

# Profile of killer: Person in turmoil

By DONNA WEEKS  
Globe-News Staff Writer

Whoever killed Sister Tadea Benz Saturday morning is a psychotic who suffers from religious conflict and has struck before, a local expert believes.

Willie Brown, professor of criminal justice administration at West Texas State University, has spent more than seven years working in institutions with the criminally insane.

Detective Capt. Jimmy Davis, a veteran of the Amarillo Police Department, yesterday said he thinks Saturday's rape-slaying of Sister Tadea at St. Francis Convent in northeast Amarillo may have been committed by the same person who murdered Mrs. Narnie Bryson on July 9.

Both women were elderly. Sister Tadea was 76 years old, and Mrs. Bryson was 77. Both were religious. Mrs. Bryson was a member of the Buchanan Street United Methodist Church. And both women performed community volunteer work. Although Sister Tadea lived in the convent, she lived in a private room, and Mrs. Bryson lived alone at 732 N. Houston.

Preliminary autopsy reports on the women, released within 72 hours after their bodies were discovered, determined they both died of strangulation, and both had been violently beaten and raped before they died.

Another elderly woman was assaulted Saturday morning in the 1300 block of Van Buren. Police are investigating that the killer of Sister Tadea struck twice that morning.

In that case, police reports state, the woman was beaten and raped early Saturday morning — within a few hours of the time Sister Tadea is believed to have died. Sister Tadea is believed to have died around 4 a.m. Saturday.

Brown yesterday attempted to depict the psyche of the rapist-slayer.

"I may be wrong, but I think I am pretty close," said Brown. "I'm sure the police have checked with prison records to see who's been released from prison lately, and mental hospitals."

Brown said "there is a good chance" the person who has been attacking older women in Amarillo has done so before, has been arrested for it and has spent time in a prison or a mental hospital for his crime.

"This person is probably Catholic or raised Catholic. And there is a good chance the nun that was killed was not selected as a particular. The decision was made to rape and kill a nun — not any particular nun, just a nun," said Brown. "The person has done it before. This is not a first-time offense. He knew how to do it."

Brown said the murderer "probably" identifies with the Roman Catholic Church, was more than likely raised in parochial schools, and "feels possessed by the Catholic Church or a nun."

"I am almost sure this person has lots of religious conflicts," said Brown. "And I have problems believing this person who committed these crimes is a long-time resident of Amarillo."

Days are gone when "men and women of the cloth" used to be able to walk the streets in America safe from harm, as if they had a certain aura about them, said Dr. Tom Cannon, a psychology professor at WTSU and psychologist in private practice in Amarillo.

"This is not the sort of thing most psychologists encounter very often. I feel a little more comfortable saying that most psychologists would not commit themselves to any hypothesis at this stage of the game," Cannon said.

In his experience as a psychologist, Cannon said, he spent some time in institutions working with the criminally insane, and he said many times religious "helpful" people often fall prey to criminals.

"In the institutional settings, the person accorded the most respect was usually a physician," he said. "The least respected were social workers and preachers, or ministerial-type people, who were basically regarded as 'soft touches,' or a little on the sentimental or naive side. They were given superficial respect."

Cannon said he didn't know if his philosophy had bearing on exactly why Sister Tadea, Mrs. Bryson, or the elderly assault victim fell prey to attack in Amarillo. But he said it does bear consideration as to why they were likely to have been picked out as victims, at random.



Sister Tadea ... victim of psychotic killer?

## Rewards near \$10,000

By CINDY LEE  
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A \$5,000 donation from a Houston businessman to Crime Stoppers has boosted the reward fund in the slaying of Sister Tadea Benz to nearly \$10,000.

Drake Williams, owner of A-Jiffy Printing in Houston, read about the rape-slaying yesterday in the Houston Post and contacted his attorney, who put him in touch with Houston's district attorney. The DA suggested that Williams contact Richard Ware, executive vice president of Amarillo National Bank.

"I'm a Catholic and I wanted to do something to help catch the person who would do such a horrible thing," Williams said. "My wife and I adopted our daughter through the Catholic Church."

"I'm not doing this for the publicity. I hope the news of my contribution will help bring in other donations to help catch the killer," he said. Williams' \$5,000 contribution is for the arrest and conviction of the rapist-slayer.

Williams' \$5,000 contribution along with individuals' and Amarillo National Bank's total of \$2,000 and Crime Stoppers' \$2,500 brings the reward funds total to near \$10,000. The bank's and Crime Stoppers' reward is for arrest and indictment of a suspect.

A site has been established at St. Hyacinth's Catholic Church for donations to pay for a security system for the convent.

Offers ranging from security dogs to a complete alarm system have been received by officials of the convent.

The Rev. Peter DiBenedetto said a security company has been asked to survey the convent and two houses where nuns reside. Officials are considering a "panic button" alarm for each nun's room to establish a communications system throughout the large convent and to connect the convent to the two nuns' residences, he said. DiBenedetto said an offer has been made for free labor to install the system.

The Rev. Joseph Peter Tabone, vicar of religious orders in the diocese, said the diocese can't afford a security system and that outside help is necessary to protect the nuns.

"We have a man who drives through the convent area during the night on weekends, but since the area is quite large, it would be real easy to miss something," DiBenedetto said. "An Amarillo police officer will be stationed in front of the convent for the next few days."

Donations to the fund for a security system may be brought to St. Hyacinth's at 4500 West Hills Trail, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. or may be mailed to that address, said DiBenedetto. Checks should be made out to St. Hyacinth's Catholic Church or the Franciscan Sisters. Contributions are tax deductible, he said.

Anyone with information on the rape-slaying of Sister Tadea may call Crime Stoppers at 374-4400. Callers do not have to reveal their identity, but if they do so and wish to testify, the reward will be doubled and their names will be kept confidential.

Anyone wishing to add to the rewards may contact either Crime Stoppers or Wayne Murphy, treasurer of Crime Stoppers.