

PAIR'S SLAYING LIKELY IS LINKED TO DRUGS SOUTHFIELD COUPLE TESTIFIED AGAINST HIT MAN

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A Southfield couple found dead in their bullet-riddled car Thursday morning had survived gunfire two years ago in the drug-related firebombing of their Detroit business, and police believe the two events may be linked.

The bodies of Thomas Tye, 45, and Alice Tye, 34, were discovered about 5:45 a.m. by a security guard patrolling the upscale Sutton Place townhouse apartments at Nine Mile and Lahser roads.

Southfield police said the Tyes were in their late-model red Chevrolet Corsica, with its lights on and the engine running. The rear and front passenger windows were shot out. Investigators believe the couple were killed about three hours earlier by two or more men who sprayed the car from the rear with at least 19 shots from an automatic assault rifle, believed to be an AK47. The gun was left near the car.

"This definitely isn't a random shooting," said Lt. Mel Paunovich. "Somebody was waiting for them."

Paunovich said retaliation for testimony from the Tyes that put hit man **Lodrick Parker** in prison for life is one possible motive for the crime. The other is drugs.

The slayings were the fifth and sixth in Southfield this year -- twice the number in all of 1990. All appear to be drug-related, according to Paunovich, who said he was adding two more homicide investigators to his staff of four.

The Tyes were so thankful **Parker** was convicted in two attacks 1 1/2 years ago on their west side Detroit candle store that they sent Detroit police investigators a poinsettia last Christmas.

Thomas Tye lost part of an ear when he and his wife were shot inside the Blessed Candles religious goods shop on West Seven Mile. Their uncle, Charles Byrd, was burned and seriously injured in a firebombing at the store in January 1990; **Parker** and three other people also were wounded.

On Sept. 12, 1989, Thomas Tye's sister, Charmaine Tye, 31, was also killed in an apparent drug-related hit in an apartment parking lot on Detroit's east side. Byrd, 58, was killed last August, in the same Detroit complex.

On Thursday morning, the couple's luck ran out.

Police said 19 shots riddled the Tyes' red Corsica. The serial numbers on the rifle left at the scene were filed off.

"I think it's a message," said a local police investigator, who has knowledge of the other assaults against the Tyes. The investigator spoke on condition his name not be released.

Their alleged involvement with drugs was a thread running through the numerous acts of violence against the Tye family.

According to witness testimony at **Parker** 's murder trial, Charmaine Tye and Dennis Conley, 37, were on their way to make a drug buy from undercover officers in September 1989 when **Parker** allegedly drove up, blocked their car with his, and shot them dead.

Parker , who currently is in the State Prison of Southern Michigan at Jackson, was acquitted.

In December 1989, the Tyes allegedly were lured to their store by promises from convicted murderer Wayman Kincaid, who told them he had information on Charmaine Tye 's death. In that incident, Thomas Tye was shot in the neck and his wife was shot in the leg, but both lived to identify **Parker** as the gunman.

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