



Arnel Salvatierra and his girlfriend, Teressa Kay Deburger.

Hours Before Arrest

Tearful Son Expressed Puzzlement at Death

By SAM ENRIQUEZ, Times Staff Writer

Arnel Salvatierra, a 17-year-old Glendale High School senior, fought back tears when describing his relationship with his father during an interview Thursday—just hours before he and his girlfriend were arrested as the primary suspects in the slaying of the father Wednesday.

A slim, good-looking, dark-haired young man, dressed in jeans and a T-shirt, he agreed to talk briefly about his father, Oscar Salvatierra, outside the family's Glendale home even though he said he was busy helping to arrange a funeral.

Salvatierra said he last saw his father Monday, after stopping by the Los Angeles office where Oscar Salvatierra worked as bureau manager for the Philippine News and as a certified public accountant.

Left for School Early

"I didn't see him Tuesday," the son said, speaking softly and looking down occasionally. "He usually came home late, past midnight, because of the income tax season." He did not see his father Wednesday, when he was allegedly shot in the head, he said. "I would get up early and leave for school."

When his father was home, he said, the two would do yard work and other chores around the pleasant ranch-style house in the Upper Chevy Chase Canyon area beneath the mountains of La Canada Flintridge.

In answer to a question, Salvatierra said he didn't know whether his father was killed for business or political reasons. "His position was in marketing," he said. "He was not a journalist."

Friday, after the younger Salvatierra was jailed on suspicion of murdering his father and trying to disguise it as a political assassination, friends and teachers described him as a bright but undistinguished student who sometimes confided about problems with his girlfriend, Teressa Kay Deburger.

Members of Family

Arnel lived with his mother, father and a sister, who is a sophomore in high school, a brother and sister in elementary school and Oscar Salvatierra's mother. The family moved to the United States in the mid-1960s, and had lived at the Glendale address since 1974. Two times, the family returned to the Philippines on vacation, Arnel said.

Paul Broneer, a biology teacher and Teressa Deburger's track coach, said that Arnel Salvatierra had often come to him for advice about the on-again, off-again relationship. Deburger, also a senior, had worked for Broneer as a teacher's assistant and was manager of the girl's track team.

"They had broken up and gotten back together a number of times," Broneer said. "About a week and a

half ago, he told me that they had really broken up."

Broneer said there had been bad feelings between the students' families over their relationship, which had begun last year. "Arnel just said there were problems between the families," he said.

Failed in Biology

Broneer said Salvatierra was a bright student but failed his advanced biology class last semester because of poor attendance. Broneer said he allowed Salvatierra to remain in his class because he believed he could still do well on an advanced placement test that would earn him college credit. Arnel was not sure what he would do after high school, Broneer said.

"He would come to my class two or three times a week," Broneer said. "I talked to Arnel and I tried to figure out how I could help him with his attendance. He didn't need help in the class, really, he just needed to show up."

Broneer, who said he became a "sounding board" for Salvatierra, said, "The only problems he talked about were between him and his girlfriend."

Broneer said he received a Christmas card from Salvatierra to "thank me for listening."

"It seemed to him that nobody else cared," Broneer added.

On Duty at Meet

During a track meet Thursday, Broneer said that Deburger performed her normal duties, keeping statistics for the team. The 18-year-old competed in track during her sophomore year, but left Glendale High to attend a private high school last year.

She returned to Glendale High last fall and had hoped to compete again in track, Broneer said. Broneer said that Deburger, while only an average athlete, was given the position of track team manager.

"She was very reliable. Both these kids were very nice," he said. "I just can't believe it."

Other school officials expressed shock and described both Salvatierra and Deburger as average students.

'Never in Trouble'

Denise Jones, Deburger's high school counselor, said the girl was "kind of nondescript, never got into trouble." Deburger, she said, had planned to attend Glendale Community College after graduation.

Lois Neil, assistant principal, said teachers were notified of the students' arrest at a meeting Friday in the faculty lounge. Neil said the "whole group was shocked into silence."

A senior who had just learned of the arrests said she didn't believe the news. "I'm friends with Arnel. He's real sincere. I just don't understand it," said the girl, fighting back tears.