

Murder  
7/16/78

**Suspect in 4 Killings**

**DEC 5 1979**

# Jury Sees Videotape of Gail

By GREG FAHERTY  
Courier-Express Staff Reporter

Gail Trait, accused of the butcher-knife slayings of her four children, said in a videotaped confession heard by a State Supreme Court jury Tuesday that the children "weren't my children until I killed them."

"After I stabbed them, they confessed they were my children," said Ms. Trait, 26, in the videotaped confession she gave police shortly after the killings.

"Then they were my children," she said.

The jury of nine men and three women sat in rapt attention while the 30-minute videotaped confession was played in a darkened courtroom.

### Key Evidence

The tape, a key piece of evidence in

the prosecution's case, was marked in evidence and played to the jury after it was identified by Chief Leo J. Donovan of the Buffalo Police Homicide Bureau.

Ms. Trait is on trial on eight counts of murder in the slayings of her three young daughters and a son, aged 2 to 9, in an upper apartment at 122 Montana Ave. on July 16, 1978.

"Those kids weren't mine," Ms. Trait told Donovan and Detective John K. Ludtka in the videotape, taken in the interview room of Buffalo Police Headquarters beginning at 6:30 a.m. the next day.

### 'To Help Save Souls'

"You would probably say this is murder, but it wasn't murder to me," the defendant stated in the videotape. "I did that to help save their souls," she said.

"After I did it, I told them to say I was their mother," said Ms. Trait in her confession. "Then they said they were my children and that's when I killed them," she said.

The defendant said she stabbed "all the girls" and partially dismembered the body of her son, Demario, who, age 2 was the youngest of the children.

Asked if she was angry at the children, she replied that she was not, that she loved them but "they had to tell me they were my own kids."

Ms. Trait was asked if the other children didn't try to stop her.

### 'Sat There and Looked'

"No, they all sat there and looked," she replied.

Ms. Trait stated she had taken the children to the hospital the day before

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## Trait Confession

they were slain, but declined to say why. Asked what was wrong with them, she replied:

"The only thing I knew wrong with those children was they weren't my children until I killed them."

In the same statement, Ms. Trait disclaimed her mother, Dorthea Williams, and her grandmother. "I thought they were my relatives but they no longer are," she said.

"All I have is the children I stabbed with a knife and made them confess I was their mother," she said. "They were my offspring because I saved their souls."

Ms. Trait said she had been reunited with the children only a few days earlier after they'd been placed in a foster home so she could continue her education.

"I was going to be a nurse," she said.

Defense attorney Carl Vizzi has claimed his client was involved in black

magic and voodoo but her statement appeared to dispute that.

Asked specifically whether she was "under pressure of black magic or voodoo," she replied in the negative. She also denied a bowl of blood found on the kitchen table had "anything to do with a ritual thing."

While the videotaped confession was introduced in evidence by Senior Assistant District Attorney George B. Quinlan Jr., the defense lawyer considers it his best evidence.

Vizzi, who will call psychiatrists later in the trial in support of his claim Ms. Trait is innocent by reason of insanity, urged the jury early in the trial to observe closely his client's demeanor in the videotaped confession.

Donovan will return to the witness stand at 9:30 this morning for further questioning when trial resumes before Justice Joseph D. Mintz and the jury.