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Man Kills Wife in Domestic Violence Shelter

On the couple's Web site, John "Woody" Raymond Woodring promised his wife his domestic violence would end.



SYLVA, North Carolina (AP) – The hunt for a man accused of pushing his way into a domestic violence shelter and shooting his wife to death was expanded nationwide Friday.

John "Woody" Raymond Woodring, 35, was believed to have fled in a stolen car from this town of about 2,500 people in the Great Smoky Mountains in the far western corner of North Carolina, near the Tennessee state line.

Woodring, a graduate student and teaching assistant at Western Carolina University, was considered armed and dangerous, authorities said. He was charged with first-degree murder, in addition to domestic violence charges alleging he violated a protective order and tried to strangle his wife at her home September 14.

Bonnie Woodring, 48, moved into the shelter after that attack. In court records, she said her husband "keeps tabs on where I am 24/7" and had threatened her 13-year-old son from a previous relationship.

On Monday night her husband, armed with a shotgun, pushed past a staff worker who was leaving the shelter for the night, then shot his wife in the kitchen, investigators said.

Bonnie Woodring and her son were the shelter's only occupants. The boy heard the shooting from another room. He was not hurt.

The shelter has panic buttons, an alarm system and locks on every window and door, but its location is not secret. Woodring shouldered his way in when the worker opened the door, police said.

Each county decides whether to keep its shelter secret, and some choose instead to warn abusers that the sites have heightened security, said April Burgess-Johnson, coordinated community response specialist for the N.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Some advocates agree a shelter is difficult to hide in a rural area.

“They don’t publicize their location, but it’s been there for several years, and the longer a place has been there, the more people know where it is,” Sylva Police Chief Jeff Jamison said.

Jamison said officers routinely check on the shelter, but he doubted that the attack could have been prevented “when you have someone who is determined and who has such a twisted obsession.”

Woodring was believed to have fled in a car stolen from a neighbor who also reported a shotgun missing, police said. Jamison said Woodring’s own car had been impounded when police tried to arrest him last week on the domestic violence charge.

On the couple’s Web site, Woodring begged for forgiveness in one of his last messages to his wife. He promised he would change and the violence would end.

That message was similar to a newspaper advertisement he paid for almost 10 years ago that sought to win back a previous wife after he was charged with assaulting her.

The university where Woodring was seeking a degree in counseling does not usually check the criminal backgrounds of its graduate student teachers, said Leila Tvedt, associate vice chancellor for public relations.

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