

# Triple killing unveils strange deception

## *Woman suspect dressed, talked like a man*

FALLS CITY, Neb. (AP) — Young people in this small Nebraska city took Brandon Teena at face value.

Brandon dressed like a man, talked like a man and dated women.

Then they found out that Brandon Teena was really Teena Brandon, a woman.

About two weeks later, Brandon, 21, and two other people were found shot to death in a farmhouse about three miles south of Humboldt, a town of 1,000 in southeastern Nebraska.

Also killed were Lisa Lambert, 23, and Phillip DeVine, 22, of Fairfield, Iowa.

"Brandon had everyone of us fooled," said Kim Gresham, 23, a convenience store clerk who frequently talked to Brandon when she came into the store.

"He was in here all the time with girls, and the girls were hanging all over him," Gresham said.

Two local men, John Lotter, 22, and Marvin Nissen, 21, both of Falls City, were arrested on suspicion of murder.

They were being held in the county jail and arraignment was scheduled for today in Richardson County Court on charges of kidnapping and first-degree sexual assault in an alleged Christmas Day assault on Brandon, said County Attorney Douglas Merz.

Charges related to the three deaths also will be filed, Merz said, but declined to give details.

Authorities were investigating the allegations of sexual assault at the time of the slayings, Merz said.

In a snapshot taken in December, Brandon resembled a teen-aged boy, with a cute smile and a pug nose.

Friends described her as having a slight, 5-foot-5-inch frame. She always dressed in men's clothes and kept her black hair close-cropped, they said.

She moved to the area about three months ago from Lincoln, about 60 miles away, and lived with Lambert and her infant son in a rented farmhouse in Humboldt.

Lambert's son, who was in the house at the time of the slayings, was unharmed, authorities said.

DeVine's stepfather, Roy McCain of Fairfield, said his stepson had been visiting friends in Nebraska.

Merz refused to speculate on a motive but said he did not believe Brandon's sexual identity was behind the killings.

But Michelle Lotter, 21, the sister of John Lotter, said her brother and Nissen were angry after learning about Brandon's deception.

Lana Tisdell, 19, of Falls City said she dated Brandon for about a week. She said she didn't find out until about two weeks ago that Brandon was a woman.

That's when Brandon was arrested on forgery and alcohol-related charges.

"They (authorities) were calling her a female so we started asking questions," Tisdell said.

She said she confronted Brandon. "She told me that she had a sex change and it's not all done," Tisdell said.