

Stabbing victim a mystery to many

Police seeking clues in Allston slaying

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Before he was stabbed to death in his Allston apartment, William Hester was a nightclub singer and a party-thrower, a man who sported long braids and preferred women's clothes, according to neighbors.

Hester was a mystery to those around him — so much so that, until his body was found on Saturday, many in the building on Parkvale Avenue believed Hester was a woman.

And as police continued to search for clues in the homicide, at least one resident admitted yesterday that although she heard pounding noises around the time of the killing, she did nothing to help Hester, who had little contact with other neighbors except for occasional waves in the hall.

"I heard a lot of bangs, but I just thought it was someone pounding on a door," said the neighbor, who said she ignored the sounds she heard at approximately 6:15 p.m.

"We didn't really pay any attention to it. We didn't hear any yelling or screams," she said.

Police said they received a call from another neighbor at 6:18 p.m. after the neighbor heard someone yell for help from Hester's apartment.

Yesterday, police continued their search for clues and a possible suspect, focusing on a lot behind the apartment building where Hester lived. Investigators released few details surrounding the city's 34th slaying of the year, except to say that Hester may have let the killer into his apartment.

"We believe the [killer] might have known the victim," Boston police Superintendent James Hussey said during a press conference at police headquarters. He would not elaborate on the theory.

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Stabbing victim a mystery to neighbors

■ SLAYING

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There were no signs of forced entry at Hester's apartment, police said. He was found with a number of stab wounds to the chest.

Police said Hester had recently contacted his parents in Connecticut, but would not elaborate.

News of Hester's killing left several tenants in the apartment building feeling nervous yesterday.

"I don't know much," said one

man who asked not to be identified. "But I wouldn't want to say much if I did know. You never know what [the killer] might do."

Police declined to answer questions about Hester's apparent double life. They said they were focusing their investigation on his final hours.

Hester, who lived in his bottom-floor apartment for several years, was often seen taking care of his black cat or entertaining friends, sometimes angering upper-floor tenants with late-night loud music, ac-

ording to neighbors.

But his loud partying had become less frequent recently, one neighbor said.

"He got better. He started to keep it down," she said.

The neighbor, who did not want to be identified, said she had seen Hester Saturday morning, before he was killed.

"It's too bad," she said of the killing, shaking her head. "He seemed real happy that morning."