

## AIMLESS YOUTHS , NOT GANGS BLAMED IN RACINE SHOOT-OUT

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Friday, August 3, 1990

Author: JIM FINKELSTEIN Free Press Staff Writer

Detroiters concerned that last month's shoot-out at a Detroit house party was the first salvo in a war among rival gangs shouldn't worry, according to experts on law enforcement and urban problems who say the incident was more likely a spontaneous event.

Yet the July 21 shooting, in which a 16-year-old bystander was killed at a birthday party on the east side, underscores the menace of what one expert calls "scavenger" gangs -- **aimless** and often armed dead-end kids.

Eleven young men ages 14 to 22 are charged with murder in the incident on Racine Street, in which they allegedly traded more than 30 gunshots in a crowded home in a shoot-out that a prosecutor compared with Dodge City. They face a preliminary examination today in 36th District Court.

Rather than being established groups such as the Crips or Bloods of Los Angeles, groups such as the Six Mile Boys and the ABC Boys -- blamed in the Racine shoot-out -- are "just loosely organized thugs" who may commit crime "if some situation presents itself where they can enrich themselves," said Sgt. Richard Worobec of Detroit's 9th (Gratiot) Precinct.

Inspector Gerald Stewart, head of Detroit Police homicide, said he's uncertain how strong the gang element in the Racine Street fight was: "You get someone to say these are the Six Mile Boys . . . it may be one person represents himself to be that, and they assume everyone there was."

Stewart said he has encountered few homicides linked to gang warfare.

The mother of Carlos Powell, an alleged Six Mile Boy, said several of the supposed gang members charged in the Racine case were just longtime friends who grew up and went to Osborn High School together.

"I never heard of either one of those gangs," said Maryann Powell.

Worobec in February brought one of the alleged Six Mile Boys, 18-year-old Alfred Readous Jr., to trial and won a conviction for aggravated assault in a beating and car theft near Osborn, less than two miles from the Racine home.

Readous got two years of probation. But Worobec said gangs never came up in that case, and that he had never heard of the ABCs or the Six Mile Boys. Denise Readous, Alfred's mother, said "As far as I know, ABC is not a gang gang, but, I guess, some entertainment group."

What, then, is the extent of Detroit's gang problem? A professor who has studied the problem says there are an increasing number of informal gangs, often made up of "misfits, the kids that are bitter with the world."

Jackson Community College Professor Carl Taylor said such gangs may commit convenient, random crimes such as selling drugs, stealing cars and mugging pedestrians.

"They're the kids in America that no one wants to talk about. They're unpredictable and impulsive" and often armed. "And the reason they're armed is there's constantly conflict between groups and internally," he said -- as on Racine Street.

"Some member goes in to get this other gang's girl, and you throw in an Uzi and automatic weapons, and bingo, they've got a problem," he said.

Caption: Photo

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Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 7B

Index Terms: JUVENILE ; DETROIT ; SHOOTING ; PSYCHOLOGY

Record Number: 9001300095

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