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Milgaard witness says detectives 'tortured' him

By Dan Lett

The star witness from David Milgaard's trial said he was psychologically tortured by Saskatoon police officers until he suffered a mental breakdown and was committed to a hospital psychiatric ward.

Albert Cadrain, in a statement given to a private investigator working for Milgaard's family, said he was grilled unrelentingly by Saskatoon police officers Eddie Karst and Charlie Short for weeks in the spring following the 1969 murder of nursing assistant Gail Miller.

The result, Cadrain said in his

statement, was almost total mental collapse.

"Before I walked into that police station I was a happy, normal kid," Cadrain said. "My life has never been the same and it never will be. Those detectives pushed me over the edge and I cracked."

In January 1969, Miller's half-naked body was found face down in a snowbank. Evidence presented at the trial indicated she had been raped and stabbed.

Milgaard was in Saskatoon that morning driving around with two friends looking for Cadrain's house. Milgaard arrived at about 9 a.m. and

after spending a few hours with Cadrain, the four left on a trip to Alberta.

Cadrain never made mention of the murder to police when he was questioned about it by police in Regina a few weeks later, after having been arrested for vagrancy. However, one month after the crime he went to Saskatoon police and told them he saw what appeared to be blood on Milgaard's clothing. He was subsequently given a \$2,000 reward for providing the information.

Cadrain detailed his experiences
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at the hands of Saskatoon police to Paul Henderson, a private investigator lent to the Milgaard case by Centurian Ministries, a U.S.-based non-profit organization that investigates cases of wrongful conviction.

Cadrain — referred to many times by Saskatoon Crown T.D.R. Caldwell as the "hero" of the case — said in his statement that police questioned him 15 to 20 times, often interrogating him more than 12 hours on each occasion.

Cadrain said officers Karst and Short would play "good cop — bad cop" with him; one officer would berate and insult him while the other was comforting.

Dennis Cadrain, Albert's younger brother, said in an interview from his British Columbia home that it was very apparent to family members that the police questioning resulted in profound psychological scars.

"He has never hurt a person in his life," Dennis Cadrain said. "But he's

been hurt by a lot of people."

Dennis Cadrain said that weeks of intense questioning had left his brother psychologically unbalanced to the point where he was experiencing various visions and delusions. Despite this, police used his testimony at the preliminary hearing and trial, he said.

Almost immediately following the trial in 1970, Dennis Cadrain said his brother committed himself to the psychiatric ward of University Hospital in Saskatoon where he was heavily sedated and subjected to shock therapy.

In a statement given several weeks earlier to Henderson, Cadrain said he had a recurring vision of the Virgin Mary appearing from the clouds and stomping on a serpent that displayed Milgaard's head.

Federal Justice Department investigator Eugene Williams interviewed Cadrain last week in Port Coquitlam, B.C., but Dennis Cadrain said Williams was unimpressed with Cadrain's statements.