Crime watch leader had human head in yard

KANSAS CITY, Missouri, Wednesday (AP). — A man whose business cards said he had poison in his head and who organised a community crime-watch program had torture devices in his house and a human head buried in his yard, police say.

Police worked in a cordoned-off area yesterday with shovels and a backhoe to dig up Mr Robert Berdella's back yard, where the head was discovered at the weekend.

A human skull also was found in Mr Berdella's house, police said, along with another human skull that appeared to be very old and was discarded as evidence.

"We're investigating the possibility he may be linked to ... unsolved cases of missing persons," said Mr Rick Pilgrim, a homicide detective.

Mr Berdella's secret life came to light on Saturday after a man who
ight on Saturday after a man who police say was held captive and sexually abused by Mr Berdella leaped out of a second-story window of Mr Berdella's house.

The man, who had lash marks on his back and was wearing only a dog collar, sought help from neighbours. Mr Berdella has been charged with nine felonies.

Police said they found photographs in Mr Berdella's brick and wood-frame house that showed people being tortured, including the man who escaped on Saturday.