

SON HELD IN MOM'S HAMMER SLAYING DETROIT - POLICE SAY HER CAR PAID FOR HIS CRACK COCAINE

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A Detroit **man** has been **charged** with first-degree murder for allegedly **bludgeoning** his 75-year-old mother to death with a sledgehammer **in** their west-side home after trading her car for drugs.

Officers found Velma McPherson **in** her bed Saturday, dead with a bloody pillow covering her head. Police said her son, David McPherson, 44, killed her a day or more earlier. Her family said she hadn't answered the phone **in** two to three days.

After trading his mother's car for crack cocaine, David McPherson, a state prison parolee, went to the basement of their home on Doris, got a sledgehammer and repeatedly hit his mother **in** the head, police and prosecutors said Tuesday. He apparently lived with the body until Saturday.

"It is horrible," said Demerus Sanders, the victim's 78-year-old aunt. "It's like a nightmare, like you will wake up and everything will be OK."

Sanders and a nephew went to the 3200 block of Doris on Saturday when Velma McPherson failed to answer the phone. Sanders said they could not open the front door and called police.

When officers arrived, they caught David McPherson, clad **in** bloody clothing, after he climbed through a bathroom window, police spokesman James Tate said.

Sanders, who was at the scene, said officers heard the crunching snow when David McPherson's feet hit the ground and quickly arrested him.

After officers entered the home through the window, they found another woman inside.

She was questioned by homicide officers but not **charged** .

Police said David McPherson confessed to the slaying.

He was arraigned Monday **in** 36th District Court on a first-degree murder charge. He is scheduled for a preliminary hearing Feb. 15.

Police investigators said Velma McPherson previously visited a police precinct at least twice to complain about her son taking her car, an older model Saturn, without her permission

Sanders said McPherson traded his mother's car for crack cocaine, and "he knew she was going to be angry." Police had not recovered the car Tuesday.

David McPherson, who was released from prison **in** May, was on parole for a robbery conviction, the state Department of Corrections Web site shows. He also served prison time on a conviction for an assault with intent to murder.

His mother was retired from Detroit Public Schools, where she worked as a kitchen helper, Sanders said.

"We were reared like sisters instead of niece and aunt, because we were close **in** age," Sanders said. "There wasn't anything she wouldn't do for you. When I asked her to do something, she never said a word. She just did it."

David McPherson was Velma McPherson's only child. He has a 22-year-old daughter.

Visitation for Velma McPherson will be 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday at Peace Chapel Funeral Home, 19530 W. Seven Mile, Detroit.

A funeral service will be at 10:30 a.m. Saturday at Christ Presbyterian Church, 23795 Civic Center Drive, Southfield.

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo

CAPTION: Velma McPherson told police of her son's use of her car.

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