

Homeless man prime suspect in fatal beating of transgender woman

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The NYPD is investigating the death of a transgender woman as a homicide after she was found unconscious on Seventh Ave. near 29th St., police sources said Monday. (MOLLY CRANE-NEWMAN/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS)

A homeless man with a lengthy criminal past is the prime suspect in the fatal beating of a transgender woman in Chelsea, the Daily News has learned.

Medics found Brenda Bostick, 59, on the ground with severe head trauma on Seventh Ave. near 29th St. at 10:30 p.m. on April 25.

The homeless woman was discovered just a few blocks from the W. 25th St. shelter where she had been staying, sources said. She died Thursday at Bellevue Hospital, and her death has been ruled a homicide.

Shadowy security video from a Five Guys restaurant obtained by The News shows a man standing over Bostick's body and then first responders working on her.

About an hour later, Joseph Griffin, 26, rushed into traffic yards away from the scene and jumped onto the windshield of a taxi, smashing the windshield, police said.

Witnesses saw him behaving erratically, running against traffic and banging on the glass of a bodega moments earlier, prosecutors said.

Cops arrested Griffin a day after Bostick died. Investigators say Griffin, who's been arrested 28 times, bashed Bostick's head with a pipe. New charges were pending.

"He was arrested in the subway station only half a block from the location of the assault, informed the detectives who arrested him that location was his home," said Assistant District Attorney Sarah Marquez. "Other circumstantial evidence ties the defendant to the assault, and the people expect the defendant to be charged with that crime as soon as an eyewitness to the crime returns from a trip out of the country."

Griffin's Legal Aid lawyer, Nalia Siddiqui, said at the arraignment that he was hit by the cab and fell onto it. She didn't address the attack on Bostick.

He remains held on \$25,000 bail.

It's not clear if the two know each other, but records show they lived in the same shelter complex for about two months in 2015, sources said.

Bostick has been in and out of the city's shelter system since October 2015. On March 30 of this year, she returned to a shelter on W. 25th St. near Seventh Ave., after she made contact with the MTA's homeless outreach program, sources said.

Griffin has been arrested 28 times, sources said. On July 2, 2014, he was accused of setting a fire in the Bronx apartment building where he lived, police said.

Witnesses who called 911 told cops that a man approached Bostick as she was walking uptown on Seventh Ave. and hit her in the head with a blunt silver object, police sources said.

The suspect walked away but turned back a second later and shouted "Someone stole my bag." Bostick stumbled for a block before losing consciousness, police sources said.

The city Medical Examiner said the cause of death was complications of blunt impact injury to Bostick's head.

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Gabby Pareja, 23, the general manager at the restaurant, said it was disturbing that no one intervened or stopped to see if Bostick was alright.

"It's very bad this (happened) outside a store where a lot of people (were) walking (past)," she said. "You see the groups walking back and forth — it looks like there could have been something to save her. It's crazy."

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