

## **U.S. TO SEEK DEATH FOR 6 DETROITERS INDICTED IN KILLINGS FOR HIRE**

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Wednesday, June 23, 1993

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Federal authorities announced Tuesday that they will seek the federal death penalty against six Detroit men accused of killings while working for the notorious Best Friends narcotics distribution and murder-for-hire organization.

It is the first time the federal death penalty will be sought in Michigan, a state which does not have a death penalty, said Sam Hutchings, spokesman for U.S. Attorney Alan Gershel.

A 56-count indictment against the six -- Reginald (Rockin' Reggie) Brown, Terrance Brown, Lonnie O'Bryant, **Stacey Culbert**, Charles Wilkes and Michael Williams -- and 23 others alleged to be members of Best Friends was unsealed Tuesday as authorities began arresting them on charges of murder, cocaine sales, weapons violations and conspiracy.

One of the people suspected of leading the Best Friends network, Reginald Brown, was arrested June 17 in New York outside a BMW dealership. His brother, Terrance (Boogaloo) Brown escaped.

Reginald Brown has agreed to be moved to Detroit and marshals will probably return him to Michigan next week, said U.S. Attorney F. William Soisson. Brown will face charges that he executed three men and a 3-year-old girl in 1992.

Of the 29 people indicted, one has since been killed, two are in prison and five were arrested in the past few days. The rest are at large.

The Best Friends network, formed in the mid-1980s, distributed drugs in Detroit, Lexington, Ky., Toledo and Lima, Ohio. According to the indictment, members also were available for contract killings and drive-by shootings to eliminate drug competition or to get revenge. The gang has been linked to dozens of killings.

Commander Joel Gilliam, former head of the Detroit Police narcotics section, has described Best Friends as "particularly vicious."

U.S. Attorney Gershel said all 29 men and women could face sentences of up to life in prison if convicted.

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Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 15A

Index Terms: DRUG ; INVESTIGATION ; HOMICIDE ; NETWORK

Record Number: 9301240334

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