

Was it murder?

# TRAGIC SOAP STAR DIES BROKE, ADDICTED AND ABANDONED

**F**ORMER soap opera beauty Candice Daly hit rock bottom and died a broke, anorexic, alcohol- and drug-addicted sometime-plaything of abusive men who wooed her with dope and booze between beatings, say sources.

In the early morning hours of Tuesday, Dec. 14, her nightmare life came to an abrupt end when the boyfriend Candice was living with took her to the hospital, where she was pronounced dead on arrival.

"Candice's doctor called me and told me she had died," says a longtime friend. "I knew she didn't have long to live, but it still came as a complete shock. I talked to Candice on Sunday, just a day before she died. She was crying, saying she missed me and all her old friends. But she still wouldn't leave the house.

"The coroner is doing an autopsy to determine the exact cause of death. If she died of cirrhosis of the liver, that will be that. But if it turns out that she died of an overdose, homicide will investigate it as a possible murder.

**'No one took care of her in life, now there's no one there for her in death'**

"Poor Candice. She was sick, withdrawn and beyond hope."

In 1997, the once-stunning beauty's promising acting career peaked when she was cast as Veronica Rodriguez on the daytime drama *The Young and the Restless*. But hard partying and substance abuse took its toll, say sources. She got canned after two years because she was showing up late for work, talking back to the producer and arguing with castmates, says an industry insider. She and her husband split about the same time.

"Little by little, we got to know Candice - and it wasn't a pretty picture," says the insider. "She never knew her father, and she was abused as a child. You could see



Once-wealthy Candice Daly lived in this dilapidated house with paper and cardboard covering the windows



Candice's face (left) was bloated from years of dope and booze, while a photo taken last year (right) shows bruises inflicted by a former boyfriend



she had a lot of unresolved issues.

"But Candice was beautiful and talented, and a few of the veteran actors tried to take her under their wings and give her advice.

"Everyone told her she wouldn't last long in Hollywood if she wasn't willing to put her work before her partying - but she didn't listen.

"Even back then, she hung out with lowlife guys, and we knew she had a substance-abuse problem because she was coming to work hungover and irritable all the time.

"At one point, she got married to a Frenchman, and we all hoped he would stabilize her. But the marriage fizzled, just around the time she was let go by Y&R."

At the end, the 41-year-old was living in a ramshackle house in Los Angeles with a boyfriend. "They constantly got into fights," the pal says.

About a year ago, Candice land-

ed in the cooler on charges of domestic battery after biting another boyfriend during a brutal brawl.

"She was bailed out by a friend for \$5,000," says the friend. "She had bruises on her body, but she had injured her boyfriend even worse by biting him on the arm.

"All Candice's friends have staged interventions to get her away from the drugs and the awful men, and into rehab. But she refused to listen.

"She preferred to use drugs and alcohol than to talk with friends who wanted to help her.

"Now we're trying to round up family to discuss funeral arrangements," laments her pal. "Poor Candice. No one took care of her in life, now there's no one there for her in death."

- ROBIN MIZRAHI



On *The Young and the Restless*, Candice oozed a healthy dose of sex appeal