Chuck Smith has worked in the East Baton Rouge Parish Coroner's Office for 15 years and he said he can't remember when so many people were being killed.

"We've not gone probably a week without a homicide this year," he said.

At a time when the world's attention was focused on Baton Rouge because of Rodney Peairs' manslaughter trial, the city experienced one of its bloodiest weeks.

There were two murders overnight Monday and six in the past seven days.

Records in the Police Department, the Sheriff's Office and the Coroner's Office show the parish's homicide problem has never been worse.

In 1991, 61 slayings occurred inside the city limits. During that record-setting year, 19 killings had occurred by the 25th of May.

By comparison, Baton Rouge's 40th homicide of 1993 occurred Tuesday — the 25th of May.

"Drugs and guns on the street" are the reasons for the city's soaring murder rate, said Capt. Don Buller, head of the city police Homicide/Robbery Division. "There's not much we can do."

Homicide No. 39 occurred shortly after 11 p.m. Monday on Larkin Court, a small street near 12th Street just

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Late last year, as the murder rate in the city soared, police chief Greg White assigned officers from the newly formed Homicide/Robbery Division to beef up patrols and crack down on violence.

Detectives say that while drugs are involved in the majority of homicides, 1993 has seen an increase in domestic killings. More than anything else, finding a solution to the drug problem will help solve the murder rate, a police official said.

Byrd from police headquarters.

City police detectives Todd Quebedeaux, left, and Charles Armstrong right, escort second-degree murder suspect.

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