

WERSHE ASKS DEAL IN COP-DRUG PROBE

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Convicted drug kingpin **Richard Wershe Jr** . offered Detroit police investigators a deal Tuesday: information on corrupt cops in return for dismissal of a cocaine charge pending against him.

But **Wershe** , through his attorney, William Bufalino II, also denied Tuesday telling a federal drug agent in January that he paid a Detroit police narcotics sergeant \$10,000 to protect his business and that the sergeant later demanded \$50,000 more to let him keep operating.

The sergeant also is suspected of stealing \$7,000 after a drug arrest and stealing cash and cocaine during raids at crack houses, police investigators said.

Bufalino said **Wershe** "denied any knowledge of this alleged federal report" during a meeting Tuesday with a sergeant from the Detroit police Internal Affairs Section.

Internal Affairs is investigating more than 125 officers and their possible involvement with crack cocaine, police officials have said.

Wayne County Prosecutor John O'Hair was not available for comment on whether he would consider such a deal with **Wershe** .

Bufalino said **Wershe** , widely known as White Boy Rick, has information about narcotics officers stealing money and other property during cocaine raids. But **Wershe** will not co-operate with the probe "until he has immunity and works out other arrangements," Bufalino said.

The price of **Wershe** 's help, Bufalino said, would be dismissal of a pending cocaine delivery case that carries a mandatory life prison sentence, the return of property and bond money seized from **Wershe** in previous cases and transfer to the federal prison system.

Wershe , 18, convicted in January of possessing 17 pounds of cocaine with a retail value of nearly \$5 million, is serving a life prison term without parole. He is an inmate in the Wayne County Jail awaiting trial on a charge that he possessed another 11 pounds of cocaine.

While **Wershe** was awaiting sentencing in January, he was interviewed twice by federal drug agents, who shared the information with Detroit police Internal Affairs investigators.

Bufalino disclosed the federal interviews immediately after **Wershe** 's sentencing Feb. 4, saying federal agents offered **Wershe** protection in exchange for his co-operation. At that time, Bufalino insisted that **Wershe** would not co-operate with authorities, saying: "He has not rolled over."

But investigators, who spoke on condition that they not be named, said **Wershe** freely told them

about police involvement with crack cocaine during those interviews even after being told the federal government could offer him little assistance with the state case.

The investigators said **Wershe** made the following allegations:

- * That he paid the narcotics sergeant \$10,000 to guarantee that no drug raids would occur at a crack house operated by **Wershe** in the 9400 block of Hayes in northeast Detroit.
- * That the sergeant soon demanded another \$50,000 to assure protection for the house on Hayes.
- * That **Wershe** smoked marijuana with a Detroit police officer who wanted **Wershe** to sell him bulk cocaine so he could resell it.
- * That another sergeant was leaking investigative information and other sensitive police data to a major east side drug ring with which **Wershe** once was affiliated.

But Bufalino said **Wershe** told him Tuesday: "There was no arrangement to pay off any police officer. He denies making any such statements."

In Detroit's treacherous narcotics underworld, **Wershe** has worn the label of both a major dealer and a high-paid federal informant. **Wershe**'s father has claimed that at the same time **Wershe** was developing a cocaine network on the city's east side, he also was working as a paid informant for the FBI.

The Detroit Police investigation of the department is focusing on allegations of:

- * Some command-level police officials associating with drug dealers.
- * Four groups of officers, operating in the four precincts where they are assigned, committing robberies to get cash and cocaine.
- * Officers providing protection and information to drug dealers.
- * Officers raiding one drug dealer and then transferring the drugs to a competitor, with whom the officers were working as partners.
- * Money and drugs being stolen during drug raids and traffic stops.
- * Officers selling or swapping their department-issued pistols and portable radios for cocaine.
- * Cocaine being used by police officers, supervisors and command officers, on and off duty.

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