

Oregon Inmate Charged with Killing Wife in La Pine

by Richard Burton

A four-year investigation led to the arrest of an Oregon inmate Wednesday for the murder of his wife, whose remains were found in a barrel three years after she disappeared, Deschutes County authorities said Wednesday.

The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office arrested Darrell Kelly Middlekauff, 44, on December 20 for the murder of his wife, Brenda, who was 39 when she went missing in July of 2002. A co-worker of the woman reported her missing in July 2002, prompting an extensive investigation into her disappearance, said Sheriff Les Stiles.

Three years later, in mid 2005, Brenda Middlekauff's remains were found about ½ mile from her La Pine home in a partially buried barrel. The ongoing investigation provided sufficient evidence to obtain a grand jury indictment against Darrell Middlekauff for aggravated murder and first-degree sexual abuse.

Darrell Middlekauff has been imprisoned in the Oregon Department of Corrections since March 2005 on unrelated drug and burglary offenses. The Wednesday arrest came just eight days before his scheduled release date of December 28, said the sheriff.

Despite the recent arrest, the investigation continues and Sheriff Stiles encourages anyone who has information about the case to contact the Criminal Detective Division of the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office at 541-388-6655.

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