

Prostitute, Key Witness in LAPD Scandal, Slain
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WITNESS: Prostitute Murdered in Motel

Prostitute, Key Witness in LAPD Scandal, Slain

By WILLIAM FARR *Times Staff Writer*

A prostitute who was to be a key witness in the investigation of the burglary and sex scandals plaguing the Los Angeles Police Department's Hollywood Division has been murdered. The Times learned

Sandra Bowers, 26, was found Sunday night in Hollywood's Crest Motel with her throat slashed and a dozen stab wounds in her back.

She is the second witness in the ongoing investigation to die violently.

Jack Myers, the first policeman to be caught in the burglary scandal and the first to incriminate fellow officers, was killed May 12 when he somehow lost control of his pickup truck and was hurled out of the vehicle, landing on his head in the middle of the Simi Valley Freeway.

"At this point," department Cmdr. William Booth said, "we are investigating the (Bowers) case

with the belief she was the victim of her last trick (customer). We are not ruling out the possibility of some connection with the police misconduct investigation, but we have no evidence to believe it is connected with that."

Deputy Dist. Atty. Gilbert Garcetti, head of the district attorney's Special Investigations Division that has filed criminal charges against six officers to date, told The Times:

"We are aware this woman was murdered and will take a close look at it. It is curious that two of the people who could be valuable witnesses have ended up dead."

Booth said Bowers' testimony would have been "most relevant" to the administrative charges filed a month ago by the Police Department against Sgt. Roger M. Gibson, a 16-year veteran who faces a Board of Rights hearing that could

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lead to his dismissal.

Gibson and 11 other officers have been implicated in the burglary scandal, which involves allegations that police assigned to the Hollywood Division broke into businesses while on duty and stole merchandise or arranged to receive it. Eight of those implicated have resigned. In addition, other Hollywood Division officers—along with several of those who were involved in the reported burglaries—allegedly took part in sexual escapades with prostitutes.

In relieving Gibson of duty Aug. 12, acting Police Chief Marvin Iannone accused him of 19 counts of misconduct, most revolving around a sex party he allegedly attended in the Mount Olympus area in April, 1980, while on duty.

According to investigative reports obtained by The Times, the woman murdered Sunday had told the Police Department's Internal Affairs Division about being sexually harassed by Gibson during an April 4, 1980, party at the Oceanus Drive home of movie stuntman B. J. Davis and on several subsequent occasions.

The reports also identified Bowers as being "close" to Ronald Venegas, the partner of Myers, the dead officer. Myers and Venegas were arrested together last December as they left a Hollywood video equipment store carrying stolen merchandise to their police car.

One report states that at the April, 1980, party, Gibson indicated to Venegas that he was interested in Bowers.

Venegas is quoted in the report as telling Gibson to "lay off."

In the Internal Affairs Division report, it says that "Sandy Bowers alleges that on numerous occasions subsequent to April 4, 1980, Sgt. Gibson, while on duty, directed her into his police car and thereafter transported her in the vehicle for no official purpose."

The report goes on to say that Bowers said Gibson "made solicitations of her for sexual activity."

1982 was a good year for dirty cops who got away with their crimes- but not such a great year for informant prostitutes- in particular, Sandra Bowers, who was one of the many prostitutes who engaged in sex parties with the cops. She was to be a key witness in the Hollywood Cop scandal, but she was murdered, her throat slit- perhaps as a warning to anyone else who might be thinking of testifying against the crooks on the LAPD... It worked- none of the cops were convicted or served any time for their crimes.