

Convict testifies defendant admitted killing woman

By Martha Deller

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FORT WORTH -- A 37-year-old man now serving a 50-year prison term for murder and armed robbery testified Wednesday that Rodney Owens admitted killing a woman, cleaning up the apartment where he killed her, then disposing of her body in a lake.

Desmond Brooks testified that he contacted authorities in May after he was incarcerated for two robberies and a murder. Those crimes were part of a 2006 home invasion-robbery spree in which a 70-year-old man was killed. Brooks' co-defendant is being tried on capital murder charges in that case.

Brooks said that Owens -- now on trial for the 2007 slaying of Glenda Furch -- initially denied killing the missing woman whose murder police had accused him of. Later, however, Owens admitted killing the woman for her money, Brooks said.

Owens said he targeted Furch because "she was an old lady, he knew her work schedule at GM, she lived alone and she let him in because she knew him," Brooks testified.

Brooks also testified that Owens described using rope and tape to restrain the woman prior to moving her from the apartment. He also told Brooks that he tried to clean up stains with Chlorox bleach and he burned her car in Dallas.

Owens never told Brooks how he killed the woman, but he said he dumped her body in a lake, Brooks said.

Fort Worth Detective Sarah Jane Waters testified that the details of Brooks' statement about Owens were so accurate that police asked the fire department's water rescue unit to help them search Lake Arlington.

Although Brooks did not specify a lake, Waters said divers searched Lake Arlington because Owens was known to frequent an area there.

Divers found a blanket which was too damaged to determine if it was tied to Furch, she said. Divers found no other evidence, she said.

During earlier testimony about a police chase that led to Owens' arrest, District Judge Mollee Westfall abruptly sent jurors from the courtroom while she admonished Owens for acting out what appeared to be someone beating him.

"If you can't restrain yourself, I'll have you handcuffed behind your back and the only way you can communicate with your attorney is by whispering," Westfall told Owens.

Owens' trial continues this afternoon in the 371st District Court.