

' SHOOT THEM !' - CHILLING ACCOUNT OF BOYS' DEATHS UNFOLDS IN CONFLICTING COURT TESTIMONY ABOUT ROBBERY AT DRUG HOUSE

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Standing over two frightened children, the woman ordered her robbery cohort to open fire.

He stood and stared at her, gripping a handgun but refusing to pull the trigger.

" **Shoot them !**" she screamed, using an expletive.

Sonya O'Neal then snatched the weapon and shot the boys, 11 and 13, in the head, killing **them** instantly, another suspect in the Feb. 23 slayings told Detroit police.

The statement from suspect Charles Moore was read Friday during a preliminary hearing in 36th District Court in Detroit for six suspects charged in the killings of Darren Johnson, 11, of Oak Park and Orlando Herron, 13, of Detroit.

O'Neal, 38; Torrisandois Lyons, 42; Deandre Witherspoon, 23; Terry Blakely, 56; Robert Reed, 36, and Moore, 38, all of Detroit, are charged with first-degree murder in connection with the shootings in a west side home on Mansfield.

They are accused of conspiring to kidnap and rob 23-year-old Ronell Thompson, who authorities say is a relative of the dead boys and an admitted drug dealer who lived in the home.

Thompson was shot several times but survived. He was supposed to testify Friday but was back in the hospital with a blood clot stemming from the shooting, Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Elizabeth Walker said.

Several of the suspects said they kidnapped Thompson as part of a plot to rob him of cocaine and money. Lyons told police they thought Thompson had \$100,000 stashed in his home, but they found no cash.

As part of the plot, Thompson was lured to O'Neal's home on Orleans, ostensibly to sell 9 ounces of cocaine, police said. When he arrived, Lyons and Reed abducted him at gunpoint, duct-taping his hands and mouth and throwing him in the trunk of a red 2000 Ford Focus before heading back to his house, Moore told police.

During Friday's hearing, homicide officers who had interviewed the suspects read sometimes conflicting statements from five of **them** .

Lyons said he shot Thompson.

Moore said Reed shot Thompson.

O'Neal said she was outside the Mansfield house when the shots rang out.

Blakely said he stashed the weapons in a heating vent.

Witherspoon said he formulated the plan to rob Thompson.

O'Neal's attorney, David Steingold, said, "You can conclude nothing based on the conflicting statements, other than that they were together in an attempt to rob this place. The truth is yet to be disclosed." On Feb. 26, Moore told Sgt. Edward Williams that O'Neal ordered Lyons to **shoot** the boys after their plot to rob the home turned up only a small amount of cocaine.

When Lyons refused, O'Neal grabbed his weapon and shouted: "I know you [expletive] have something to do with my house getting robbed!" Then O'Neal started shooting, Moore said. Police said they are uncertain whether O'Neal's house was ever robbed.

A woman and two other boys, 15 and 17, survived the attack without serious injury.

According to a search warrant, Thompson told police "Sonya" had shot him.

Lyons told police that Witherspoon told him that Thompson used kids as drug runners, which made the house an easy target. But he did not identify the two victims as such.

"I'm sorry about the kids, and my heart goes out to the families," Lyons told Sgt. Michael Russell. "I'm not a child killer."

Police have said they have no confirmation that the boys robbed O'Neal or were drug runners for Thompson.

Family members have strongly denied that the pair had any involvement in drugs.

After the statements were read, Judge Kenneth King adjourned the hearing until May 14.

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo

CAPTION: Darren Johnson, 11, left, of Oak Park and 13-year-old Orlando Herron of Detroit were shot in the head, police say.

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