

WOMAN STABBED TO DEATH

Palm print led Ames police to charge man with murder

By **THOMAS R. O'DONNELL**

OF THE REGISTER'S AMES BUREAU

Ames, Ia. — A bloody palm print is one of the pieces of evidence that led police Friday to charge a transient with murder in the death of an Ames woman.

Lauren Merrill "Ron" Cook, 34, was being held Friday at the Story County Jail in Nevada on \$500,000 bond.

Cook was taken into custody Wednesday night in Austin, Minn., as a material witness in the slaying of Thea Korver, 38. Korver was found dead of stab wounds in her Ames apartment Tuesday night. Police believe she had been dead several days.

In an affidavit, Detective Mark Wheeler said that on Friday morning the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation determined that a bloody palm print found at Korver's apartment matched Cook's prints. Police charged Cook soon after the results came in.

Police began seeking Cook after



Lauren Merrill "Ron" Cook
Charged in stabbing death

they determined that he was the last person with whom Korver had been seen alive the night of Feb. 18.

In the affidavit, Wheeler said there was evidence Korver had been beaten with a bottle and stabbed. There also was evidence that someone besides Korver had been cut.

Wheeler said that when Cook was arrested, he had a knife "that could be consistent with the wounds on Thea Korver."

Cook also had been cut on his left

CHARGE *Please turn to Page 6M*

Print led police to arrest man

CHARGE

Continued from Page 1M

arm, but said he had injured himself in a fall on ice.

A doctor in Cedar Rapids who treated Cook's injury on Feb. 20 said the cut was not consistent with a wound received in a fall and that the injury was about two days old, Wheeler said. Cook also reportedly told a truck driver who gave him a ride to Austin on Wednesday that he had been stabbed in the arm.

Cook admitted being with Korver until about midnight Feb. 18, Wheeler said.

Ames Police Chief Dennis Ballantine said Cook was returned to Ames from Minnesota on Thursday.

Ballantine said there is some evidence to support Korver's earlier claim that Cook is the father of her infant twin sons. "To the best of our knowledge, we think it's true," Bal-



Thea Korver

Mother of twin boys

lantine said.

Korver's mother, Anita Korver of Orange City, said a social worker had described Cook as "menacing."

Services were scheduled for 10 a.m. today at Trinity Reformed Church in Orange City.