

SERIAL KILLER SUSPECT TESTIFIES THAT SHE SHOT MAN IN SELF-DEFENSE

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Saturday, January 25, 1992

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DELAND, Fla. -- Former prostitute **Aileen Wuornos** said Friday she shot and killed a motorist who picked her up because he brutalized, raped and threatened to kill her.

"He was saying he had to have me in pain," Wuornos, 35, told a 12-member jury in her murder trial.

The prosecution rested its case Thursday. Wuornos took the stand in her own defense and testified that she acted in self-defense when she shot Richard Mallory, 51, a Clearwater video store owner.

She is being tried on a charge of first-degree murder in the 1989 killing. She is charged in four other slayings along Florida highways and is a suspect in two others. The prosecution has claimed she robbed and killed out of greed and a lust for power.

Wuornos said she agreed to spend the evening with Mallory in a wooded area, but that he then tortured her and kept her nude in the car for long periods.

When Wuornos confessed to the killing in 1990, she did not tell investigators that she had been raped or assaulted. She said Friday she did not remember details of the rape at the time of her confession.

Her testimony was riddled with lapses of memory, confusion, frustration and at times anger toward prosecutor John Tanner, but she did not waver from her claim of self-defense.

She said she carried a gun because she wanted to protect herself and had worked as a prostitute since she was 16.

"It's all I know how to do," she said. "I couldn't hold other jobs. . . . I always got fired."

A native of Troy, Mich., Wuornos moved to Florida with her family in the early 1970s.

The trial is to resume Monday.

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 5A

Dateline: DELAND, Fla.

Record Number: 9201030976

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