

FBI JOINS THE HUNT IN HIGHLAND PARK

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Help from as far away as Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles flowed into **Highland Park** on Wednesday, as authorities there admitted they can't catch a fast-working serial killer alone.

"It has overwhelmed our detective division," said Public Safety Director John Mattox.

FBI Director William Sessions called Mayor Linsey Porter and told him "his help is just a phone call away," Porter said. **FBI** agents from **the** Detroit office met with **Highland Park** police for an hour Wednesday.

Since December, eight women have been found dead **in** or around abandoned buildings along a 1.4-mile stretch of Woodward Avenue **in Highland Park** and Detroit. All had been strangled; most were found bound and naked.

The FBI entered **the** investigation under kidnapping laws that allow **the** agency jurisdiction when someone has been missing for 24 hours.

FBI special agent John Anthony said **the** bureau knows of no abductions **in the** women's cases, but relatives of one dead woman, Valerie Brown Chalk, told **the** Free Press they believe she was abducted and held **in a Highland Park** crack house before her death.

Wayne County Sheriff Robert Ficano said two of his detectives and a crime technician began working on **the** case Wednesday. **The** department also has been patrolling **Highland Park** streets and last week raided eight homes for drugs.

Porter and other officials held a news conference to generate publicity that they hope will dredge up tips from **the** community. **The** city is offering a reward of \$2,000 for tips that lead police to **the** killer, Porter said.

"Someone, somewhere knows, and we need that person to call **in** ," Porter said. "Someone needs **the** courage to call **in** . . . Maybe even a family member."

The publicity over **the** killings has raised attendance by 50 percent at recent meetings of **the Highland Park** Neighborhood Coalition, Porter said. He urged citizens to be more vigilant and careful.

"We have a sick individual or individuals roaming **the** Detroit- **Highland Park** area," he said. "I urge everyone to just follow good common sense."

Five of **the** bodies have been found **in Highland Park** . Three have been found **in** Detroit.

Mattox said his investigators believe someone else, perhaps a copycat, killed Kelly Cummings, 18, whose body was found Monday **in** an alley off Midland at Woodward. She was strangled, too, but also was struck **in the** head and run over with a vehicle. She was white; **the** other victims were black.

Porter said he is concerned that **Highland Park** is becoming a dumping ground for bodies. He said he did not know why.

The investigation has strapped **the Highland Park** Public Safety Department and **the** financially troubled city. **The** 10- member detective division has spent countless hours investigating possible suspects and interviewing residents and relatives of **the** dead women, officials said.

Profiles could spark tip

Wayne County Sheriff Robert Ficano said Wednesday he asked California forensic pathologist Dr. Bruce Danto to prepare a profile of **the** killer. Ficano called Danto a leading crime expert who assisted **in** several Detroit area investigations during **the** '80s.

In 1984, Danto was convicted **in** U.S. District Court **in** Detroit of submitting false claims to Michigan Blue Cross & Blue Shield. He was fined \$1,000 and sentenced to community service, and later moved his psychiatry practice to California.

Danto, who said he was not paid by Wayne County to produce **the** killer's profile, now co-owns Death Investigations International, a Los Angeles area company. **In** a telephone interview from his office Wednesday, Danto said **the** fraud conviction was "a political attack" and not relevant to his work on **the Highland Park** case.

Ficano's spokeswoman, Nancy Mouradian, said she did not know whether Ficano was aware of Danto's conviction. "It's most unfortunate, but his reputation **in the** area . . . is widely acclaimed. That's **the** reason why we went to him."

Danto and other profilers -- who are widely recognized as experts -- agree on these possible characteristics for **the** killer:

- * He may be a victim of child abuse.
- * He entices his victims with drugs.
- * He hasn't changed his "method of operation," which may indicate he wants to be caught.
- * He lives **in** or near **Highland Park** .

Police cautioned that **the** characteristics might not be accurate.

But, said Ficano, "it's like releasing a mug shot or sketch. You hope it stirs or activates somebody's memory."

Anyone with information on **the** case may call police at 252-0139, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays.

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