

'They're gonna bail,' and then a cop is dead: Partner describes deadly ambush in Detroit

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DETROIT -- City police Officer Shawn Bandy and his partner were expecting the kidnapping suspects in the van in front of them to ditch the vehicle and flee.

Then a volley of bullets from the van's back window shattered their windshield, killing Bandy and wounding Officer Jeffrey Bonner and another officer in a second patrol car, Bonner testified Monday.

With Bandy's parents, Max and Susan, solemnly sitting in the second row, Bonner took the stand in the preliminary hearings for four of the five suspects charged in the case. He said that when the van slowed Dec. 5 at a dark area of Westphalia, he told Bandy to get ready for a foot chase.

"They're gonna bail, get ready," Bonner said he told his partner.

"I'm on it," Bandy responded.

Just then, the shots came from the van's back window, Bonner said.

"I (saw) a flash of light coming from the rear of the van," Bonner said. "I saw the drapes and the glass blow out of the window ... Your brain says, 'Holy Cow,' I think that's gunfire."

Bandy was shouting into the radio for help.

Then stopped. The radio microphone fell into the 23-year-old officer's lap.

He had been shot in the face.

Bonner said he grabbed Bandy as a second bullet hit Bandy's face. He said he covered him with his body on the patrol car's floor and radioed for help.

Charged in the case with murder, kidnapping, extortion and other related charges are James Langford, 24 **Montez Moore**, 26 Thomas Culbreth, 20 D'Andre Coffee, 25 and Eugene Childrey, 18, all of Detroit.

They are accused of kidnapping a Detroit woman and her 12-year-old son and then spraying two Detroit police cars with more than 30 bullets from an assault rifle, killing Bandy and wounding Bonner and Officer Lloyd Todd.

Childrey waived his right to a preliminary hearing and agreed to testify against his co-defendants as part of a plea agreement.

Childrey testified matter-of-factly how he and the four other suspects played video games early Dec. 5 and then cruised around town.

Then they bought two-way radios from Radio Shack and picked up several handguns and an AK-47 from Culbreth's house, he said. Langford then set up the kidnapping of Athena Akins, 30, and her son, Childrey said.

When Akins drove her Lincoln into her driveway about 8:30 p.m., Langford flashed the van's high beams and Green and Culbreth jumped out and snatched Akins and her son, Childrey said.

His accomplices handcuffed Akins. They kept their faces covered by ski masks and headbands. After Akins' boyfriend paid about \$4,500 cash ransom, the two were released, he said.

Moments later, they saw police cars tailing their van, Childrey said.

The sirens and lights went on.

"Bang at 'em!" Childrey said Coffee yelled.

Montez Moore grabbed the assault rifle and blasted out the van's rear window, firing at the two police cars, Childrey said. The men drove a few miles before ditching the van and the guns and fleeing on foot, Childrey said.

Culbreth and Green also tossed away bullet-proof vests they were wearing, Childrey said. All five met up later at a friend's home on Roxbury, he said.

After Monday's hearing was adjourned, Bandy's mother, Susan, appeared shaken by Childrey's testimony and the suspects' demeanor in court.

"It strikes me that they think this is a big joke," she said. "They talked about playing a PlayStation and going out and shooting somebody all in the same breath. They were laughing about it over there."

Still, she said she plans to attend every court hearing.

"I feel a great need to know," she said. "He'll never be back, but I still want to know everything."

Max Bandy, himself a sergeant in the Detroit Police Department's Armed Robbery Unit, said his familiarity with the court process is helping him cope with hearing the details of his son's death.

"I am so used to hearing this stuff that a lot of it comes naturally," he said. "It did cause me to reflect back a lot."

The preliminary examination was to continue today in Detroit's 36th District Court. Judge Deborah Lewis Langston will determine whether there is enough evidence to order the suspects tried on the charges.

Caption: Photo 1: **Montez Moore** listens to testimony by suspect Eugene Childrey who said **Moore** fired the AK-47 through the back window of van, killing Officer Shawn Bandy. Behind **Moore** are two other suspects, Thomas Culbreth, left, and James Langford. D'Andre Coffee is the fifth suspect in the shooting. James Borchuck / The Detroit News Photo 2: Max and Susan Bandy listen to testimony Monday by their son's partner, Jeffrey Bonner. Bonner recounted events leading to the attack that killed Shawn Bandy. James Borchuck / The Detroit News Photo 3: Eugene Childrey said he and his friends played video games before getting guns and kidnapping Athena Akins and her son. James Borchuck / The Detroit News

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