

Priest Beaten To Death In Apartment

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A Catholic priest, known for his work with recovering alcoholics, was found beaten to death Wednesday morning in his Oklahoma City apartment, police said.

The Rev. Richard Frank Dolan, 66, was found in his residence by an apartment manager and a maintenance man just after 10 a.m., police said.

The apartment, 130 NW 17, was ransacked, but authorities are not sure if anything was stolen. Police found no evidence of forced entry, said Capt. Bob Jones, police spokesman.

Jones said Dolan's light blue 1974 Oldsmobile station wagon might have been stolen but that will not be confirmed until investigators check reports that the car is being repaired. The car's license tag number is YN-3620.

The apartment manager told police she found Dolan's body after making a routine check, as she does with many of her tenants.

Police estimate Dolan had been dead for as long as two days.

"Since there was no forced entry, we think it was someone he knew or someone he recognized," Jones said. However, he said, there are no suspects and investigators have not determined a motive.

Police would not comment on other evidence found inside the apartment.

Dolan, a recovering alcoholic, was known locally for helping other alcoholics in Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

In 1967 he was assigned by the Roman Catholic Church to establish a program for alcoholics, said the Rev. David Monahan, Oklahoma City Archdiocese spokesman.

In 1968 he established and operated The Main Artery, 3501 NE 23, which was one of the few alcohol recovery programs available at the time.

Although his assignment ended in 1969, his work with alcoholics continued without support from the church, Monahan said.

The Main Artery closed in the mid-'70s, but Dolan continued programs largely funded through donations and the sale of his paintings. Dolan was an artist who operated several art shops.

He also became known as the city's "Bingo King" in the late '70s because he operated several bingo halls.

Although his programs were respected, the bingo operations were often controversial, officials said.

In 1974, the Oklahoma City priest was arrested and charged with engaging in an act of lewdness with an Oklahoma City vice squad officer, police said.

Police said Dolan approached the undercover officer on SW 2 and invited him to his apartment.

Dolan was arrested after he made a pass at the officer, police said.

In 1986 he moved from Oklahoma City to Pueblo, Colo., where he served as an associate pastor at St. Francis Catholic Church, Monahan said.

It was his only assignment outside of Oklahoma since he was ordained in 1950.

He left that post in 1987 and returned to Oklahoma City.

Apartment management at Heritage East Apartments said Dolan lived a quiet life there.

He was considered in good standing with the Catholic Church though he was inactive, Monahan said Wednesday afternoon.

Monahan, who last saw Dolan at Christmas 1985, remembered him as man with a good personality and a gift for public relations.

"He was a very charming fellow," Monahan said.

"I think there was a lot of goodwill toward him on the part of the priests around here. I hope people will remember him for all of the good he did." BIOG: NAME:

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