



spotlight

“I’m just hoping for a good patriot, a good family man, a good Democrat.”

Bill Grimshaw, talking about who he hopes will move into the 6,000-square-foot house in Chicago that he and his wife are selling after 36 years

WHAT WOULD YOU PAY TO LIVE NEXT TO OBAMA?

THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR TO THE PRESIDENT is up for sale, and, frankly, no one has a clue what the asking price should be.

CHICAGO
THERE IS A “FOR SALE” SIGN in the front yard, not that potential buyers would see it. The street is closed to nonresidents by order of the U.S. Secret Service. // The house at 5040 S. Greenwood Ave., next door to the Hyde Park residence of President Barack Obama and his family, hit the market here over the weekend. And in a summer of real estate doldrums, it is causing quite a stir not simply because it is a gracious, century-old, 17-room house with elaborate stained-glass windows and a charming carriage house in the backyard.

By SUSAN SAULNY | *The New York Times*

Here is what the owners say makes it a real deal: You just could not get more impressive neighbors. They are downright stately and come with a full-time security staff that keeps an eye out like no Neighborhood Watch in the world.

Bill and Jacky Grimshaw are the empty-nesters who are selling their 6,000-square-foot house after 36 years.

The price? Hard to know, real estate agents say, because not since Richard M. Nixon lived in a New York City apartment has the market tried to assess the value of immediate proximity to the president in a dense urban neighborhood. (The Greenwood Avenue neighbors are separated by

about 20 feet, a line of thin trees and an iron fence that is more decorative than foreboding.) The Grimshaws paid \$35,000 in 1973; other homes in the area have sold for \$1 million to \$2.5 million.

“We think there’s a premium,” said Matt Garrison, the listing agent with Coldwell Banker, who does not intend to put an asking price on the house. “We don’t know what the Obama effect is.”

Garrison said he tried to scout out similar parcels of residential property but noted there was no family living next door to the White House.

“I tried to look at 12 Downing St., but that’s all offices,” Garrison said, refer-

ring to the building next door to the British prime minister’s London residence. “Here we are looking out the kitchen window at the president’s back porch. Buyers establish the market. Stuff sells for what people are willing to pay.”

On the third floor, in a playroom, a large picture window offers a sweeping view of the red-brick, Georgian-style house that the Obamas bought in 2005 for \$1.65 million.

Looking out that window, Garrison was taken by surprise. “Obama’s roof needs some work,” he said. Well, at least now they know, he joked: “The Secret Service is probably looking at us, reading our lips.”

Still, the Grimshaws — he’s a professor of political science at the Illinois Institute of Technology and she’s a transit expert and Democratic political activist — said they have managed to have an easy, neighborly rapport with the Obamas, who shot a commercial in the Grimshaws’ living room during the campaign.

“They didn’t want to mess up their own house,” Bill Grimshaw said in jest. “Thirty people came traipsing in asking, ‘Are these the best chairs you have to set at the table?’ I thought, ‘What a nutty lark this is.’”

Everyone involved in the sale agreed that prospective buyers would have to be screened for security reasons before being taken seriously, but a spokesman for the Secret Service would not comment on that process or anything related to the house.

Grimshaw, an almost-retired 71-year-old, said he never has to lock his doors.

“But I also know that there are some people who would never live under these circumstances,” he said. “I’m just hoping for a good patriot, a good family man, a good Democrat.”

But would he sell to a Republican?

“Only if push came to shove,” he said. So far, all the shoving seems to be from the curious who want to get a peek inside the house. Already more than 7,000 people have clicked on to the broker’s Web site, at www.5040greenwood.com.

A visit — if one is qualified to be granted a private showing — will reveal that the house is also a fixer-upper. The Grimshaws did not tamper with its original fixtures or woodworking. The electrical switches are from 1907. The kitchen and bathrooms are worn. The third floor probably needs to be gutted.

“I didn’t lavish attention on the house,” Grimshaw said. Mocking an outraged, imaginary potential buyer, he said, “Where’s the granite? How can people live like this!”

Grimshaw has been in poor health lately. The property, which sits on a 12,000-square-foot lot, requires too much upkeep now, he said.

Even looking back to when he bought it, Grimshaw said, “We had no means to support a place like this.” He said they had no idea, back then, about how the larger middle- and working-class area would evolve into a premier address.

Back in the 1970s, some teenagers from a few blocks over broke in before they had even unpacked their boxes. Somehow, Grimshaw said, he is pretty sure the new owners will not have to worry about things like that.



Howdy, neighbor, er, Mr. President!

the house for sale

The dwelling at 5040 S. Greenwood Ave. in Chicago’s Hyde Park, next door to the residence of President Barack Obama and his family, hit the market over the weekend.

the Obama house

On the third floor of the Grimshaw house, in a playroom, a large picture window offers a sweeping view of the red-brick, Georgian-style house that the Obamas bought in 2005 for \$1.65 million.

The Grimshaws say they have managed to have an easy, neighborly rapport with the Obamas, who shot a commercial in the Grimshaws’ living room during the campaign.



The home is a fixer-upper. Its fixtures and woodworking are original, and it shows the wear and tear of a house built in 1907.



Police: Lab tech was last to see student alive

Authorities searching for DNA match to identify suspect from crime scene



the victim

Annie Le’s body was found Sunday stuffed behind the wall of the basement at Yale where lab animals are kept. The Connecticut medical examiner said Wednesday that Le died of “traumatic asphyxiation” — that she was suffocated.

By Dave Altimari, Alaine Griffin and Josh Kovner
The Hartford Courant

NEW HAVEN, CONN.

Computer records show that lab technician Raymond Clark III, a “person of interest” in the slaying of Yale graduate student Annie Le, was the last person to see her alive, a law-enforcement source said Wednesday.

Investigators traced Le’s and Clark’s movements through their computerized swipe cards, said the source, who is familiar with the investigation. Le entered the Yale laboratory about 10 a.m. Sept. 8. She passed through a basement lab area moments later. Then she swiped her way into a separate room of that lab.

Clark entered that same room a short time later, the source said, citing the computer records. Le was never seen again, and her card was never used again.

Clark had moved around the laboratory area quite a bit that day, including entering rooms that he normally would not be expected to be in, the source said.

Clark also swiped into another area — the place where Le’s body was eventually found after five

days, stuffed into a 2-foot crawl space behind a wall.

The pattern of movements captured by the computer records is the reason authorities focused almost immediately on Clark, 24, the source said.

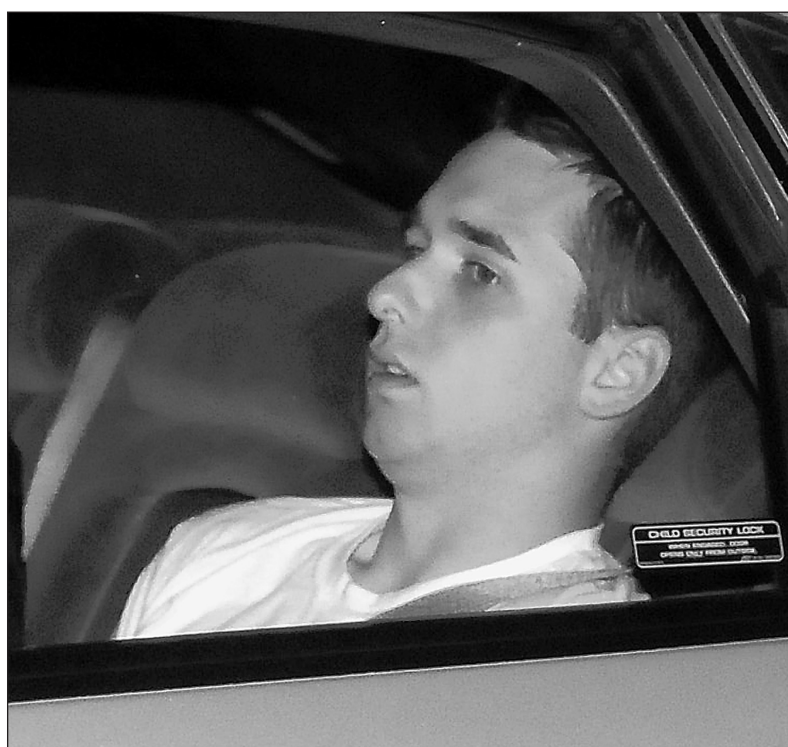
The chief state medical examiner ruled Wednesday that Le, 24, who was pursuing a joint doctoral and medical degree, died of traumatic asphyxiation by neck compression.

When Clark was initially interviewed by federal agents shortly after Le was reported missing, he acknowledged seeing Le in the laboratory, the source said. He then was asked to take a polygraph test, which he failed, sources said.

Federal authorities also issued polygraph tests to anyone who had access to the laboratories, including Clark’s girlfriend, Jennifer Hromadka, who is also a lab technician. She passed her polygraph test, the source said.

Le’s devastated family, speaking through a pastor, expressed gratitude to the law offices and the Yale community, including a Vietnamese student association, for their response to the tragedy. Scooped up at his Middletown apartment by a squadron of police officers armed with search warrants, Clark was released from custody Wednesday after giving police a DNA sample.

Investigators will compare it to 150 items of evidence found in and



Raymond Clark III, 24, is driven away from an apartment building Tuesday. On Wednesday, police searched his Ford Mustang.

around Le’s makeshift tomb in the wall of the laboratory basement.

Now, investigators await the DNA test results, which Police Chief James Lewis said could lead to an arrest.

“It’s all up to the lab now,” Lewis said during a Wednesday evening

news conference.

Police already have served four search warrants in the case, three in search of evidence at Clark’s home and in his car and another on Clark’s body. Those search warrants have been sealed from public view, according to prosecutors.

‘person of interest’

Police call Raymond Clark III a “person of interest” in the slaying of Annie Le. Authorities hope to compare DNA taken from Clark’s hair, fingernails and saliva with more than 150 pieces of evidence collected at the crime scene and from Clark’s apartment.

Investigators said they expect to determine within days whether Clark should be charged in the killing.

Although Clark was cooperative while in police custody, the chief said Clark invoked his right not to speak to police.

His attorney, David H. Dworski, declined to answer questions about his client but said they are staying in touch with police.

Lewis said investigators believe a single killer was involved in the attack but that they are keeping surveillance on more than one individual. He said he doesn’t want investigators to be accused of having “tunnel vision.”

“The issue for us now is to bring justice to Annie Le’s family,” the chief said.

Le, from Placerville, Calif., was to have been married last Sunday in Syosset, N.Y., to Jonathan Widawsky, a graduate student at Columbia University in New York. Police have said he is not a suspect and that he is helping with the investigation.