

## SUSPECTED MICH. SLAYER IMPLICATES HIMSELF

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**Coral Eugene Watts**, the prime suspect in the "Sunday morning slasher" murders of three Ann Arbor women two years ago, implicated himself in as many as 22 unsolved slayings Tuesday -- including those in Ann Arbor -- while pleading guilty in Houston to burglary with intent to commit murder.

**Watts**, 28, dressed in a khaki shirt and blue jeans, showed no emotion in Houston as District Judge Doug Shaver accepted his guilty plea to a May 23 incident in which **Watts** tried to drown a Houston woman in her bathtub during a burglary.

Shaver, who told a reporter that **Watts** "does not like women . . . he thought they were evil . . . he'd just find one and kill that particular woman," agreed to wait until next Tuesday before sentencing **Watts** to be sure that **Watts** keeps his promise to co-operate in the homicide investigations.

As part of a plea-bargaining agreement, which calls for **Watts** to be sentenced to 60 years in jail, he also admitted nine killings in the Houston area but will not be charged in those cases.

**Watts** has already led homicide investigators to two gravesites in Houston, police said.

Prosecutors said **Watts** also agreed to lead authorities to other graves in Austin and Galveston, as well as Detroit, Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo and Windsor, if authorities in those areas offer him immunity from prosecution

HOUSTON law-enforcement officials said **Watts** may be responsible for as many as 22 slayings of women. In addition, he is considered the prime suspect in three assaults on women in Windsor.

Investigators from Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo and Windsor were en route to Houston to testify before Shavers about **Watts**' being the major suspect in their cases.

**Watts** "has been our prime suspect since July of 1980," said Ann Arbor Police Chief William Corbett of the three slayings in that city.

On April 20, 1980, Shirley Small, 17, was killed outside her residence at Georgetown Townhouses. Three months later, Glenda Richmond, 23, was found slain outside the University Townhouses. On Sept. 14, Rebecca Huff, a 30-year-old graduate student and former airline stewardess, was found dead outside her apartment in western Ann Arbor. Corbett said the women had been stabbed to death.

"WE INTERVIEWED ( **Watts** ) on two occasions in depth," Corbett said Tuesday, "and each time we became more convinced he was our man." Since being arrested in Houston, **Watts** has been interviewed again by Corbett's investigators, but Corbett declined to say what was discussed.

Corbett credited a Detroit police officer with providing information that led to **Watts** ' becoming a suspect. The Detroit officer, who was familiar with **Watts** ' record, phoned Corbett after the second Ann Arbor slaying and suggested that investigators check with Kalamazoo police, since **Watts** had been a prime suspect in a coed's slaying in that city.

ACCORDING TO a spokesman for Western Michigan University, **Watts** attended the school's summer and fall sessions in 1974. The period **Watts** attended the school, according to the spokesman, went from July 2 through Dec. 18.

On Oct. 25 of that year, according to Kalamazoo police, **Watts** was arrested for the early morning assault of a woman who was knocked to the ground and choked. **Watts** was charged with assault, but records showed no disposition in the case.

At 1:40 p.m. Oct. 30, the body of Gloria Steele, 19, was found in her apartment in a campus housing area at Western Michigan University. Steele had been stabbed 33 times. Based on evidence found at the scene that investigators would not discuss, **Watts** became the prime suspect.

"He's been our main suspect from the start," said Detective Sgt. Wesley Carpenter of the university's campus police. "His m.o. (method of operation) was to go to a door and ask for 'Charles.' "

On Nov. 12, **Watts** was arrested and charged with beating and choking a woman in Kalamazoo. He was convicted of assault and sentenced to a year in the county jail.

IN ADDITION to the three Ann Arbor slayings in 1980, **Watts** is considered the major suspect in at least four assaults of women in Windsor, according to police sources.

The attacks , which occurred between July and November, were "extremely serious assaults . . . In one, a woman's throat was slashed. She was left for dead but didn't die," said a police source.

**Watts** , a Houston bus mechanic, claims he was born in Texas, but records indicate he spent most of his life in the Detroit area. His first recorded contact with police came on June 25, 1969, when, as a 14-year-old, he attacked a woman while he was delivering newspapers on his route about 7:30 a.m. After the attack, **Watts** was committed to Detroit's Lafayette Clinic for psychiatric treatment; he was released five months later.

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