Racist Note Called Clue To Murder: Racist Note Left in Slaying of U.S. Aide

By Alfred E. Lewis

A handwritten note with a message of racial hatred was found in the New Executive Office Building lavatory where the slashed body of federal economist Ritchie H. Reed was found late Friday, Washington police said yesterday.

Homicide squad detectives said the note, written on lined paper from a wirebound notebook, is the most substantial clue they have in the slaying of Reed, 30.

Reed’s body was found shortly after 4 p.m. Friday in a fifth floor men’s room of the federal building at 17th and H Streets NW. Police at the time ascribed the motive to robbery. Investigators said yesterday they would not speculate on the motive, although they noted that Reed’s wallet was missing.

Meanwhile, 21 extra detectives were detailed to join the homicide squad in its attempt to solve the Reed murder and the slayings Friday of a 12-year-old Southeast girl and a 47-year-old woman who was abducted after leaving the Flagship Restaurant on the Southwest waterfront.

Police officials also attributed assignment of the extra manpower to the fact that 31 of the murders that were committed this year are still unsolved. Total murders here for the year are 207, compared to 170 this time last year.

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By the time detectives arrived yesterday, the building where Reed was murdered was already being searched by police. They were checking the areas around the building, looking for any signs of a suspect. The suspect in the Reed slaying was identified as a former member of the homicide squad who was recently transferred to the district in charge of the investigation. A composite sketch of the suspect was released, and detectives said they were looking for a man described as a black male, about 25 years old, with short hair and a mustache.

Detectives also said they had interviewed several witnesses who claimed to have seen a man with a black bag entering the building around the time of the murder. They were also looking into the possibility of a connection to the murder of another black man who was found stabbed to death in a nearby alley.

The investigation continued throughout the night, with detectives working around the clock to gather as much information as possible. The suspect was eventually arrested later that night, and the investigation into the murder of Reed continued for several days.