

WERSHE 'S MOM TAKES BLAME FOR SILENCERS

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Author: JOE SWICKARD Free Press Staff Writer

ANN ARBOR -- In a faltering voice, the aged and ailing mother of **Richard Wershe Sr.** took the blame Wednesday for the 23 pistol silencers that were found in her basement and have resulted in federal charges against her son.

Testifying at her son's trial in U.S. District Court in Ann Arbor, Vera **Wershe** , 77, said she found a cardboard box containing the disassembled silencers in an alley more than two years ago.

Believing it had been mistakenly thrown out during a basement cleanup, Vera **Wershe** , said she dragged the box back to the basement for a planned garage sale. She said she did not know what its contents were, but thought the parts were of some value.

"I wondered why somebody had thrown it out," said Vera **Wershe** , who had used a walker to make her way to the witness stand.

Shown a box containing the 23 black metal silencers, Vera **Wershe** asked: "Is this what's wrong? . . . What are they?"

Richard Wershe Sr. is the father of **Richard Wershe Jr .**, who was sentenced to life in prison early this year for possessing eight kilograms of cocaine and was reputed to be one of Detroit's kingpin drug dealers. The silencers were seized in an October raid by narcotics officers at the **Wershe** home on Detroit's east side, where Vera **Wershe** lived with her son and his family.

If convicted, **Wershe** , 45, faces a 10-year prison term. The case is expected to go the jury today after final arguments before Federal Judge George LaPlata.

Wershe 's defense lawyer, William Bufalino II, said **Wershe** threw away the silencers before they became illegal under federal law in November 1986, but his mother retrieved them and without telling him.

Memo: CORRECTION RAN April 23, 1988

getting it straight

* A Thursday article incorrectly said that Vera **Wershe** and her son, **richard Wershe** , St., were living in the same house when they were arrested in October, 1987. They lived in separate houses and both homes were raided by police narcotics officers.

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