
Subject: And yet you people still say the American Army isn't capable of mass rapes
Posted by [prasp](#) on Sat, 12 Jan 2008 02:37:54 GMT

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Pregnant Marine's grave apparently found

Quote: JACKSONVILLE, N.C. - Authorities said Friday they believe they found the shallow grave of a pregnant Marine in the back yard of a comrade she accused of rape, along with evidence inside his home that suggested she had been killed.

Investigators are treating the case as a homicide, said Onslow County Sheriff Ed Brown. But the prime suspect left a note insisting Lance Cpl. Maria Frances Lauterbach had killed herself, Brown said.

After some slight digging in a fire pit discovered in the yard of Marine Cpl. Cesar Armando Laurean, detectives found what "appeared to be burnt human remains," Onslow County District Attorney Dewey Hudson said Friday night.

"We think we have found what will (contain) the skeletal remains of Maria Lauterbach," Hudson said. Authorities placed a tarp and two white tents over the area and planned to begin slowly scraping the earth with garden tools Saturday morning.

Lauterbach, 20, vanished three weeks ago, days after she talked to military prosecutors about a rape case against Laurean, who remains at large. Authorities said Friday that information from another woman, a former Marine, left them certain that she is dead.

Before fleeing Jacksonville on Friday, Laurean left a note that said Lauterbach had "come to his residence and cut her (own) throat," Brown said.

But crime scene investigators found blood stains and obvious signs of that a cleanup had taken place inside the home, Brown said late Friday.

"Evidence now is showing that what he claimed happened didn't happen," Brown said.

Authorities learned about the note from Laurean's wife, a person familiar with the investigation told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the investigation is ongoing. In the note, the person said, Laurean wrote that he had nothing to do with Lauterbach's suicide, but that he had buried her body.

Laurean's wife Christina is "heartbroken," said her mother, Debbie Sue Shifflet.

"I feel sorry for the other family," Shifflet said. "It's horrible what they're going through. My heart goes out to them."

Authorities on foot and all-terrain vehicles searched Laurean's neighborhood near Camp Lejeune on Friday. Megan Melton, who lives nearby, said dozens of vultures had descended on the area in the past few weeks.

Although the outdoor search was suspended for the night, investigators from the State Bureau of Investigation moved indoors and began a search for blood and other evidence inside his one-story, brown brick ranch home.

The search continued late Friday for Laurean, a 21-year-old from Clark County, Nev., who had refused to meet with investigators and apparently left the area without telling his lawyers where he was going, the sheriff said.

Lauterbach met with military prosecutors in December to discuss pursuing rape charges against Laurean, said Kevin Marks, supervisory agent with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service at Camp Lejeune. He said military prosecutors believed they had enough evidence to argue that the case should go to trial.

In court papers filed this week, prosecutors said the anticipated birth of the baby "might provide evidentiary credence to charges she lodged with military authorities that she was sexually assaulted." Lauterbach reported the rape in April and was due to give birth in mid-February, authorities said.

In a brief interview with reporters outside the family's home in Vandalia, Ohio, Lauterbach's uncle, Pete Steiner, said the rapist was the father.

Authorities said they were not concerned that Laurean would flee because they had information the pair carried on a "friendly relationship" even after she reported the assault to military authorities. There is no indication Lauterbach asked the military to protect her after she leveled the rape allegations, investigators said.

Steiner, however, said his niece didn't have any kind of relationship with her attacker, and that Lauterbach had been forced to rent a room off base because of harassment at Camp Lejeune.

"She was raped," Steiner said. "The Marines, unfortunately, did not protect her, and now she's dead."

Originally from Dayton, Ohio, Lauterbach was reported missing Dec. 19 by her mother, who last spoke with her daughter on Dec. 14, authorities said. Her cell phone was found Dec. 20 near the main gate at Camp Lejeune, and she missed a Dec. 26 prenatal care appointment.

Lauterbach was assigned to the 2nd Marine Logistics Group of the II Marine Expeditionary Force, based at Camp Lejeune. She joined the Marines in June 2006, and had not been sent to either Iraq or Afghanistan. Laurean worked in the same unit, where both were personnel clerks.

Steiner said Lauterbach had four siblings. Worried about the difficulty of raising a child while a single Marine, she had talked with her family about putting the baby up for adoption, he said.

According to court documents filed this week, Lauterbach's mother told investigators that her daughter was bipolar and had a history of compulsive lying. Steiner said the family wanted to give authorities a fair and accurate impression, and that while Lauterbach tended to stretch the truth in stressful situations, "she was not a compulsive liar."

"We're all going to miss Maria horribly," Steiner said. "She was a big part of our lives. What I personally hope comes out of this is that victims of sexual assault in the armed services will be taken more seriously and this will be handled differently in the future."

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080112/ap_on_re_us/missing_marine
