

## WELL-DRESSED SUSPECT FACING NEW CHARGES

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Saturday, January 25, 2003

Author: DAVID ASHENFELTER FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

**Thelmon Stuckey** III already is facing trial and a possible federal death sentence in the 1996 killing of former Detroit police officer and suspected drug dealer Ricardo Darbins.

Now, prosecutors are after **Stuckey** 's flashy duds and jewelry.

In a new indictment issued Thursday, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Detroit initiated criminal forfeiture proceedings to take the gems and the crocodile leather jackets, hats and belt that federal agents seized in a raid on **Stuckey** 's apartment near Atlanta, Ga., in September.

**Stuckey** was arrested in the raid and returned to Detroit. Authorities seized \$203,606 worth of property.

"He was a pretty flamboyant personality," Assistant U.S. Attorney J. Michael Buckley said of **Stuckey** . "In some of these cases, criminal defendants get more upset about the prospects of losing their possessions than they do about facing prison time."

Buckley said he couldn't discuss the charges until after the case goes to trial in June.

**Stuckey** , 33, is accused of belonging to a large-scale, violent drug gang on Detroit's west side from 1993 to early 2000.

He's accused of murder, conspiracy to distribute cocaine, money laundering, witness tampering and being a felon in possession of a firearm. He's being held in the Wayne County Jail.

Dinnis Sifford, 27, and Verdel Murrie, 32, both of Detroit, are accused of being accessories to Darbins' killing and of conspiracy to distribute cocaine. M.C. Higgins, 72, of Detroit is charged with money laundering. Murrie is in custody. The others are free on bond.

**Stuckey** 's lawyer, Anthony Chambers of Detroit, said he hadn't seen the new indictment, but looks forward to defending his client.

The indictment says **Stuckey** obtained large quantities of cocaine from sources in Atlanta and Detroit and sold it in Detroit with Sifford's and Murrie's help. Higgins is accused of helping **Stuckey** conceal drug profits.

The most serious charge involves the killing of Darbins, 28, who was shot Aug. 6, 1996. **Stuckey** allegedly killed him to prevent him from talking to federal agents about **Stuckey** 's drug activities.

Two months before his death, a federal grand jury indicted Darbins and another police officer on drug conspiracy charges.

The indictment doesn't explain why Sifford and Murrie were charged in Darbins' killing.

The fate of **Stuckey** 's clothing and jewelry will be decided by the jury that tries him, Buckley said. If the government gets it, it likely will be sold at auction or used in undercover investigations.

Contact DAVID ASHENFELTER at 313-223-4490 or [ashenf@freepress.com](mailto:ashenf@freepress.com)

Caption: Photo

Police say **ThelmonStuckey** III killed for drug deals.

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 3A

Index Terms: THELMON STUCKEY III ; MURDER ; SUSPECT ; RICARDO DARBINS

Record Number: 0301250345

Copyright (c) 2003 Detroit Free Press