

WATTS SENTENCED TO 60 YEARS

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Saturday, September 4, 1982

Author: FREE PRESS STAFF and WIRE REPORTS

HOUSTON -- With a relative of a victim weeping the gallery, a judge Friday honored a prosecution plea bargain and sentenced **Coral Eugene Watts**, confessed killer of 13 women, to 60 years in prison "because the death penalty is not available to me."

"I hope they put you so deep in the penitentiary that they have to pipe in light to you," Harris County District Judge Doug Shaver told the former Detroit.

Shaver, prosecutors and **Watts** wore bulletproof vests because of reported threats by people angry about the seemingly lenient sentence -- on a burglary charge.

The judge said he would recommend no parole, although **Watts** would be eligible after 20 years. Shaver also said he planned to seek changes in the law that allows inmates "good time," which can shorten their prison stays by as much as half.

SHAVER IMPOSED the sentence after hearing testimony from three witnesses to establish minimal proof **Watts** was guilty of burglary with intent to commit murder in a May 23 Houston attack in which two women survived. **Watts** subsequently confessed 10 killings in Houston, one in Austin, one in Galveston and one in Grosse Pointe Farms, as well as six non-fatal attacks.

Watts has admitted stabbing to death former Detroit News reporter Jeanne Clyne in October 1979. Last month, investigators from Grosse Pointe Farms flew to Houston and taped a statement from **Watts** in which he admitted attacking the 44-year-old Clyne while she was walking home from a doctor's office. **Watts** admitted using a sharpened 14-inch screwdriver to stab her 11 times in the neck and chest, officers said.

Although several Wayne County cities are studying homicide files to determine if **Watts** is a possible suspect, Chief Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Dominick Carnovale said **Watts** would not be granted immunity from prosecution if he is charged in any of the cases. In the Clyne case, the Prosecutor's Office guaranteed **Watts** it would not use his confession in any prosecution.

The 28-year-old former bus mechanic, whom one psychiatrist described as having a schizophrenic hatred of women, testified from the defense table that he had agreed to the plea bargain and was guilty of burglary.

Relatives of victims were in the courtroom. One wept openly. Also in court was Sheila Williams, 21, **Watts**' girlfriend who had called him a "perfect gentleman" around her.

"I think justice was served, limited justice, for 60 years at least," said Kathy Gregory, sister-in-law of one victim. But Harriet Semander, mother of another victim, said her idea of a fair sentence was "death."

WATTS WAS ALLOWED to plead guilty to burglary with intent to commit murder in a plea bargain he proposed Aug. 9 as he was preparing to go to trial and facing life in the May 23 Houston attack.

Shaver has explained that in terms of parole eligibility in Texas, a 60-year sentence is equivalent to life. Inmates become eligible for parole after serving one-third of their sentences or 20 years, whichever is less.

With "good time," given to reduce the sentences of well-behaved prisoners, parole from a life sentence is possible after 10 years, Shaver said. Police and the prosecutor have defended the plea bargain as the best they could do, given their lack of evidence linking **Watts** to the murders.

One of **Watts'** confessions, to the Jan. 30 slashing of a Wisconsin woman, caused the release of a man who had been sentenced to life for the crime.

The first thing Howard Ware Mosley did after being released Thursday from the Galveston County Jail was go to church. Mosley, 25, had been in jail since his February arrest in the attempted murder case.

Patty Johnson, 19, of Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., had picked Mosley out of a lineup and his conviction, along with two other felony convictions, led to a sentence of life in prison as a habitual offender.

Caption: Pix

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 12B

Record Number: 8301100483

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