

## **POLICE SUSPECT GUNMEN KILLED WRONG BROTHER**

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It was 7 a.m. Tuesday when Armond Hickmon stepped out of his Farmington Hills apartment and shut the door behind him. He was headed to work.

Across the hall, three men waited. As the door shut, the men approached. With arms outstretched, guns in hand, they pumped at least 11 bullets into Hickmon's face, head and chest.

The 21-year-old fell to the floor. A pool of blood spread across the hall.

Hickmon's family said the slaying is a case of mistaken identity. The bullets, they said, were meant for his brother, Antoine Hickmon.

"They were actually after our eldest brother, who testified against some people for a drug and murder case last year," said Antoinette Wilson, 35, of Detroit. "The police had to move our eldest brother out of state." Wilson said Antoine Hickmon visited his brother several times in the last two weeks.

Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer agreed that the killers may have confused the brothers because they look alike, he said. Investigators found a white Dodge Intrepid with Georgia license plates parked at the Independence Green apartment complex at Grand River and Halstead. It belonged to Antoine Hickmon.

"This was not a random homicide," Dwyer said. "This was -- without question -- an execution that was well-planned, well-executed. And we know there was a relationship between this hit and a drug homicide investigation in Detroit."

Federal authorities, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not allowed to discuss federal proceedings, said Antoine Hickmon testified last October in a grand jury investigation against Tommie Hodges and Leonard Shoulders.

In March, the U.S. Attorney's Office charged Hodges, 31, and Shoulders, 27, both of Detroit, with distribution of marijuana. Hodges also was charged with money laundering and illegally structuring financial transactions. The indictment said that from June 2001 to January 2004, the men conspired to ship tractor trailer loads of marijuana from Arizona to Detroit.

According to documents filed at the federal court in May, authorities have been investigating homicides linked to an ongoing feud between Hodges and another drug trafficker, **Quasand Lewis**. An agent with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency wrote: "The task force has identified over 11 homicides and four house fire bombings linked to the feud. . . . All of these homicides have involved the use of firearms."

A month after testifying, Antoine Hickmon was the target of a drive-by shooting. He was shot in the back but survived.

The suspects fled the apartment complex in a stolen black Mercury Sable, police said. The car was abandoned at a nearby Red Roof Inn late Tuesday morning. Police are searching it for evidence.

Armond Hickmon's funeral is scheduled for Monday. Family members declined to release details because they fear for their safety.

"We're worried about whether they meant to get our older brother or were they trying to get Armond," Wilson said. "And if they were trying to get Armond, are they coming after the rest of us? And will it be safe to go to the funeral?"

Wilson said they have not spoken to Antoine Hickmon and have no idea where he is hiding.

But Dwyer said: "The family is going to be protected. The brother is being protected."

Raised in Detroit, Armond Hickmon was described as a spirited, fun-loving man with a strong work ethic. He graduated from Mumford High School in Detroit and began working as a janitor at Detroit Forming Inc. in Southfield last October. At night, he attended real estate classes, hoping to one day sell homes.

He was engaged to his girlfriend of five years, Eliece Vaughn, 31, who discovered his blood-soaked body in the hall Tuesday. They began living together nearly a year ago, Wilson said.

"We're trying to hold up, but it's hard," Wilson said. "He was not a bad person. He was not on the streets. He was doing well with his life. He had dreams. And now, I'm burying my baby brother, and my mother is burying her youngest child."

Anyone with information is asked to contact Farmington Hills police at 248-871-2610, anytime.

Contact MARSHA LOW at 248-351-3299 or [low@freepress.com](mailto:low@freepress.com)"

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Caption: Map KOFI MYLER/Detroit Free Press;Photo CHIP SOMODEVILLA/Detroit Free Press

Armond Hickmon, 21, of Farmington Hills died Tuesday. The victim's mother, Thelma Hickmon, right, embraces her friend Judith Sanderfield, both of Detroit, after her son's death Tuesday.

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