


# Lewiston woman's body found in garbage Police question man in case involving drugs, prostitution

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By Lou Michel

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Amanda L. Wienckowski, the 20-year-old Lewiston woman whose body was found stuffed in a garbage tote outside an East Side church Friday, was murdered, according to her family.

But police have declined to say anything about the circumstances of her death until an autopsy is completed.

Buffalo homicide detectives were continuing to interview a man who allegedly had a paid sexual encounter with her before she was reported missing Dec. 7. His home is across the street from the church at Spring and Clinton streets.

Authorities said a risky lifestyle of drugs and prostitution put the young woman in danger's way. But these grim details, according to her family, do not even begin to scratch the surface in describing the woman they knew.

She spent her early years growing up in Kenmore. Her family then moved to Wheatfield, where she graduated from Niagara Wheatfield High School with a Regents diploma in 2006. She even dreamed of one day becoming a corrections officer.

Family members, in coming to terms with the death, pointed to photographs of a petite, blonde, blue-eyed young woman whose pictures seem to bubble with effervescence and happiness.

In one portrait, she's cuddling an infant niece. In another, she's smiling as if she did not have a care in the world.

Yet, there is the horrible reality.

"She was killed. I don't know how, but they are doing the autopsy," said Leslie L. Brill Fink, her bereaved mother who lives in the Town of Tonawanda. "She was innocent. She was so young. She would never hurt anybody."

The mother says she is at a loss for words in explaining how her daughter became a heroin addict, but she was at no loss for words when it came to Adam Patterson.

He's the Lewiston man, police say, who lived with Wienckowski and drove her to the Spring Street home where she was hired to have sexual relations on Dec. 5.

"After he dropped her off, he called me two days later and asked me to come to his house on Walmore Road. At his house, he told me he left my daughter Friday night on the East Side and later found her purse in his truck," Brill Fink said.

She said she agrees with what police have told her about Patterson. "The police called him a coward. It doesn't make any sense, and they're not doing anything to him," Brill Fink said of Patterson's decision to drive off and leave her daughter. "Why would he leave her? I don't understand."

Patterson told investigators he received a text message and phone call from Wienckowski stating she would be longer than expected at the home on the 100 block of Spring Street and so he left, according to authorities.

The home is across the street from New Covenant United Church of Christ, where the tote was discovered in an alcove at 7:55 a.m. Friday by a Central District officer investigating a tip. But, it was no secret that Wienckowski was missing in that neighborhood.

Her family and friends printed up thousands of circulars and canvassed the neighborhood, knocking on doors asking residents if they had seen her in recent days.

"Her mother's pastor came to our door and showed us a picture of the young woman and asked if we had ever seen her," Julius Allen said. "I said 'No, I've never seen that young lady.' "

Allen and his wife are heartbroken. "I get chills. That's my church across the street," Marlene Allen said. "I have eight children, and I know just how that mother is feeling right now. If I could see her, I'd give her a hug and tell her that God will be with her."

Late Friday, Buffalo police were consulting with the Erie County district attorney's office on the case, and no one had been charged.

Buffalo police spokesman Michael DeGeorge declined to confirm details of the case.

Wienckowski's family says whoever is responsible for her death will get what he deserves, but they wanted to focus on the young woman they knew best.

"She'd signed up for college the day before this occurred. She wanted to go into corrections," said Carolee Wienckowski, one of Wienckowski's older sisters. "If you knew her, you'd love her."

Glenn Wienckowski, a brother, said his sister was a devoted aunt to his young children. "She loved her niece and nephew," he said.

The 28-year-old brother had performed the sad task of identifying his sister's remains at the Erie County Morgue Friday, after his mother was unable to go through with it.

One of 10 siblings, Wienckowski loved to play softball and dance, according to Matthew Clark, who described himself as her uncle.

"Since she was a little kid, she danced at my studio. Why would somebody leave her here?" Clark asked Friday afternoon, sitting in his car across the street from the Spring Street home where she had been dropped off last month. "Like any young adult, she's had issues, but this is unfathomable."

Clark, of North Buffalo, urged the public not to judge Wienckowski by this one part of her life, but to consider the countless moments of goodness that made her a lovable person who suffered a tragic death.

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