St. Petersburg police say woman lied about rape to cover up drug death

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In Print: Saturday, April 10, 2010

ST. PETERSBURG — When police discovered a woman's body in an abandoned house earlier this week, they released little information.

The woman, identified through fingerprints as Kathleen M. Baur, 52, was partially clothed and was thought to have died about a week before. There were no signs of trauma. The Pinellas-Pasco Medical Examiner's Office is still trying to determine a cause of death.

But Friday, authorities revealed there was more to the story.

Police say Baur's decomposing body was actually staged in the unoccupied upstairs apartment by another woman who made up an elaborate story in order to direct police to the corpse.

Police say about 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, they got a call from Jeannetta Hall, 38, who told them a man had attacked her, dragged her into a vacant house and raped her. She took officers to the scene, 405 Eighth Ave. N, where they discovered Baur's body after detecting an odor.

But there were inconsistencies in Hall's story, police said.

Upon further questioning, police said, Hall confessed to making up the story about the rape in order to get officers to the abandoned house, knowing they would find the body inside.
Hall told police that in late March, she and her boyfriend, Keith Gary, 39, were smoking crack with Baur nearby when Baur began having "medical issues." They went inside the house on Eighth Avenue, where Baur collapsed and died, she said.

Hall told police that she and her boyfriend were scared and left. They returned the next day and positioned Baur's body to make it appear that she had been sexually assaulted, robbed and murdered, police said.

Then Hall made the false report. Gary has since admitted helping to stage the scene with Baur's body, police said.

The couple told police they lied because they thought they would be in trouble since they were with Baur when she died, police said. Both were arrested Thursday on charges of providing false information to law enforcement during an investigation.

Baur, Hall and Gary all have extensive criminal records. Police said Baur was a prostitute who worked the Fourth Street corridor.

Family members said Baur was more than that. She loved animals, recently became a grandmother and has an adult daughter who has a master's degree.

Baur's sister, Diane Dyal, 62, reported her missing on March 31 after she had not been seen for two weeks.

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[Last modified: Apr 09, 2010 10:42 PM]