Two die in murder-suicide

10-year-old girl escapes danger by grabbing sister and fleeing

Photos by HOLLY McQUEEN/The Register Star

Winnebago County Sheriff's officers gather outside a South Beloit home Thursday after a murder-suicide that left Kimberly Rieffer, 30, and Gale Engelkes, 51, dead. Police said Engelkes shot Rieffer, then shot himself. Two children in the house were not injured.

By SCOTT WILLIAMS
The Register Star

SOUTH BELOIT — A romantic triangle turned fatal Thursday when a man shot his ex-girlfriend to death at her home — and then shot himself — after she reunited with her husband.

The woman's two children escaped the early-morning violence by fleeing their home at 7751 Middle Road, where police had been called repeatedly because of family turmoil.

Kimberly Rieffer, 30, and Gale Engelkes, 51, of Roscoe, identified by police as Rieffer's ex-boyfriend, were found dead inside the house about 8 a.m.

Officials said both apparently were killed with blasts from a 12-gauge shotgun found next to Engelkes' body.

Police had been called to the house several times since April. Winnebago County Sheriff Dick Meyers said those disputes involved Rieffer and her husband — not Engelkes — with no indication that lethal violence would follow.

"It's a very difficult situation for law enforcement to get a handle on," he said.

Neighbor Amy Dionne, 35, said the Rieffer house — located in a quiet rural area east of South Beloit — has been a noticeable center of police activity more than once.

"They've had police cars over there for one reason or another," she said.

Arthur Rieffer, 42, the shooting victim's husband, was arrested April 6 on a charge of domestic battery. That misdemeanor case is pending in court.

Police returned to the house at least twice in April and May to deal with other disputes between the Rieffers.

Neighbors said Kimberly

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Coroner Sue Fiduccia consoles Arthur Rieffer, husband of shooting victim Kimberly Rieffer.