

POLICE SEEK HELP FINDING KILLER

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Wayne County Sheriff's deputies and Highland Park police will go door-to-door today, asking city residents to help catch a serial **killer**, who was blamed Tuesday in the strangling of a ninth woman in the Woodward Avenue corridor.

Deputies on horseback also will begin patrolling Highland Park streets as part of a beefed-up patrol effort announced Tuesday.

About a dozen deputies will assist in a neighborhood canvass on streets from Glendale to the southern border of the city. Residents will be asked if they have information about the killings.

Officials have said the **killer** probably lives near the area in which the bodies have been left and might be known in the community.

The new push for clues came as an autopsy on a woman found Monday in an abandoned building showed she was strangled. So were eight other women found since December in rotting buildings along a 1.4-mile stretch of Woodward in Highland Park and Detroit.

"We're going to have to look at it as if it's connected," Lt. Donald Roberts said of the woman found Monday.

The woman, who has not been identified, shared several similarities with the other women:

- * She died of asphyxia by strangulation, most likely with a shirt that was found tied around her neck.
- * Her hands were bound behind her back.
- * She was nude, wearing only socks and **black** velvet boots with high heels.
- * Her body appeared to have been heaved into a corner of the abandoned building.
- * She was **black**.

Her body was badly decomposed and covered with trash and boxes. She is about 5 feet 4, 105 pounds, and in her late 30s. Morgue officials are seeking help identifying her.

Although detectives say they are likely pursuing one man who is stalking crack-addicted prostitutes in the Woodward Corridor, there have been some differences among the victims. The woman discovered Monday was the first to be found with two plastic bags over her head.

"Everything's not the same," Roberts said, referring to the **killer's** modus operandi. But **killers** "can always change their M.O."

The **killer** was particularly bold in leaving the body across the street from the abandoned Monterey Motel, where three victims were found in February in separate rooms. It could be the work of a copycat, Roberts said. If so, "they might figure that's the way to get the blame on this guy."

Dr. Bader Cassin, the Wayne County Medical Examiner, said the body found Monday probably had been in the building more than a month, though it is possible she was there as long as the bodies in the Monterey Motel. Her boots were fur lined.

But Roberts said the **killer** had to have left the body there sometime after Feb. 20, when the building at Woodward and Richton was checked in a sweep of abandoned structures.

Neighbors complained that they called police several times over the last two weeks to report an odor, but no one showed up until Monday. Mayor Linsey Porter said Tuesday he checked and found "they never contacted our police department."

Porter spoke at a news conference with Wayne County Sheriff Robert Ficano to announce the stepped-up street patrols and investigation.

Detectives have established two hot lines for tips on the murders. Call sheriff's deputies at 224-2222 anytime, or Highland Park police at 252-0139, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Leave a message after hours. Anyone with information about the identity of the woman found Monday can call the medical examiner's office at 224-5643 anytime.

Caption: Map CATHY MORRIS

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