

3 INDICTED IN TOUGH-TO-CRACK HOMICIDES COUNTY PROSECUTOR GIVES CREDIT TO GRAND JURY'S WORK

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Author: MATT HELMS Free Press Staff Writer

Oakland County Prosecutor David Gorcyca on Tuesday announced indictments **in** two long-open murder cases, charging **three** men **in** deaths that stymied police because of uncooperative witnesses.

Lewis Clarke, 25, of Detroit, was arraigned Tuesday before Oakland County Circuit Judge Richard Kuhn, who ordered him to stand trial on charges of conspiracy to commit murder and of first-degree premeditated murder.

Clarke faces life **in** prison if convicted **in** the 1998 beating death of 32-year-old Reginald Young of Pontiac. He was killed near a biker bar **in** downtown Pontiac. A preliminary examination is set for April 6 **in** Pontiac District Court.

Also arraigned before Kuhn were Horace Smith, 44, and Ernest Smith, 36, unrelated Detroit men who are charged **in** the kidnapping and death of 23-year-old Sherneir Thomas of Detroit at a Southfield gas station **in** 1995.

The arraignments marked the final indictments from the grand jury Gorcyca impaneled last March. Prosecutors said the grand jury returned indictments **in** 13 **homicide** cases before its term expired Sunday.

Authorities say the two men kidnapped Thomas **in** revenge for his angering a drug dealer for whom both worked. Thomas fled when they stopped to refuel but was fatally shot.

Horace Smith was bound over for trial on five counts, including first-degree murder and kidnapping. Ernest Smith was charged with kidnapping and perjury before a grand jury. Both face life **in** prison if convicted. Their preliminary examination is set for April 1 **in** Southfield District Court.

James Halushka, deputy prosecutor **in** charge of warrants and investigations, said Tuesday that the prosecutor's ability to compel testimony from grand-jury witnesses by granting them immunity was particularly helpful **in** the biker-bar slaying.

Halushka said witnesses testified that a group of Phantoms chased Young out of the biker bar **in** April 1998 and beat him and another friend, who was able to escape, **in** a dispute over a leather jacket.

Witnesses identified other attackers only by gang names. Investigators have yet to charge the others.

Assistant Prosecutor John Pietrofesa said Young's death was caused by Clarke repeatedly smashing Young's head with a crowbar. He died after two months **in** a coma.

Matt Helms can be reached at 1-248-586-2618 or by E-mail at helms@freepress.com

Caption: Photo

David Gorcyca (CUTLINE RAN **IN** STATE EDITION ONLY.)

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