Pink deer hair prompts arrest in disappearance

By Joline Gutierrez Krueger
Tribune reporter

The arrest of a third suspect in the mysterious disappearance and presumed death of Girly Hossencofft came down to minuscule strands of pink deer hair, authorities said.

That and an "alien trance."

Bill Miller, 50, was arrested Monday and was expected to be arraigned today on charges of first-degree murder, conspiracy to commit first-degree murder, kidnapping, conspiracy to commit kidnapping, harboring or aiding a felon and tampering with evidence in the September 1999 disappearance of the 36-year-old Albuquerque woman.

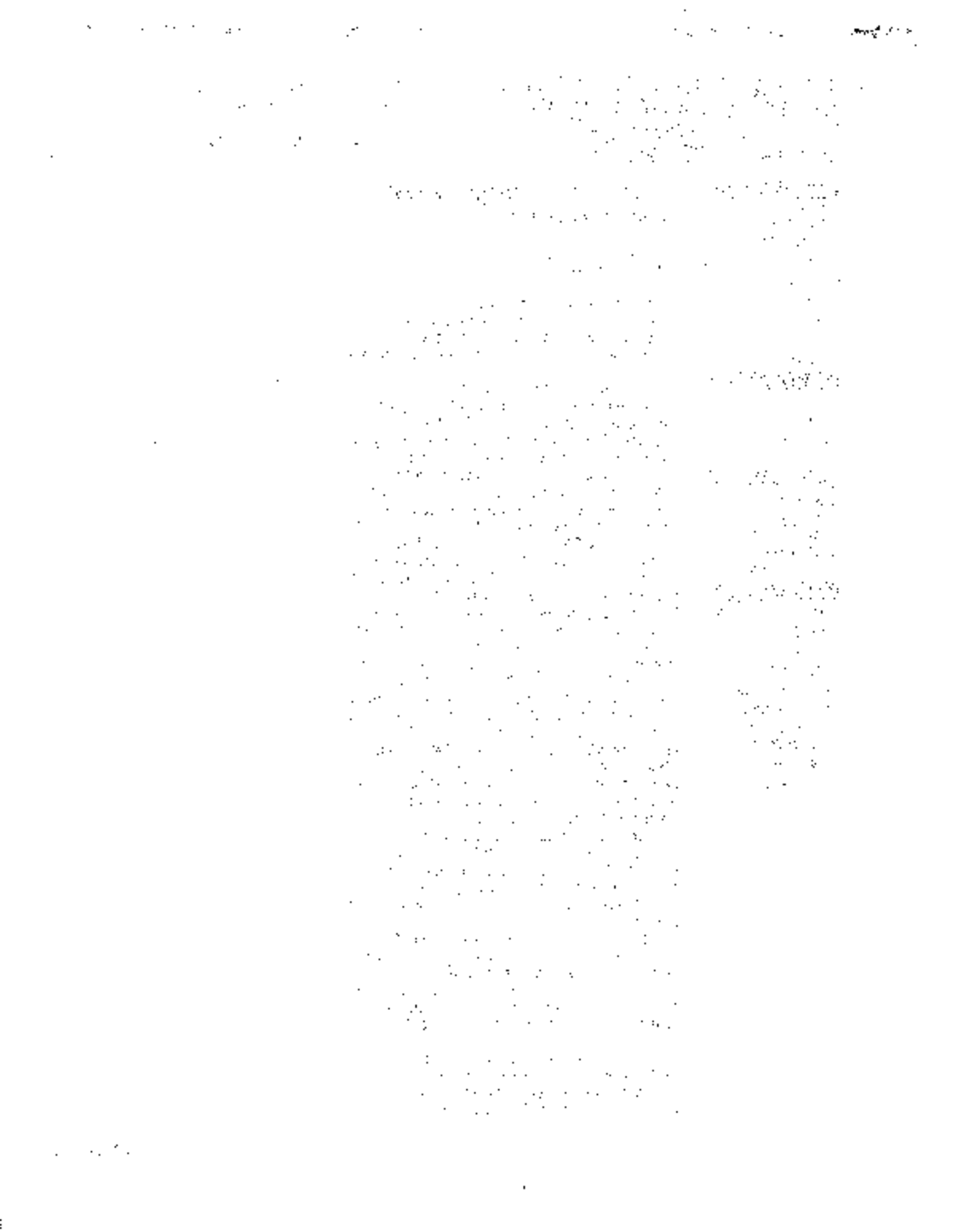
Hossencofft's estranged husband, Diazien Hossencofft, 35, and his 47-year-old girlfriend, Linda Henning, were indicted November 1999 in her disappearance on charges of first-degree murder, kidnapping and numerous other counts. Both remain in City-County Jail.

Miller's arrest comes after months of intensive forensic work by Albuquerque police. Investigators Donna Arbogast and Catherine Dickey matched the pink-dyed deer hair found in Miller's home at 3505 Candlelight Drive N.E. to those found in the carpeting of Girly Hossencofft's apartment in the 8400 block of Spain Road Northeast as well as in a shampoo carpet cleaner owned by Diazien Hossencofft, an arrest warrant filed by Albuquerque police Detective Michael Fox states.

Police also matched numerous cat, dog and rabbit hairs in various combinations from Girly Hossencofft's carpet, her bloody blouse found strewn along N.M. 60 near Magdalena, the carpet cleaner and Miller's house, the warrant states.

"It's really sort of a forensic climax," said Paul Spiers, senior trial prosecutor in the case. "It was not until Feb. 8 that a rather impressive amount of fiber and hair had been analyzed from various sources that brought us to a moment when Mr. Miller's arrest became unavoidable."

Police found the fibers in Miller's home during the execution of a search warrant Dec. 14 when they seized a blue and silver tackle box and two bags of fishing supplies.



Miller is known to be an avid fly fisherman and hunter. Pink-dyed deer hair is used in the making of fly fishing lures, authorities explained.

Miller has been under the microscope of the exhaustive investigation into Girly Hossencofft's presumed death almost since Sept. 10, 1999, when she failed to show up for her job as a bank employee.

Gripped in a vicious divorce, Girly Hossencofft had earlier warned co-workers that if she ever missed work without explanation they should fear the worst had happened to her -- and that the worst could be attributed to her husband.

New information released in Miller's arrest warrant indicates that she contacted the FBI on Aug. 27, 1999, and again on Sept. 8, 1999, to ask for protection from her husband, who she said she believed was going to kill her.

'Girly had previously asked the Albuquerque Police Department for help, but she was not happy with the results," the warrant states.

Police say they believe she was killed on the night of Sept. 9, 1999.

An acquaintance of Diazien Hossencofft told detectives that he wanted to pay someone to kill his wife, court documents in the case say.

In grand jury hearings in the case, as released in police documents, Miller testified he told two members of his weekly lunch group that Henning and Diazien Hossencofft were trying to recruit him as a hit man.

"Miller told him (one of the members) that he knew much more of what was going on in the missing person case of Girly Hossencofft," a search warrant affidavit in the case states.

Detectives said they located a safe deposit box issued to Miller, who used a Colorado driver's license as identification, the day before Girly Hossencofft was reported missing. The box was found to have $10,350 in cash and $12,400 in gold coins, according to search warrant affidavits.

Witnesses told authorities that Miller, described as an "anti-government, militia type of person," had become close friends with Diazien Hossencofft and Henning in the summer of 1999.

But when talk turned to killing Girly Hossencofft, Miller told acquaintances that "this thing is getting out of hand," the arrest warrant states.

When the friend asked why Miller didn't end his relationship with Diazien Hossencofft and Henning, he told her that Diazien was an alien and had him "in a trance," the warrant states.

Miller's bail was set at $1 million. He will be kept on a floor away from his co-defendants, jail Capt. John Van Sickler said.



And though authorities said a crucial piece of evidence has finally been linked in the case, the most important evidence -- Girly Hossencofft's body -- has not.

"We still endeavor to find her body and remains," Spiers said.

Police have searched for her body in remote areas near Magdalena where Miller is known to hunt; the home of a now deceased Santa Fe woman who had given Diazien Hossencofft hundreds of thousands of dollars over several years; the Sandia foothills near Henning's home on La Villita Circle Northeast; and an area of the Rio Puerco where Miller took Diazien Hossencofft and Henning target shooting, the warrant states.

Police have also confirmed Girly Hossencofft did not fly out of Albuquerque between Sept. 9 and Sept. 13, 1999. Nor did she request a new passport, contact her family in Malaysia or access her financial assets, the arrest warrant states.

Diazien Hossencofft has contended that his estranged wife is still alive.

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