

## **POLICE LINK KILLINGS TO REJUVENATED YOUNG BOYS INC.**

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Thursday, August 2, 1984

Author: SANDY McCLURE Free Press Staff Writer

The street enforcement branch -- once known as "The Wrecking Crew" -- of Detroit's most notorious heroin trafficking organization has been resurrected and is responsible for at least six execution-style slayings since February, Detroit **Police** Homicide Inspector Gilbert Hill said Thursday.

"The killers have known since Wednesday or Thursday of last week that the **police** are looking for them," Hill said. "Someone else might die if these people are not taken off the streets."

The street enforcers -- who now call themselves the A-Team -- use a weapons setup that **police** sources said included high-powered pistols and an Uzi, a submachine gun designed by an Israeli army colonel.

**Police** describe the A-Team as an enforcer for **Young Boys Inc.**, a citywide organization of heroin and cocaine sellers that was seriously damaged -- but apparently not destroyed -- by its leaders' convictions a year ago in federal court.

Five of the slayings attributed **to** the A-Team were in Detroit. The sixth occurred in a ranch-style house on the Troy- Bloomfield Township border, the home of Portia Sturdevant Jones, 29, wife of convicted **Young Boys** kingpin Milton (Butch) Jones.

Two of the slayings were overtly drug related, **police** said, and the other four were in retaliation for an attempted robbery of the Jones home.

BASED ON evidence -- some uncovered during the homicide investigations -- federal and local law-enforcement officials think that Jones, serving a 12-year sentence in a federal penitentiary, may be running **Young Boys** from his cell.

"We are working very closely with the Detroit **Police** Department on leads emanating from **Young Boys** , and we think there will be many arrests stemming from this in the future," said Robert DeFauw, head of the Detroit office of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

Asked whether a federal grand jury recently had subpoenaed witnesses **to** testify about **Young Boys** , DeFauw said:

"Absolutely no comment."

Only one man identified as an alleged A-Team member -- Charles Victor Obey, 18, of the 13500 block of Woodmont -- is in **police** custody.

"We believe they're still in the Detroit area," Hill said. "The people who are targets are aware they are targets, and precautions are being taken" **to** protect them.

The A-Team investigation caused conflict among various **police** units, department insiders said. They said there was at least one incident in which top Detroit **police** officials ordered that **police** protection of some witnesses against the A-Team be rescinded. But several homicide investigators, wearing flak vests and armed with shotguns, continued **to** protect the witnesses on their own time until **Police** Chief William Hart interceded and reinstated full-time **police** protection, the sources said.

ACCORDING **TO police** records, the string of **killings** tied **to** the A-Team began at 7:20 a.m. Feb. 7 when a man walking his dog found the body of Norman (Sneezy) Johnson, 23, lying between two houses in the 15300 block of Linwood. **Police** think that Johnson, who died of gunshot wounds, was a high-ranking A-Team member who was slain by his former cohorts.

At 8:45 p.m. April 30, **police** from the 10th (Livernois) Precinct were called **to** the corner of Dexter and Richton where Jerry Kenney, 33, lay wounded. According **to** witnesses, Kenney, an independent drug dealer, had been arguing with other men over rights **to** sell drugs on that corner, which was claimed by **Young Boys** . Kenney died a short while later at Henry Ford Hospital.

Kenney was shot four times. The one bullet recovered from his abdomen came from a .44 magnum revolver registered **to** Farod Mallory, of the 17300 block of Rainbow Drive in Lathrup Village, said **police** sources. A murder warrant was issued Wednesday against Mallory, Hill said.

A MURDER WARRANT was issued Friday in Oakland County in a May **killing** which **police** think occurred at the Jones home in the 3100 block of Adams in Troy.

Authorities think Ricky Darnell Gracey, 26, and possibly others, robbed the Jones home in late May. Gracey and three accomplices returned about a week later, apparently thinking millions of dollars in drug proceeds were hidden there, **police** said . Investigators think Mrs. Jones shot Gracey once while his three accomplices fled from the home.

Based on witnesses' statements, **police** think Mrs. Jones phoned A-Team members who went **to** the home, tortured Gracey until he gave them the names of the people who had planned the robbery and then killed him. Gracey's body was found about noon May 30 in an alley south of Emery, between Cardoni and Russell. He had been shot 15 times with a 9mm Uzi and five times with two different .38-caliber revolvers, **police** sources said.

The Oakland County murder warrant charges Mrs. Jones, Charles Obey and Spencer Tracy Holloway, 20, of 17416 Westhampton in Southfield, with Gracey's slaying.

ABOUT 11 P.M. June 22, residents in the Mendota-W. Chicago area of northwest Detroit called **police** when they heard gunshots.

**Police** found Donald Bankston, 40, slumped in the front seat of his car. Bankston, identified by **police** as an independent drug dealer, had been killed with the same Uzi used on Gracey and the same .44 magnum used on Kenney, according **to police** sources.

Homicide investigators think Bankston may have been set up by A-Team members who posed as possible cocaine buyers.

Bankston was the first of three members of his family **to** be slain before the end of July.

ABOUT 12:45 A.M. July 17, scout car from the 12th (Palmer Park) Precinct drove by as a man with an automatic rifle pumped round after round into the body of Carl Garrett, 18, who was cut down as he rode his moped at W. McNichols and Schaefer. The gunman and an accomplice escaped in a car.

At one time, according **to police** investigators, Garrett was a bodyguard for Raymond Peoples, 25, a self-proclaimed founder and enforcer of **Young Boys** , now in a federal penitentiary. Despite Peoples' claim, though, law-enforcement officials maintain that Milton Jones created **Young Boys** .

Peoples denied Wednesday he had anything **to** do with the **killings** .

"I want **to** stop any implication that I'm doing anything like that," he said. "Everybody wants **to** be **Young Boys** Inc. They claim **to** be, but they aren't. They like the publicity."

The latest victim was Reginald Charles Stringer, 24, who was found slumped over the steering wheel of a 1984 Buick parked in the 500 block of Winder. Like the others, he died of gunshot wounds in the head and body. He was dead on arrival at Detroit Receiving Hospital shortly after 10 p.m. last Sunday.

Bankston, Garrett and Stringer were related and were associates of Gracey, **police** said.

\*\*\*\*\*

Caption: Photo

Memo: SEE ALSO STATE EDITION

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 1A

Index Terms: MURDER ; GANG ; YOUNG BOYS INC ; SHOOTING ; DRUG

Record Number: 8401270382

Copyright (c) 1984 Detroit Free Press

