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Police: teens robbed, abducted, murdered man, 66

GRAND RAPIDS – Four teenagers are under arrested for allegedly abducting and killing a Grand Rapids man.

According to Grand Rapids police, Willie Jones, 66, was abducted from the parking lot at Michigan Lanes bowling alley on Michigan Street Wednesday night. Thursday afternoon, police discovered Jones's body in the woods of southern Mecosta County.

Police say one of the teens told them where Jones was after an officer pulled them over Thursday morning. Police searched the car and found blood in the trunk. The car belonged to Jones.



Jones had retired from General Motors last year. "Very laid back gentleman," said Michigan Lanes manager Mike Fortuna. Jones even had a plaque with his name at the bowling alley. "He'd bowl five or six games then he'd go home. That's what he enjoyed doing."

Police suspect the teens, all between 17 and 19 years of age, beat and robbed Jones as he left the bowling alley Wednesday night and then put him in the trunk of his car and drove him to Mecosta County, where they killed him. "We believe the



motive for this incident was robbery," said Grand Rapids police Captain Kevin Belk. "These individuals saw Mr. Jones in the bowling alley and, followed him out into alley where intended to rob him."

Police arrested three of the teens in the car Wednesday morning. A fourth was arrested later that day. All four are being held on felony murder charges, pending a review by the prosecutor.

Girl critical after accidental shooting

BATTLE CREEK – A 12-year-old Battle Creek girl was in critical condition Friday after being accidentally shot Thursday night. The teenager who



allegedly shot her turned himself in to police Friday. Police say the shooting was accidental, but the boy could still face charges.



The shooting happened at around 9:30 p.m. in a home on Post Avenue near Marjorie Street. According to Battle Creek police, the victim, her brother and a friend were playing with a gun. They say the friend was handling the gun when it accidentally went off, shooting the girl in the stomach.

The girl underwent surgery night at Battle Creek Health Systems.

Fatal fire ruled arson

BATTLE CREEK - A house fire that killed a Battle Creek woman has been ruled arson.

Penny Charameda, 38, died in the blaze at a home on Spencer Street in Battle Creek. Charameda died of smoke inhalation. Her death is being investigated as a murder.



Police say they have some suspects but no arrests had been made as of Friday afternoon. Anyone with information is asked to call silent Observer at 964-3888.

WMU to partner with Lake Michigan College

KALAMAZOO - Western Michigan University has formed a partnership with Lake Michigan College in Benton Harbor.

The plan was announced Friday by WMU President Elson Floyd. Under the partnership, WMU will offer credited classes in the Lake Michigan College Campus.

Former minister sentenced in molestation case

CASSOPOLIS - A former Cass County minister was sentenced Friday to at least 10 year in prison for molesting a child.

John Charles Yeager, 54, pleaded no contest to a sexual assault charge. Yeager is already serving an 8-20-year term in a case involving another sex offense. The sentences will run concurrently. In 1998, he was convicted of molesting a teenager who knew one of his daughters.



Yeager was once a pastor at First Congregational Church in Constantine. He also was the administrative director at Village of Indiana, a nonprofit organization dealing with abused and neglected children.



Criminal charges possible in FSU student's drinking death

BIG RAPIDS - Criminal charges are possible in the apparent drinking death of a 19-year-old Ferris State University student, police said. According to a preliminary autopsy, Stephen Petz died early Wednesday of alcohol poisoning. Tests showed his blood alcohol level content was 0.42%. The legal limit for intoxication is 0.10%.

Big Rapids Director of Public Safety Kevin Courtney says his department is interviewing about a dozen people believed to have been at an off-campus party where Petz was drinking Tuesday night.

This is the third drinking-related death of an underage drinker in Big Rapids in less than 18 months.

Whirlpool forms gay employees group, won't insure partners

BENTON HARBOR - [Whirlpool Corporation](#) has formed an organization for gay and lesbian employees and is banning discrimination based on sexual orientation. But the Benton Harbor-based appliance maker says it doesn't plan to extend health and other benefits to unmarried same- or opposite-sex partners of its workers.



According to Whirlpool chairman David Whitwam, the company formed the group to help create broad-based organizational diversity. The company has also formed similar affinity groups for women and blacks.

But some Whirlpool employees are unhappy about the gay network. Engineer Bob Ghent says he considers homosexuality a sin. Whirlpool's action amounts to an endorsement of "men having sex with men and women with women."

Construction to close Oakland Drive

KALAMAZOO - A major artery in Kalamazoo will be closed beginning Monday. Road crews will tear up part of Oakland

Drive between Kilgore Road and Parkview Avenue.

City buses will be detoured away from the area. Traffic is expected to slow down in both directions. Drivers are asked to find alternate routes.

Organ donor cards go unfilled despite need

By [Desiree Carvajal](#), News 3 Reporter

KALAMAZOO - It's as simple as filling out the back of your drivers license, but thousands of people never think about being an organ donor and people are dying because of it.

About 67,000 Americans are currently on the national transplant waiting list. Dr. Sanjay Dalal, a board certified internist and nephrologist, says most people on the transplant list will never get one. "The average time for somebody waiting for a transplant is five years," he says. "For a lot of people that is so long that it may never be possible."

Dr. John Bernhard, former president of Western Michigan University, has been on dialysis for over a year. He's almost 80-years old and at this point will never be considered for a kidney transplant. But he hopes other "...younger people who have a whole life ahead of them," will be lucky enough to receive one.

Even live donors are needed and a new less invasive surgery makes giving a lot easier. It's easy to become a donor; all you do is fill out the back of your driver's license.

Links:

- [National Transplant Society Web Site](#)
- [Organ and Tissue Donor Registry Enrollment Brochure](#)
– Michigan Secretary of State

Haworth earns environmental award

HOLLAND (AP) – Holland-based office furniture maker [Haworth](#) is getting kudos for its environmental efforts. The honors are coming from the company's biggest customer—the federal government.

The U.S. General Services Administration gave Haworth its



1999 “Evergreen Award” for environmental stewardship. The award is presented annually to two manufacturers nationwide. It recognizes and encourages environmental practices to companies who supply the federal government.

Zeeland-based Herman Miller received the government’s first-ever Evergreen Award last year. Herman Miller also makes office furniture.