

Boys' school suspects isolated in Paso killing

By Pete Dunan
Staff Writer

Several possible suspects in the Monday afternoon murder-rape of a 51-year-old school teacher at the El Paso de Robles School for Boys were isolated today at the California Youth Authority facility. The badly beaten body of Marie Romero of San Luis Obispo arrived in Los Angeles late Tuesday afternoon. An autopsy was completed late this morning.

Preliminary findings by Dr. Thomas Noguchi, chief medical examiner and coroner of Los Angeles County, indicated Mrs. Romero was stomped to death in the corner of a classroom where she taught high school courses to inmates of the facility. The school is a mile east of Paso Robles.

Almost every bone in her head was crushed or broken, and footprints were found on her face, preliminary findings showed.

An autopsy report is expected to arrive in San Luis Obispo today, but complete findings are not expected for several days following numerous chemical and tissue tests.

Mrs. Romero's partially disrobed body was found at 4:45 p.m. Monday by Tomiko Viera and Christine Bustillo, two other teachers at the school.

Mrs. Romero was last seen alive by students she had dismissed from class at 2:30 p.m.

A new method of obtaining evidence, used in only two other cases, may be used in the investigation.

Dr. Noguchi indicated there may be teeth marks on one of Mrs. Romero's shoulders and, if so, it may be possible to identify the attacker through dental charts.

Noguchi would not say how strong the possibility was.

School Supt. Ron Lopez said all classes have been suspended and the 314 inmates confined at the institution are being restricted to the immediate area around their cottages.

The exact number of the suspects being isolated, their identity and their ages are being withheld until charges are filed.

Sheriff's Capt. Arnie Goble said he suspects more than one person may have been involved in the attack.