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Hartford Courant.



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VOLUME CLXV, NUMBER 105

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TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2003

7★ Sports Final

NEWSSTAND 50¢

Evidence From Drug Bust Missing

Cash, Jewelry Gone After Being Seized

By **MATT BURGARD**
COURANT STAFF WRITER

Hartford police are investigating the disappearance of thousands of dollars in cash and jewelry from a safe seized after a drug bust in which a suspect was shot by an undercover narcotics detective last month, police officials said.

Chief Bruce P. Marquis said Monday that an internal affairs investigation was underway to determine who took the valuables from the safe, which was seized from the suspect's home after the controversial shooting and placed as evidence in the department's property room.

Marquis said it was unclear when the valuables were taken but he acknowledged that the investigation was focusing on police officers and other employees. He said the apparent theft "disgusted" him.

"I'm gravely disappointed over this alleged act of theft," Marquis said. "It comes at a time when the department is doing a great job of dealing with crime in the city and the community should have their full faith in us as a professional organization. Yet a member or members of our department have apparently committed a selfish and criminal act."

The chief said he notified Hartford state's attorney James Thomas about the investigation and that he asked the state police for help with the Hartford investigation.

The property room has been marred by scandal in recent years, but the internal investigation is not focusing solely on the property room,

PLEASE SEE **MONEY**, PAGE A8

Mother Confesses To Killing

Had Sought Help To Deal With Daughter

By **MAURICE TIMOTHY REIDY, COLIN POITRAS And DAVE ALTIMARI**
COURANT STAFF WRITERS

A Branford woman charged with murder Monday in the April 4 shooting of her 7-year-old daughter had sought help from the state Department of Children and Families earlier this year because she was having trouble dealing with the child.

But DCF investigators closed Jennifer O'Connor's case in mid-February after finding no evidence that O'Connor's learning-disabled daughter, Sara, was at risk, sources said.

Less than two months after DCF closed its case, O'Connor, 40, walked into her daughter's bedroom with a loaded rifle and fired a single shot into Sara while she slept, police said.

According to an arrest warrant released Monday, Sara woke up after she was shot and "told her mother that it was burning."

When police arrived, Sara was taken to Yale-New Haven Hospital where she underwent surgery. She died on April 7 after a weekend in intensive care.

O'Connor told police that she shot her daughter because Sara had behavior problems and "she didn't know what to do anymore," according to the warrant.

O'Connor, of 313 Field Point Road, was charged with murder Monday morning. She was arraigned in New Haven Superior Court and was being held Monday night at the York Correctional Institution for women in East Lyme. Bail was set at \$1 million and her next court appearance is April 29.

After the arraignment, William Dow, O'Connor's attorney, said that his client "had a history of educational and emotional difficulties."

"She came to court from a psychiatric facility," Dow said. "She's overwhelmed by grief and is trying to address the emotional fallout."

Dow would not say whether O'Connor had been institutionalized before the shooting. He would only say that she had "been under care" and that her difficulties had been "addressed by professionals."

The Office of the Child Advocate and DCF have launched investigations into DCF's handling of O'Connor's case.

Gary Kleeblatt, a DCF spokesman,

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