

SHOOTING SUSPECT DID PRISON TIME IN '86 KILLING

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One of the alleged gunmen in Tuesday's assassination attempt in Birmingham was released from prison earlier this year after serving time in the killing of the son of Detroit anti-violence crusader Clementine Barfield.

Barfield said she was shocked and dismayed that **Jessie Harrison** , who killed her son in 1986, is a suspect in another violent crime.

"I didn't know he was out," said Barfield, the founder of Save Our Sons And Daughters. "This time four years ago, we were in trial."

Tuesday night, police said **Harrison** 22, and Shawn Brown, 18, fired repeatedly into a Cadillac driven by Arthur Ben (Fatman) Wilson at a Birmingham intersection. Wilson survived. Police chased the pair down Woodward until their car crashed into a light pole in Highland Park. Brown died; **Harrison** is in the hospital.

On July 17, 1986, 16-year-old Derick Barfield and his two brothers went looking for a fight at a gasoline station at West Grand Boulevard and Dexter. There they met **Harrison** , who was believed to have been involved in a threat on one of the Barfield brothers.

When Derick called out of a car window, **Harrison** fired four shots into the car, killing Derick and wounding his younger brother, Roger.

Harrison was charged with second-degree murder but was convicted of careless use of a firearm and use of a firearm during a felony. He got 16 to 24 months on the first charge and the mandatory two years on the second. He was paroled March 1.

The sentence was not enough for Barfield.

"I feel as though it was a waste," she said. "I was very disappointed that he didn't take advantage of this opportunity to do something constructive with his life."

She said, though, that she has never dwelled on thoughts of **Harrison** .

"I think if I had spent my time hating him, I think the hate would have consumed me and the rest of my family," she said. "We can't keep throwing away lives like this."

Federal and local authorities have launched an investigation to determine whether the Birmingham attack was part of a larger struggle within the Detroit-area drug world.

The brazen shooting in a residential area near downtown Birmingham came a little more than 24 hours after reputed drug lord Demetrius Holloway was assassinated in a downtown Detroit clothing store.

Birmingham police stopped just short of connecting the shooting of Wilson with the Holloway killing.

"Everyone's assuming, and I wouldn't be surprised if it is," said Lt. Richard Dimock. "We just don't know." But, he said, "This was not a random shooting."

Police said Wilson, 34, is lucky to be alive after being hit by three of 14 shots that tore into the side of his car during the three-second burst of gunfire from a 9mm semiautomatic pistol.

Charges against **Harrison** are expected to be filed today.

A Detroit police investigator said the Birmingham shooting has no known link to the Holloway killing, and Detroit Executive Deputy Chief James Bannon cautioned against speculation that a drug war has erupted.

"I'm not impressed yet that anybody knows whether there's some kind of war going on or whether it's bad feelings going on among fellow travelers," Bannon said. "I don't know whether this is related to any kind of turf war or just a bunch of s---heads with guns."

Another law enforcement official with extensive experience in drug gang operations said the killings might not be unusual attrition among dealers.

"It happens all the time -- they kill each other every day," he said. "Only now, we've had a couple of big names go down. That's the only difference. Anyway, look at Holloway's age. He was 32; that's really old to be in drugs. At that age, they are usually dead or in jail. Time just caught up with him."

William Coonce, head of the Detroit office of the federal Drug Enforcement Administration, said his agency is cooperating with local police investigations.

"Whether the recent shooting are related, retaliatory or turf drug control-oriented is speculative at this time," he said.

Don Reisig, director of the state Office of Drug Agencies, said the rash of drug-related killings is a symptom of drug abuse that is not confined to large cities.

"The fact that a couple of drug barons escaped prosecution and now chose to shoot it out, and the fact it happened in Birmingham, may wake people up to the fact that this can happen anywhere," Reisig said.

The shooting flared when a blue 1979 Datsun pulled along Wilson's white 1988 Cadillac and a

passenger in the Datsun "just stuck the gun out and started firing," Dimock said.

Although hit in the right arm, the abdomen and a leg, Wilson put the car in park and crawled into the backseat. He then rolled out through a rear door; a resident who heard the shooting found him, police said.

Wilson was listed in serious condition.

According to court records, Wilson was placed on two years' probation in August after pleading guilty to possession of less than 25 grams of cocaine stemming from a Pontiac arrest.

Harrison was convicted in a 1987 Detroit Recorder's Court case of careless use of a firearm and possession of a firearm in the commission of a felony and sentenced to a 3 1/3-year prison term. He was discharged in March.

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