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Police hope figurines, T-shirt, other clues lead to mom of baby 'Angel' found in river near Winona

By John Brewer
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A Green t-shirt with an image of a bread slice on the front was wrapped around the baby that was found in the river near Winona. (Courtesy to Pioneer Press: Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension)

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The newborn girl was dumped in the Mississippi River on or just before Labor Day, sealed in a canvas bag with the name of a Mexican tourist town stitched on the side.

Inside, she was wrapped in a green T-shirt, and tied in two plastic garbage bags. Two small angel figurines lay next to her.

A charm bracelet - with an eye motif - and two more, larger angel figurines were placed in the canvas bag, too.

Then someone - presumably her mother - put the 7-pound girl in the river near Winona. She was found dead Labor Day afternoon by a passing boater.

"We've named her Angel," said Winona County Sheriff Steve Brand. "We want to give Angel a last name."

The new details about the fourth newborn to be pulled dead from the Mississippi River in southeast Minnesota since 1999 were released today at a press conference behind the courthouse in downtown Winona.

Investigators from the county and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension have tracked down about 25 leads in the case, but none have panned out. That's why Brand and BCA Senior Special Agent Drew Evans made a public plea for the mother to come forward. They hoped that the items found in the bag with Angel would help someone identify the mother.

Evans said investigators want to find the mother, who they believe gave birth alone without medical attention, because she likely needs physical and mental help.



Bureau of Criminal Apprehension senior special agent Drew Evans, standing in front of a poster of images of items found with the baby that was found in the river near Winona, speaks to the press on Tuesday morning, Sept 13 2011 at the Winona County Law Enforcement Center in Winona, along with Department of Public Service spokesman Andy Skoogman, far left, and Winona Sheriff Dave Brand. (Pioneer Press: John Brewer)

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still too early to determine the child's race or exactly when she died.

He did say that the girl was likely in the river less than a day before she was found. All of the items found with her were currently at the BCA's labs being checked for fingerprints and DNA evidence.

Anyone with information is asked to call 507-457-6530.

As Brand and Evans talked with media about the images, one stood out.

On the bottom of one of the plastic bags Angel was tied in was a warning: "To avoid danger of suffocation, keep this plastic bag away from babies and children."

"This infant had no one to support it," Brand said. "We're here to ask the public for their help to solve this investigation."

John Brewer can be reached at 651-228-2093.

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River,"Evans said.

The BCA agent said he has spoken with authorities in Goodhue County, about 60 miles up river, about the three newborn babies who turned up in the river near their communities in 1999, 2003 and 2007. At this point, he said, those unsolved cases do not appeared directly linked to the baby found Labor Day.

Angel was found in the main channel of the Mississippi River at about 2:20 p.m. Labor Day by passing boaters six miles south of Winona. Brand said the boaters passed the

canvas bag once but were curious, so turned around and picked it up. When they realized what was inside, they called 911.

Brand's investigators are currently following up with boaters who were on the river that day. His deputies took down boat registrations from craft in the area after the body was found, he said.

Evans said autopsy results, being conducted by the medical examiner in Dakota County, are pending, and it's



One of two 10" porcelain angels inside which was two 4" porcelain angels, with bells, was found with the baby that was found in the river near Winona. (Courtesy to Pioneer Press)

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