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Update: Police say cell calls contradict suspect

By Ramon Bracamontes / El Paso Times
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EL PASO -- On the summer night that Gloria Marmolejo disappeared, her son, homicide suspect David Marmolejo, sent a chilling text message to his girlfriend.

"Taking care of stuff, had to do what I had to do," it said.

This quote is in the police affidavit that was used to obtain an arrest warrant for Marmolejo, 29. He remains in the El Paso County jail, his bail set at \$1 million, suspected of strangling his mother.

Gloria Marmolejo, 54, vanished July 25. Six days later, a walker found her body in Santa Teresa.

A five-week police investigation culminated last week with David Marmolejo's arrest.

Police say Gloria Marmolejo was upset because David Marmolejo was living in her house with his stepsister, who is also his girlfriend.

Investigators allege that David Marmolejo and his mother clashed over the living arrangement, and that he killed her.

In the affidavit, Detective Jose Ochoa said cell-phone records contradict David Marmolejo's claim that his mother was unharmed when he last saw her.

Ochoa gave this account of the case:

After spending five months in Phoenix, Gloria Marmolejo returned to El Paso on July 25.

She was angry because David Marmolejo and his girlfriend, Mariah Wilson, apparently were living together in her home. Gloria Marmolejo told other relatives that, if her suspicions were confirmed, she would evict David Marmolejo and Wilson.

She called her son at 5:14 p.m. and told him she wanted him to come to their home on Sonoma Drive to

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David Marmolejo did not answer that call.

But he rang her back minutes later, and they talked.

At 5:40 p.m., Gloria Marmolejo called her son again. This suggested to police

that he had not yet arrived at the house.

But David Marmolejo told detectives a different story. By the time he got the second phone call from his mom, he said, he had already helped her unpack her bags and had left their home.

Police said they were skeptical of his account.

"Records show not only is he arriving to the victim's residence on Sonoma at 5:40 p.m., but he remains there for approximately another hour and a half," the affidavit stated.

Police allege that Gloria Marmolejo died about 6 p.m.

After telling police that he left the home at 5:40 p.m., David Marmolejo said he did not return until 10 p.m., when he and his girlfriend went to sleep.

He told police that they did not wake until 10 a.m. July 26, and that his mother was asleep in another room at the same time.

Other family members told police they found this account suspicious. Gloria Marmolejo would not have tolerated the "relationship" between David Marmolejo and his stepsister, relatives said.

Cell-phone records further contradict David Marmolejo's story, police said.

While he supposedly was sleeping, his phone was used for calls at 1:37 a.m. and 4:52 a.m. on July 26. More calls were made between 5:30 and 5:49 a.m.

The 1:37 a.m. phone call was transmitted from a tower near Anthony, Texas, which is 12 miles from where Gloria Marmolejo's body was found.

Wilson, the girlfriend, told police she was not at home asleep with David Marmolejo. She said he asked her to lie about how long he was gone after he left a movie theater on July 25.

"She stated he was gone for 2-3 hours," the affidavit stated. "She also revealed that she texted the defendant while he was gone from the theater and asked what was taking him so long.

"The defendant replied, via text, 'Taking care of stuff, had to do what I had to do.' "

The medical examiner said Gloria Marmolejo's head and three of her limbs were covered with paper or plastic bags when she was found. This indicated to police that her killer took time with the body, making it unlikely that a stranger or intruder committed the crime.

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