

Murder suspect hangs himself in Ohio jail cell

Des Moines police had planned to charge him in the death of Khieeda Brinson.

By **DEANNA TRUMAN-COOK**
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

A New York man who police had planned to charge with a Des Moines woman's murder apparently hanged himself in an Ohio jail cell, authorities said Thursday.

Andra Petersen, also known as Anthony Petersen, 40, was being held in Stryker, Ohio, as a material witness in the death earlier this week of Khieeda Brinson, 29.

The mother of three was found dead Monday in her east-side Des Moines apartment from multiple stab wounds. Police said Petersen and Brinson had dated, but that the relationship had recently ended. Friends who lived in Brinson's apartment building said the two were engaged but fought often.

Petersen's car was stopped by Ohio state troopers late Monday. He was questioned for the better part of a day, and Des Moines detectives examined the vehicle. Petersen initially told police that he was in New York at the time Brinson was killed. His eastbound car was stopped in Fulton County, about 20 miles west of Toledo.

Des Moines police spokesman Vince Valdez said Petersen had agreed to return to Iowa, where he was scheduled to be charged Monday with first-degree murder.

Authorities in Ohio say Petersen was found unconscious in his maximum-security cell Wednesday night. Cpl. Daniel Hughes said Petersen hanged himself

with a sheet, but that he had not been under suicide watch and that guards had checked on him about 30 minutes before he was discovered. He died later at a hospital.

Officials said Petersen had been on parole for a New York robbery at the time of his arrest.

Brinson, a native of New York City's Bronx borough, was found Monday morning by her sister at Fenway Manor apartments, 1640 Hull Ave.

Betty Thompson, who lives in the apartment below Brinson's, said a loud noise from Brinson's apartment woke her, but she thought it was one of the victim's three children.

Thompson said she was shocked by the latest development.

"That scares me, because if he hasn't confessed, we still don't know who did it," she said.

Thompson said Brinson's three children — ages 1, 5 and 11 — were either at school or in child care when their mother's body was discovered.

The children are staying with Brinson's mother at the home of Ako Abdul-Samad, director of Creative Visions, an organization that fights inner-city violence.

"How are you going to tell those children what happened to their mother?" Abdul-Samad said. "The question will never be answered."

Brinson, who had lived in Des Moines about two years, was an administrative assistant for Spectrum Resource Program, 1702 Keosauqua Way, and was enrolled at Des Moines Area Community College. Her death was the 11th homicide in Des Moines this year.

Obituary for Khieeda Brinson, Page 5B.



Brinson



Petersen