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IN BRIEF

Six bodies found at rural California ranch home

GARNER VALLEY, Calif. — An investigator for the district attorney's office was found dead Tuesday in his sprawling ranch home along with five other people, including three children, who were all shot to death in their beds in the middle of the night, authorities said.

Sheriff Bob Doyle said detectives have not reached any conclusions about the slayings, but they had not ruled out a murder-suicide. The sheriff said there was no evidence of a break-in or struggle in any of the rooms, and he added that the "community is in no danger."

"We are not at this time looking for a suspect," he said.

David McGowan, 44, was found dead of a gunshot wound to the head close to the entrance of the home, Doyle said at a news conference. A handgun and a phone, which may have been used to call 911, were found near his body.

A 14-year-old boy, two girls — ages 8 and 10 — and two adult

women were found in beds throughout the house, all of them shot in the head. Names of the victims were withheld pending positive identification, Doyle said.

"The beds were undisturbed. The house itself was undisturbed. It did not appear that the house had been ransacked," Doyle said.

The sheriff said someone called 911 from the house at 4:33 a.m. A 911 dispatcher didn't hear any voices on the line, but was able to identify the sounds of the telephone hitting the wall and a gunshot, Doyle said.

"It was pretty much no one on the other end of the phone. There was some noise that was heard by dispatch," he said.

McGowan was a five-year veteran of the Riverside County district attorney's office and previously worked as a detective with the Cathedral City Police Department.

Public records show David and Karen McGowan bought the 4.5-acre property and 3,331-square-foot ranch house for \$425,000 in 2000.

Neighbors said they were shocked by the scene unfolding nearby.

"It's just really quiet here," said David Merriman, whose parents live about a mile from the McGowans. "A

lot could happen right next store and you wouldn't even know it."

Father arrested in slaying of two girls in Illinois

ZION, Ill. — A man was arrested on murder charges Tuesday in the Mother's Day slayings of his 8-year-old daughter and the little girl's best friend, who were killed after they went biking in a park.

Jerry Hobbs, who was recently released from prison, had led police to the bodies just off a wooded bike path early Monday, claiming he spotted them while searching for his daughter, the girl's grandfather, Arthur Hollabaugh, told The Associated Press.

Hobbs, 34, was questioned through the day about the deaths of Laura Hobbs, 8, and Krystal Tobias, 9.

Both girls had been beaten and stabbed repeatedly in the woods and left to die, Lake County Coroner Richard Keller said. The girls were found side-by-side and did not appear to have been sexually assaulted. They appeared to have been killed Sunday evening near the area where they were found, he said.

Lake County State's Attorney Michael Waller said in announcing the charges Tuesday that he could not discuss possible motives for the killings, but prosecutors said more details would come out when Hobbs appears in bond court today.

Authorities said Tuesday that additional charges could be filed, but they did not specify what they might be.

"This horrific crime has terrorized and traumatized the Zion community and I think it's safe to say people of good will everywhere," Waller said.

Hollabaugh said the family would not be able to afford an attorney. The public defender's office said Tuesday it had not been asked to take the case.

Outside the Tobias home, Krystal's 15-year-old brother, Alberto, said he had never met Hobbs but knew Hobbs was searching with his own family the night his sister was killed.

"We never thought a father would do that to a daughter," Alberto Segura said. "They were just babies. They didn't do anything wrong."

In front of the Hollabaugh's house, "No Trespassing" and "Keep Out" signs printed in black and orange had been posted on a fence.

Hobbs has an extensive criminal history dating back to 1990 in Texas, including prior arrests for assault and resisting arrest, according to state Department of Public Safety records.

Before being released April 12, he had served two years in a Texas prison for chasing neighbors with a chain saw during an argument with Laura's mother, Sheila Hollabaugh, according to Wichita County, Texas, Assistant District Attorney Rick Mahler.

No one was hurt in the 2001 incident, and someone subdued Hobbs by hitting him in the back with a shovel, Mahler said. Hobbs was sentenced to 10 years of probation but failed to appear for required meetings, so his probation was revoked in 2003 and he was imprisoned.

Hobbs had been living with the Hollabaughs after his release, Arthur Hollabaugh said. He said he worried authorities might be trying to railroad Hobbs in their search for the girls' killer.

"Jerry just got out of prison for aggravated assault, and I think they're holding that against him," Hollabaugh said before police announced charges against Hobbs. "I don't think he did it."

He described the search for his missing granddaughter and said the two men were in the woods shortly before dawn Monday when they spotted Laura's bike partway down a ravine in the brush.

Minutes later, he said, Hobbs was screaming that he had found the bodies.

— The Associated Press

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