

## FAMILY SUFFERS ANOTHER SLAYING

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A year ago, Charles Byrd asked aloud why someone had killed his niece, Charmaine Tye, in a deliberate barrage of gunfire as she sat in a car near her mother's apartment.

"We can't figure it out," said Byrd, 58.

Late Thursday night, police said, Byrd was the target at the same east-side Detroit apartment complex where his 31-year-old niece was gunned down. At least eight shots from a handgun ripped through the bedroom window of his first-floor apartment about 10:50 p.m. on Superior near the I-75 service drive, fatally wounding him.

"It would be irresponsible . . . to think it was anything else but a hit," said one police investigator. Byrd's death raises the family casualty list to two dead and two injured in four attacks over the last year.

Police have investigated possible drug links and the involvement of alleged hit man **Lodrick Parker** in the three earlier attacks. They say the attacks were not random or coincidence.

Richard Padzieski, the Wayne County prosecutor's chief of operations, said no connection between Byrd's death and the earlier attacks was immediately uncovered, but added, "Obviously this is a cause for some concern. I hope the Detroit police would look at this as a motive or a lead to investigate."

Homicide Inspector Gerald Stewart said Friday that no suspects or motives had been identified in Byrd's death.

Byrd, an affable man with a knack for turning colorful phrases, was to be a key witness in the November firebombing trial of **Parker**, accused of setting off an explosion Jan. 19 at the Blessed Candles Store on West 7 Mile. Byrd and a co-worker were seriously burned in that blast.

**Parker**, 31, who is in the Wayne County Jail, also faces trial Monday in the Sept. 12, 1989, shooting deaths of Byrd's niece and Dennis Conley, 37, and the critical wounding of Edith Mae Wilborn in a car parked at the Paul Roberson apartments.

Wilborn, now paralyzed below the waist, has identified **Parker** in court as the gunman. Stewart has characterized that incident as drug-related.

In addition, **Parker** is a suspect in the shootings of Alice Tye and her husband, Thomas -- Charmaine's brother -- at the Blessed Candles Store last Sept. 28, the same store that blew up in January. Both survived.

Rene Cooper, defending **Parker** in the Tye-Conley murder trial, said the Byrd killing is "a coincidence, certainly an interesting coincidence."

Jeffrey Collins, **Parker** 's lawyer in the firebombing trial, said: "The case is not until November, and there is the transcript of Mr. Byrd's testimony from the examination. I imagine that will be used, so really none of this means any particular legal advantage to Mr. **Parker** ."

**Parker** was acquitted of the 1988 hospital bed slaying of Richard (Maserati Rick) Carter, a suspected cocaine dealer.

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