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Guilty verdict reached in 2016 murder of woman found in west side pond

Jury convicts Ralph Tait in the murder of Starr Eldridge

(Indianapolis, Ind.) Marion County Prosecutor Terry Curry announced today that Ralph Tait was convicted by a jury on Tuesday evening of Murder for the September 2016 fatal stabbing of Starr Eldridge. The murder occurred in Tait's apartment on the west side of Indianapolis. The victim's body was discovered on September 25, 2016, after investigators were called to the 7100 block of Waterfront Drive on a report of a body floating in the water. A sentencing hearing has been set for January 19, 2018, at 2:00 p.m. in Criminal Court 5.

Tait was identified as a suspect after witnesses reported seeing a man matching Tait's description dragging a blanket with human legs exposed from his apartment to a gray vehicle hours before Eldridge's body was discovered. Tait was the registered owner of the vehicle.

During the execution of a search warrant of Tait's apartment, officers found human hair on the steps outside. There were apparent bleach burns and red spots on the bedroom floor. There was also blood found near the master bedroom closet and possible blood staining on an area rug hanging on the railing of the balcony. Cleaning supplies were found throughout the apartment. Tait had called his apartment's management company and requested that the carpet be replaced and that he change units on the day after the homicide.

An autopsy revealed that Eldridge suffered approximately 13 stab wounds to the neck, shoulder, chest and head. The cause of death was determined to be multiple stab wounds. Eldridge did not have water in the lungs and it was determined that she did not drown.