

GANG MEMBER WANTED IN 4 SLAYINGS ARRESTED

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Notorious drug **gang** figure Reginald (Rockin' Reggie) Brown, **wanted** for more than a year **in** the **slayings** of three men and a 3-year-old girl on Detroit's east side, is **in** custody **in** New York, officials said Friday night.

But his younger brother, Terrance (Boogaloo) Brown, escaped from federal agents on a motorcycle **in** Manhattan on Thursday, officials said.

The Browns and two other brothers formed the nucleus of Best Friends, a reputed murder-for-hire **gang in** the late 1980s, according to local officials close to an investigation of the **gang** . Its **members** were known as enforcers and debt collectors for drug distributors and are suspected **in** dozens of deaths.

A team of drug agents and police, alerted by federal authorities **in** Detroit, saw Reginald and Terrance Brown and another man enter a Manhattan car dealership Thursday, said John Dowd, special agent for the federal Drug Enforcement Administration **in** New York.

Reginald Brown, 27, was **arrested** as he tried to get into a car, Dowd said.

William Wilkes, 21, was **arrested** a block away on a motorcycle. He was **wanted** on an outstanding federal warrant issued **in** Detroit for narcotics violations, Dowd said.

Terrance Brown escaped on a motorcycle, struck a pedestrian and fled into a subway station, Dowd said. He is **wanted** on federal narcotics charges.

Reginald Brown and Wilkes were **in** custody pending return to Michigan.

Reginald Brown is **wanted** on four counts of first-degree murder and using a firearm during a felony **in** the May 9, 1992, **slayings** at a home on Buckingham near Mack.

George Ward, chief assistant **in** the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, said late Friday: "I'm pleased to know that he's **in** custody. He's simply a hired killer and obviously a menace to the community."

In the 1992 deaths, Alfred Austin, 26, was shot first among people on the porch. Then Brown killed two witnesses, Harry Roper, 24, and Lawrence Gainey, 23, according to authorities. Detectives believe the 3-year-old girl, Lori Roper, was killed by a stray bullet.

The target was Austin, who had been charged with federal weapons violations and was considering a deal with the government **in** exchange for information, his lawyer had said.

In 1989, Reginald Brown was convicted of murdering associate Steve Rousell, and received a life sentence.

But Recorder's Court Judge George Crockett III ordered a new trial **in** early 1992 and freed Brown on bond **in** February. The Michigan Court of Appeals revoked Brown's bond **in** March, but he remained at large until his apprehension **in** New York.

Terrance Brown was acquitted of first-degree murder **in** the March 16, 1989, killing of James Lamont, 30, as he sat **in** a car outside the St. Regis Hotel **in** the New Center area.

The two other Brown brothers -- Ezra, 24, and Gregory, 22 -- were shot to death **in** December 1986.

Best Friends is thought to have been the brawn for teenage drug figure Richard (White Boy Rick) Wershe Jr., now serving a life sentence for cocaine possession.

Caption: Photo

: Terrance Brown ***

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