

Informant's tip gives officers evidence to locate remains of murder victim Paul Graupe

Written by Marty Randall

Tuesday, 27 November 2012 00:00 -

The signs asking for help in finding 50-year-old Paul Graupe of Austin have been taken down now.

Four days before the three-year anniversary of the disappearance of Graupe, officers with the Scott County Sheriff's Department and an Indiana State Police forensic evidence team recovered the presumed remains of Graupe.

Residents and motorists driving through Austin have been kept aware of the slightly-built man's mysterious disappearance from family members' efforts. His family posted many signs in Austin and around the county with Graupe's smiling, bespectacled face, urging anyone who had information to inform authorities.

The quiet-mannered Graupe has been the subject of numerous searches by local police since his disappearance was reported by family members on November 26, 2009. No one has seen the slightly-built, dark-haired Graupe since the afternoon of November 24, 2009, when he reportedly told a few people that he planned to visit a man who owed him some money. That man was Robert L. "Bobby" Riley Jr.

Graupe was never seen again.

Austin police tried to locate him but had no luck. Family members went to then-Sheriff John Lizenby, who followed investigatory leads for another six months or so. After having little success, Sheriff Lizenby assigned the case to a part-time deputy/investigator he had just hired, Ray Dawson. The retired Indiana State Police trooper re-interviewed and followed leads. Again, the investigation bore no fruit.

Though he continued with his efforts under now-Sheriff Dan McClain, Deputy Dawson was forced to cut short his investigation when he was re-activated for an overseas tour of duty with the U.S. Army early in 2012.

It wasn't until an informant's tip was provided to the Sheriff's Department on Tuesday morning, November 20, that Sheriff McClain felt his department had enough cause to request a search warrant for the residence and outbuildings of Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Riley Sr. at 586 West Main Street (State Road 256 West), Austin.

The search warrant information was reviewed by County Prosecutor Jason Mount, who prepared the document and submitted it to Scott Circuit Court Judge Roger Duvall. Judge Duvall signed the warrant, allowing Sheriff McClain to begin assembling a team in the late afternoon. His team included the two ISP technicians, Chief Deputy Donald Campbell, Detective Rick Barrett, Deputies Jeremy Arnold and Rodney Rudder and Reserve Deputy Jack Sanders.

An arrest warrant for Bobby Riley was also issued that same day out of Scott Superior Court for nonsupport of a dependent. Riley is reported to be over \$2,000 behind in child support payments.

Upon the team's arrival at the Riley home just before 5:30 p.m., Bobby Riley was taken into custody without incident and transported to the Scott County Security Center in Scottsburg on the nonsupport warrant. Remaining family members were advised to leave the premises, and the home and grounds were secured by officers in preparation for a search.

No evidence was recovered from the family's home. The team then concentrated its efforts on a small duplex immediately behind the house. Reportedly, the structure had once been used as a rental unit, but no one had occupied the building since Graupe's disappearance.

When they entered the building, officers found the structure in poor physical condition and filled

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with junk. Sheriff McClain said it took at least two hours to work through items piled in the building and create a path to a back room. The body was found there, in surprisingly good condition, according to the Sheriff, considering the time that had lapsed between Graupe's disappearance and the body's recovery.

Sheriff McClain said that Scott County Coroner Kevin Collins was notified as was Prosecutor Mount when the remains were discovered. Both arrived that evening to witness the removal of the body.

Evidence technicians collected material around the body before it was carefully removed and transported to the Kentucky Medical Examiner's Office in Louisville. Preliminary tests were performed on Wednesday, November 21, and a laminated worker's ID badge issued by the company for which Graupe worked was found in the body's clothing.

Additional testing was performed on Friday, November 23, by a forensic pathologist. Reportedly, the investigation revealed that Graupe had been stabbed in the back by a sharp object.

Officers remained on the scene that Tuesday past 11 p.m. as collection of possible evidence was performed.

On Wednesday morning, Bobby Riley's initial court hearing on the nonsupport charge, a Class D felony, was conducted in Superior Court. A not guilty plea was entered for Riley, with bond set at \$25,000 and a jury trial date of February 12 scheduled.

Immediately after that hearing, Riley was taken to Circuit Court. A probable cause affidavit filed under a miscellaneous action and signed by Sheriff McClain indicated that Riley admitted to Detective Barrett and Deputy Arnold that he had stabbed Graupe and hid the body in the duplex.

Judge Duvall allowed a 72-hour hold to be placed on Riley due to the unlikelihood that proper forensic testing could be completed on the remains because of the Thanksgiving holidays. The hold order does not include holiday or weekend hours.

Riley is expected to be brought back to Circuit Court some time on Tuesday, November 27, to be formally charged, advised Prosecutor Mount.