

REPUTED DRUG GANG ENFORCER, 29, DIES THE WAY HE LIVED

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He was 6 feet 2, weighed 211 pounds and, on Sunday, had a tag on his toe with the number 6205-85.

His body, scarred by a lifetime of street battles, was one of 20 on the overloaded autopsy docket at the Wayne County Morgue.

The body was that of **Raymond Peoples**, recently paroled drug kingpin and onetime reputed muscle -- street enforcer -- for the Young Boys Inc. drug trafficking organization.

He was a month short of his 30th birthday.

As one of the founders of the Young Boys heroin- and cocaine-pushing outfit, he helped turn Detroit's dope trade into a model of capitalistic enterprise -- using a rough-hewn bureaucracy that made street pushers of young teens, who, because of their age, were immune from serious criminal prosecution.

PEOPLES WAS killed Saturday night, as he lived, on the street, the victim of someone police say probably is younger and, by this time, a little bolder even than **Peoples**.

"They all think they're something, but it comes down to this," one investigator said at the morgue.

In his prime, **Peoples** drove a Mercedes and wore heavy gold neck and wrist chains.

Saturday night, he was sitting alone at about 8:20 p.m. in a 1981 beige Chevrolet Citation when someone walked up to his car, kneeled down and pumped several shots into his upper right back.

It was in the 2300 block of Sturtevant between La Salle Blvd. and Fourteenth Street, a few blocks north of Central High School, in the old neighborhood where Young Boys began and where **Peoples** used to run before he hit the big time and moved to a townhouse in Troy.

Investigators believe he had been living with his mother in the old neighborhood since his recent release from federal prison. He had pleaded guilty Feb. 24, 1983, to conspiracy to distribute heroin in connection with Young Boys operations.

"He was sitting in his car waiting to meet somebody," one police investigator said Sunday. "As far as we know, (the meeting) was on the up and up, but somebody apparently wanted him, clocked him there. . . ."

Witnesses told police the gunman was a young man wearing a black hat and shirt and beige shorts.

He did his job and just walked away, they said.

Peoples died a short while later at Henry Ford Hospital.

Neighbors gathered near the shooting scene Saturday night expressed relief when told **Peoples** had died.

Asked about the degree of **Peoples** ' involvement with Young Boys since his parole, one woman who lives in the area echoed what has become the street talk in recent weeks: "Not too much. . . . I think they're all turning on him."

A scramble for control of Detroit's drug traffic set off an area-wide power struggle after federal indictments in 1982 and subsequent convictions sent the Young Boys' top leadership, including Milton (Butch) Jones, to prison.

Investigators Sunday said street shootings and killings since then have stemmed from an internal struggle between allies of Jones and **Peoples** for control of the multimillion-dollar drug business while Young Boys' top leaders are in prison.

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