

## **Self-professed hit man, alleged accomplice to stand trial on murder charges**

Detroit News, The (MI) - Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Author: George HunterThe Detroit News

Self-professed hit man, alleged accomplice to stand trial on murder charges

By George Hunter

The Detroit News

DETROIT — Two men will stand trial for the murder of three people, including a Detroit Police officer's wife, a judge ruled this afternoon.

The case of self-professed hit man Vincent Smothers, 27, and Marzell Black, 20, was bound over for trial by 36th District Judge Mark Randon.

Meanwhile, Detroit Police Sgt. David Cobb, who was arrested April 20 in connection with the Dec. 26 slaying of his wife, Rose, is still under investigation by the police department's Internal Affairs Unit.

Wayne County prosecutors are also investigating Cobb's possible role in his wife's death, spokeswoman Maria Miller said.

Cobb was released from jail a day after his arrest, but he was suspended without pay April 24 for conduct unbecoming an officer, pending the internal affairs investigation. When he was arrested, police officials said Cobb hired Smothers to kill his wife, and that Black, the son of Cobb's girlfriend, Sheila Black, acted as a go-between in the murder, as well as the getaway driver.

Approached at his home last week by Detroit News reporters, Cobb said, "I can't say anything except that there's a side to this that no one in the media has asked me about at all." He declined to elaborate.

After Smothers was arrested in Shelby Township on April 19, police say he confessed to being a hit man who was responsible for seven murders. Investigators say Smothers also fingered Cobb, 38, for promising to pay him \$10,000 from his wife's \$200,000 life insurance policy if he killed her. Marzell Black also implicated Cobb in the murder for hire, police said.

But Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy said there wasn't enough evidence to charge Cobb, and he was released from jail.

"The only evidence that was presented to us that connects Sgt. Cobb with this murder are the statements of defendants Smothers and Black," Worthy said in a written statement on April 21, the day Cobb was released from jail. "Under the law, Smothers and Black cannot be compelled to testify; there is no admissible evidence upon which to charge him at this time."

Rose Cobb, 47, was murdered in the parking lot of a CVS store on Jefferson on Detroit's east side.

Smothers is charged with the June 21, 2007, double slaying of **Gaudrielle Webster** and Clarence Cherry in the 7000 block of Gravier. Another woman, who survived being shot during the same incident, provided police with a lead to Smothers' arrest.

Detroit Police Chief Ella Bully-Cummings said Smothers told investigators he shot Rose Cobb in the head while she waited in her car in the parking lot of a CVS store while her husband shopped inside.

If convicted, Smothers and Black face the possibility of life in prison without parole. Smothers also is charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm, and using a firearm to commit a felony.

You can reach George Hunter at (313) 222-2134 or [ghunter@detnews.com](mailto:ghunter@detnews.com).

Edition: Online

Section: Metro

Record Number: det19155186

Copyright (c) The Detroit News. All rights reserved. Reproduced with the permission of Gannett Co., Inc. by NewsBank, inc.