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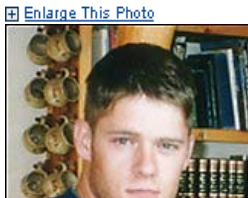
ARLINGTON HOMICIDE Pentagon City Shooting Baffles Family

By Jamie Stockwell Washington Post Staff Writer Thursday, July 6, 2006; Page B03

As Arlington County detectives continued to investigate the shooting death of 24-year-old Paul Zeller outside the Pentagon Row shops last week, the former soldier's father said yesterday that his son would be buried this morning in his home state of Colorado.

Dwight Zeller, who described his son as an "easygoing, likable guy," said in a telephone interview that his youngest child's body was shipped on Monday to his home town of Westcliffe.

"It's been very hard for us," said Zeller, a retired Navy chaplain who teaches at a seminary in Westcliffe. "We don't have any answers. . . . The police haven't told us anything except to avoid speculating about what



Paul Zeller was walking home from the Metro station when he was shot early Friday.

Police said Zeller was fatally shot at close range outside the upscale shopping center just after midnight Friday. Investigators interviewed several witnesses and handed out hundreds of fliers, and yesterday chased several leads, said Detective Steve Gomez, a police spokesman. Police do not know whether Zeller was targeted by his assailant or was a victim of random violence in a relatively safe and quiet area of Arlington.

Zeller was honorably discharged from the Army in September 2004 after serving in Iraq as a mortar man with the 82nd Airborne Division. He worked long hours at the College Park Honda dealership, where he sold and detailed cars, among other duties, his family said. Zeller commuted between Arlington and Prince George's County on Metro and was walking home from the Pentagon City Station when he was killed. Family members said he did not appear to have been robbed.

Police said Zeller was found dead at 12:06 a.m. in front of the retail center's World Market store in the 1300 block of South Joyce Street. It is near several high-rise apartment buildings between the Pentagon City mall and Interstate 395. The bars at a couple of restaurants at the shops stay open late, police said, and so several people were in the area when the shooting occurred.

Zeller's was the fourth homicide in Arlington County this year. Family members and police request that anyone with information call the criminal investigation division at 703-228-4194 or the police tip line at 703-228-4242.

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