

SUSPECT IN WALKER DEATHS IRKED QUIET NEIGHBORS

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Catherine Wood, one of two former nursing home employes accused of murdering elderly patients, lived a quiet life until her husband and child moved out of their home on Grand Rapids' north side in fall 1986, a former neighbor said Wednesday.

For the next year, Wood became more visible -- sometimes too visible, partying loud and late, said the neighbor who spoke on condition he not be named.

The neighbor said police were called several times to quell the noise and rowdiness. Police would not comment Wednesday.

Neighbors said Wednesday that Wood appeared to have a succession of roommates after her husband, Kenneth, from whom she was later divorced, moved out.

One of those roommates was Wood's former lover, **Gwendolyn Graham**, who is charged along with Wood in the deaths of patients at the Alpine Manor Nursing Home in Walker, where both women had worked.

The neighbor said Catherine Wood never spoke much of her work or family. In fact, he said, she didn't speak much at all.

"I don't think she knew how to neighbor," he said.

He said he was happy to see Wood leave the one-story wood frame house in the working-class neighborhood late last year.

Wood, 26, was charged Monday with two open counts of murder and held without bond pending a Dec. 16 preliminary hearing. **Graham**, 25, was arrested Sunday near her home in Tyler, Tex., and arraigned on one open count of murder. Held on \$1 million bond in the Smith County Jail, **Graham** was fighting extradition to Michigan.

Wood has told police **Graham** suffocated six elderly patients in their beds and collected a "souvenir" from each, according to search warrants.

Tyler Police Officer Dan Alexander said he assisted Michigan law enforcement officials in executing a search warrant at **Graham**'s mobile home in October.

Alexander said some letters were confiscated. He said no personal belongings were found, and that the warrant did not list specific items.

Graham's arrest came two days after she pleaded guilty in Tyler to writing bad checks for \$700 of merchandise, according to the Smith County prosecutor who handled the case.

David Dobbs, of the Smith County District Attorney's Office, said **Graham** agreed to make restitution and was sentenced to six months' probation.

Dobbs said that at the time, he did not know **Graham** was under investigation in Michigan for murder.

CUTLINE

Catherine Wood

Gwendolyn Graham

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