

JURY CONVICTS REPUTED HIT MAN IN TEEN'S SLAYING

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Reputed hit man **Mark McCloud**, described by prosecutors as one of the most dangerous men in Detroit, was convicted Wednesday of first-degree murder in the beating and stabbing death of a Detroit man.

A Recorder's Court jury deliberated about five hours before convicting **McCloud**, 21, of overseeing the August contract killing of Lenny Thompson, 19, in a house on the 15300 block of Westbrook on Detroit's west side. Thompson's killing was ordered because of an outstanding cocaine debt, according to testimony.

McCloud, who was acquitted in two earlier murder cases, is believed responsible for more than a dozen killings in the Detroit area, police said.

"He's got a reputation for being a very dangerous person -- one of the worst in town -- and responsible for a lot of deaths," said Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Robert Agacinski.

Investigators, speaking on condition of anonymity, said recently that **McCloud** had built a sizeable west side crack cocaine operation.

Also convicted after four days of testimony before Judge Prentis Edwards were George Cheatham, for first-degree murder and kidnapping; and Michael Howell, for kidnapping and assault with intent to murder.

McCloud and Cheatham face mandatory sentences Feb. 14 of life in prison without parole and Howell faces a maximum life term.

A fourth defendant, Thomas Friday, in whose home the slaying occurred, was acquitted of assault with intent to murder. A fifth man, Alexander Martin, testified against the others under a grant of immunity.

In 1987, **McCloud** was acquitted of murder and conspiracy in the machine-gun slaying of three people in a house on the 15800 block of Coyle. The three victims, and one who survived, were bound and shot with a machine gun.

A week after his acquittal, **McCloud** was arrested with Cheatham for the kidnapping and murder of Michael Braggs. Chief Recorder's Court Judge Dalton Roberson declared a mistrial in the Braggs case when the main prosecution witness escaped from custody in the middle of trial.

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