



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

A STATE ACCREDITED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

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Media Release

From: Corporal Wendy McGinnis
Public Information Officer, 352-754-6830

Re: Son confesses to Murdering Father and Burying Him in Their Yard

Date: December 16, 2011

Case Number: 2011-35847

Victim Information:

Raymond Burke W/M 12-09-50
27047 Hiawatha Blvd
Brooksville, Florida 34601

Suspect(s) Information:

Christopher Burke W/M 09-10-71
27047 Hiawatha Blvd
Brooksville, Florida 34601

On 10/22/2011, the Hernando County Sheriff's Office received a phone call from James Burke who wished to report his brother, Raymond Burke, missing after several attempts were made to contact him. Later that same day deputies responded to 27047 Hiawatha Blvd., Brooksville, and met with Shannon Atkinson. Shannon was identified as the girlfriend of Raymond's son, Christopher Burke. Both Shannon and Christopher reside on the property with Raymond Burke.

Shannon explained that on 10/13/2011 between 1930 and 2100 hours, Raymond left his residence with a subject only identified as "Ronnie" and indicated he was moving to an unknown location out of state. Shannon also stated she and Christopher were in contact with Raymond via telephone on 10/13/2011. Raymond supposedly called from a private telephone number stating he arrived safely in North Carolina and would return at a later date to collect his personal property.

As the missing person investigation ensued, it was learned that Raymond left no forwarding address for the delivery of his social security check. Raymond also left behind his personal vehicle and five (5) small dogs. His brother, James Burke, stated that it would be extremely unusual for James to do this. Raymond could not be reached via his cell phone as it continuously went to voice mail. Christopher Burke was interviewed and he confirmed the initial statement provided by Shannon. Christopher added that he believed his father may be en route to Texas, armed with a firearm, to inflict harm upon Christopher's

mother. Subsequent investigation revealed that Christopher had recently utilized his father's bank debit card at several locations, draining the account of funds.

On 12/15/2011, Christopher and Shannon were interviewed at the Sheriff's Office when this information was received indicating Christopher used his father's debit card since his disappearance. Post Miranda, Christopher admitted that he lied about receiving a call from Raymond saying he was in North Carolina. Shannon further stated (post Miranda) that on 10/13/2011, Christopher and Raymond engaged in a verbal altercation. During the altercation Christopher picked up a flashlight and struck Raymond in the head, which incapacitated him. Christopher then strangled Raymond until he was dead. Christopher wrapped Raymond's lifeless body in a blanket and buried his body on the property near the gravesite of a family pet. Sharron and Christopher fabricated the story about Raymond moving to North Carolina. Shannon later identified a gravesite on the property where the body of Raymond Burke was buried. The gravesite is in the process of being excavation, and the body is pending identification confirmation.

Prior to transporting Christopher to jail, he requested to speak with the investigating detective again. The detective again clearly articulated Christopher's right to counsel. Christopher asserted that he wished to speak with the detective, and he did not want to have an attorney present. Christopher then admitted to the verbal altercation with his father and that he has harbored lifelong anger for him (Raymond). During the argument, he admitted striking Raymond with the flashlight and then strangling him to death. Christopher then corroborated Sharron's statement about burying Raymond in the back yard at the location that Shannon pointed out to detectives.

Christopher Burke has been charged with 2nd Degree Murder and transported to the Hernando County Detention Center where he is being held without bond. Raymond Burke's next of kin has been notified and updated regarding the status of this investigation.