

# Officials hunt clues in death of Macks Creek woman

**By Kathy Oechsle**

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HERMITAGE — A Macks Creek woman whose body was found Monday evening in Hickory County died of a gunshot to the head, a spokeswoman for the Hickory County Sheriff's Department said.

The spokeswoman said the weapon has not been found and the caliber of the gun is not known.

The nude body of Trudy Jean Darby, 42, was found Monday night near Erickson's Ford on the Little Niangua River near County Road 200 and Route BB.

Darby, a former secretary for the Macks Creek Public School, apparently was killed after being abducted from K and D Country Corners in Camden County where she worked as a night clerk. The store is about five miles northeast of where the body was found.

The search for Darby began Saturday night after Darby's 22-year-old son, Waylon Darby, alerted the Camden County Sheriff's Depart-

ment of his mother's disappearance.

Trudy Darby had called her son just before 10 p.m. and told him a "strange man" was outside the store. She asked him to come over, but her son said she did not sound alarmed, Sheriff Ralph Rider said.

Waylon Darby told police he arrived within five minutes and his mother was gone. A little over \$200 was missing from the cash register, but Trudy Darby's car, coat and purse were at the store, Rider said.

Hickory County sheriff's deputies were "gathering things" where the body was found, but the spokeswoman would not say what was found.

There were no suspects Tuesday night, the spokeswoman said.

Rider said the Camden and Hickory county departments are working closely on the investigation.

"We have a lot of rumors and a lot of leads and we're checking each one as they apply to this county and are working closely with (Hickory County Sheriff Ray) Tipton," Rider said.