

DRUG GANG FOUNDER WANTS ANOTHER CHANCE WITH KIDS

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Butch Jones **wants** to organize the children of Detroit again.

But this time, Jones -- who founded Detroit's notorious Young Boys Inc. in the 1970s and ruled the 300-member **drug** gang **with** a gold-plated pistol -- swears it will be different.

"I **want** to tell them that they don't have to go out on the streets and sell **drugs** and carry guns," Jones said last week through the grate of a Recorder's Court holding cell.

"I can be an asset."

Law enforcement officials who battled YBI into the 1980s recoiled at Jones' suggestion.

"I would think two or three times -- real hard -- before giving him access to **kids**," said Detroit City Councilman Gilbert Hill, who headed the police homicide section during the bloodiest days of YBI.

"The last time he got an idea about organizing **kids**, it was to sell dope. We paid that price. In fact, we're still paying."

Last week, Jones completed eight years of a 12-year federal **drug** conspiracy sentence and was transferred to the Michigan Department of Corrections to finish a three-to-five- year sentence for being an accessory to murder. He should be back on the streets by December, said his lawyer, Jeffrey Collins.

When released, Jones said, he **wants** to join forces **with** schools to enlist students in an enterprise called **Drug** War Awareness Inc., which would steer youngsters toward completing their schooling and away from **drugs** and crime.

He said years in prison have made him a different and better person. He said his experiences can help children.

"I was young and did a lot of ruthless things," said a lean and fit Jones. "I'm older now. I'm 35, not 20 and running the streets. This is the 1990s and not the '70s and '80s."

In the late 1970s, Jones did for narcotics trafficking what Henry Ford I did for the auto industry: revolutionizing the way business was done.

On the Birney Elementary School playground, Jones called a meeting of friends from the west-side Monterey-Dexter neighborhood and told them they could be millionaires.

His plan was to involve juveniles as cogs in a highly organized machine. Like Ford's assembly line, jobs were sharply delineated, **with** each person performing a specific task.

YBI set up a network of dealerships that moved specific **drug** mixtures under imaginative brand names such as Atomic Dog, Whipcracker, Rolls Royce and Freak of the Week.

Using juveniles as young as 12 for jobs such as mixing, delivery, sales and enforcement, YBI was a Horatio Alger story run amok. Young employees were offered performance incentives -- diamonds, gold jewelry, concert tickets, bicycles and fur-trimmed leather jackets -- as bonuses.

A hard-working youngster could quickly rise through the ranks, provided he lived.

Within months of its formation, Young Boys Inc. -- headed by Jones, Raymond Peoples and Mark Marshall, according to police -- had all but taken over the city's distribution and street-level dealing of heroin.

Police say YBI's rise and consolidation of power was marked by dozens of murders and shootings. Even police were victimized.

Gang member Cary Goins was convicted of manslaughter for shooting undercover police officer William Green on Woodward in 1982. Goins testified that he thought Green and his partner -- both in plainclothes -- were about to rob his friends, who were carrying a package thought to contain money or **drugs**.

In 1984, the gang's A-Team enforcement arm was blamed by police for at least nine slayings in Detroit, Highland Park and Troy in little over a month. Detroit's former U.S. attorney, Leonard Gilman, told a U.S. Senate hearing in 1984 that Jones' "natural leadership abilities parlayed the group into an organization that included upwards of 300 members by the end of 1982."

YBI spread to Flint, Pontiac and other Michigan cities. Successor organizations in Detroit followed the YBI formula.

But beginning in December 1982, the gang's hierarchy was rocked **with** a series of federal indictments. Eventually, Jones, Peoples and their supplier, Sylvester (Seal) Murray, and many underlings went to prison.

Jones was charged **with** four murders but convicted only of the lesser accessory charge.

Peoples served about two years but did not survive long once released. In 1985, he was slain as he sat in a parked car in the 2200 block of Sturtevant. No one has been charged **with** the killing.

Last week, Jones and his lawyer asked Recorder's Court Judge George Crockett III for a sentence reduction or assignment to a prison apart from his enemies. Collins said Jones' infraction-free stay in federal prisons and his counseling work **with** other prisoners are proof he is a different man.

Crockett said the sentence could not be reduced, but said he would recommend protective custody. "You may be an altogether different person than when all this started," Crockett told him. "I hope so. It looks like it."

Jones, in the holding cell interview, reflected on his past and future.

"I believe I demonstrated that I changed in federal prison. I'm very remorseful for a lot of what happened. But now I'm changed. I have a different perspective. I have a family. I just need an opportunity to show I can do some good."

He talked of providing peer counseling; organized activities such as chess, athletics and music; scholarships, and employment opportunities.

Jones said he is aware that his creation is responsible for untold lives ruined by **drugs** and guns, and that gangs in other cities followed his lead in recruiting children into **drug** dealing.

"It does bother me," he said. "I **want** to do whatever I can to try to make some of that up."

Many law enforcement officials are wary.

Farmington Hill Police Chief William Dwyer, who headed the Detroit police narcotics section during the YBI era, said: "Obviously he's a habitual criminal and involved **with** criminal networks since his teens. Personally I don't believe him.

"Look, he brought a whole new concept to **drugs** -- dealing **with kids** even before they got into their teens. He helped destroyed lives."

Wayne County Prosecutor John O'Hair said Jones' contact **with** children would be inappropriate.

"I don't know Mr. Jones personally, but his record's there for people to judge," O'Hair said.

Rudy Ramirez, acting special agent in charge of the federal **Drug** Enforcement Administration's Detroit office, said: "I don't think a convicted felon like him is the type of role model our children need. There are a whole lot of good people out there who can stand up for the children."

U.S. Attorney Stephen Markman said a person like Jones might be able to help deter youths from crime in a limited way, something akin to "the gruesome car crash films shown in driver's education."

But Jones' lawyer said the doubters are mistaken.

"Mr. Jones has been locked up too long to go back to the old things now," Collins said. "I know it's tough to erase the memories. But he has changed. This is not 10 years ago. He's different. It's a reality."

Caption: Photo

: Butch Jones ***

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