

JUDGE'S SON CHARGED WITH MURDER MAN SLAIN IN SOUTHFIELD PARKING LOT

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The son of the chief judge of Detroit Recorder's Court was charged with murder Tuesday in the shooting death of a man during a fight in the parking lot of a Southfield bar.

Randy Gardner, 31, of Greenway Street in southwest Detroit, was charged with killing Kevin Fields, 21, of Twenty-eighth Street in Detroit, during a fight in the parking lot of the Perfect Blend, 24901 Northwestern Highway, shortly before 2 a.m. Tuesday.

Gardner is the son of Judge Samuel Gardner

Witnesses gave police conflicting statements about whether Fields was armed when the shooting occurred.

THOMAS HEARNS, the World Boxing Council's world super-welterweight champion was there when the shooting occurred.

"Tommy was in his car talking to a friend when all this commotion started," said John Noonan, an attorney who has promoted some of Hearn's bouts.

"When somebody yelled there was a gun," Noonan said, "Tommy got out of his car and sought cover."

Hearn, who police have listed as a possible witness in the case, was instrumental in the quick apprehension of the suspects, according to sources close to the investigation.

Hearn, a Detroit police reserve officer, helped Southfield police recover the gun, which was tossed away after Fields was shot, the sources said.

Police recovered a snub-nosed, .38-caliber revolver, a police spokesman said.

GARDNER AND FIELDS, who lived only a few blocks apart in southwest Detroit, had been arguing "for quite some time" over a woman who was with Fields when the shooting occurred, according to a source involved in the investigation.

Shortly before the shooting, the source said, Gardner grabbed the woman's buttocks while she was dancing. Fields began fighting with Gardner and two of Gardner's acquaintances, the source said.

Once outside, the fight started again, and Fields was shot once in the chest, police said.

At least one witness told investigators that Fields swung a crowbar or tire iron at Gardner before being shot, the sources said. Other witnesses, however, told investigators Fields was unarmed.

Aided by witnesses who pointed out the car occupied by Gardner and his two friends, police arrested the three as they were trying to leave the parking lot, a spokesman said.

RANDY GARDNER is the son of Judge Gardner and his first wife, Bernice. They were divorced when Randy was a child, and he remained with his mother. Judge Gardner has remarried twice.

Judge Gardner declined comment Tuesday.

Some of **Randy Gardner**'s acquaintances expressed disbelief about the shooting.

"Randy is really nice, a swell person," said Detroit lawyer W. Otis Culpepper. "I just don't believe it. If he did shoot -- and we don't know yet that he did -- I'm positive it was in self-defense. Randy does not have that aggressive-type personality to just shoot an unarmed man."

Gardner is a 1981 graduate of the Detroit College of Law but never took the bar exam. He was a law clerk in the Detroit law firm of Bell and Hudson, headed by former Wayne County Circuit Judge Edward Bell. Culpepper described Gardner as a private businessman.

GARDNER, accompanied by attorneys Elbert Hatchett and Bell, was arraigned on an open murder charge Tuesday afternoon before Southfield District Judge Clarence Reid Jr.

Requesting bond for Gardner, Hatchett said his client was married, had two children and had lived at the Greenway address for two years. Gardner was ordered held on \$20,000 bond in the Oakland County Jail, pending a Sept. 13 hearing.

The two men arrested with Gardner were released Tuesday afternoon "pending further investigation," a police spokesman said

The Perfect Blend, on the first floor of the Horizon Heritage Plaza office building, is popular with young professionals and athletes.

Caption: Photo RICHARD LEE

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