

DRUG MONEY BOUGHT HOTEL AND BAR, INDICTMENT SAYS

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Federal authorities charged two Detroit men Friday with trying to hide more than \$1 million of drug money by purchasing a hotel and a topless bar in Detroit.

One of the suspects, **Marcus Mitchell**, 24, has been linked to three homicides in Detroit since 2000, authorities said, although he has never been convicted.

Authorities first charged Mitchell in 2003, saying he bought more than 300 kilograms of cocaine with a street value of \$5 million in California and brought it to Detroit to sell.

On Friday, Mitchell and David Steele, 46, of Detroit were charged with an additional two counts -- conspiracy to launder monetary instruments and criminal forfeiture.

According to the indictment, Mitchell and Steele used money from drug sales to buy the St. Regis Hotel on West Grand Boulevard and the Black Orchid Cabaret on Livernois over a five-year period, beginning in 1998.

Steele told sellers of the hotel and bar that he was a doctor, but authorities say Mitchell gave Steele \$1 million to buy the St. Regis and \$500,000 to buy the Black Orchid.

Attorneys for Mitchell and Steele could not be reached for comment.

A bank now owns the hotel. The nightclub was seized under federal forfeiture laws.

If convicted on all counts, Mitchell could face up to life in prison and a \$4-million fine; Steele could face up to 20 years in prison and a \$2-million fine.

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Page: 2A

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