

Where is Jimmy Brantley?

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GULFPORT — Now that capital murder suspect Richard Lambert is in custody, another question looms in the investigation — where is Jimmy Brantley?

Harrison County Sheriff's investigators believe Lambert used Brantley's identification to cash one of murder-victim Robert Barnes' checks. Barnes, 79, was stabbed to death and dismembered; his remains were found dumped near a bayou north of Pass Christian on May 19.

"Jimmy Brantley is real but where he is, we don't know," said Harrison County Sheriff's Maj. Ron Pullen. "He's unaccounted for. We're not saying he has met with foul play, but we want to talk to him in connection with our capital murder case. It's turned into a two-fold investigation."

Arrest mug shot of murder suspect Richard A. Lambert, suspect in the stabbing death of Robert 'Bob' Barnes of Pass Christian.

Story: SUNHERALD TV: U. S. Marshals on Murder Suspect Lambert Arrest in Ohio

"We can't place Jimmy Brantley in Mississippi," said Pullen, "but we can place him at a time and date as having been in Destin, Fla. We're working with authorities in Destin to try and find him."

Barnes lived alone on Red Creek Road near Long Beach across from a bed-and-breakfast where Lambert had rented a room for about a month. Lambert checked in at Red Creek Inn under his real name but investigators believe the 31-year-old was pretending to be Brantley just before his abrupt departure from the area in a gray BMW.

"Mr. Brantley is a traveler, from what I understand, and has no one place as an address," said Pullen.

Lambert remains in custody in Ohio after his capture Thursday night by a federal fugitive task force in Cincinnati. Sheriff's investigators were waiting Tuesday to hear if Lambert plans to fight extradition.

"Our investigators tried to interview the suspect and brought back numerous pieces of evidence that will be sent to a crime lab," Pullen said. "Cincinnati CSI processed the car for us. Their police department has their own equipment."

A U.S. Marshals Service fugitive task force was already looking for Lambert, who was on probation for aiding and abetting a federal prisoner in an attempted escape. Marshals said he is suspected of illegal activity with used-car sales.

Marshals said they also were concerned because of Lambert's past connection with an anti-abortion militant who was once his cell mate.

They found Lambert at an apartment near Cincinnati State Technical and Community College in Clifton, a Cincinnati suburb.

A U.S. marshal speaking at a news conference in Cincinnati described Lambert as "very quiet, very methodical a very dangerous individual."

Lambert was convicted of reckless homicide in 2003 for the 2001 slaying of a woman whose body was found in the Ohio River in Petersburg, Ky.

While in jail awaiting trial on the homicide charge, Lambert tried to help his cell mate dig out of a Boone County, Ky., jail, according to the Cincinnati Enquirer.

Lambert's cell mate was Clayton Lee Waagner, convicted in 2003 of mailing hundreds of anthrax-hoax letters to abortion clinics in 24 states.

Waagner, a self-proclaimed "abortion avenger," was sentenced to 19 years in prison. He had been on the FBI's 10 most wanted list.

Lambert's homicide charge was punishable by up to five years in prison. He was released from a state prison in 2006 and then served two years in a federal prison for aiding in Waagner's attempted escape.

Lambert was released from federal prison Sept. 25, 2008 and began a three-year probation.

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