

## PONTIAC SHOOTINGS PART OF DRUG WAR ?

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Quiet hangs over a **Pontiac** park where machine-gun fire interrupted a basketball game and left one young man dead and three wounded.

But in the two weeks since the **shootings** , there has been a lot **of** noise on the streets around the park -- rumors that the violence stemmed from a **drug war** involving the notorious Detroit street gang Young Boys Inc.

"We're getting the same kind **of** information on the street . . . that YBI is supposed to be trying to take over the **drug** operation here in **Pontiac** ," said **Pontiac** vice squad Sgt. Roger Houck. "But we really don't have anything concrete.

"And I'm still not sure **of** the **drug war** end **of** it, either," he continued. "I'm not so naive to say it isn't, but I don't want to overreact either."

**PONTIAC** POLICE say most **of** the **drugs** in their city come from Detroit.

"We're about halfway between Detroit and Flint, and this is a drop-off point," said Capt. Branton Dennis. " **Of** our arrests **of** main suppliers and pushers, almost all are out **of** Detroit. We go by the addresses, and they lead us to Detroit. All the ties are there."

Dennis is supervising the investigation **of** the May 9 **shooting** , which killed 19-year-old Michael Andre Steed **of** **Pontiac** .

Dennis acknowledged that police are concerned that the **shooting** was "a turf battle **of** some kind" between street gangs.

"We do know they were hunting for an individual or individuals, but we don't know if they got who they were after," he said a day after the **shooting** . Police later said Steed was probably an innocent victim.

DENNIS SAID the investigation into the **shooting** has been slow-moving.

"We're zeroing in on a couple **of** leads, but we're running into some reluctance on the **part of** some **of** the witnesses. And some **of** them are changing their stories."

The morning **of** the **shooting** at the small park on the city's southeast side, vice squad officers seized 10 packs **of** cocaine, but made no arrests, Houck said.

He noted that gangs calling themselves Pony Down from Detroit and the Alphabet -- which Houck said may have origins in Boston with connections in Detroit -- also have been mentioned as participants in the **Pontiac drug** trade. But mostly, police hear about Young Boys.

" **Part of** it, I think, is various **drug** dealers trying to capitalize on the name, to put some fear into people," Houck said. "It's like a group **of** guys on motorcycles calling themselves the Hell's Angels, when all they are is a bunch **of** raggedy bums. They try to scare you."

Houck said arrests in **Pontiac** reflect an increase in criminal activity in the city by Detroiters in the past two years, although he had no up-to-date statistics.

"We've been getting more and more **of** them" from Detroit, he said. "It's really getting to be a problem."

But things have cooled since the **shooting** , Houck said.

"It's pretty quiet, especially at the park," he said. "The heat's on, and everybody knows it."

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