

THE



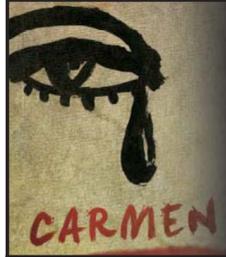
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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2007

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JORDAN LUCK

Ex-teacher saw "no obvious musical flair" in class.

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CINDERELLA ON TOUR

Royal NZ Ballet comes to Christchurch.

>> NEWS A6



SHOW OF DEFIANCE

Monks challenge military dictatorship.

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Fugitive talked of killing wife

Kim Ruscoe and Dan Oakes

Revelations that fugitive father Nai Yin Xue had talked of killing his wife have emerged as police wait for forensic results confirming that she is the dead woman found stuffed in his car boot yesterday.

Police are defending taking two days to search Xue's car after police, media and members of the public had wandered around the crime scene in an Auckland street.

Xue, who abandoned three-year-old-daughter Qian at a Melbourne railway station on Saturday, has fled to the United States. Los Angeles police say they have yet to be formally asked to search for him and that he could have been intercepted when he arrived.

It has also been revealed that Xue, a martial arts expert, had collected a ceremonial sword and his passport from Henderson police last Wednesday, the day before he and Qian — nicknamed Pumpkin by Australian police — flew to Melbourne.

The sword had been seized by police as a result of a report of domestic violence within the family. Xue, a magazine publisher, was convicted of assaulting his wife, Anan Liu, in June.

She had repeatedly tried to leave him, taking her daughter to a women's refuge for a month and to Wellington. Liu had told refuge staff she planned to return to China but instead returned to the relationship.

Liu, known as Annie, was last seen alive at a childcare centre on Tuesday last week.

A friend of Xue told The Age newspaper in Melbourne last night he had spoken in the past about killing his wife.

Friends had tried to talk him out of it.

"He mentioned it a little bit, but we never knew whether he would do it or not," the friend said.

"Nobody could know for sure that he would do it. As a friend, you could only try to give him some help, to make him not think of the bad things.

"He said he felt no hope and that he felt he was being played

by his wife, that she didn't really like him or love him."

The body that has been found is believed to be that of Liu, 27. Her parents in China have been told of the discovery.

Her mother plans to travel to New Zealand to collect Qian and take her to China.

The car containing the body belonged to Xue and was parked outside his home in Keystone Avenue, Mount Roskill.

A police cordon was put around the house on Tuesday afternoon but was not extended to the roadside where the car had been parked until at least 30 minutes after the body was found.

Police, reporters and residents had been walking around the scene for at least two days.

Detective Senior Sergeant Simon Scott defended the delay in searching the car, saying detectives had needed a search warrant to take the car to a secure location where it could be examined by police and forensic scientists.

"The process of gaining a search warrant does take a long

time to do it properly," he said. "We haven't had the keys to that vehicle. It's not just a matter of breaking the windows and getting in."

"There is a bit of a CSI factor here," he said, referring to the popular American television programme. "These things don't take minutes; they could take days or weeks."

"We won't be rushed into doing anything and will take the utmost care with a key item in what is now most definitely a homicide investigation."

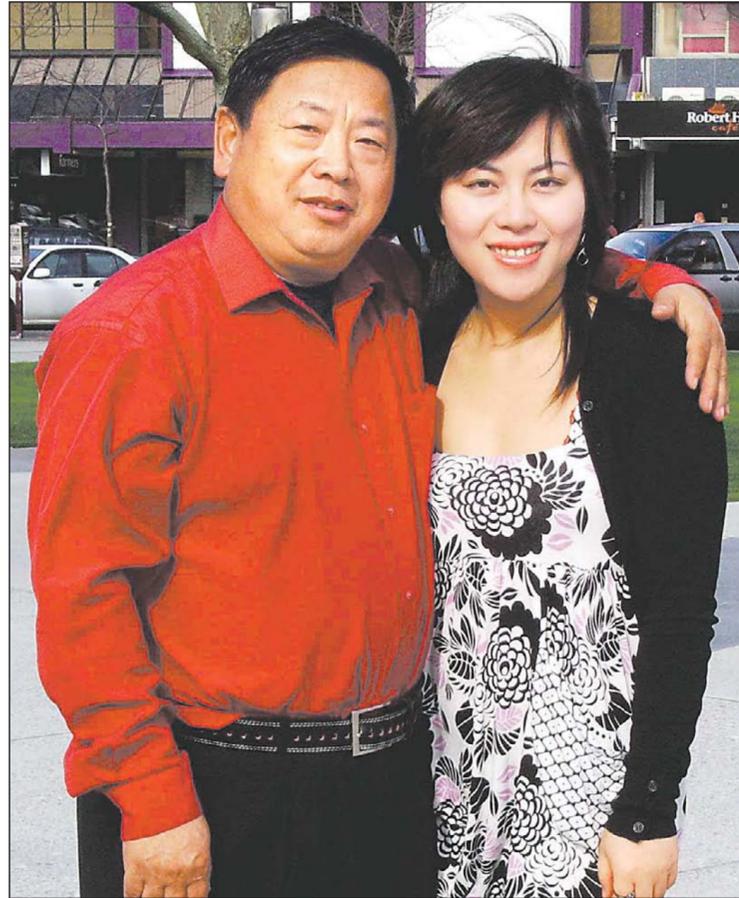
He would not say what injuries the dead woman had or if any other items were found in the car boot with her body.

An autopsy is expected to be carried out on the body today.

Asked why police had not sealed the roadside until after the body was found, Scott ended the press conference.

An international manhunt continues for Xue, who bought the air tickets last Wednesday and exchanged New Zealand dollars for almost \$US6500 the following day.

—Dominion Post and The Age



Troubled history: Nai Yin Xue and Anan Liu had a history of domestic violence. Last week, Xue called at the Henderson police station with his daughter to pick up his passport and a confiscated ceremonial sword. They were caught there on a security camera photo, bottom right.

Body in car boot for days

The silver Honda emblazoned with Chinese Times on the bonnet and doors was parked in front of the Mount Roskill home for days, with nobody realising its grim contents.

From Monday night detectives, reporters, members of the public and even joggers had filed past the vehicle.

Police were granted a search warrant for the car about 9pm on Tuesday and immediately impounded it.

It was moved to a secure location overnight — and the body discovered in the boot at 1pm yesterday.

Prominent defence lawyer John Billington, QC, said detec-

tives could not simply search the vehicle without permission.

"Until you've got a suspected crime you can't access private property without a cause."

Police were required to obtain a warrant from a judge or court registrar.

Billington said searching the car without a warrant could

have had serious ramifications as the case proceeded.

"It could raise the issue of admissibility. It's much better to follow the rules, then you don't have a situation later on."

Robert Lithgow, a Wellington QC, also said police could not have searched the car without a warrant. —Dominion Post



94,500km of travel claims by councillor

Martin van Beynen

A councillor's "excessive" mileage claims have prompted Environment Canterbury (ECan) to change its expenses policy.

Figures released by ECan show first-term councillor Bill Woods, 65, of Springfield, claimed for 94,577km, worth \$66,203, between November 2004 and July 2007.

The claims represent about 33 working weeks of continuous driving and took his remuneration to about \$75,000 a year.

The claims, which are almost double those of the other rural ECan councillors, so concerned chairman Sir Kerry Burke that he initiated a rethink of the council's mileage policy.

Burke said yesterday that Woods' claims were "pretty incredible" and had resulted in a much tighter mileage reim-

bursement regime from July 1.

"Bill Woods' travel claims created a new regime as I was anxious to protect the other councillors from adverse actions because excessive claims from one councillor were not being addressed," he said.

Under the new system, councillors could claim mileage only if they were attending a formal meeting.

"It talks about the need for a formal meeting rather than a licence to roam. A councillor can't, under the new regime, claim for driving to see a constituent or operational work better done by staff," Burke said.

"It's unacceptable to me that a councillor can drive 100km to see a constituent, who has raised a matter, and then drive 100km home and then put in a claim for 200km when that could well have been done by telephone."

Driving into the office to



Councillor Bill Woods

check on information that could have been done by phone should also not be the subject of a claim, he said.

He had raised the mileage claims with Woods, but Woods said he "didn't care" and that his claims were higher at Selwyn.

In the year ending June 30, 2004, when Woods was on the Selwyn District Council, he received \$17,553 for mileage. The year before, he netted \$17,606.

"Nobody in the past ever abused (the former policy) or ever had claims remotely approaching Bill's," Burke said.

He had no concerns about other councillors.

Woods, who drives a 1986 diesel Toyota Corona with 566,000km on the clock, denied he made trips to Christchurch to check his emails.

He combined the task with seeing staff members "because every time you ring them you get their answer machines".

He refused to have a council-supplied computer because the computer was public property and subject to discovery (a legal term obliging parties to a court action to provide documents).

"I believe that is an invasion of my privacy," he said.

A personal email could become public, he said, so he insisted on emails being sent to a computer at the council office. Urgent communications could be faxed to him.

He did not explain how a council computer was any more private.

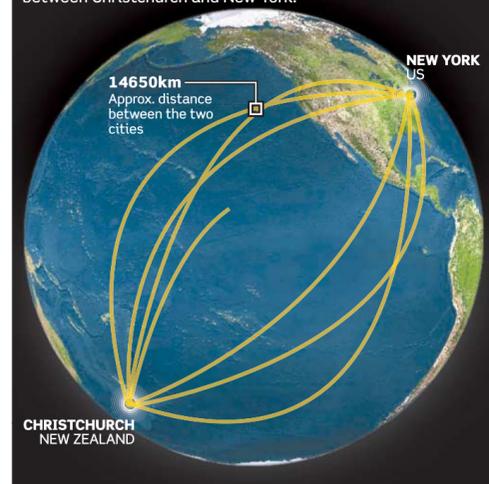
"I look after my constituents. I go from Arthurs Pass to Akaroa, and if people have problems I go and see them. I don't expect people to bring their septic tanks to me to have a look at it," Woods said.

He said he was the only councillor who worked full-time on council business, and because most other rural councillors still ran their farms, people often came to him.

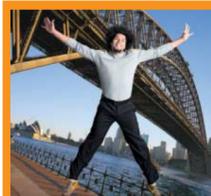
>> To A2

THE 94,000KM MAN

ECan councillor Bill Woods claimed for 94,577km of travel worth \$66,203 between November 2004 and July 2007. That distance is equivalent to about six and a half trips between Christchurch and New York.



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