

# Assault victim dies, police heighten investigation

By Alice Collins  
staff writer

Birmingham police continued to say Wednesday that they had good suspects in the June 27 fatal beating of a 52-year-old Birmingham man who died early Tuesday morning without regaining full consciousness.

Fred Jacob Myers died of pneumonia brought on by the injuries he sustained in the beating at his home, according to the preliminary findings of an autopsy conducted shortly after his death.

Birmingham Police Chief Edward Ostin said the current suspects in the case "are believed to have been guests at Myers' house" the night of the attack.

The investigation was intensified Tuesday after what started out as a felonious assault became a murder case.

Myers, who lived alone in a small frame house at 648 Benvenville in south-central Birmingham, died at 3:50 a.m. in William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, according to a hospital spokesman.

His body was transported to the Oakland County Medical Examiner's office in Pontiac where the autopsy was conducted.

MYERS WAS taken by ambulance to Beaumont around midnight June 27 after having been brutally beaten and robbed at his home.

He was severely beaten about the head with a one-foot square piece of concrete and was unconscious and bleeding badly when Birmingham paramedics and police arrived on the scene, according to police. He also suffered a broken jaw, rib and wrist, police reported.

A stereo and other items valued at about \$600 were missing from the home, police said.

UNIDENTIFIED WITNESSES questioned by police reported seeing at least four teen-agers run from the home the night of the attack and leave in a dark blue, full-sized car with one headlight out and a noisy muffler, said Ostin.

Police are awaiting the results of laboratory tests made on undisclosed evidence collected in the case, said Capt. Millard Squire. Lab analyses are being done by Michigan State Police laboratory experts and the results are expected late this week or early next week, said Squire. A search of the crime scene was conducted by the Oakland County Sheriff's Department.

Myers was initially listed as being in critical condition. Later he was listed as "fair" and last week the hospital reported him as being in good condition.

A next door neighbor said Tuesday that Myers' son Pete "had such high hopes that his dad was going to make it. But I guess he never did completely regain consciousness. "This is such a shock," she said.

MYERS HAD worked as an insurance auditor. He was born June 28, 1928, in Detroit and is survived by two sons — Peter who lives in Royal Oak, and Frederick J. Jr., a resident of Warren; three brothers, a sister and a grandson.

Funeral services will be conducted at 10 a.m. Thursday at Vasu Rodgers & Connell Funeral Home in Royal Oak.



DICK KELLEY/staff photographer  
Fred Jacob Myers' little frame house at 648 Benvenville in south-central Birmingham was the scene of the June 27 beating which led to his death early Tuesday morning in Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak.

# Sorrow, disbelief expressed after neighbor's death

By Alice Collins  
staff writer

Fred Jacob Myers who died Tuesday after being brutally assaulted and robbed at his Birmingham home on June 27 was described by neighbors this week as a man battling a drinking problem, a man who was nice to their children and a man who loved flowers.

Neighbor Terry Ashcraft began to cry Tuesday when she was told that Myers had died hours earlier in William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak.

Myers had remained unconscious from June 27 until his death at 3:50 a.m. Tuesday after developing pneumonia.

"What a shame, what a shame," said Ms. Ashcraft in an interview at her home across the street from the small frame house on Benvenville where Myers had been living alone.

"We've known him the six years we've lived here," she continued, "but we got to know him better in just the last six months.

"He'd come across the street and play ball with my little one. I think he was really trying to make friends now. He had problems but he was trying to overcome them.

"JUST TWO weeks before this happened a friend of mine was over and introduced her to Mr. Myers," said Ms. Ashcraft.

"Right here in the yard we tried to talk to him about the Lord, but he didn't want to listen.

"When he hadn't been drinking he was such a different person, such an enjoyable person. It's pitiful.

"The night we saw them take him away to the hospital, and the next morning found out what had happened, I made up my mind to do something," she said.

"I called other neighbors and made up my mind that when he got out of the hospital and back home that we'd be extra specially nice to him. That we'd let him know that people cared and would really try to help him."

THE NEIGHBORHOOD described as quiet and made up primarily of retired people and some young families, is in south-central Birmingham.

The homes are small, in many cases single story, and are frame or brick.

"We need to move to a larger house now," said a woman who lives next door to Myers' house, "but this is just a nice quiet little neighborhood. The kids can go to school right down the street and there are parks," she said.

"But a murder, right next door to my house, I can't believe it," she added. Her name isn't being used at her request.

"ON THE SATURDAY NIGHT he was beaten," she continued, "it was around 11 or 11:30 and my husband had gone to bed. I was getting ready to take a shower when I heard my husband yell.

"I was afraid he might be going to make a big mess again, so I looked out the window to see what he was doing. I was going to have my husband go over and talk to him.

"But I didn't see him when I looked out. So I went ahead and took my shower in the hospital.

"Pete had high hopes he was going to make it."

She said she and her family were home the night of the attack on Myers "but we had the radio on and didn't hear anything."

Ms. Ashcraft did hear Myers yell that night, she said, "but when he'd be drinking he'd be out late in his front yard and do a lot of hollering. There was always so much activity over there on those nights and we just kind of got used to hearing him hollering."

"ON THE SATURDAY NIGHT he was beaten," she continued, "it was around 11 or 11:30 and my husband had gone to bed. I was getting ready to take a shower when I heard my husband yell.

"I was afraid he might be going to make a big mess again, so I looked out the window to see what he was doing. I was going to have my husband go over and talk to him.

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er. About 10 or 15 minutes later I saw the lights flashing outside and heard a big commotion with the fire trucks and ambulances and police.

"We saw them take him away. Then the next day we found out what had happened. This is so upsetting," she said.

Ms. Ashcraft said she will always remember Myers as a man who was kind to her three sons. "In the last couple of weeks he'd been playing a lot of ball with them.

"HE'D ESPECIALLY play with my 7-year-old who wasn't allowed to go out

in the street. Mr. Myers would come across and play ball and joke with him. He was really enjoyable."

Ms. Ashcraft said until recently Myers would go off to work every morning dressed in a suit and carrying a briefcase. Myers had worked as an auditor for a Southfield insurance company.

Even though his house had taken on a run-down appearance, Myers always kept his yard in good shape.

"And he loved flowers," said Ms. Ashcraft. "He always had a beautiful yard and flower garden. As you can see, the flowers are there now," she said.

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