VICTIM'S WIFE, MAN CHARGED

BELLEFONTE -- The wife of Samuel S. Boob was text-messaging an accomplice, Ronald Lee Heichel, police say, when Heichel twice pulled the trigger of Boob's own shotgun, killing him in a detached garage at his Centre Hall home. Mirinda Boob was charged Friday morning with conspiracy to commit first-degree murder, and her bail was set at $2 million just hours before the scheduled memorial service for her husband.

Charged with pulling the trigger is Heichel, 29, of Bellefonte, who police say waited for Boob inside a detached garage at Boob's 383 Tusseyville Road. Heichel, who is also a father and a former Bellefonte Area High School football player, faces first-degree and other murder charges. Police have yet to explain how Mirinda Boob and Heichel knew each other.

Judge Bradley P. Lunsford put Heichel behind bars without bail Friday, then set Mirinda Boob's bail at twice the amount District Attorney Michael Madeira requested, despite her attorney's pleas that bail be set at an amount she could make to go to the funeral.

Heichel's attorney, public defender Casey McClain, said Heichel is shocked that Mirinda Boob would blame the shooting on him. Police never questioned him, McClain said, just took him into custody Thursday night and charged him Friday morning with murder.

"He's scared and terrified and he wants to know how he has been made a suspect in this case," McClain said. "He just kept saying over and over, 'How am I charged with this?' It sounds like he was unaware why she would point the finger at him." Police say text messages linked the two.

Unlike Heichel, Mirinda Boob has been talking to police since shortly after her husband's death five days ago, when she was seen throwing her arms toward the sky and yelling for God to take her.

Police say the 27-year-old mother "provided both truthful and untruthful in formation."

"The relevant truthful information includes the fact that she responded to Heichel's text messages and provided him with specific information about Samuel Boob's whereabouts," police wrote.
Rockview state police said Mirinda Boob was in her house getting her kids ready for church while text-messaging Heichel to arrange the killing.

"Specifically, the text messages indicate (Heichel) wanted Mirinda Boob to go to church because that would provide witnesses for her whereabouts," state police wrote in charging papers. "That (Heichel) wanted Mirinda Boob to keep her children inside the residence; that (Heichel) wanted to know if the garage would be unlocked; and that (Heichel) wanted Mirinda Boob to know that he was hiding in the garage." Police say Heichel shot Samuel Boob twice -- first in the left side of his chest as Boob stood in the garage doorway, then again in the back after Boob stepped back and fell to the ground just outside the entrance.

Boob died almost instantly, police say, and Heichel left the house, taking Boob's shotgun with him.

Search warrants obtained on Thursday showed police were suspicious of bloody footprints at the scene and the positioning of Boob's blue truck, which appeared to be out of place in an attempt to shield the body from the street.

Police seized some of Mirinda Boob's clothing, including sandals with the word "American" on the soles. Mirinda Boob wore shoes with that sole when police first interviewed her, police say.

Mirinda Boob's attorney, Ed Blanarik, said he wouldn't comment on the charges. Blanarik said only that he was shocked that bail was set so high for Mirinda Boob, a lifelong county resident who voluntarily cooperated with police.

Heichel, who admitted to a disorderly conduct charge in 2006, was also wanted on a bench warrant for bad checks Friday.

Samuel, who was the maintenance supervisor at the Centre County Solid Waste Authority, was the father of four children ages 6 months to 10 years.

A trust fund has been set up at Northwest Savings Bank, 219 N. Pennsylvania Ave., P.O. Box 395, Centre Hall, PA 16828, for the children.

He loved to cook, his boss Ted Onufrak said. According to police, that was probably one of the last gestures he was able to do for his family. Mirinda Boob told police that she and her husband woke up together around 8 a.m. and he was working in his garage on a tractor motor before cooking his kids breakfast and taking a shower.

For an unknown reason, Samuel Boob then went back to his garage.

Boob will be buried today.

"I've had a very tough time just being able to comprehend how somebody with this much passion for life, joy and appreciation for family could have something this tragic happen to him," said lifelong friend Jon Brooks.

Samuel Boob's brother-in-law, Ben Cort, said that the arrest Friday makes a hard situation much more difficult. Sara Ganim can be reached at 231-4616.
FRIENDS RECALL VICTIM'S KINDNESS

Samuel Boob was a fixer. He fixed up old cars, motorcycles and tractors, restoring them as toys for himself and future gifts for his four beloved children. He fixed up food. He cooked every Thursday at staff meetings for his co-workers, for his family at home, for his friends when they'd meet. Call him for any problem, his friends say, and Sam would show up within minutes -- rain, shine or otherwise to fix your problem with a smile on his face.

"Anyone in Penns Valley can come up with a story that at one point or another Sam has lent a hand, dropped everything he was doing for somebody else," said longtime friend Jon Brooks. "That kind of personified who he was, that he would give the shirt off his back to anybody."

Sam, or Sammy to friends and family, was shot and killed in his own home Sunday. He will be buried today.

But those who knew him aren't focusing on the tragedy of his death, but the life and memories he left behind and the void that is left in their lives without him.

"His pervasive kindness was really overwhelming," said another friend, Ben Battaglia. "When my father died, he made sure to speak to my mother, give her his number and tell her that he would do anything she needed him for. ... It didn't matter how well he knew you. The world's kind of just much worse off without this particular young man."

When he was 12, Sam took a scrappy old Chevrolet Nova and by the time he was 16, perfected it, said Ben Cort, who also grew up with Sam in the Valley and became his family when in 2000 he married Sam's sister.

"He built a bunch of those, he built up a Corvette that he had, he built up a Harley and rode that," Cort said. "Over the last couple of years, he really spent a lot of time restoring tractors. He was working toward having one for each of his kids, had three done."

"He was truly a kid at heart, he loved his toys," Brooks said. "But he would drop all those things to be able to help a friend."

Everyone says he was happy-go-lucky, a phenomenal mechanic who loved to hunt and ride in the woods, and was already scoping out deer season.

"I think I'm going to miss our time spent hunting in the woods," Brooks said. "It's tough
approaching hunting season with that coming up."

Cort recalls three days they spent at a cabin where Sam cooked while everyone else had fun outside.

"He loved to cook, he was a heck of a cook," Cort said. "We'd all be having fun and enjoying ourselves, and he'd be doing what he could to have dinner ready." Herb Grove met Sam when they were in the third grade, and Sam followed him off the Bible-study bus to ride his 4-wheeler home. His nickname quickly became "Booby."

"There has been nothing I have done or nothing that I will do in life that doesn't have his name all over it," Grove wrote in a letter of stories that went to Sam's children at his memorial service Friday.

"He taught me everything I knew," Grove said. "He was a great kid all around." Sara Ganim can be reached at 231-4616.

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