

PAROLE OF SERIAL SUSPECT AT ISSUE - MAN WASN'T SEEN AS THREAT AT TIME

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LANSING - Serial murder suspect **Matthew Macon** was considered low risk with a record of good behavior, no need for psychological treatment and having a supportive family in the community when he was paroled from prison June 26.

The state Parole Board took a burglary he committed while on parole in 2005, other parole violations and a lengthy juvenile record into consideration when it granted **Macon** his third parole, said Department of Corrections spokesman Russ Marlan.

Weighing all the factors, **Macon** was a good candidate for parole, Marlan said.

Now, police say they believe **Macon**, 27, killed five women and assaulted a sixth starting July 26.

"Certainly, the parole system is not perfect," Marlan said Tuesday. "When you're trying to predict human beings' future behavior, that's something you can't do."

The alternative, Marlan said, is to abolish parole and require those convicted of felonies to serve set sentences and then release them with no supervision or restrictions.

Macon was sentenced in 2001 to 2 to 10 years in prison with credit for time served. Had he served the maximum sentence, he would have been kept behind bars until 2010.

Police expect **Macon** to be arraigned today or Thursday in connection with one or more of the homicides. Charges in the other cases are expected to follow.

Police also suspect **Macon** in the 2004 beating death of another Lansing woman and a series of assaults on women in 2003, although they said those cases remain under investigation. As a juvenile, **Macon** had convictions for two sex crimes, two car thefts and breaking and entering.

Macon was on parole in February 2005 when Lansing Township police arrested him after responding to a call of a burglary, according to the parole report. It said **Macon** tried to escape from police in a car and was chased and captured.

Marlan said **Macon** pleaded guilty to home invasion and resisting police, and was sentenced by Ingham County Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield to 1 year in the Ingham County Jail.

After serving the year, he was immediately sent back to a state prison for violating terms of his parole. He served another year before he was paroled again June 26.

Marlan said the Corrections Department's re-entry program for parolees has reduced the number of repeat offenders by 21%.

He added, "Parole supervision, community placement is a good thing; we're going in a good direction."

Macon 's family expressed support for him and denied that he is the serial killer, even before charges were issued.

Macon 's cousin, Clifton Jackson, 32, of Lansing said **Macon** was turning his life around with a job at a metal stamping shop and welding classes at Lansing Community College.

"Our prayers and thoughts are with the victims' families," Jackson said. "We are in full support of Matt; we do not believe **Matthew** has committed these horrendous crimes.

"We're asking that police and media not rush to judgment."

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo

CAPTION: **Matthew Macon** , 27, is accused of killing five women in Lansing and attacking a sixth. He could be arraigned today.

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