

## GUNMAN, SLAIN MANAGER MAY HAVE MET AT CAR WASH

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It **may have** been a coincidence.

A victim of Comerica Bank **gunman** Allen Griffin Jr. **may have** known his killer because he was a regular customer at the Birmingham car wash where Griffin worked for more than 1 1/2 years, the Free Press has learned.

Detroit police investigators looking into the events leading up to the shooting said they did not know the two men **may have** been acquainted.

"We were unaware of that and certainly will look into it," said a member of the major crimes squad who requested anonymity. "That's a very curious piece of information."

Owners and **managers** of Jax Kar Wash on South Hunter Boulevard said they are not sure whether the affable, clean-cut Griffin knew bank **manager** Stanley Pijanowski III.

But the two are likely to **have** crossed paths before Griffin killed him Tuesday.

Pijanowski brought his dark green Cadillac to the car wash about four times weekly, **manager** Wayne Craig said in an interview Wednesday. Griffin had worked as a service adviser, selling customers extra services and products, he said.

"The **manager** of that bank was a customer of mine here quite often," Craig said. "He had a Club Plan, which means he could be washing it every day. But he did it about three or four times a week."

Craig said it was likely the pair had bumped into each other, although he couldn't be sure. Griffin's job as a service adviser required considerable customer contact.

Police noted that unlike the two victims who were felled in the bank lobby, Griffin walked into Pijanowski's office to shoot him.

Police also are looking into Griffin's personal problems, which seemed to **have** peaked in the last few days, for a possible motive in the slayings. Among them:

\* Secretary of State records show Griffin's driver's license was suspended for the third time Monday. Griffin received a notice of the suspension Tuesday, relatives said.

\* Griffin owed more than \$5,300 in child support payments to the mother of his children born in 1993 and 1995, a paternity lawsuit filed in Wayne County Circuit Court shows.

\* He was scheduled for a court hearing next week on a separate paternity lawsuit to determine

how much additional child support should be garnisheed for a child by his estranged wife.

\* Warrants for his arrest were issued in the last two months for violating his probation on a Detroit drug charge and for not appearing in traffic court in Ferndale.

\* He was having trouble making payments on his car, which relatives helped him finance.

Griffin's personal problems sometimes surfaced in his daily conversations with Craig and other coworkers at the car wash, especially his difficulties in trying to support three young children.

"At one point, just before they delivered the last baby, he was living out of his car," Craig said.

Relatives say Griffin had difficulty meeting weekly payments to ex-girlfriend, Candie Norman of Highland Park, and child care bills for his 10-month-old son, Allen Griffin III, whose mother is Vikki Ratliff.

"The child support payments cut him down," said Charles Griffin, the uncle Griffin lived with near Denby High School. "He just didn't feel he was making enough money. There was not a whole lot left over for himself."

Griffin was in the hole for more than \$5,300 in child support payments to Norman. She could not be reached for comment.

Wayne County Friend of the Court issued several warrants for his arrest for not paying that child support.

Griffin claimed to be making \$50 a day working at the Birmingham car wash when a judge ordered him in August 1995 to pay \$60 a week for his first two children. But records show Griffin never made a payment .

And when Griffin didn't appear for a January court hearing, he was arrested and spent a week in jail. That stint caused him to lose his car wash job, where he had hoped to move into a management position, his former bosses said.

When Griffin returned home, he was without a job and without his wife. His uncle said he was happy to end a year- long silence with his nephew.

The early marriage had been a sore point between the two. "He kept his distance from me and I kept mine from him. Then he asked for my help," Charles Griffin said.

The elder Griffin said he wanted to "try and keep Allen's mind off of his problems," which included depression about the murder of his father and his mother's schizophrenia. He said he gave Allen a job at his car wash, Keep It Simple, on East 8 Mile.

"I was about to turn it over to Allen because he knew the business and I didn't want to be washing cars until I was old," Charles Griffin said.

Despite his help, Griffin said his nephew probably went into his bloody rampage after a telephone call that morning. Relatives and police do not know who made the call or what was said, but Charles Griffin said he's convinced it had something to do with his nephew's children.

"Both women were very studious about putting the child support demand on him, and that could **have** exacerbated the situation," Griffin said. "I'm led to believe it could **have** triggered his trauma."

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