

Woman found in suitcase was pregnant with suspect's child, her father says

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ST. JOHN'S -- A mother of two whose dismembered body was found inside a suitcase in a St. John's backyard was nine months pregnant at the time of her death, carrying the child of the man accused in her slaying, her father said yesterday.

"She was almost due," Peter Power, father of 29-year-old Amanda Power, told The Canadian Press.

"I don't think there's a worse hurt in the world that can compare with this."

The woman's remains were discovered Friday by four boys in a leafy downtown neighbourhood.

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The grisly nature of the slaying has stunned a city where the homicide rate is 0.6 per 100,000 people, one of the lowest in Canada.

"This is very rare," said Constable Paul Davis of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary. "I don't know of a case like it before."

Ms. Power's father sometimes choked up with emotion when recounting her days as a bright, carefree little girl.

"She was always a happy-go-lucky child, smiling, friends with everybody," he said.

But he said her life spiralled out of control in her late teen years and he eventually took over the care of her children.

"It seemed like things just changed for her for some reason, and she got into drugs," he said from his home in Paradise, west of St. John's.

"She used to come quite a bit at first to see them and then all of a sudden she just faded away. ... I don't think she wanted her children to know what her lifestyle was really like. She knew that they were happy and protected here."

About a year ago she met Warren White, the man accused in her death, while seeking treatment for her drug addiction, he said.

"For the last while, she was trying really hard doing the methadone treatment and everything to get her life straightened out," he said.

Methadone is a powerful narcotic used in treatment for addiction to drugs such as heroin and OxyContin.

Mr. Power said his daughter's son and daughter, ages 10 and 12, were finding the loss of their mother difficult.

"It was really tough and they're finding it hard, but a lot of family and friends are keeping them busy, keeping their minds off it," he said.

Meantime, investigators gathered evidence after securing a wooded area behind Mr. White's residence.

"We're not willing to discuss what we have seized as part of this investigation," Constable Davis said.

Soon after the four boys made the discovery Friday, Mr. White spoke with police. He was arrested a little later.

The 35-year-old has been charged with second-degree murder and performing an indignity to a dead body. He is scheduled to undergo a psychiatric assessment and will return to court Monday.

Investigators believe Ms. Power was killed May 30, a week before the discovery of her remains.

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