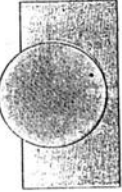


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Allegations of brutality rock Monroe

■ **Sheriff's Department:** County already has paid \$1 million as 3 agencies investigate charges.

By Said Deep
THE DETROIT NEWS

Federal, state and local authorities are investigating allegations of brutality by Monroe County sheriff's deputies, which have cost the county nearly \$1 million in out-of-court settlements.

The largest award, more than \$600,000, went to 30-year-old Kenneth Watson, of Maybee. In his lawsuit, Watson claimed his mouth was taped and deputies beat him while he was chained to a drain cover on the floor of his cell, bent backward like a pretzel by his shackles.



Kenneth Watson, after the beating he claimed he received by deputies.

"I thought I was going to die," said Watson, who was arrested for reckless driving and fleeing an accident scene on Jan. 15, 1989.

In his lawsuit, which was settled in December, Watson said the beating stopped only after he began vomiting through his nose and passed out.

In a similar out-of-court settlement in September, Charles Wilder of Temperance received nearly \$300,000. He claimed a deputy beat him unconscious with a blackjack during a 1986 arrest. Additional lawsuits are pending.

A spokesman for Amnesty International, which monitors brutality complaints around the world, said what allegedly happened to Watson is similar to what happens to political prisoners in countries like Chad and India.

The Watson case has prompted a number of agencies, including the FBI, Michigan State Police and the Monroe County Prosecutor's Office, to investigate

Please see **Sheriff, 12A**

Victim: 'They beat me so much I started vomiting'

By Said Deep
THE DETROIT NEWS

Four years after he was beaten unconscious by Monroe County sheriff's deputies, Kenneth Watson is still trying to put his life back together.

The lifelong Monroe County resident was a construction worker and optimistic about landing a job as a hazardous waste materials worker before his run-in with deputies on Jan. 15, 1989.

Arrested after returning to the scene of an accident, Watson said he was handcuffed and beaten at the scene and again in a Monroe jail cell called the "rubber room."

Watson said he lay shackled and bleeding from the mouth, head and ears before one deputy decided to cut off the tape covering his mouth.

"They beat me so much I started vomiting, and I thought I was going to die," Watson recalled in a recent interview. "My mouth was taped up and it started coming through my nose and stuff. ... I kept passing out on them."

Please see **Victim's claim, 12A**