

SUSPECT IN 3 SLAYINGS HID IN HOME FURNACE

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Saturday, June 23, 1990
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While homicide investigators combed **Travis Pride** Jr.'s house for clues after his girlfriend and their two children were killed there, **Pride** hid for two days inside the home's furnace, according to **Pride**'s confession, read in court Friday.

Pride apparently emerged at night after investigators left, made sandwiches and got food from the kitchen, then retreated to his cramped basement hideaway before detectives returned.

The 5-foot-tall furnace was just large enough to accommodate the slightly built **Pride**, investigators said. He was arrested May 1 after neighbors saw him taking a predawn walk outside.

Pride, 23, was ordered by 36th District Judge Chris Stith to stand trial on three counts of first-degree murder. He is accused of killing the three in their home on the 3000 block of Hurlbut after smoking crack cocaine at a neighbor's house.

In his confession, **Pride** said his girlfriend, Viola Rivers, began nagging him about visiting the neighbor. He said he warned her, but she carried on after they went to bed.

Pride said he got two knives from the kitchen, returned to the bedroom and told Rivers he would kill her if she continued. When she did not heed his warning, **Pride** said, "I just snapped and started sticking her."

He said he dragged Rivers to the bathtub in a futile effort to save her. She was found in the tub, beaten and stabbed 11 times, her throat slit.

Taking a hammer, **Pride** said, he went to the bedroom of his 11-month-old son, Darius. "He was awake and looking," **Pride** told police. "I hit him in the head."

Pride said he then went to the room of his daughter, Tywanna, 2, and beat her to death. He told police that he killed the children because "I wanted to make it look like someone came in and did it."

After slashing his wrists and neck in an unsuccessful suicide try, **Pride** said, he hid inside the furnace.

Defense lawyer Michael Batchelor argued that **Pride** should not face trial for first-degree murder because "There was no sign of premeditation or deliberation. He snapped. He was scared and went from room to room."

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 3A

Index Terms: DEATH ; DETROIT ; MULTIPLE

Record Number: 9001240705

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