

Huber murdered

WALNUT FORK CLAIMS DEMPSEY'S BOYFRIEND AS LATEST VICTIM

By Janet Park
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Murder raised its red right fist again last night in Candell County. This time, there's no mystery this time about the identity of the victim or the killer.

Sheriff's deputies were called once more yesterday to old Walnut Fork Inn, the same building where a few short months ago they discovered the body of Stephanie Dempsey. Last night, in a gruesome reminder of last fall's tragedy, they removed the body of Stephanie Dempsey's former boyfriend, Mike Huber.

Huber, 22, came from his home in Columbus to the Inn to join psychic investigator Margaret Whalley and a television crew for the filming of an episode for *The Ghost Files* program that Whalley hosts for the Mystery Channel.

At 9:47 PM yesterday, a panicked emergency call was received by 911 dispatcher Maribelle Clayton. The caller was Jennifer Weigman, producer for *The Ghost Files*. It took forty-five confused seconds for Clayton to determine what the caller was talking about, but she quickly dispatched a county emergency squad and a deputy to the old building.

"She said they were filming something for their show, when Whalley suddenly attacked one of the others in the room with a knife," Clayton said. "She kept crying about all the blood. There was a lot of shouting in the background."

When deputy Mark Blassingham arrived, he found Huber dead on the blood-soaked floor of the inn's lobby, a four-inch long gash across

his throat. Weigman and the others present indicated that the wound had been inflicted by Whalley, who sat quietly in the corner murmuring to herself.

Weigman and the others at the inn were taken to the sheriff's office for questioning. The group included local pastor Rob Sage, inn owner Benjamin Fultz, and local author Mike Pratt, who was recently acquitted in Dempsey's murder. Weigman indicated Pratt had been invited because of his extensive knowledge of the inn's history.

Blassingham told reports that by the time he had arrived Sage had taken the knife away from Whalley. She was arrested without incident.

"She wasn't even really there," Blassingham said. "She had this vacant look on her face. Her eyes were empty. I don't know if it's drugs or what, but she was out of it."

Witnesses said that Whalley, who surprised everyone last month by announcing that Dempsey had been killed by a spirit who has haunted the area for over a hundred years, was in the middle of performing a ritual to banish the demon when the attack occurred.

"She had completed the chanting and incantations, which were supposed to draw the evil spirit into the body of a chicken she had brought with her. The plan was to then banish him to the realm of the dead by slaughtering the chicken," Pratt said.

"Instead, she grabbed Huber, who was sitting next to her, and stabbed him in the neck. It was over in less than a second."

Sage, who said he was seated on the other side of Whalley at the time, said concerns of "something terrible" happening were what had prompted him to accept Whalley's invitation to the inn. "It's always dangerous to tamper with the spirit world. It's clear the woman became possessed by a demon because of her dabbling in black magic.

"I'm sorry to say I wasn't quick enough to prevent her from harming that young man."

While Whalley has been involved in using her psychic powers to solve mysteries for several years, the Dempsey case marked was the first time her powers had lead her to suspect a supernatural culprit. Press releases from the Mystery Channel surrounding last night's plans say that identity of Dempsey's killer and the ritual to it had been revealed to Whalley last

March when she slipped into a coma after visiting the inn.

Candell County Sheriff Ray Kates indicated that Whalley has been placed in isolation and that he she will be arraigned on murder charges this afternoon in common pleas court.

"This is horrible," Kates said. "And unfortunately, it doesn't get us any closer to knowing who killed Stephanie Dempsey."