

D.M. man arrested in Ridgeway murder

By **TARA DEERING**
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Authorities Tuesday charged a Des Moines man with killing a woman found two weeks ago in a wooded area just north of Des Moines.

Robin Marie Ridgeway, 34, was found dead in the 4400 block of Northwest 12th Street. Ridgeway and her boyfriend, Matthew Popp, 36, had been camping out in the wooded area after Ridgeway was evicted from her apartment in May.

William Lee Carr, 45, an acquaintance of Ridgeway's boyfriend, was arrested Tuesday and charged with first-degree murder.

Polk County Sheriff's Chief Deputy Neil Shultz said Ridgeway met Carr through her boyfriend. Shultz said he didn't know how long the two had known each other.

Carr of 3700 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway was among nearly 50 people interviewed during the investigation. Shultz said Carr became a suspect early in the investigation.



Carr

of evidence.

Ridgeway's body was found about 75 yards southeast of the camp area. Autopsy results show Ridgeway died of multiple injuries, but authorities have refused to disclose the weapon used or how she was killed.

Popp used his cell phone to

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notify authorities after discovering blood at the camp area when he returned Aug. 13.

He said he left the campsite about 5 p.m. Aug. 12 after he and Ridgeway had gotten into what he called "a lover's spat" over when they would eat dinner.

He said that was the last time he saw her.

"We were hollering at each other and I decided to leave," said Popp, who added the two had been drinking. "The last words that we spoke to each other was 'I love you,' and then I drove away."

Authorities arrested Carr following an interview at the sheriff's office.

His initial court appearance is scheduled for this morning.

Investigators said they don't believe others were involved.

Conviction provides relief for two grieving families



William Carr

By FRANK SANTIAGO
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Two families were relieved Friday when a Polk County jury found William Carr guilty of the rape and murder of a 13-year-old girl more than four years ago.

"Justice was done," said a jubilant Ruth Duncan, aunt of Linda Williamson, whose partially clothed body was found on the banks of the Des Moines River on June 6, 2000. Williamson had been hit on the head with a brick and had drowned.

"I'm very pleased with the verdicts," Duncan said. Barbara Ridgeway, who followed the trial closely, wept openly. She is the mother of Robin Ridgeway, a 34-year-old homeless woman whose body was found near a Des Moines creek on Aug. 13, 2002.

"He killed my daughter," she said, shaking with emotion Friday.

Carr was charged with Robin Ridgeway's murder but was acquitted last year by a jury after Carr admitted having sex with Ridgeway but denied killing her. DNA testing on semen found in Ridgeway linked him to semen taken from the body of Williamson two years earlier.

"Robin got him convicted," Barbara Ridgeway said. "Without Robin they couldn't have convicted him."

Carr, 48, faces life sentences for the jury's first-degree murder and first-degree sexual abuse convictions. A third conviction, third-degree sexual abuse, carries a 10-year sentence. The jury, which did not know about the Ridgeway case, deliberated over three days before reaching its verdict.

District Judge Robert Hanson on Nov. 3 will sentence the former Des Moines night janitor to mandatory life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The verdicts were read aloud by Hanson in a silenced courtroom, with only an occasional sigh heard.

Carr looked straight ahead and said nothing. He



GARY FANDEL/REGISTER PHOTOS

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"Without Robin, they couldn't have convicted him."

— Barbara Ridgeway, mother of Robin Ridgeway, a homeless woman whose body was found near a Des Moines creek in 2002. Carr was acquitted in Ridgeway's murder.

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