

Harris charged with murder

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By RYAN SMITH
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A Jefferson City man was charged Sunday with second-degree murder for Friday's killing of the man's neighbor.

Moreland Jefferson, 43, 812 Broadway St., was found dead in the doorway of his apartment late Friday afternoon, after he apparently was beaten and stabbed.

Christopher B. Harris, 31, also of 812 Broadway St., was being held Monday in the Cole County Jail on \$1 million bond.



Harris

He was expected to be arraigned Tuesday.

Police had been searching for Harris as "a person of interest" since Friday night, after police began investigating Jefferson's death.

Harris was found Sunday morning at a friend's residence in the 200 block of Olive Street, after an unknown witness called the Jefferson City Police Department and told them they knew Harris' whereabouts.

Police said he'd been staying there since Friday.

Officials said they received several tips, and thanked citizens for the information and the media for publishing and broadcasting Harris's picture.

"We're lucky we have a town where people are willing to come forward and give us the information we need," said Detective Lt. Rob Bucklew.

According to a police probable cause statement, Harris allegedly confessed the murder to investigators during interrogation.

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Harris reportedly told investigators he was having an argument with Jefferson about 4 p.m. Friday in the apartment building where they both lived.

Police would not say what the argument was about, but Bucklew noted both men had been evicted from the apartment and were in the process of moving out.

Following the verbal confrontation, reports say Harris used a hammer to hit Jefferson on the head several times.

Harris then drug Jefferson, who was still alive and breathing, up

the stairs to Jefferson's second floor apartment.

While Jefferson gasped for air, Harris then stabbed or slashed Jefferson in the throat with a knife.

An autopsy was scheduled at 11 a.m. today and was expected to reveal the exact cause of Jefferson's death.

Jefferson's body initially was found about 5:49 p.m. Friday by the landlord, who immediately called police.

Described by authorities as "a violent man," Harris also was arrested in connection with a March 19 stabbing of a woman

who was found in the front yard of the Broadway Street apartment.

Police had asked prosecutors to charge Harris with first degree assault for stabbing the woman in the chest, but Cole County Prosecutor Bill Tackett said Monday morning no charges were filed because the victim would not testify.

Neighbors said Jefferson was a "nice guy" who kept to himself most of the time and had few friends.

Police said his apartment had been burglarized earlier this year.

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