

Written by

Saturday, 12 November 2011 09:25 - Last Updated Saturday, 21 April 2012 17:05

By JOSEPH G. LARIOS

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CHICAGO (*JGLi*) – A 36-year-old parolee was charged Thursday (Nov. 10) with first-degree murder by the Illinois state prosecutors before the court for the fatal beating of a Filipino-American nurse more than two weeks ago in her Chicago's south side garage, according to the victim's family member.

Raymond Harris, 36, who is on parole for an attempted murder conviction, was arrested after stealing the wedding and engagement rings of the victim, Virginia Y. Perillo, 73, and used them to propose to his girlfriend.

Virginia's son, John Y. Perillo, told this reporter that Harris was charged in court with first-degree murder and armed robbery Thursday and was held without bail.

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John's younger brother, Michael Y. Perillo, also told this reporter "I feel good" that his Mom's killer was arrested.

Prosecutors said Harris, who was paroled in May, attacked Perillo as she was getting out of her car in her garage in the 3300 block of South Parnell Avenue. He stole her purse and wedding and engagement rings.

Perillo, a native of Cagayan de Oro City in the Philippines, sustained serious head wounds and was found lying unconscious by a neighbor, who was trying to close her garage door that was open.

An intensive critical care nurse of the Rush University Medical Center for 40 years, Mrs. Perillo died on Oct. 24, two days after she was rushed to the hospital.

Prosecutors say on the night of the attack, Harris went to a party, wearing "brand new clothes" and showed the rings to a witness, asking which of them he should use to propose to his girlfriend. Harris later used both rings.

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DNA TRACED TO SUSPECT

It was the DNA recovered from a blood-stained men's watch found inside Perillo's car that matched Harris. A resident of suburban Carpentersville, Harris was arrested Tuesday afternoon in suburban Elgin, police said.

When police contacted Harris' fiancé, she turned the rings over to the detectives and Perillo's family identified them as hers.

Harris was paroled in May after serving 13 years of a 30-year sentence for his 1997 attempted murder and aggravated arson convictions, according Assistant State's Attorney Melissa Howlett.

In that case, Harris broke into a woman's home, raped and beat her for several hours, Howlett said. He also threatened that victim at knifepoint, cut her neck and set three separate fires in the woman's home, Howlett said. The woman woke up with her legs on fire and suffered

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third-degree burns.

Just three weeks before that attack, Harris had been released from prison for a 1993 armed robbery, vehicular invasion and burglary. In that case, Harris brandished a gun at a woman getting outside of her car outside her home, Howlett said.

Perillo's son, Michael Perillo, 32, the youngest of Perillo's three children, all boys, told this reporter in an interview that Chicago police found his mom lying unconscious Saturday (Oct. 22) between 5:30 and 9:30 p.m. by a neighbor, who tried to close her garage after seeing it open.

NEIGHBOR FOUND HER

It was at that point that the neighbor found Mrs. Perillo badly beaten with face lying down and alerted the police.

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“My mom came from a store, earlier in the day and visited my Dad (Mauro) in the hospital and went to the church (St. Mary of Perpetual Help) and parked the car in her garage after driving it that day when she was found lying unconscious,” the grieving Michael recalled.

At 73, Mrs. Perillo was supposed to be enjoying her retirement. But John Perillo, 36, the eldest of the three children of the Perillos, said his Mom just loved her job as a “full-time nurse, working the third shift. It was her passion.” Isabel Pecson, a retired nurse at Rush hospital and one of the mourners at the wake, told this reporter, “if you like what you are doing, why retire?”

John said his Mom would babysit his first child, Matthew, 13 months old, who was also her first grandchild, three days a week so he and his wife, Celeste, could go to work and spend some time together.

Mrs. Perillo never returned to the Philippines since immigrating to Chicago in 1971. “Perhaps, all she wanted was take care of the three of us,” John added.

“WISH I WERE THE ONE IN THE COFFIN”

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Mrs. Perillo's husband, Mauro, 75, a native of Polangui, Albay in the Philippines, told this reporter that he returned to the Philippines

"at least three times. Magastos (it is expensive)" since marrying Virgie in 1973 after meeting her while working in a hospital where his aunt was being treated.

Hard of hearing and bound to a wheelchair and experiencing "rheumatism in my back and my binti (legs) and had undergone a recent open heart surgery," Mauro, still seething in pain due to his health condition, sobbed, "I wish I am the one lying in the coffin, not her," referring to his wife, who was very healthy and was not complaining of any ailment when she was attacked.

"The story of my wife is very short. She was attacked for still unknown reason and now she is dead." Mauro, a retired auto parts supervisor, sighed. But he still could not understand why his wife did not let their children learn her Visayan language nor his Bikolano language when he tried to. # # #

Editor's Note: To contact the author, please e-mail him at: (lariosa_jos@sbcglobal.net)

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