

FRIENDS SAY SOCIAL WORKER IS UNLIKELY SLAYING SUSPECT

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To **friends** and associates, Victor Malone **is** a "bright, caring, creative" **social worker** who holds a master's degree from the University of Michigan.

To psychiatrists who have examined him, Malone has "dull normal" intelligence and **is** "psychotic, schizophrenic and sociopathic."

To Detroit police, Malone **is** a man with a lengthy criminal record who **is** charged with murdering one woman and **is** the prime **suspect** in the **slayings** of at least 10 other women.

"I don't believe it, to be honest with you," Dr. Howard Brabson, a U-M associate professor of **social** work, said Friday. "I've seen him inside and I've seen him outside and I just don't believe it."

BUT BRABSON'S assessment **is** not necessarily shared by Detroit police homicide investigators, who since Thursday morning have been pulling files on unsolved **slayings** of women to determine if Malone can be connected to them.

"We're checking several open, unsolved cases . . . dating back a few years," said homicide Inspector Gilbert Hill. "We're going back over files, re-interviewing witnesses and seeing if there's any information consistent with what we know about this case. Hopefully, this will lead to some positive developments."

Hill, who said a task force has been set up within the homicide section to work on the case, would not **say** how investigators were analyzing other **slayings**, but police sources said they were concentrating on victims who were prostitutes or dancers at go-go bars.

"We've already pulled 30 files from the last three years as possible," said a police source. "I don't know if we'll ever prove it, but we could well have many more than 10 solid ones before we're done."

ANOTHER POLICE source said: "First of all, we're determining the exact dates when Malone was incarcerated and couldn't have committed a homicide. Then we're pulling every case involving a prostitute since at least 1973. He's expressed a deep hatred for them and also has a history of frequenting go-go joints, flashing lots of money and then pulling one of the women out of the bar."

Asked if investigators were focusing on the use of a particular weapon or a specific area in Detroit, another police source said:

"Not really. As near as we can tell, he's been arrested or charged with cases involving the assaulting of women using a knife, a carpet knife, the blade from a pair of scissors and he's charged with killing a woman with a gun, so there's no real common denominator there. As to location, hell, those kind of bars are all over town. We're looking at cases in which the victim was tied up, but even that might not be the common denominator we're looking for."

ON THURSDAY, Malone, 38, of Southfield, was ordered held in Wayne County Jail on a \$1 million cash bond for the murder of Leshia Brooks, 26, a go-go dancer at a Highland Park lounge who was found shot to death two months ago in a Woodward Avenue motel.

Malone has a criminal record that includes convictions for armed robbery in Ohio, bank robbery in Ohio, assault in Plymouth and a narcotics violation in Detroit. He also was involved in two sexual assault cases in Detroit -- one of which was dismissed and the other which resulted in Malone's acquittal.

"He's very, very intelligent," said Jerome Barney, a lawyer who represented Malone in one of the sexual assault cases in Detroit. "He's got a drinking problem. When he drinks, his morals may slip when it comes to women. Victor may have loose morals, and he may go around and frequent prostitutes, but I don't think he's a murderer."

Barney, an assistant corporation counsel for the City of Detroit, said he met Malone in 1981 when Malone, then a clinical **social worker** at the Plymouth Center for Human Development, was charged with assaulting the center's personnel director, Jan Miller.

ACCORDING TO a Michigan State Police report of the incident, Miller was assaulted by Malone after Malone was laid off because of budget cutbacks. Malone was convicted and sentenced to 60 days in the Detroit House of Correction and then placed on one-year probation, according to Detective Sgt. Wayne Bullen of the State Police post in Northville.

"After that, he started his own organization," said Barney. "He decided there was a need for a cancer organization that served the needs of the black community. He had several locations."

Barney said Malone **is** an adopted child whose adoptive father died years ago. Barney said Malone **is** close to his mother and **is** married -- but separated -- and has three children.

"Victor **is** the kind of guy . . . he reminds me of someone who gets into trouble while he's trying to make good. He's really borderline. . . . He falls in and out," Barney said.

Barney said that at Malone's mother's request, he visited Malone after Malone was arrested by Detroit police.

"He can handle being incarcerated," said Barney. "He's a good defendant. He's very intelligent and works hard to assist his attorney."

In 1968, however, psychiatrists who examined Malone in another criminal matter said he was incapable of assisting his own defense and was suicidal. During that case, the FBI asked that if Malone were to be hospitalized, it be at a maximum security facility.

MALONE GOT his bachelor's degree in general studies from U- M in 1976, according to university records, and got a master's degree in **social** work from U-M two years later.

Brabson remembers Malone as "a very bright young man who worked very hard and was creative. Victor worked for me when he was in the master's program here. He treated me like a father figure."

Brabson called Malone "a very caring man. We're talking about the kind of guy who, when he telephones you and finds out you're sick, drives to Ann Arbor to go to the drugstore for you. I feel very badly about this whole thing. I'm shocked. Being a **social worker** , I would have not predicted this because of his behavior around me."

Both during and after his stay at U-M, Malone claims to have had steady jobs as a **social worker** at various agencies in southeastern Michigan. Malone was also an active member of the Huron Valley Association of Black **Social Workers** .

"Unless we're talking about a Jekyll-Hyde figure here -- which I don't believe -- you can't talk about Victor and these crimes simultaneously," said Brabson.

DURING CHRISTMAS week, Brabson said, Malone drove to Ann Arbor to have dinner with Brabson. Asked if Malone acted like he had problems or was in trouble, Brabson said:

"No. I'm the godfather of his children and we talked about the kids." Brabson said the two men briefly discussed Malone's marital problems. "That started two weeks after they were married. I've always kind of taken that as being a part of their marriage. Nothing more," Brabson said.

Brabson agreed with Barney that Malone " **is** very close" to his mother. "He's been living with her recently. She has cancer."

Asked if he was aware of Malone's criminal record when Malone was at U-M, Brabson said:

"Yes. But I also knew that in none of those circumstances did he injure anyone."

BRABSON APPARENTLY was not aware that Malone was charged in 1968 with shooting a man twice in the head. The victim, wounded in a west side Detroit coffee house, survived. Malone was charged with the shooting after he was captured by Detroit police following his escape from a Toledo jail, where he was being held on a bank robbery charge.

On Oct. 2, 1968, Detroit Recorder's Court Judge Joseph Gillis ordered Malone examined to determine if he was mentally competent to stand trial and Malone was evaluated by Dr. Albert Wallaert, chief psychiatrist at the Recorders Court clinic.

"This patient presents a schizophrenic reaction of the simple type with depression and latent suicidal tendencies," Wallaert wrote in his report about Malone. "We feel he **is** not competent to stand trial."

Gillis ordered Malone sent to the state Center for Forensic Psychiatry, where Malone was diagnosed as having a "schizophrenic reaction of the acute, undifferentiated type." Malone was described as being "evasive and guarded" and having intelligence in the "dull normal range." The specialists who examined Malone also noted that he was "on the surface highly sociopathic but underneath a schizophrenic disorder with marked distortion in his perceptions."

On Oct. 24, the U.S. Marshal's Office in Detroit issued a detainer for Malone for federal parole violation for the bank robbery charge. Shortly afterward, Malone was committed to a state mental health facility by Judge Gillis.

On Dec. 13, Gillis set aside his order and Malone was turned over to the FBI as a fugitive. He then was sent to a federal prison.

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