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Ohio Supreme Court Case #

# Suspect In Murder Had Criminal Past

BY DAVID WELLS  
Enquirer Reporter

Murder-suspect David Steffen is a drifter who has been in trouble with the law before, said his brother, Air Force Sgt. Paul Steffen.

David, 22, was arrested Saturday and charged with the stabbing death of 19-year-old Karen Range, whose body was found Thursday evening in her Roselawn home. Paul, 23, is stationed at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton.

Until April, the brothers had been out of touch for about six years. "He called in April, and we talked," Paul said Saturday. "That was the first time I had heard from him since July, 1976. He didn't really have a home. He roamed around."

DAVID STEFFEN is the fourth of six children. In addition to older brother Paul, there are two older sisters and two younger brothers. The family lived in Cleveland, but broke up when the parents divorced.

"I was 12 and David was 11," Paul said. "We moved to Brunswick, Ohio, and lived there for a while. He (David) had a lot of problems after that. He was in a couple of different foster homes. . . . Things were kind of rough on all of us then. I guess some of us made it, and some of us didn't."

Paul said his brother has been in trouble with the law before, both as a juvenile and as an adult, although he declined to be specific. Cincinnati police said a records check indicated Steffen did not have a criminal record in Ohio as an adult, but a nationwide records

check would not be possible until Monday.

TWO AND a half weeks ago, David showed up at his brother's house in Dayton for a visit. It was to be a short reunion. "He was looking for work," Paul said. "I got home one night about two weeks ago, and he said he had a job. An hour and a half later he was gone."

Steffen told his brother he had been hired as a salesman by Hy-Pro, a company that sells household soaps door-to-door. David had no car, so company representatives picked him up and took him to a motel in Sharonville, which they were using as a base of operations while they were selling in the Cincinnati area, Paul said.

The next time Paul Steffen saw his brother was Thursday night: "He called and said he had gotten fired. He said he wanted to come back. I picked him up at the bus station here about midnight. He said the boss just told him he wasn't the kind of salesman he was looking for."

PAUL SAID he did not realize his brother was in any trouble until Friday night. About 8 p.m., officers from the Cincinnati homicide squad knocked on the door of the Dayton house. "They said they wanted to take (David) to the police station for questioning. He said, 'Well, okay, but how long is it going to take?' They said they didn't know, and he went with them. He called a couple hours later. I asked him how he was doing, and he said okay."

It wasn't until Saturday morning that Paul learned from the police that his brother had been charged with aggravated murder.

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