

PG police let suspect go in killing, for time being

By Brian Reilly
The Washington Post

Prince George's County prosecutors yesterday dropped murder charges against a 31-year-old man who has been held since December after a DNA test failed to link him to the murder.

Arthur "Tico" Wright Jr., 31, had pleaded to the Dec. 12 murder of William K. Hall, 47, after that confession was obtained by police.

Prosecutors said that claim, and prosecutors insist they will continue to push for charges against Mr. Wright.

"When we litigate this case, there will be more than ample evidence" against Mr. Wright, said Capt. Glenn Colevas, commander of the Prince George's County police criminal investigation division.

Mr. Wright was scheduled to be released from the county detention center in Upper Marlboro last night and was expected to return to the home of his girl-

■ Mr. Hall, 30, was described as "a close friend and co-worker" of Mr. Wright's.

friend of about 10 years and their two young sons.

Mr. Hall, 30, was described as "a close friend and co-worker" of Mr. Wright's, and the two men car-pooled daily to the sign company where they worked.

In his signed confession, Mr. Wright said he hit Mr. Hall with a table during an argument in Mr. Hall's apartment in the 6000 block of Logan Way in Bladensburg and then stabbed him several times.

Police say he confessed freely after a lengthy interrogation. But Mr. Wright's attorney, Michael Blumenthal, said his client was already tired after a long night of work and police intimidated him into confessing.

Blood samples taken from Mr. Wright's apartment, his car and the suspected murder weapons were sent to the FBI for testing, and word came back last week

that one of the samples belonged "to an unknown third person."

Authorities downplay the importance of that news, saying there is no evidence Mr. Wright was ever injured or bled in the attack. They also said it is not clear where the disputed blood sample came from.

"Just because [charges were dropped] does not mean we are not going to re-try the case," said Prince George's County State's Attorney Jack Johnson.

Mr. Blumenthal noted that his client was released one day before the 180-day deadline for prosecutors to bring a case to trial. Mr. Johnson insisted Mr. Wright was released because of a lack of solid evidence, not to comply with the rule that does not allow suspects to be held more than 180 days without a trial.

Mr. Blumenthal also said Mr. Wright, who lost his job because he was in jail, insists he knows nothing about who killed Mr. Hall.

"He looked at me in the eye and said, 'I spent Christmas and New Year's in jail. If I knew anything that could have gotten me out of here, I would have done anything I could to make that happen,'" Mr. Blumenthal said.

Police, however, say they are confident Mr. Wright is the right man.