

Crete Man Charged With Murder

By Don Brown

Murder charges were filed Monday against a Crete man in connection with the slaying July 3 of a fisherman on the banks of Olive Creek Lake.

Paul Leonard Kennedy, 23, 2045 Hawthorne, Crete, was charged with first degree murder and murder in perpetration of a robbery in the shotgun killing of John L. Vajgrt, 67, Crete.

Mr. Vajgrt was shot four times with a 12-gauge shotgun while fishing on the lake in southwest Lancaster County.

Kennedy was arraigned before Lancaster County Court Judge Ralph W. Slocum. He did not enter a plea and was accompanied by Lancaster County Chief Public Defender T. Clement Gaughan who was appointed to defend the bearded part-time bartender and construction worker.

Hearing Aug. 14

The charges against Kennedy were lodged by Lancaster County Attorney Paul Douglas. Preliminary hearing was set for Aug. 14 at 9 a.m. No bond was set. Kennedy will remain in Lincoln City Jail on the charges.

Kennedy was accompanied



Paul Leonard Kennedy

into the crowded second-floor courtroom of the County-City Building by Lancaster County Sheriff Merle Karnopp. Kennedy displayed no emotion during his arraignment and responded quietly to questions put to him by Judge Slocum and Douglas.

Kennedy was arrested by sheriff's officers Saturday evening, 18 days after Mr. Vajgrt was found slumped over on the lake bank — two fishing lines still dangling in the water.

Douglas said Lancaster County Sheriff's deputies Glenn Christiansen and Del Zeman went to Crete in Saline County Saturday evening to look for Kennedy. He was found driving a car, questioned and brought to Lincoln.

Douglas said a search warrant was later obtained from Lancaster District Judge Herbert Ronin. Douglas, along with several deputies, accompanied Kennedy back to Crete.

Kennedy's small one-bedroom home was searched and among the items found were several firearms including a 12-gauge pump shotgun which was the weapon used in the commission of the crime, Douglas said.

Douglas declined to elaborate on what other items were found in Kennedy's house as a result of the search warrant. However, a billfold which Vajgrt was

reportedly carrying when he went fishing and reportedly containing at least \$50. was apparently not among the items seized.

Douglas said Kennedy was later returned to Lincoln for further questioning and was booked into Lincoln City Jail at about 5:30 a.m. Sunday.

Douglas said the 12-gauge shotgun found at Kennedy's home would be tested at the FBI's crime laboratory in Washington, D. C., where several spent shotgun shells which were found near the lake were sent earlier.

Kennedy, a Marine Corps veteran who served in Califor-

nia was given a polygraph test but Douglas declined to say what the results were.

Vajgrt, a retired Crete school custodian was found on the rocky banks of the lake by boaters the night of July 3. An autopsy later showed that he had been shot four times — twice in the head. Deputies later found three spent 12-gauge shotgun shells near the murder scene after tall grass was mowed.

A fourth spent shell was found near where a dog was found shot in the head. Douglas said the killing of Vajgrt was linked with the shooting of the dog — which at last report was alive.

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High

13th internationally in the measurement of infant deaths.

The death rate for pneumonia was up 19% over 1971.

Abortion deaths remained at a low of 1 per 100,000 population, although the actual number increased from 126 in 1971 to 140 last year. Homicide and suicide rates both increased.

By months, the highest death rates were recorded in January and February. The lowest were in the summer and early fall.

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