

HILL SAYS ALLEGATIONS AREN'T NEW OR TRUE

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Detroit City Councilman Gilbert Hill said Sunday that allegations that he impeded a murder investigation while he was a homicide inspector are the result of attempts by two drug dealers to get out of prison and part of the FBI's ongoing targeting of him and other black officials.

"I absolutely believe" the FBI is leaking information about its probe to news reporters "because they can't prove their case against me," Hill said. "If they can't get me one way, they kill me another way."

Hill, considered a possible mayoral contender since he won election to the council in 1989 with the second-highest vote total, said he thinks there are political overtones to the latest allegations against him.

"It has crossed my mind that it is because I'm a threat to be mayor," said Hill. He said he has thought about it but isn't planning to run for mayor next year.

The FBI did not return calls Sunday about the Hill case.

A Detroit News article Sunday said the FBI is probing allegations by convicted drug dealers **Johnny Curry** and Rick Wershe that Hill gave Curry information about a drug-related murder investigation in 1985, and impeded the investigation. Hill denies all allegations.

According to the report, Curry said he and his wife, Cathy Volsan-Curry, niece of Mayor Coleman Young, met with Hill in his office the day after a 13-year-old boy was slain. During that meeting, Curry is quoted, Hill told him that an associate of his was a suspect in the slaying. Hill allegedly assured the couple that they had nothing to worry about in the investigation.

The report said that suspects associated with Curry were not interviewed for nine months, and by then, they refused to answer questions about the case, which remains unsolved.

Hill said that allegations he impeded the murder investigation are old news. "This is a story that's been bandied about for years, with no proof and no believability," he said.

In fact, Hill mentioned an allegation that wasn't reported Sunday: That is that Curry paid Hill \$10,000 the day after the slaying to keep him out of the investigation, Hill said.

Hill said he said he never met with Curry and Volsan-Curry. He also denied impeding or getting money to derail the investigation.

Hill said he may have talked to Volsan-Curry on the telephone after the murder of 13-year-old Damion Lucas, who died from gunshots after bullets tore through his Detroit house on April 29, 1985.

Investigators wanted to talk to her because someone thought her car had been parked at the scene, Hill said.

"I put out the word that I wanted to talk to her. But I didn't initiate a phone call," Hill said. Police determined that her car was not involved.

Hill said he doesn't recall talking with her but said if he did, the call was inconsequential.

A 30-year veteran of the Detroit Police Department before he retired, Hill has long been the subject of rumors about involvement with drugs or corruption.

"You can only deny beating your wife so many times before people will begin ascribing truth to it," Hill said. Asked whether the probe would hurt Hill politically, Council President Maryann Mahaffey said she "wouldn't dignify the allegations with a comment."

Councilman Mel Ravitz noted that Hill is very popular with voters. "Allegations are cheap," he said. "If there are indictments, there will be negative consequences; if not, they will disappear like a whiff of smoke."

Caption: Photo

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