

More to be given polygraph exam

Fort Myers News-Press, Friday, October 27, 1978 38

### Three suspects in murder case pass lie tests

By KAREN FELDMAN  
PUNTA GORDA — Three suspects received favorable results this week after taking polygraph tests in connection with the Lida Pikaritz murder case.

According to Lt. William Clement, chief investigator for the Charlotte County Sheriff's Department, the polygraph, or lie detector test results were "in their (the suspects') favor" but, he added, "no one will be completely cleared until we arrest someone."

Clement said another person is expected to take a polygraph test this week and another has agreed to take the test but has not been scheduled yet.

The sheriff's department anticipates testing at least one more person, bringing the total to six, Clement said.

Although he would not reveal the identity of the suspects, he said at least one female and a 13-year-old boy were among them.

### Jailer, fired after escape, is rehired

By PETER G. JIMSON  
Charlotte Bureau Chief

PUNTA GORDA — A jailer fired after the escape of an accused murderer has been rehired by the Charlotte County Sheriff's Department.

Robert J. Brown, who was fired Oct. 14, was reinstated after a grievance committee at the sheriff's department said the disciplinary action taken against him was too harsh.

Sheriff Alan LeBoau Thursday confirmed he had accepted the recommendations of the grievance committee and rehired the jailer.

However, Brown will not resume his duties at the jail until he completes a 30-day suspension.

In addition to the suspension, LeBoau confirmed Brown has been denied one rank from corporal to deputy and placed on one year's trial probation.

Reached at home Thursday, Brown said "I'm happy with the decision of the grievance committee and I'm happy the sheriff went along with it."

Departmental policy does not require the sheriff to follow the recommendations of the three-member grievance committee.

The grievance committee is made up of one deputy elected by members of the department, one deputy selected by the sheriff and one deputy selected by the union.

Brown was fired after an in-house investigation into the escape attempt by Ralph Porter indicated the jailer had been leaving on the night the double murder suspect slipped out of the jail.

Brown was also supervisor at the jail on the night Porter escaped and was therefore "responsible for all activities that took place at the jail," sheriff's officials said.

Porter, who is charged with the murder of Harry and Margaret Walsh, escaped from the Charlotte County jail on Oct. 10, sometime between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

He was recaptured less than 13 hours after his escape but more than two miles away from the jail.

Problems with the sheriff's decision to rehire the jailer.

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### Affidavit filed for venue change

By KEVIN BLOOM  
News-Press Bureau

PUNTA GORDA — Ralph Porter, in a sworn affidavit, claims he can not get an impartial jury trial in Charlotte County on the two counts of first degree murder brought against him.

The affidavit, filed Thursday, was accompanied by a motion for a change of venue (October), filed by the public defender, Stephen Widmeyer.

Widmeyer's motion claims that extensive coverage by newspapers, radio and television makes it impossible for Porter to receive a "fair and impartial trial by jury in Charlotte County."

Widmeyer said he will argue that the trial should be taken out of the 20th judicial circuit.

The circuit includes Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee counties.

"I will argue that the trial be moved to a place where the people have not been inundated by the coverage," Widmeyer said.

He said he will further request the trial not be held in Sarasota County because of the penetration of the Charlotte County media there.

Widmeyer's motion states that between Aug. 23, when Porter was arrested, and Oct. 15, 31 stories were printed in 20 different days.

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