

Part 5/10/44

Police Search For Slayer of Bethesda Boy

More than two dozen Montgomery County detectives were pressed yesterday into the hunt for the slayer of a 9-year-old Bethesda boy, found stabbed to death in a patch of woods near the Kenwood Golf and Country Club.

The victim, Stephen F. Johnston, was one of five children of Mr. and Mrs. Francis R. Johnston, of 5117 Fairglen la., in the Bradley Hills subdivision.

His body, bearing many stab wounds, was discovered at about 8 a.m. yesterday in all-out search after the boy had failed to return home the night before from a turtle hunt along the banks of the Little Falls Branch.

An autopsy by Dr. J. Thornton Boswell, a Suburban Hospital pathologist, determined that the boy's death was caused by choking on his own blood. Most of the wounds, inflicted by a long, narrow-bladed instrument, were around the neck and head, and two had penetrated the trachea and throat, Dr. Boswell said.

There were no bodily signs

of sexual molestation, but the victim's clothing was in disarray and investigators are assuming a sexual motive for the attack.

However, Detective Capt. Fred P. Thraikill emphasized last night that after a day of activity his investigators were still without a definite motive or any real clues to the identity of the slayer.

The slain boy was a third grader at Radnor Elementary School. He left home at about 2:30 p.m. Sunday with his parents' permission to look for golf balls on the edge of the Kenwood course and to bring home a turtle, if he could find one.

His failure to show up for dinner prompted the parents to notify police, and until 3 a.m. firemen, rescue squadsmen and police with K-9 dogs combed the wooded vicinity of the Johnston home. At that time, it was decided that more searching would be useless in the dark.

The hunt was resumed at 6:30 a.m. Half an hour later Edward E. Shoemaker, 21, a Bethesda fireman who had taken part in the search the night before, went off duty and rejoined the effort. It was Shoemaker who made the discovery in a dense thicket, a

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