

Benton deputies investigating woman's harassment report

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The Benton County Sheriff's Department is investigating whether a Benton City woman has been harassed because of her testimony about a 1960s test that was likely related to Hanford.

The department is not sure whether harassment incidents reported by Darcy Thrall are related to her testimony, said Benton Sheriff Capt. Mike Fitzpatrick.

"We're considering all possibilities. ... We're taking it seriously," Fitzpatrick said.

The sheriff's department has some directions it is looking at but no solid leads, Fitzpatrick said.

Thrall could not be reached for comment Friday.

The Spokane Spokesman-Review newspaper reported Friday that Thrall received anonymous threats after publicly discussing a test that took place in elementary school in the 1960s in which she drank a chalky, milky liquid and then was checked by a radiation measuring device.

Her uncertainties about the tests were part of a January 1994 story in the Tri-City Herald.

The initial incident possibly indicating harassment was in early 1994 when a turkey she owned was stabbed, Fitzpatrick said. That incident was investigated and nothing was found.

The threats escalated after Thrall testified last fall to a White House committee looking into federal radiation experiments. The Spokesman-Review reported.

Last October, The Associated Press reported Thrall told the White House committee in a San Francisco hearing she was still seeking information about the 1960s tests.

In the last few weeks, she received a threatening card, someone thrust a butcher knife into a chair on her porch, and someone left a bowl of poisonous liquid for her cats to drink, the Spokesman-Review reported.

Thrall told the Spokesman-Review she does not know who might be responsible for the threats.

Fitzpatrick declined to discuss details about the incidents. He said a phone tap has been installed on her telephone.

He said new threats surfaced about two weeks ago, and a detective has been assigned to the case.