

# Fort Worth trial will go on even though no body has been found

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FORT WORTH – Glenda Furch has been missing for a year and is presumed dead. Her two daughters, having resigned themselves to their mother's fate, want to schedule her final rites.



Shimon Furch (right) and Latisha Furch (left), two daughters of Glenda Furch.

But there is no body, no cause of death. So the obsequies will have to wait.

Yet Shimon and Latisha Furch may soon get some sort of closure to their ordeal. On Oct. 6, a Tarrant County jury is scheduled to begin hearing evidence against the Fort Worth man accused of kidnapping and killing Glenda Furch.

Rodney Owens, 41, has been charged with murder in connection with the case. He is a former neighbor of Glenda Furch who was arrested last November after leading police on a short car chase. When he was pulled over, officers found items in his car from Ms. Furch's Woodhaven apartment.

The 51-year-old grandmother was last seen a year ago today as she completed her shift at the General Motors assembly plant in Arlington, where she had worked for nearly three decades. Ms. Furch left the

factory after midnight, purchased gasoline in East Fort Worth and drove a few blocks more to her apartment, authorities said.

"We think she made it to her apartment," Fort Worth homicide Sgt. J.D. Thornton said. "We have some clues about what happened after she arrived."

Fort Worth police believe Mr. Owens accosted Ms. Furch as she entered or was about to enter her second-story apartment.

"It isn't clear if she was targeted at random," Sgt. Thornton said. "It could have been he was there when she got home from work. To say that he was targeting her and waiting for her, no I don't think so. She just happened to be the one he was able to make contact with."

According to Mr. Owens' indictment, Ms. Furch died the same day she disappeared. A few days after she was reported missing, her car was found burning at an abandoned Dallas carwash.

"There is evidence of an assault and restraint," Sgt. Thornton said. "Combined with the lack of contact between her and any relatives or work is what led to the murder charge."

"So obviously, we think she's dead. She just hasn't been located."

Neither prosecutors nor defense attorneys would comment about the case or the pending trial. But a law professor who specializes in evidence said that a successful prosecution in a murder trial is possible without a body.



Glenda Furch

"You don't have to have a body, necessarily," said the professor, Guy Wellborn of the University of Texas at Austin. "If they're going to convict him of murder, they're going to have to have evidence that she is, in fact, dead."

Mr. Wellborn acknowledged that some jurors may be bothered

momentarily that a body hasn't been found, but he said that won't necessarily be an impossible hurdle for prosecutors.

"They will realize and reason through it and say, 'This guy killed this girl, and we shouldn't let him get away with it just because he was successful at getting rid of the body,' " he said.

"They will have to be convinced that the victim is dead, and other physical evidence, no doubt, leads to this defendant," he said. "The burden is added piece by piece. No single piece would do it alone. If you get enough pieces you, get the picture."

Aside from a conviction, Ms. Furch's daughters are hoping the trial will produce something else – details of their mother's death and the whereabouts of her remains.

"He could have told us," Latisha Furch said of Mr. Owens. "I don't know why he can't say what happened."

Her sister, Shimon Furch, agreed.

"I want to look into his eyes, and I want him to look into mine," she said. "It's time to man-up to what you've done. It's time to accept some responsibility."