

'WHITE BOY' WERSHE GETS LIFE

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Decrying cocaine's toll of "burned-out brains and burned- out souls," Detroit Recorder's Court Judge Thomas Jackson sentenced **Richard Wershe Jr .**, the convicted teenage drug dealer, to life in prison without parole Thursday.

After the sentencing, one of **Wershe** 's lawyers alleged that police had packed the courtroom and hallways during **Wershe** 's trial with young people in drug dealer regalia to sway the jury. Attorney William Bufalino II also said **Wershe** refused an FBI offer of federal protection in exchange for unspecified testimony.

In handing down the mandatory sentence for possession of large amounts of drugs, Jackson noted that **Wershe** was convicted of holding eight kilos of "almost pure cocaine" worth about \$5 million. Jackson said he could only "surmise what you had to do to control that amount" at the age of 18.

Wershe , his double-breasted suit wrinkled and blond hair uncombed, said only "No, sir," when asked if he wished to speak. His mother, Darlene Carr, wiped her eyes as Jackson pronounced the sentence.

Jackson said he was wasn't sure whether the young people who came to **Wershe** 's trial "decked out in gold chains and dress that is common to the drug trade" were concerned about **Wershe** , or merely assessing "how and when they can fill the void" created by his imprisonment.

"If they survive," he told **Wershe** , "they can be your neighbors in your new residence."

Wershe still faces trials on two other drug counts, including possession of five kilos of cocaine.

Bufalino said he has affidavits from some of the youths who attended **Wershe** 's trial in which they contend they were paid \$20 a day by Detroit police to show up.

Police spokesman Inspector Fred Williams said: "The Detroit Police Department does not pay spectators to attend trials."

Bufalino said **Wershe** "did not know who 98 percent of these kids were. He knew only three to five of them. . . . The police paid some of those individuals to be there."

He said he spoke to some of them during the trial, but did not raise the issue then because "I had no proof. . . . I have it now: affidavits."

Bufalino also said that **Wershe** was offered a new identity and relocation in another state prison system in exchange for assistance in drug cases, but that **Wershe** turned down the offer. He said the offer of protection was made by the FBI Wednesday, just a few days after **Wershe** 's father, in jailhouse interviews, said both he and his son were paid federal informants.

The elder **Wershe** is being held on federal charges of threatening agents and possession of pistol silencers.

"He has not rolled over," Bufalino said of his client.

Special Agent John Anthony, local FBI spokesman, said the agency had no comment.

Edward Bell, **Wershe** 's other lawyer, said the elder's **Wershe** 's comments were "dumb, and I don't think it's true." He also said the interviews might endanger the teenager's life.

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