

## OFFICER'S FATHER WAS SHOT SO HE'D 'BE STILL'

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Author: CECIL ANGEL Free Press Staff Writer

Porter Thomas was easing away backward as Patrick Smith moved closer.

Thomas grabbed Smith's right arm, the one holding a .38- caliber handgun.

They tussled and fell to the floor. Thomas, 72, struggled toward the office of his auto body shop.

"I fired a shot," Smith said, ". . . hoping to make him stop and be still.

"I'm not a murderer. God forgive me."

Smith recounted the June 21st slaying of Thomas in a confession to Detroit police that was read Friday at his preliminary examination in 36th District Court. Judge Chris Stith ordered Smith, 35, and **Rodney Dumas**, 42, to stand trial in Detroit Recorder's Court on charges of first-degree murder and use of a firearm during a felony.

Thomas was the father of Cmdr. Rudy Thomas of the Detroit Police Department's narcotics division, but investigators said the robbery and shooting at the elder Thomas' shop were not related to his son's work.

In a rare move, Wayne County Prosecutor John O'Hair is personally handling the case. O'Hair said the police connection was "incidental" to his decision to prosecute the case himself.

He said most of his recent cases have involved the slayings of elderly people, and he hopes his involvement sends a reassuring message that preying on senior citizens will not be tolerated.

"They are so vulnerable," O'Hair said.

Smith has five armed robbery and a weapons conviction dating back to 1973. **Dumas** was convicted of second-degree murder in 1977 and released from a seven- to 15-year prison sentence six months before Thomas was killed.

In his confession given the day after the slaying, Smith said he needed money for his daughter's abortion and for a \$138 telephone bill.

"We were cruising the neighborhood looking for some quick easy money," Smith said.

After stopping at a drug house and a Burger King, Smith said they decided to rob the Porter Thomas Garage in the 15000 block of Wyoming on Detroit's west side after Smith noticed an open gate that was usually closed.

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