

## KEY DRUG WITNESS CONVICTED OF PERJURY HE ATTEMPTED TO RECANT TESTIMONY

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Terry Colbert, a key witness in the trial of the **Chambers brothers** drug gang, perjured himself in trying to recant his testimony, a U.S. District Court jury decided Wednesday.

Colbert, a reputed courier and lieutenant in the 200- member cocaine-trafficking gang, volunteered to become a paid government informant in October 1986 and testified against gang members in October 1988.

In June 1989, at a hearing to decide if a federal judge would order a new trial, Colbert said he had lied in the trial that convicted nine gang members.

Testifying on Tuesday, Colbert said he had no knowledge of the workings of the gang and "basically, nothing I said at that trial was true."

Assistant U.S. Attorney J. Michael Buckley told the jurors that Colbert lied when he said his testimony was false. When Buckley asked Detroit police narcotics officer Gerard Biernaki if Colbert's testimony in the trial had been consistent with information Colbert had supplied during the two-year investigation, Biernaki testified, "Yes, it was."

Buckley argued that there were "irreconcilable contradictions" between what Colbert said at the trial and what he said in the later hearing.

Colbert, 25, could face as much as five years in prison on each of eight counts, but he is more likely to get 10 years, Buckley said just before the verdicts were delivered to Judge Paul Gadola.

As he left the U.S. Courthouse in downtown Detroit, Arthur Lee Morman, Colbert's court-appointed attorney, said of the 12 jurors and their less than 1 1/2 hours of deliberation: "They did what they had to do. They had no other choice."

On the witness stand, Colbert admitted telling a reporter in May 1989 -- two months after signing a statement that he had lied at the trial -- that "I would like to see the **Chambers brothers** brought home" from prison.

Under Buckley's questioning, Colbert said, "That's what I said."

Larry Chambers, leader of the gang, was sentenced in March 1989 to life in prison and ordered to pay a \$250,000 fine. Three of his brothers -- Otis, Billy Joe and Willie -- and five other people were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 10 to 45 1/2 years.

Government officials have said the gang supplied and operated more than 300 crack houses throughout the city, beginning in 1983, until their indictment in 1988, at an annual profit of nearly \$42 million.

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