

PROSECUTOR WILL FIGHT ANY DEAL FOR WERSHE DRUG DEALER SAYS HE HELPED IN FEDERAL STING

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Wayne County **Prosecutor** John O'Hair, whose office helped put Richard (White Boy Rick) **Wershe** in prison **for** life, said Monday the former teenage drug lord should not be able to **deal** his way to freedom by turning federal informant.

"Once we arrest and successfully prosecute ranking figures in the drug trade, we're not going to let them out by ratting on each other," O'Hair said.

O'Hair said he would mount "very strong opposition" to **any** effort to free **Wershe** through a governor's pardon or sentence reduction in exchange **for** his cooperation.

"There is no legal basis **for** federal authorities to interfere with the state sentence," O'Hair said. "The law is clear: There is . . . no power to modify a lawful sentence."

Wershe , in an interview shown Monday on WDIV-TV (Channel 4), said he was instrumental in setting up an FBI sting that led to the arrest of several Detroit and suburban police officers **for** allegedly protecting phony drug shipments and money-laundering operations.

Also arrested in the sting was Detroit Mayor Coleman Young's niece, Cathy Volsan-Curry, and her father, Willie Volsan. Volsan-Curry is the wife of convicted drug dealer Johnny Curry, and later was involved with **Wershe** .

Wershe 's lawyer, William Bufalino II, said **Wershe** has not cut **any deals** with federal authorities.

"There are no promises, no guarantees," Bufalino said. "I don't know why he's doing it. This is all on his own."

U.S. Attorney Stephen Markman and FBI spokesman John Anthony declined to discuss **Wershe** 's involvement or a motive to cooperate.

But Bufalino said **Wershe** may be hoping that Michigan's mandatory life sentence without parole **for** major drug dealers, which is being challenged before the U.S. and Michigan supreme courts, **will** be overturned. If the sentence is overturned by either court, **Wershe** might become eligible **for** resentencing and his cooperation could weigh in his favor.

Another possible avenue **for Wershe** is a pardon or commutation of his life sentence by the governor. Under Michigan law, the governor has broad powers to free prisoners and it is possible **for** federal officials to lend support to petition **for** early release.

According to the Michigan Department of Corrections, **Wershe** is among more than 30 prisoners convicted under Michigan law housed in the federal prison system, which many inmates believe has conditions superior to those in state facilities. Some prisoners were moved there **for** disciplinary problems, others **for** their protection.

The night before the FBI arrested the police officers, federal authorities removed **Wershe** from a state maximum security prison in Marquette and placed him in protective custody at an undisclosed location.

But even if **Wershe** is permanently transferred to federal custody, it does not affect his life sentence. Federal officials, under law, cannot reduce a sentence imposed by a state court.

Wershe , now 21, was convicted in 1988 of possession of eight kilos of cocaine and sentenced to life in prison without parole. At the time, it was the largest single drug seizure -- more than 17 1/2 pounds of the drugs -- in Detroit history.

On Monday, in a routine procedural move, the complaints were dismissed against the officers, Volsan-Curry and her father. In federal proceedings, such dismissals are a common prelude to taking the case before a federal grand jury **for** indictments.

Caption: Photo

: Richard **Wershe**

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