

THE MISSISSAUGA NEWS
Police say victim lured to his death

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Peel Regional Police homicide investigators say the city's most recent murder victim was lured to a secluded Meadowvale forest by his friends before he was killed.

The body of Mississauga's Richard Hughes, 20, was discovered early Tuesday evening, hidden deep in the woods directly behind Argonia and Derry Rds. by a man walking through the forest shortly before dinner. Although the cause of death is not being released, police say the body had "obvious signs of trauma."

Police said Hughes had a long history with the men charged with his murder.

"There are always varying levels of friendship, but all four individuals have known each other for some time," said Peel Homicide Inspector Rick De Facendis.

A local man and two 15-year-olds were taken into custody Tuesday, sometime before midnight, and charged in connection with Hughes' death. Charged with second degree murder is Mississauga's Carl Gernhaelder, 23, along with two young offenders whose names cannot be released under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

All three made appearances in a Brampton court on Wednesday for bail hearings. Gernhaelder is scheduled to appear in court again on Nov. 4.

De Facendis said the murder was not a heated argument between buddies that came to blows before going horribly awry. Police believe the three accused had every intention of killing their friend.

"The fact we laid second degree murder charges is a clear indication this was no accident," said De Facendis. "All three individuals intended to kill the victim."

Police believe the murder took place sometime Monday night and the body lay undiscovered for over 24 hours until it was found near a natural pathway the next day.

De Facendis said the forest, located behind the Shell gas station off Hwy. 401 near the Winston Churchill Blvd. eastbound on ramp, is a popular hangout for local youth.

Police would not indicate a possible motive or if weapons were recovered at the scene.

When police first discovered the body, they began treating the death as "suspicious." After preliminary examinations by forensic investigators and officials from the coroner's office, police switched their investigation to homicide.

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