

'Free Pussy Riot' Murder Suspect Confesses

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Danilevsky speaking with his mother on Friday as he appears before a Kazan court in the double-murder case. **Nikolay Alexandrov**

A university professor has confessed to the brutal murder of two women in a Kazan apartment where the words "Free Pussy Riot" were written in blood on the wall, investigators said Friday.

The suspect, an acquaintance of one of the women, said he wrote the message to throw off investigators.

Investigators on Friday said Igor Danilevsky, a 38-year-old professor at a Kazan university, had confessed to the killings and been detained.

The announcement Thursday that the bodies of a 76-year-old woman and her 38-year-old daughter had been found in their apartment with multiple stab wounds alongside the words

"Free Pussy Riot" prompted a Russian Orthodox Church official to urge human rights groups and politicians to disavow their support of the female punk band to prevent further violence. Media outlets declared that a Pussy Riot supporter had been behind the killings.

Three Pussy Riot members were sentenced earlier this month to two years in prison for their performance of a song denouncing President Vladimir Putin in Christ the Savior Cathedral, in a case that has drawn international scrutiny.

A lawyer for the Pussy Riot women on Thursday called the English-language message on the wall of the murdered women's apartment a "provocation."

According to a statement posted on the Investigative Committee website Friday, Danilevsky said he had studied with the younger of the two murdered women. Danilevsky had told her that he wanted a family with her and convinced her to take out a loan for him, the money from which he used to pay off debts he had.

Danilevsky promised the woman to go on vacation with her to Egypt, then offered to go to Simferopol instead, citing a lack of funds, the statement said. On Aug. 22, he told the woman that the trip had to be delayed until January.

The woman accused him of perpetually deceiving her, at which point Danilevsky picked up a knife and stabbed her several times, the statement said. Hearing the fight from the next room, the woman's mother came in, and Danilevsky stabbed her several times as well. Both women died from their wounds.

A knife that investigators presume to be the murder weapon was also found in Danilevsky's apartment, the statement said.

Danilevsky then looked for the papers showing that he had received money from his acquaintance and stole 100,000 rubles (\$3,100) and two cellphones. On Thursday, regional investigators had said the "total mess" in the women's apartment indicated that it was a robbery.

In an attempt to make investigators think it was a "ritual murder," Danilevsky then arranged the bodies in the form of the number 69 and wrote "Free Pussy Riot" on the wall with their blood, the Investigative Committee statement said.

A criminal murder case has been opened by Tatarstan investigators, and the inquiry into the killings is ongoing, the statement said.

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