

SUSPECT INTENDED TO KILL 1 PERSON, NOT 3, POLICE SAY

EX- EMPLOYER ALLEGEDLY WAS TARGET IN ARLINGTON BOARDINGHOUSE DEATHS

By Lan Nguyen

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Christopher J. Beck told police that he intended to kill only his former employer in an Arlington boardinghouse one night last month, but unintentionally shot his aunt, too, and then killed another boarder who walked in on the scene, according to testimony at a preliminary hearing yesterday.

In the first detailed account of the grisly slayings, Arlington's first-ever triple killing, police said Beck, 20, was seeking revenge against William Miller, 52, the owner of the rooming house in the 2000 block of South Fillmore Street where the three victims lived.

According to Arlington Detective Robert Carrig, Beck "felt that Mr. Miller had disrespected him, had always put him down, had possibly {made} sexual advances toward him, abused him, whatever. That's his rationale for coming down here and wanting to kill Mr. Miller.

But Beck first shot his aunt, Florence M. Marks, a county bookkeeper, and then sexually assaulted her with a hammer, Carrig said. Later when David Kaplan, a Congressional Quarterly editor, arrived home unexpectedly, Beck also killed him, Carrig said.

Carrig based his testimony on a lengthy taped interview with Beck the night of his arrest. The testimony came during an hour-long hearing at which General District Court Judge Thomas J. Kelley Jr. ruled there was sufficient evidence to hold Beck in jail in the June 6 murder of Kaplan, 34. A grand jury will meet next month to decide whether to indict Beck in the slayings of Miller, a Bureau of Labor

statistician, and Marks, who at one point had taken him in to help him through a difficult period in his life.

Beck's attorney, Richard McCue, declined to comment about the case and said decisions on his defense "have not been made yet."

According to Carrig, Beck arrived in Arlington about noon on the day of the slayings to break into Miller's house, where he found a gun and waited in the basement for Miller to come home.

Several hours later, Carrig said, Beck heard someone enter the house through the garage.

"Mr. Beck, thinking it was Mr. Miller, aimed the weapon point-blank, closed his eyes and shot the weapon twice," Carrig testified.

When he opened his eyes, he discovered that he had shot his aunt, Carrig said. He pulled her body into the laundry room, tore off her clothes and assaulted her to make it appear to be a sex crime, Carrig said. Carrig said Beck then went upstairs to wait for Miller, who arrived home a short time later and was shot several times.

As Beck rummaged through the house, picking up several items and taking money from Marks and Miller to give an appearance of a burglary, Kaplan arrived and saw Miller dead under a blanket, Carrig said.

Kaplan, who was shot several times and stabbed in the head, "walked in the house at the wrong time . . . and basically he had to die," Carrig said.

After the killings, Beck took several guns, keys and two bikes and left to meet a friend in the District, where he had a minor traffic accident, Carrig said. He then left for Philadelphia, where police located him two days after the slayings.