

Young Couple Murdered in Niguel Shores.

By Jerry Hicks

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Laguna Niguel—Police Friday were seeking leads in the slaying of a young newlywed couple found in a bedroom of their fashionable Niguel Shores home Thursday evening.

The victims were Keith Eli Harrington, 24, a fourth-year UC Irvine medical student, and Patrice Ann Harrington, a pediatrics nurse. The bodies were found at 6:30 p.m. by Harrington's father, Roger Harrington, who owns the house.

The couple, found in their bed, had been beaten to death with a blunt instrument, according to Sheriff's Lt. Andy Romero.

Weapon Not Found

Investigators say they have discovered no motive for the murders. It was not known late Friday whether anything was missing from the home. The couple may have been killed as early as the night before, but police officials were awaiting an autopsy report, which should be ready today.

No murder weapon was found, and the sheriff's office had no clues, Romero said, adding, "This one is a real mystery to us right now."

Niguel Shores is an enclosed private community of about 950 homes just north of coast highway. While the entrance has a security guard, there are several places which offer easy access to the homes.

The elder Harrington had apparently been at another residence he owns since Wednesday, Romero said. He told investigators he had not seen or talked to the couple since then.

The victims apparently died of "massive trauma to their upper bodies," Romero reported.

Married Four Months.

The \$300,000 home occupied by the couple at 3381 Cockelshell Drive is on a corner lot.

The Harringtons met at UCI Medical Center about a year ago. He was in his third year of medical school, specializing in emergency medicine. She was then a pediatrics nurse there.

They were married about four months ago.

Mrs. Harrington left the medical center to work for a private family. The couple temporarily moved to San Francisco, where Harrington was pursuing special studies. They recently moved back to the Laguna Niguel house.

Word of the murders spread quickly through Niguel Shores Friday morning, stunning residents.

We've had very few incidents at all that the police would consider a crime," a homeowners spokesman said. "This is tragic, but we're not anxious for a lot of publicity about it."

Brian Brenner, a friend of the Harringtons at UCI, said Harrington was "one of the most brilliant people I ever met; he was fun-loving, full of life, energetic, raring to go all the time."

Harrington was born Oct. 10, 1955 in Santa Monica. He was a graduate of Palisades High School in Los Angeles County, and received a bachelor of science degree from UCI in 1973.

He entered medical school in 1977 and would have graduated in December.

Harrington has three brothers, two of them doctors and the third a lawyer.