

## **DETROIT: SMOTHERS WILL FACE TRIAL IN 3 KILLINGS - SHELBY TWP. RESIDENT SAYS HE'S A HIT MAN**

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After listening to the statements of an alleged hit man in court Monday, relatives of Rose Cobb said they felt grateful that he showed remorse and owned up to her slaying.

Cobb, the 47-year-old wife of Detroit police Sgt. David Cobb, was fatally shot Dec. 26 while parked in the family minivan at a CVS.

The man accused in her slaying, Vincent Smothers, 27, of Shelby Township, told police that David Cobb hired him to kill her.

Smothers appeared in 36th District Court on Monday, where Judge Mark Randon bound him over on charges of first-degree murder in three cases. In addition to Rose Cobb's slaying, Smothers is accused in the fatal shootings of Clarence Cherry, 34, and **Gaudrielle Webster**, 18, on June 21 on Gravier.

"I'm angry with him, yes," Sheryl Gary, Rose Cobb's sister, said of Smothers after the three-hour hearing. "But I truly appreciate that he had a measure of conscience enough to admit to what he did. If he had not, we would still be in the dark about what happened to Rose."

Marzell Black, 20, of Detroit, who is suspected of setting up the Rose Cobb shooting, also was bound over for trial Monday on a charge of solicitation of murder, a felony punishable by life in prison. He sat next to Smothers during the hearings, but neither man spoke to each other.

Black told police that he met David Cobb through his mother, Sheila Black, and Cobb asked him if he would kill his wife, Detroit police Sgt. Michael Russell testified. Black, in a statement that was read by Russell in court, said he couldn't do the killing, but, "I would holler at one of my guys, V," meaning Smothers.

A few weeks later, Smothers, David Cobb and Black all met and planned the killing, according to Black's statement.

In another statement, Smothers said he worked for drug dealers and said the killing of Cherry on Gravier was a contract hit for \$10,000. He said he was disturbed that Lakari Berry, 27, who already is serving life in prison for the killings, shot **Webster**.

Smothers also said in his statement that was read in court that he became sickened after killing Rose Cobb because he felt she was innocent.

"I couldn't stomach it," he told police.

Gabi Silver, Smothers' lawyer, argued that Detroit police Investigator Ira Todd made false promises to Smothers and accused Todd of telling Smothers that his wife, Cecily Smothers, would not face charges if he cooperated. Todd, who took Smothers' statement, denied making such promises.

Smothers told police he stayed in the suburbs to avoid being solicited for more hits after the Cobb killing. He said he and his wife were living off the \$60,000 he collected for various killings.

Smothers has claimed responsibility for at least seven Detroit slayings, city police say.

David Cobb was arrested last month but released without being charged. Rose Cobb's relatives said they hope police will charge Cobb, who was suspended without pay pending an ongoing investigation.

Rose Cobb's 34-year-old niece, Adrian Gary, said she's angry with Smothers: "But not as much as with the others involved. I feel he's remorseful."

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo

CAPTION: Vincent Smothers said he was living off \$60,000 he collected for killings.

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