he believes Riordan was working for Coleman as a prostitute and that she was also romantically involved with the accused murderer, who had a prior arrest record with 16 arrests, ranging from soliciting prostitution to assault and drug charges.

On Craig's List

"I would characterize it as both business and personal," DeFazio said. "They definitely had some sort of a business relationship and also had some other relationship. I would say it was a hybrid of the two, but she was [allegedly] in the prostitution business, as was proven in some Internet sites."

In fact, almost shockingly, on July 26, one day after Coleman allegedly killed Moore, Riordan appears on the website Craigslist.com, billing herself as a New Jersey escort on the site's popular online flea market.

According to DeFazio, in Riordan's advertisement, which also featured her picture, Riordan tried to pass herself off as "Lisa," an escort from Weehawken, offering her services for "a \$150 special."

Riordan, who was adopted as a young child by a very affluent Connecticut family, remains in Hudson County Jail, where she is being held on a \$1 million cash bail. Before last week's murder and kidnapping charges, Riordan was only being held on tampering with evidence and hindering prosecution.

"I doubt anyone is going to step forward and try to produce that kind of bail for her," DeFazio said.

Coleman says he's innocent

Meanwhile, Coleman remains incarcerated in New York and is fighting extradition to New Jersey to face the murder charges. He was interviewed by reporters from Associated Press and the *New York Post* from his jail cell on Riker's Island last weekend, maintaining his innocence.

"I apologize for your loss," Coleman said in the *Post*. "But I had nothing to do with this. They have the wrong guy. I didn't kill the girl."

Coleman is being held without bail until his next hearing Aug. 25.

Coleman said that he had an alibi: That he "hooked up" with a "working girl" near the Port Authority bus terminal on the night of Moore's murder.

"We then took a walk to the pier, near the Intrepid," Coleman said. "I then went home after being with that woman. I wish I knew who she was. She could talk to the cops for me. I am not a wholesome man, but I don't have that kind of thing on my record."

DeFazio said that he read Coleman's comments in the newspaper and didn't want to comment on them, except for one sentence.

"Obviously, he didn't see the video like we did," DeFazio said.

Extradition

DeFazio said that he made an official request to the Governor's Office to begin the extradition process for Coleman. New Jersey is a death penalty state, whereas New York is not.

Coleman will appear in court on Aug. 25 to either agree to face the charges in Hudson County court or await word to see if there is sufficient evidence to force him to stand trial in New Jersey.

"One way or another, he'll be back here," DeFazio vowed. "I would say that he's just trying to delay the inevitable."

©The Hudson Reporter 2006