

## **U .S. TO SEEK DEATH FOR 6 DETROITERS INDICTED IN KILLINGS FOR HIRE**

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Federal authorities announced Tuesday that they will **seek** the federal **death** penalty against six Detroit men accused **of** killings while working for the notorious Best Friends narcotics distribution and murder-for-hire organization.

It is the first time the federal **death** penalty will be sought in Michigan, a state which does not have a **death** penalty, said Sam Hutchings, spokesman for U .S. Attorney Alan Gershel.

A 56-count indictment against the six -- Reginald (Rockin' Reggie) Brown, Terrance Brown, Lonnie O'Bryant, Stacey Culbert, Charles Wilkes and Michael Williams -- and 23 others alleged **to** be members **of** Best Friends was unsealed Tuesday as authorities began arresting them on charges **of** murder, cocaine sales, weapons violations and conspiracy.

One **of** the people suspected **of** leading the Best Friends network, Reginald Brown, was arrested June 17 in New York outside a BMW dealership. His brother, Terrance (Boogaloo) Brown escaped.

Reginald Brown has agreed **to** be moved **to** Detroit and marshals will probably return him **to** Michigan next week, said U .S. Attorney F. William Soisson. Brown will face charges that he executed three men and a 3-year-old girl in 1992.

**Of** the 29 people indicted, one has since been killed, two are in prison and five were arrested in the past few days. The rest are at large.

The Best Friends network, formed in the mid-1980s, distributed drugs in Detroit, Lexington, Ky., Toledo and Lima, Ohio. According **to** the indictment, members also were available for contract killings and drive-by shootings **to** eliminate drug competition or **to** get revenge. The gang has been linked **to** dozens **of** killings.

Commander Joel Gilliam, former head **of** the Detroit Police narcotics section, has described Best Friends as "particularly vicious."

U .S. Attorney Gershel said all 29 men and women could face sentences **of** up **to** life in prison if convicted.

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