

Friendly Idahoan caught as fugitive

Bad past catches up with 'good neighbor'

By NANCY REID
The Idaho Statesman

Last summer, Jim Forsgren shared a cache of blackberries with his elderly Boise neighbors on Idaho Street.

"He walked up the side of a mountain ... and then he gave half of them away to his neighbors," Forsgren's landlord, Jim Ross, said.

But in Pennsylvania, people are

of a different mind about Forsgren. Lavonne Rimer spent almost 20 years gathering petitions and writing politicians to keep the same man behind bars for the murder of her daughter.

Jim Forsgren — generous neighbor, basketball referee, musician — also is Jon E. Yount, fugitive professor and convicted murderer of his 18-year-old math student, Pamela Sue Rimer.

Yount, 50, was arrested Wednesday in Coeur d'Alene after being accused of escaping from a Pennsylvania prison and living on the lam for two years with girl-

friend Diane Brodbeck, 45.

He was charged with escape Thursday in Coeur d'Alene before a U.S. magistrate, and Brodbeck was charged with criminal conspiracy for escape, hindering apprehension or prosecution, and aiding in the consummation of a crime. They also face a federal charge of unlawful flight to avoid prosecution.

It was the culmination of a long investigation into his escape, which was aided by a tip from a Boise viewer who watched NBC's "Unsolved Mysteries" program. Authorities suspect Brodbeck of

helping Yount escape on April 5, 1986, picking him up in her car. She left behind a husband and three children, without notice.

Brodbeck, 45, first met Yount in prison. She belonged to a church group that visited with the prisoners at the Rockview state prison in Pennsylvania.

They fell in love and exchanged long letters, officials said. He was a model prisoner who was allowed to work on the unsupervised security farm detail, despite his conviction for the 1966 mur-

See ARREST, Back Page

Continued from Page 1A

der.

They made their way to Boise, where Yount and Brodbeck had been living as Jim Forsgren and Kathy Kermen since mid-1986, according to FBI supervisory agent T.C. Brock. They had moved to Coeur d'Alene in April or May.

Yount obtained a false birth certificate and Social Security number. He passed for a 40-year-old man and worked officiating city league basketball games last winter.

"He was in great shape," Boise City Recreation Program Director Earl Killan said.

Killan said he remembers watching the NBC program "Unsolved Mysteries," but said he did not recognize his employee. Yount quit perming his hair, started wearing contacts and grew a beard to change his appearance.

Brodbeck worked in Boise at Perma-Green, where she started as a telemarketer a year ago and later was promoted to sales manager.

Perma-Green President Mike Spicer said Brodbeck was a professional and trustworthy employee. Spicer said her co-workers were shocked about the news, although Brodbeck had no close friends at Perma-Green.

Neighbors who knew "Jim and Kathy" better were more upset.

Luis Jayo, 67, said Jim Forsgren went hunting or fishing almost every day. "They gave the fish to the old people in the neighborhood. He was a good person for the neighborhood — never had any better."

Jayo's granddaughter, Gorane Eguren, 14, sighed and said, "It's kind of sad" when she heard the news about the friends.

Eguren had interviewed the fugitive for a school journalism project. She said she did not get much information out of him and when she asked his profession, he replied succinctly, "fisherman."

Yount loved to fish, Jayo said, and he took some of his elderly neighbors fishing with him.

"My brother had a stroke a few years ago. He's in his 70s. Jim took him fishing; he even baited the hook for him," landlord Ross said.

Neighbors admitted they really never talked about personal matters with the couple, but they felt like they knew Yount, whom they spoke with almost every day. Brodbeck, who worked full-time, was not around so much.



Teri Davis/Statesman

Gorane Eguren, 14, at Yount's former home on West Idaho Street. Eguren lives next door with grandparents.

"He was a good person for the neighborhood — never had any better."

— Luis Jayo

Brenda Windell, minister of the Unity Church that Brodbeck regularly attended, probably knew Kathy Kermen as well as anyone.

"I sensed that she was frustrated because of her situation," Windell said, although "Kathy was devoted to Jim."

Yount was the dominant personality in the relationship, said Windell, who described him as handsome and charismatic.

"She didn't have a whole lot of strength inside of her," Windell said. "She seemed to be in the grips of something — ready to burst."