

## DEATH HAS SIMILARITIES TO 8 OTHERS COPS AREN'T RULING OUT SERIAL KILLER

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The decomposed body of a woman found Monday inside a vacant Highland Park building **has similarities to** eight victims police believe died at the hands of a serial killer, but detectives said they'll await autopsy results before calling her Victim No. 9.

"I haven't ruled it out," Highland Park Sgt. James Dobson said.

The unidentified woman's body was found with a plastic bag over her head and a shirt tied around her neck, said a law enforcement source who requested anonymity. She wore only socks and boots, the source said.

The woman was black, as were the eight **other** women whose bodies have been found along a 1.4-mile stretch of Woodward Avenue since December. Her age is estimated as about 30 and she had no obvious injuries. Her body was found across the street from the Monterey Motel, where three victims were found Feb. 17 in separate rooms.

An autopsy on Monday's discovery is expected today.

If a serial killer is **to** blame, neighbors and police marveled over the boldness of leaving the body within sight of the Monterey.

The eight **other** victims were strangled and found at least partially nude. Most had something -- clothing, foam insulation -- lodged in their throats and were bound and gagged with their own clothing. All but one were found in vacant buildings, the **other** was concealed under the rubble of one that had been demolished.

The **other** victims were addicted **to** crack cocaine and most, if not all, had been selling sex **to** pay for the drug.

A woman who came **to** the scene Monday said an area hooker **has** been missing for some time. She said she knew her only as Beverly.

Around 2 p.m., a Detroit Edison meter reader and another man entered the two-story building on Woodward at Richton **to** check on a foul smell. They opened a rear door and retreated when they were overwhelmed by the odor.

Police later found the body on the first floor near the front of the building, which years ago housed the headquarters of former state Rep. Ethel Terrell. The body was found in a filthy corner of the front room; only her boots stuck out from under trash.

State Police evidence technicians scoured the floor and walls for blood and fingerprints with a laser beam. They would not say what was found.

Area residents said they had called police several times since they noticed the odor at least a week ago. They complained that police ignored their calls until Monday.

"I called the police when I first smelled it . . . a couple of days after Memorial Day," said Cora Jackson, who runs a soup kitchen next door.

Mayor Linsey Porter, outside the building Monday afternoon, said he did not know about the early calls, but would investigate.

Also outside the building, Mildred Combs, president of the Richton-Woodward Homeowner's Association, said: "I am almost at the point of tears. I am livid."

Porter said his police department **has** been working overtime on the case, with help from the FBI, Wayne County Sheriff's Department and the State Police.

"I believe somebody is holding information, and while they're holding information women are losing their lives unnecessarily," Porter said. "We realize we're dealing with a slick individual or individuals. So far this person **has** been very elusive."

Anyone with information on the case may call Highland Park police at 252-0139, **8** a.m. **to** 4 p.m. weekdays or leave a message after hours.

Staff Writer Stephen Jones contributed **to** this report.

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