

News

DA will not file charges over Piedmont mummified body

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PIEDMONT — Prosecutors have decided not to file charges against a woman who police say kept the mummified body of her elderly mother inside their family home for at least two years.

Patrol officers discovered the body of 86-year-old Patricia Bostrom on Feb. 24 when they visited the residence in the 200 block of Highland Avenue for a welfare check.

The body was propped on a chair in the hallway, police said.

Despite her death, Bostrom was continuing to receive \$1,262 each month from Social Security and someone was making withdrawals from her bank account at Wells Fargo, Piedmont police Capt. John Hunt said.

Bostrom's adult daughter was her caregiver and regularly visited the property, according to police and neighbors.

On Tuesday, the Alameda County District Attorney's Office decided not to file fraud or other charges against Bostrom's daughter, saying not enough evidence exists to prove she had made the withdrawals.

The woman was also facing a possible misdemeanor charge of interfering with human remains.

Prosecutors noted that Bostrom's daughter was taken into custody following the grisly discovery for a psychiatric evaluation after investigators searched her Alameda residence and found it was allegedly unfit for habitation because it was packed with clutter.

According to the Alameda County coroner, Patricia Bostrom was dead for at least two years when police found her remains. She is believed to have died from natural causes.

The elderly widow was last seen alive about four years ago, neighbors said.

"It's just a very sad case," Hunt said. "It seems her daughter could not let her go."

Neighbors told police that when they would question Bostrom's daughter about her mother's whereabouts, she provided varying accounts, including that she was on vacation and that she had moved.

Bostrom's body was found after family friends went to the Piedmont police station Feb. 24 to report that they had not seen her for some time and were concerned about her welfare.

An officer went to the Mediterranean home at Highland and Blair avenues and knocked on the door, but it was unlocked and swung open, police said. Bostrom's body was near the door.

The police investigation showed that property taxes had not been paid on the house since December 2003. Hunt said the taxes have since been paid. He also said Bostrom's daughter now owns the property as a result of a family will.

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