

BUFFALO: Body of Lewiston woman found

niagara-gazette.com/news/local_news/buffalo-body-of-lewiston-woman-found/article_a9dc74bb-133b-5269-8000-ddbbf0906a18.html

By Rick Pfeifferrick.pfeiffer@niagara-gazette.com

January 9, 2009

Buffalo police remained tight-lipped Friday night on the fate of “person of interest” picked up shortly after the body of a 20-year-old missing Lewiston woman was found in a garbage tote on the city’s

East Side.

Family members said the body in tote was that of Amanda Wienckowski. However, Buffalo Police spokesman Michael DeGeorge said the body has been positively identified. An autopsy will determine the cause of death.

“We were called around 8 a.m. (Friday) to a location at Clinton and Spring streets,” DeGeorge said. “The body was discovered in a garbage tote in an alcove of (New Covenant United Church of Christ).”

DeGeorge and a spokesman for the New York State Police both confirmed that a search for Wienckowski, with the help of a specially trained K-9 cadaver dog had been scheduled to take place Friday morning in the Spring Street area.

Wienckowski was last seen alive when her roommate dropped her off at a home in the 100 block of Spring Street on the night of Dec. 5. Her family said she had left a shift as a bartender at Cocktail Bob’s in the Falls earlier in the evening.

Wienckowski reportedly had a heroin addiction and was working as a prostitute when she went to the Spring Street home. Her roommate told police investigators that he was waiting for her in his car when he received a text message telling him that she would be longer than she expected.

The roommate told investigators he couldn’t wait for Wienckowski and left to return to their apartment in Lewiston. When he failed to hear from Wienckowski after two days, he went to her family. Her mother reported her missing Dec. 7.

Buffalo police took the lead in the case and began actively looking for Wienckowski. The longer she remained missing, the more concerned her family became.

“We were hoping for the best,” her sister Danielle Wienckowski said. “We’re glad they found her, but you don’t know how to react (to her death).”

Shortly after the discovery of Wienckowski's body, Buffalo police took her Spring Street "client" into custody.

"We do have a person of interest in custody," DeGeorge said. "He has not been charged (with any crime)."

While denying that Wienckowski worked as a prostitute, her family did admit that she had been involved "with a bad crowd."

"She made some mistakes," he sister said. "But she had more than enough time (in her life) to turn things around."

Danielle Wienckowski said another sister was moving back to the area and that she and Amanda were going to move in together. She also said Amanda had enrolled at Niagara County Community College to study nursing.

She also had been interested in a modeling career.

"She was getting her life together," he sister said. "We don't know how this could have happened. We don't know how (someone) could have hurt her."

Wienckowski was described as 5 feet 3 inches, 100 pounds, with blue eyes and blonde hair and was last seen wearing a leather jacket, jeans and black knee-high boots. The church alcove where her body was found is across the street from the home she was last seen at.

Wienckowski had some minor brushes with Falls police, having been twice arrested on shoplifting related charges in August 2007 and July 2008.

Contact reporter Rick Pfeiffer

at 282-2311, ext. 2252.