

San Luis Obispo Police Department PRESS RELEASE

**WHAT: INVESTIGATION UPDATE PRESS CONFERENCE
MURDER / SUICIDE INVESTIGATION**

WHERE: 1770 Frambuesa

UPDATE: October 18, 2007

**DECEASED: #1 - John Michael RIVARD 48 Years of Age from SLO
#2 - Barbara RIVARD 44 Years of Age from SLO
#3 - Olivia RIVARD 7 Years of Age from SLO**

The following are Chief Deborah Linden's comments provided during the press conference on October 18, 2007.

On October 3, 2007, officers from the San Luis Obispo Police Department responded to 1770 Frambuesa in San Luis Obispo where they discovered the bodies of John Michael Rivard, his wife Barbara Rivard, and their 7 year old daughter Olivia. Two other young children of the Rivards were found unharmed and were removed from the home by officers. Since then, investigators from the San Luis Police Department, San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department, and the San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office have conducted an extensive investigation in order to determine, to the best of our ability, what occurred. During the past two weeks, we have released information as we were able to confirm it. We have now reached a point in the investigation where we are able to release what we believe to be the sequence of events. However, there are many details we do not know because there were no direct witnesses to the events that occurred inside the home. This is what we have been able to determine.

At 6:53 AM on October 3, 2007, John Michael Rivard called 911 from his cell phone from inside his house at 1770 Frambuesa. During the ensuing telephone conversation with the San Luis Obispo Police Department dispatcher, Rivard stated there had been a homicide/suicide at the home and that he had killed his wife Barbara after there had been an altercation between Barbara and their daughter Olivia. Rivard told the dispatcher that his other two children were alive and in their rooms. During the telephone conversation, Rivard stated that he had a firearm. While officers were responding to Rivard's home, the dispatcher attempted to keep Rivard talking on the telephone. At one point in the conversation a loud noise was heard and Rivard no longer responded to the dispatcher's voice. It was later determined that Rivard had shot and killed himself while still on the phone with the dispatcher. It was not clear from Rivard's telephone call who had killed Olivia.

When officers arrived and entered the home, they found Barbara Rivard dead on the floor in Olivia's bedroom. Barbara had been severely beaten and shot once in the head. The officers found John Rivard dead in the master bedroom. John Rivard was lying in bed holding a handgun and a cellular telephone was lying on his chest. The phone was still connected to the San Luis Obispo Police Department dispatch center. Rivard had a single gunshot wound to his head. Olivia Rivard was found deceased lying next to John in the bed. Olivia had suffered a single gunshot to her head.

Officers found the two younger Rivard children unharmed in their respective bedrooms. The children were carried out of the house by a police officer and cared for until relatives could arrive.

After an extensive investigation and analysis of the scene and evidence, investigators determined that John Michael Rivard severely beat his wife Barbara with a metal flashlight on her head while Barbara was in Olivia's bedroom. At some point, John Rivard shot and killed Barbara using a pillow to muffle the gunshot. Sometime after killing Barbara, John Rivard shot Olivia while Olivia was lying in Rivard's bed, again using a pillow to muffle the gun. The same .357 caliber revolver was used in both murders and Rivard's suicide. The gun had been purchased by John Rivard in 1997 in North Carolina.

The investigation conducted by the San Luis Obispo County Coroner concluded that Barbara Rivard was killed before Olivia Rivard, and that the cause of death for both Barbara and Olivia was a single gunshot wound to the head. A contributing factor to Barbara Rivard's death was multiple blunt force trauma to her head.

It is clear from the investigation that John Michael Rivard was responsible for the murders of Barbara and Olivia Rivard before he committed suicide. It is not known if Olivia witnessed the events. There is no indication the younger children witnessed the murders. The results of toxicology tests on John Rivard are still pending.

Although we are confident about the sequence of events, and the fact that John Michael Rivard is responsible for these murders, we do not know why he committed these senseless acts. His motives or reasons for his actions may never be conclusively known and we will not speculate or try to explain something we do not know as fact. I urge members of the media to do the same. What is clear is that this tragedy has deeply affected this community, including and especially the young schoolmates of Olivia. More importantly, there are two young surviving children who deserve a chance to grow up with some sense of normalcy, if that is possible. They are being well cared for by family members who ask that you respect their privacy and memories of their mother and sister who are the victims of this horrific crime.