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LEAC helicopter helps catch Rockford murder suspect

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By Marissa Alter

ROCKFORD (WREX) - On the ground and in the air, Rockford police keep their promise to neighbors and find the man they say is responsible for what investigators describe as a brutal, vicious murder.

The manhunt for Omarrian Jones is over. Rockford police arrested the 24-year-old murder suspect this afternoon after a chase that ended at Future Tool, Inc. on 23rd Avenue.

Jones is accused of killing Reynato Cardino, 77, and his wife Leticia Cardino, 75, inside their home at 2623 Pleasant View Avenue on July 8.

Last night, people living near the Cardinos had a neighborhood watch meeting where police updated them on the hunt for Jones.

Deputy Chief Greg Lindmark promised Rockford police would find him, and today they did, thanks to some help.



Omarrian Jones

Around 11:30 this morning, police began a pretty extensive search of the woods at 20th and Wesleyan. They had information Jones might be hiding there, so police called in the K-9 unit, ATVs, and the LEAC helicopter to help.

During the course of that, dispatch got a call from a business not too far away, R.L. Leek at 2210 Harrison Ave.

"My boss noticed there was a vehicle--one of our tractor trailers broken into--and there was clothes on the dash drying because they were all wet. So my boss called police," explains R.L. Leek Worker Kyle Hedrick.



Officers caught Jones inside Future Tool, Inc. at 2029 23rd Avenue

Some officers checked out the complaint, and when workers brought them to the semi, they saw the clothes had moved.

"The clothes were outside the vehicle at this time, hanging on the wheel and on the mirror," Hedrick says.

"Upon further investigation, a black male with no shirt on, no shoes, and shorts ran in a westerly direction from the area of R.L. Leek," states Deputy Chief Lindmark.



Police brought in the K-9 unit, ATVs, and the LEAC helicopter to help with the manhunt.

Immediately, the helicopter, ATVs and other officers were diverted. Lindmark says Jones ducked into the nearby Future Tool, Inc. through an open back door. He then tried to hide in the first floor ceiling area even while police swarmed the building.



"While they were conducting a search of this business, he fell through the ceiling tile and was taken into custody," says Lindmark.

Jones now faces two counts of first degree murder. The Cardinos were found last Wednesday night after their son Reyle Cardino, 51, showed up at the home to visit them and encountered an intruder. He got into a fight with the man and had to be treated at a local hospital for injuries. Autopsies concluded that the Cardino's were killed by blunt force trauma.

Lindmark credits the capture to a coordinated effort among several law enforcement agencies.

"We feel relieved. This was a vicious brutal murder," he states.

The arrest news was also a huge relief to people living in the Cardinos' Pleasant View Ave. neighborhood.

"We were out here this morning when the helicopter was going around," explains Anita Thorsbakken," and I thought hopefully, hopefully today will be the day."

Neighbors plan to hold a candlelight vigil in front of the Cardino home next Wednesday evening.

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