

## Police: Gulu-Gulu cook fell into South River basin on way home

By Tom Dalton

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August 26, 2008 12:01 am

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SALEM — A cook at a downtown restaurant apparently fell into the South River basin and drowned while walking home early yesterday, according to police.

The body of Jocelyn Callahan, a cook at Gulu-Gulu Cafe, was found around 7:30 a.m. yesterday floating in the water off Pickering Wharf. The body was first spotted by workers on the roof of adjacent Shetland Park, an office complex.

"It looks like an accident," Detective William Jennings said.

Callahan, 25, originally of Swampscott, was last seen around 12:45 a.m. talking with a friend at the Dodge Street Bar & Grill in downtown Salem, according to police.

"They were drinking at a couple of bars downtown, and she was walking home," Jennings said.

Police suspect Callahan took a shortcut to her apartment at 56 Peabody St. and walked down a path along the South River basin. One of her moccasins was found on a sea wall next to the path, and some of her belongings, including "personal papers," were found in the water, police said. Her apartment is about 100 yards from where the articles were found.

"One shoe was in the water and one shoe on the wall," Jennings said. "We're figuring she lost her balance."

When the tide went out a few hours later, police say her body must have drifted under the Congress Street bridge and into Pickering Wharf, an area of restaurants and luxury boats.

The Gulu-Gulu, in Town House Square near the "Bewitched" statue, closed yesterday as soon as police contacted the cafe's owner, Steven Feldmann. Workers gathered there all afternoon, exchanging hugs and stories.

"She was just fun, just so full of life," Feldmann said.

Callahan came into the restaurant about five months ago looking for a job as a waitress and, after being told there were no openings, took a job in the kitchen. She became a full-time cook and popular figure at the cafe.

"She looked like Amy Winehouse," the owner said, referring to the Grammy Award winning singer-songwriter. "She just had these brilliant tattoos and huge set of black hair."

She had a Buddha tattoo on one shoulder and angel wings on her back, co-workers said.

Callahan was going to hairdressing school, according to Laura Walton, the manager at Gulu-Gulu.

She also had a flair for art and posted some of her drawings on the restaurant walls, Walton said. She drew a caricature of herself for the restaurant and captioned it "Lean Mean Rock 'N Roll Machine."

"We all loved her so much," Feldmann said. "There's a really close-knit group of kids working here. ... It's like a death in the family."

A MySpace page attributed to Callahan listed interests and biographical information under the heading "Bury At Sea." A friend said it might be a song title or lyric. Callahan, she said, was a huge music fan. Friends had already posted messages on the site yesterday. One wrote: "Rest in peace, baby, we love you."

Feldmann said Callahan was happy and upbeat when he spoke to her just the other day.

"She was telling me how much she really loved this job," he said.

"I can't stress enough how much fun it was to have her around," he said. "She was always smiling. ... She was definitely a character. We're going to miss her ..."

Callahan worked at Gulu-Gulu on Sunday, finishing around 8 p.m., Feldmann said. She stayed after her shift and had a couple of drinks with a co-worker. The two then went over to Dodge Street, he said.

At Dodge Street, the friend left the bar to get cigarettes for both of them, Jennings said, and returned to find Callahan had gone.

"When she came back, she asked where (Callahan) was and was told she had left and walked toward her apartment," the detective said.

The mood was somber at the Dodge Street Bar & Grill last night where friends of Callahan gathered to share stories and also look for answers.

"It's really frustrating," said friend and bar patron John Dowd. "We were hanging out with her last night, and she was fine. She was fine! We don't know what happened."

Friends at the bar said Callahan only lived at her Peabody Street apartment in the Point neighborhood for a short time.

Dowd learned what happened from a friend and has been searching for information about her death on news Web sites.

"She was full of life," Dowd said. "She was a vibrant person. She liked to hang out with her friend. We all liked her a lot."

The body was pulled from the water by members of the Salem police dive team. Also at the scene were Harbormaster Peter Gifford and state police.

Salem police are waiting for a report from the state medical examiner's office, which briefly examined the body on a Pickering Wharf dock before transporting it to Boston.

Staff writer Bruno Matarazzo Jr. contributed to this report.

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Photos



Personnel from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner remove the body of a woman that was discovered in Salem Harbor off Congress Street. Staff photo