

soybean field about a mile west of Findlay.

Baumgardner was convicted

Mrs. Mottinger.

Mrs. Mottinger, 48, had been stabbed at least 13 times in the chest. Her badly decomposed body was discovered under a tarp by a couple and a child who had been looking for butterflies.

Postal Inspectors May Have Major Break In Mottinger Case

10-21-82 V W T B

Postal inspectors are trying to trace the origin of a theater curtain in hope this will lead them to the killer of Elgin postmistress Betty Jane Mottinger.

The determination that the cloth the body was found wrapped in was a theater backdrop, not a painter's drop cloth as originally believed, is one of the few breaks investigators have had since Mrs. Mottinger, 48, of Ohio City, was abducted on Aug. 9 from the tiny post office.

The victim had been stabbed at least 13 times. Her body was found near a soybean field about a mile west of Findlay Sept. 18.

Postal inspector Tom Macioch said that learning the fabric was theater curtain was significant because the tightly woven, fire-resistant cotton is manufactured by relatively few firms.

"If we find the manufacturer, then we can go through records and see who they made it for, and who might have had it after that," Macioch said.

He said the cloth was cut from a larger piece of material and appeared to have been used as a painter's drop cloth recently.

The Postal Service laboratory in Washington identified the fabric as theater curtain and is studying dried paint on the material, he said.

Macioch said manufacturers of similar curtains have been located in Tiffin, Cincinnati and Canton, but that none of those firms said it made the curtain in question.

A New York City company, one of the largest distributors of theatrical curtains in the nation, has been asked to supply a list of all the manufacturers east of the Mississippi River, Macioch said. He said the list of about 25 firms should arrive this week.

The curtain material is believed to be expensive and could have been used by a traveling theatrical group or possibly a rock band, postal inspectors reported.

A task force of 10 postal inspectors is working on the case and is based at Best Western Van Wert Inn.

Police seek Marion "Sonny" Baumgardner, 45, formerly of Louisville, Ky., for questioning in the case. Postal inspectors say Baumgardner fits the general description of a man seen sitting in a car in front of the post office just before Mrs. Mottinger disappeared.

Baumgardner served five years in prison for the Oct. 24, 1975, armed robbery of the Dupont post office.

Baumgardner is being sought for a parole violation.

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