

PALM PRINT IN MOTEL MATCHES SUSPECT

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Benjamin (Tony) **Atkins** ' handprint has been confirmed at a slaying scene, giving authorities the first physical evidence tying the Highland Park drifter to a series of 11 strangulations along the Woodward corridor.

Experts matched **Atkins** ' palm print with one found in a bathroom at the Monterey Motel, where a woman was found stuffed in a shower stall, investigators who spoke on condition of anonymity said Wednesday. Three women were found slain at the closed motel on Woodward.

Until the print was identified, the murder charges against **Atkins** were based solely on his confessions. If a judge had decided his statements were not usable in court, the case against the serial killing suspect would have been endangered.

Investigators hope to further strengthen their case by matching **Atkins** with body fluids found in at least one woman.

Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Michael Reynolds said he has not been officially notified of any test results.

However, investigators closely involved in the case said the palm print was matched to **Atkins** , arrested last month by a special task force after a rape victim identified him. He has confessed to strangling 11 women in Highland Park and Detroit since mid-December, police said.

Atkins , a 24-year-old former pizza cook, allegedly lured his victims with crack cocaine. He said he was driven by a hatred of women.

He is undergoing psychiatric tests to determine whether he is fit to stand trial. **Atkins** faces a mandatory life sentence without parole if convicted of any of the 11 first- degree murder charges.

Caption: Photo

: **BenjaminAtkins**

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