

Man Stabbed to Death By Intruder In Bedroom of Flat

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Mr Webb

Very Keen To Make Trip South

Staff Reporter

Wellington

A 23-year-old journalist was stabbed to death by an unidentified assailant in a Wellington apartment early yesterday morning.

Staff Reporter. Hamilton
The father of Mr D. N. Webb, Mr N. H. Webb, a stockyard caretaker, of 2 Wha St, Frankton, said at his home yesterday afternoon that his son had been very keen about his job in the Antarctic.

"He rang last Thursday to tell us he had been equipped and was soon to go to Christchurch to stand by for a flight south," Mr Webb said. "He was to be journalist-photographer, public relations officer at Scott Base. He had just bought a camera worth about £190 to take with him."

Mr Webb and his wife said yesterday afternoon they had not yet felt the full impact of the news of their son's death.

They were told at about 9 a.m. Friends and relatives called later to offer their sympathies.

Police officers said he was knifed in the chest during a struggle with an intruder who had been surprised by his girl friend in a bedroom of the apartment.

Late last night detectives, in spite of a widespread search of the south city area, had found no trace of the weapon used in the attack.

The dead man was Dexter Norman Webb, aged 23, of Wha St, Hamilton. He was formerly employed by Taranaki Newspapers, Ltd, and worked in the Taurarunui and Stratford offices of the New Plymouth Daily News.

He was to have left Wellington next Thursday for the Antarctic with the summer contingent of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Antarctic division, to take up a public relations position.

Detective Inspector F. H. Parker, of the Wellington Criminal Investigation Branch, said Mr Webb had attended a party on Saturday night at 70 Brougham St, Wellington.

Went to Bedroom

"He stayed on after the party, and at 4.30 a.m. went with his girl friend to a bedroom at the front of the flat to get his coat.

"Webb grappled with him and received stab wounds, in the chest and shoulder, one of which led to his death soon afterwards in another bedroom of the house."

Detective Inspector Parker said the assailant ran from the house immediately after the incident. He was not pursued.

The room was in darkness and two people were asleep in it when the attack occurred. The confusion and alarm resulting from the scuffle is reported to have aided the assailant in making good his escape.

The police were notified of the stabbing about 5 a.m. An intensive search of the area was begun almost immediately, but no trace of the attacker was found.

Checkpoints were established at the Wellington airport and the Cook Strait ferry terminal. Later in the day two police officers visited the Australian aircraft-carrier Melbourne, now berthed in Wellington.

Fingerprint experts and a large team of detectives searched the apartment for clues.

Uniform and CIB staff hunted for some hours through the backyards of properties in the area, slashing long grass and checking under houses in efforts to find the weapon used.

Late in the afternoon detectives left the apartment carrying a bundle of clothing, a rifle which looked new and a partly consumed flagon of beer.

Neighbourhood inquiries revealed the party at the flat quietened some time between 3 a.m. and 3.40 a.m.

Police seeking information from neighbours inquired about a red sports car. A neighbour, Miss L. J. Davis, said she and her flatmate had often seen such a car parked near number 70 Brougham St. They had not seen the car there when they returned to their flat yesterday morning.

Investigating officers later said inquiries being made in relation to the car were purely routine.