Beat: Business

California prostitute arrested in murder of Google executive

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USPA News - A high-priced Northern California prostitute has been arrested on charges of murder in the death of a Google executive who died of a heroin overdose last year after meeting the woman at his yacht, police said on Wednesday. She is also being investigated in a similar case elsewhere.

Forest Hayes, 51, was beloved by his colleagues at Google X, the tech giant`s innovation lab. He was found dead on November 23, 2013, at his boat in the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor, where detectives quickly determined the circumstances to be suspicious in nature, leading to a months-long investigation. The Santa Cruz Police Department said Wednesday that 26-year-old Alix Catherine Tichleman, of Folsom, California, was arrested last Friday and booked into Santa Cruz County Jail on one count of second-degree murder, one count of destruction of evidence, and one count of transporting and providing narcotics. Police described Tichleman as a high-priced outcall prostitute who met her clients through `sugar daddy` website "Seeking Arrangement," which connects wealthy men with women looking for financial support. It is believed Tichleman and Hayes were in a prostitute-client relationship. In a statement, the Santa Cruz Police Department said detectives had obtained text messages and emails between Tichleman and her clients, including with Hayes. They also learned that Tichleman met with Hayes on the night of November 23, 2013, and the investigation revealed that the prostitute injected Hayes with heroin during her visit. Surveillance footage obtained from the yacht showed Hayes suffering medical complications before going unconscious. "Rather than provide first aid or call 911, Ms. Tichleman proceeds to gather her belongings including the heroin and needles," the police statement said. "The video also shows Ms. Tichleman stepping over the victim`s body several times as she is gathering her belongings." At one point in the surveillance footage, Tichleman steps over Hayes` body to finish a glass of wine. "Finally, she leaves the boat and reaches back in to lower a blind and conceal the victim`s body from outside view," police added. Police had been tracking Tichleman`s activity for a while, but detectives decided to arrest her after becoming concerned that she might leave the area. As a result, detectives lured Tichleman back to the Santa Cruz area by posing as a potential client who offered her more than $1,000 to meet at an upscale location. A possible motive for the murder was not immediately known, but Santa Cruz Police said they discovered a second case with similar circumstances involving Tichleman in another state. "SCPD detectives are looking into that deaths investigation and Ms. Tichleman`s involvement," said the statement, which did not identify the other state. After Wednesday`s news became public, a memorial site for Hayes was taken offline. "I have only worked with Forrest for a few months but he had a great impact on me, as he had on many other people here at Google X," one colleague had written in a message on the memorial website in November 2013, adding: "Our whole team is absolutely devastated." An obituary published in the Santa Cruz Sentinel in January said Hayes was married for 17 years and had five children. "Forrest will be remembered above all as a loving husband and father," the family said. "More than anything else he enjoyed spending time with his family at home and on his boat. His brilliant mind, contagious smile, and warm embrace will be missed and cherished in memories by his friends and family."

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