

## Conviction in murder of adoptive mother

*by UPI*

OTTAWA - A 20-year-old Ottawa man pleaded guilty to killing his adoptive mother by crushing her skull and then hiding her body for nine days, court records said. Aaron Howard, 20, pleaded guilty to second-degree murder Wednesday for the June 6, 2007, killing of Deborah Howard, the Ottawa Sun reported. The court heard the pair had had an argument over his responsibility to clean the basement when he "just snapped," his lawyer said. Excerpts of Howard's diary read into evidence said he grabbed a lead pipe and began beating the woman on the head until he was too tired to swing it anymore. Afterward, he went out to buy cigarettes and vodka and returned home with his girlfriend to smoke marijuana, prosecutors said. Howard wrote that he cleaned up most of the blood and put the body in a cold storage room and turned the air conditioning up, the report said. The body was discovered by police nine days later, acting on concerns of family and friends. Howard's mother had recently retired from the federal Health Canada agency, where she wrote a study on family violence. Her son will be sentenced May 2, the newspaper said.

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