

## **SERIAL KILLING SUSPECT ARRESTED - 5 WOMEN DEAD IN LANSING; ATTACK ON 6TH BROKE CASE**

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LANSING - The beating deaths of five women in five weeks - four inside homes - put neighborhoods on edge and sent police searching for a possible **serial** killer.

Thursday, they said they'd captured one, thanks to a sixth victim who survived Tuesday because her dog scared off her attacker.

And what had been a summer of fear - especially for women who live alone - was calmed.

"A cloud has been lifted from our city," Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero said at a news conference. "Our nightmare is over."

Lansing Police Chief Mark Alley said the **suspect** would be charged in all five homicides and the assault.

Alley said the description of the man from the 56-year-old woman who survived was crucial to breaking the case. Alley said she was recovering well. He would not provide details about the **suspect**, but a composite drawing released this week indicated a male in his 30s.

Alley said the search would continue for a possible link between the **killings** and a series of unsolved rapes in the city in 2003.

Ingham County Prosecutor Stuart Dunnings III said the man in custody would be charged today in a Monday assault that killed Sandra Eichorn, 64, a General Motors Corp. retiree. Dunnings said charges for the other attacks would be issued later.

Dunnings said it was unusual for such a case of multiple homicides to be solved so quickly. The FBI and Michigan State Police assisted with the investigation.

All six assaults occurred within a short distance of downtown and the Capitol building. They rattled a city where violent crime is not an overriding worry, though the 14 homicides this year equals the combined total for 2005 and 2006.

The latest victim was Karen Delgado-Yates, 41, who was found Wednesday afternoon beaten and barely alive in a vacant home on Hickory Street. She died later in the day at nearby Sparrow Hospital.

Across the street from the home, neighbor Steve Hitchcock, 52, said Delgado-Yates apparently was homeless and was discovered by a prospective buyer who had come to look over the home.

Two other assaults occurred not far from the house. Hitchcock said that after the attacks, some in the neighborhood stayed up late on their porches with lights on.

Meu Alohamanaloa, 51, shares the rental home with Hitchcock and two others. She said the attacks made her afraid to stay in the house alone, or to go out unless someone accompanied her.

"I was really scared to death. All those women were about my age," Alohamanaloa said Thursday, sitting on her front porch and wearing a Michigan State University jersey.

She said she's not completely relieved: "I hope they got the right guy. I'm still scared. They might have the wrong guy." Neighborhood activists said the **killings** have made neighbors more aware of safety precautions and of other people.

"Oh, God, I was enormously relieved," Joan Nelson said of the arrest. She heads a neighborhood development agency near a popular city park where the beaten body of one of the victims was found by police on patrol on Aug. 7.

The assaults Tuesday and Wednesday occurred in that same area.

"The neighborhood has been on high alert," Nelson said. "People have been jumpy, angry, fearful, as you would expect."

On the city's south side, community watch director Andrea Amble, 32, said she has been busy showing residents how to make their homes more secure, even though the **killings** occurred far from her neighborhood.

Make sure your back porch lights work, she told them. She showed them how to use makeshift alarms, such as a glass vase balanced on a windowsill to announce an invader.

"People had assumed all the murders had been connected in some way," Amble said. "The biggest concern was, 'I don't want that to happen to me.'"

The first victim was Ruth Hallman, 76, who had battled drug dealers in her neighborhood just west of the Capitol. Hallman died July 28, two days after she was beaten, and not far from where Eichorn was found dead Monday.

Hallman's daughter, Carol Wood, is a member of the Lansing City Council and lived in the same neighborhood as Hallman. Despite the homicides, Wood said she feels safe in the city as a single woman.

"We always have to be cautious," she said. "Hopefully, it's a lesson we can take away from this - watch out for one another. Look for things in your neighborhood that are not normal."

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo

CAPTION:

ROD SANFORD / Lansing State Journal

Lansing Police Chief Mark Alley announces the arrest of a **suspect** in a series of homicides. Behind him from left: Mayor Virg Bernero, Ingham County Prosecutor Stuart Dunnings III and State Police Inspector Gary Nix.

CAPTIONWRITER: Karen Delgado-Yates was killed Wednesday.

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