

Faribault County Register

Bail set at \$2M in murder

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Residents on the 400 block of East Fourth Street in Blue Earth were awakened early Monday morning by law officers knocking on doors seeking information.

Later that day they would learn a neighbor, 37-year-old Christopher Michael Fulmer, had been beaten to death and three others severely assaulted.

Ristsuko White and her 14-year-old daughter lived next to Fulmer, in the east side of the duplex house.

White says her daughter just happened to be awake at that time.

"She heard a lady screaming loud and somebody talking, but she couldn't tell if it was a man," she says.

Unable to sleep, White says her daughter woke her up to tell her about the noise next door.

"I heard sirens. When I looked out the window there were flashing lights all around the house," says White. "I thought I was dreaming."

Less than 24 hours after Blue Earth police and Faribault County law officers were called to the duplex house at 414 E. 4th St. at about 12:30 a.m. for a reported assault, 29-year-old Brian Daniel Freeman of Ceylon was arrested.

"He's the one. He's our sole suspect," Faribault Sheriff Mike Gormley told the Register on Tuesday morning. Blue Earth police were first at the scene, but Gormley was close behind.

"It has to be one of the most horrific crime scenes I have seen. It was very gruesome," says the veteran law officer.

Freeman faces several charges, including second-degree murder with a weapon.

Local authorities and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension believe Freeman was wearing a mask when he entered the home and beat Fulmer with a tool or tools and assaulted his wife, 38-year-old Candice Marie Freeman of Ceylon; Freeman's 19-year-old daughter Brittany Kay DeVary; and Freeman's 15-year-old daughter.

A 6-year-old girl also in the house, who is Freeman's daughter, was not injured.

"To have something like that happen right next door to you, some 30 feet away, is scary," says Craig Wells.

"Wow! You only read about things like this happening in other places," he adds.

The two women and the teen were treated at United Hospital District in Blue Earth before being airlifted to St. Marys Hospital in Rochester. Their conditions were unavailable.

Local, county and state law officers were at the crime scene all day Monday.

Squad cars from the Faribault County Sheriff and Winnebago Police departments were used to prevent motorists from driving past the residence.

A (BCA) crime lab unit also was at the crime scene assisting authorities in gathering evidence.

Wells describes Fulmer as being real quiet and pretty much kept to himself.

Wells says he and his wife would say hello to the man when they went walking and he would greet them.

"I can't imagine why this happened. I've been trying to figure it out. It's so bizarre," Wells says.

Ken Breen, who lives on the same block, says his wife talked with law officers when they knocked on their door around 1 a.m.

"You never expect something like this in a small town. It's a surprise, but not a major surprise," he says.

Like Breen, Wells says officers came to his house seeking information.

"A dep-uty asked if we heard anything. I slept right through it. Neither of us were woken up," Wells says.

"My wife has always insisted we lock our doors at night. Now, I'm going to make sure they are," he adds.

White says she and her daughter are having a hard time dealing with what happened.

"Living here isn't the same. When night comes, I'm terrified and afraid to be here," she says. "The days are OK, but when night comes me and my daughter stay close together."