

# Man charged with killing couple

By The Associated Press

GAINESVILLE — A Gainesville man has been arrested and charged in the stabbing deaths of a couple whose bodies were found at their home Thursday, police said.

Joseph Baskin, 24, was jailed Friday night pending his arraignment, scheduled for this morning, on two counts of first-degree murder and two counts of robbery, Alachua County sheriff's Lt. Spencer Mann said.

"It is certain the motive was robbery," Mann said. "He was cold and calculating — just plain mean and hateful. He had no regard for human life whatsoever and needed to be removed from the streets."

Baskin was arrested about 8 p.m. Friday in a waiting room at Shands Hospital, where he had gone to visit a relative, Mann said.

The bodies of James Ellis, 60, and Thomasena Ellis, 53, were found Thursday morning after Thomasena Ellis failed to arrive for two days at her job as an elementary school cafeteria worker.

A sheriff's deputy was called to the home around 9 a.m. and found James Ellis dead in the yard. His wife's body was inside the house.

Mann said the break came after "a concerned citizen" heard the suspect talk about the murders and told the sheriff's office.