

## Campus security, crime prevention are top priorities at Yale

By: Jeffry Kurz, Record-Journal staff

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In this photo taken Thursday Sept. 17, 2009, memorial flowers are placed on the corner of Amistad Street, where the body of Yale graduate student Annie Le was discovered in the Yale Building in New Haven, Conn. Police say they might never know the motive for the killing of a Yale University graduate student whose body was found hidden behind a wall on what should have been her wedding day.

Margaret Girard is a graduate student working toward a degree in national security at the University of New Haven. She also works in New Haven, as a waitress and bussing tables at a downtown pub. When she heads for home at night, she makes sure a bouncer escorts her to her car.

"A lot of the girls do," she said.

As an arrest and details involving the killing of a Yale graduate student unfolded last week, inevitable questions about campus security ensued. Schools such as Yale and the University of New Haven, which is in West Haven, take precautionary measures, which include call boxes outside dormitories, campus security guards and shuttle services, but students also understand that they're attending school in an open campus in an urban setting.

"Everyone on campus talked about it, because it's right down the road from us," said Girard, who is from Wallingford.

On Thursday, a Yale lab technician, 24-year-old Raymond Clark III, was arrested and charged with murder in the death of Annie Le, also 24. Clark and Le worked in the same research building, where Le's body was found stuffed in a wall.

On the day of the arrest, New Haven Police Chief James Lewis said it was a case of workplace violence, as opposed to urban or university crime. Nevertheless, Yale President Richard C. Levin sought to reassure the university community, with a statement promising "to redouble our efforts to educate the community about Yale's zero tolerance policy for violent, threatening and abusive behavior."

Campus killings tend to draw intense media scrutiny, particularly following the April 2007 gun massacre at Virginia Tech that cost 32 lives. Concerns about a potential shooting spree led to jittery days at Wesleyan University, in Middletown, before an arrest was made last spring following the shooting death of a student, Johanna Justin-Jinich, at a campus bookstore.

"This incident could have happened in any city, in any university, or in any workplace," said Levin in his statement about the Yale killing. "It says more about the dark side of the human soul than it does about the extent of security measures."

"I don't want to minimize what happened; unfortunately, we live in the real world and not everyone is as good as we would like them to be," said Stanley J. Garstka, a Cheshire resident who is deputy dean and professor in the practice of management at the Yale School of Management.

Some Yale students have sought counseling, "a few of them about being overcome by fear and letting it dominate their lives," said Kevin Nelson, pastor of university ministries at Christ Presbyterian Church, on Whitney Avenue in New Haven.

Graduate students tend to be particularly affected, he said, because they're the students often working during off hours at places where there aren't many people around.

"Undergraduates seem to feel a sense of comfort within the walls around Yale," he said. "Part of being an undergraduate is a sense of invulnerability anyway."

Nelson said he tries to emphasize common sense safety precautions. "Other than that, you have to step out and not live in fear that you could be the target," he said. "All of us could be the victim of random violence at any time."

Ashlie Liller, a sophomore studying criminal science at the University of New Haven, said developments in the Yale investigation were followed in one of her classes.

She has never felt unsafe on campus, said Liller, but she does take precautions.

"At night I usually try to walk with a friend, or if it's a short distance I'll talk on the phone while I'm walking," she said.

David Flinner, who studied psychology at Yale, graduating last spring, said he never felt unsafe at the school. "I doubt

I'd feel unsafe just because of this," he said.

Le, a pharmacology doctorate student, wrote about campus security in an article titled "Crime and Safety in New Haven" that appeared in February's issue of Yale's "B magazine," a publication of the university's medical school.

In her article, Le noted that theft rates on the Yale campus were far higher than at Southern Connecticut State University, which is located farther from downtown New Haven, or at Quinnipiac University, in Hamden. She also interviewed the university's police chief about tips for crime prevention.

"In short, New Haven is a city, and all cities have their perils, but with a little street smarts, one can avoid becoming yet another statistic," wrote Le at the end of her article.

Over the years, Yale has taken steps to strengthen security and worked with the city to improve safety, said Garstka.

"In the last 20 years, we've seen tremendous cooperation," he said. "There's a lot of progress."

Garstka, who grew up in Meriden and is a 1962 graduate of Platt High School, the first class to go all four years at the school, has been at Yale 30 years.

Garstka said that when he heard where Le's body had been found, he thought the case would be solved, because it's one of the most secure buildings on campus, with cameras and security cards. The 1998 killing of Yale senior Suzanne Jovin on a New Haven street remains unsolved.

"This kind of tragedy is sickening," he said. "You think about this, and for the next couple of days you look suspiciously at everyone."

"We'll get over it; we have to," Garstka said. "Otherwise you have no right living in a city. If you live in fear, you should find some place more comfortable."

Information from the Associated Press was included in this article.

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