

BOAST OF SLAYINGS IS LABELED A PLOY UNCLE SAYS NEPHEW IS STALLING FOR TIME

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WATERVLIET -- Donald Walker believes his nephew, Donald Leroy Evans, **is a** con man, thief and liar, but not the deadliest serial killer in U.S. history.

Interviewed in his southwestern Michigan cottage across the lane from where Evans grew up, Walker said Thursday he believes his nephew's confession to more than 60 murders **is a ploy** to stall his possible execution for **a** Louisiana murder by tying up his case in investigations for years.

"They have to check all these out, don't they? It can keep it tied up in court for years," Walker said.

One case that authorities are looking at **is** Evans' claim that his victims included **a** man killed near Hartford, just east **of** Watervliet.

Van Buren County Sheriff Sgt. Donald Hogmire said Thursday there was an unsolved murder in the area in August 1977. The victim was **a** white male found on the banks **of** the Paw Paw River near Hartford.

Police would not say how the man died for fear **of** tainting their investigation.

"We have **a** lot **of** legwork to do. We don't know whether this one **is** his or not," Hogmire said.

So far, only three **of** the killings Evans, 34, claims to have committed have been confirmed, said Fred Lusk, his lawyer.

Those include the rape and strangulation **of** 10-year-old Beatrice Louise Routh. Evans, who was arrested Aug. 5, led authorities Sunday to her body, which had been dumped by **a** Mississippi highway.

The two other cases took place Florida. Police in Fort Ft. Lauderdale said claims by Evans appeared to match an unsolved 1985 murder that involved **a** prostitute, said Ft. Lauderdale police spokesman Ott Cefkin.

Sgt. Bill Tillard **of** the Daytona Beach Police Department said facts furnished by Evans "seem to relate" to an April 1985 case.

The victim was Jeannette Movich, 38, **of** Rossiter, Pa., whose body was found in **a** wooded area along U.S.-1.

Walker said Thursday that his nephew dropped out **of** school in the eighth grade, and was **a** smart but troubled child.

"He was **a** manipulator. He could size you up right away, figure out what you wanted him to be and act that way," Walker said.

"He'd make up stories. He liked to exaggerate. He's streetwise . . . he took on the person you wanted him to be."

As a boy, Walker said, Evans seemed like **a** normal kid, running, playing and fishing in the nearby lake. But the quiet boy with the bad temper gradually changed.

" **As** he grew older, he got himself in trouble. He got into trouble the way kids sometimes do, stealing . . . but how could you imagine it would lead to this?" Walker asked.

Small items, such **as** cigarette lighters and cans **of** beer, would disappear from the Walker home.

Berrien County Sheriff Capt. Dave Tiefenbach said Evans had **a** minor record **as a** youth, including an August 1974 conviction for petty larceny.

Dennis Nybro, **a** childhood friend **of** Evans, was asked what he thought when he first heard the news.

"The first thing was, 'was that the same Don Evans?' " said Nybro, 37.

"He was just **a** regular kid. I wouldn't say he's unusual at all."

Nybro said he never heard **of** Evans tormenting other children or animals **as a** youth.

Walker said Evans lived in Water vliet until he was about 10. The family broke up and Evans moved to Chicago with his mother.

After dropping out **of** junior high school, Evans "didn't have any kind **of** home life. Nobody wanted him or he wanted nobody," Walker said.

Evans joined the Marine Corps in September 1975, serving less than **a** year before being discharged for medical reasons, according to records.

The murders allegedly began about 1977 and continued into 1987, when he was convicted **of** rape in Texas. He was parolled this spring, after serving four **of** the 15-year sentence.

Federal and Mississippi law enforcement authorities said Thursday that they will proceed cautiously in investigating Evans' claims because in the past, people have falsely confessed to murder and other crimes. One famous false confessor, Henry Lee Lucas, claimed to have killed hundreds **of** people.

A special FBI team specializing in serial killers **is** to begin trying to verify Evans' accounts.

Evans **of** Galveston, Texas, will be arraigned on kidnapping charges Monday in U.S. District Court in Biloxi, Miss. His lawyer said Evans will plead guilty in exchange for **a** life sentence.

However, Evans, in return for his cooperation in the murders, has asked to receive the death sentence.

If Evans' claim **of 60 slayings is** true, he would be America's worst known serial killer. If found guilty, Walker said, "Just keep him locked up and throw away the key. None **of** this feeling sorry for him, just keep him locked up."

Caption: Photo, Map Detroit Free Press

: Donald Walker

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