

RECOVERING MAN SLAIN IN HOSPITAL

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A **man** described as one of Detroit's biggest cocaine traffickers was gunned down Monday as he lay on his bed at Mt. Carmel Mercy **Hospital recovering** from a weekend gunshot wound.

Richard (Maserati Rick) Carter, 29, was shot **in** the face at least once around 5:30 p.m. by a gunman who strolled into Room 307, fired and fled, police and **hospital** officials said.

Carter, alone **in** the semi-private room, had been listed **in** fair condition after being shot **in** the stomach Saturday **in** a gunfight with a **man** at a car wash on West Seven Mile Road at Mansfield.

"He was looking forward to going home," said a Mt. Carmel employe who identified himself as a nurse.

Police, who called the mob-style execution "a hit," had no one **in** custody Monday night, and it was unclear if they were seeking one suspect or two.

Police described one suspect as a black **man** with a medium build **in** his early 20s, dressed **in** a black-and-gray striped shirt and black pants.

Carter -- whose nickname stemmed from his flashy style, not necessarily his choice of automobiles -- was no stranger to Detroit and federal law enforcement authorities.

"He is certainly well-known," said William Coonce, special agent **in** charge of the Detroit office of the federal Drug Enforcement Administration.

"He has a reputation with our office and the Detroit Police Department as a suspected narcotics trafficker."

A Detroit police official, who spoke on condition that he not be named, said:

"He was a dope **man** , a big dope **man** , upper echelon.

"He had the capability to deliver almost any amount of cocaine into this city and was always considered a multi-kilo dealer."

Officials said Carter was believed to be a close associate of Reginald (Rockin' Reggie) Brown, who was convicted April 29 of murdering an associate of Richard Wershe.

Wershe, known as White Boy Rick, is serving a life sentence for cocaine possession. Brown, the alleged leader of the Best Friends -- a reputed murder-for-hire gang -- is awaiting trial **in** two homicides and two assaults.

Carter was suspected by officials **in** several narcotics- related slayings.

He had an arrest record dating to 1977, and last Nov. 17 was charged with two counts of assault to commit murder and two counts of possessing a firearm **in** the commission of a felony. The status of those charges was unclear Monday night, though Deputy Chief James Younger said there were no outstanding warrants against Carter.

The shooting left **hospital** workers, patients and visitors stunned. The gun's report could be heard two floors away, said the nurse, who spoke on condition that he not be named. After the shooting, the **hospital** 's trauma team attempted to save Carter but he was pronounced dead at 6:01 p.m.

"Patients are **in** shock," the nurse said.

LeRoy Fahle, the **hospital** 's president, walked the third floor two hours after the shooting, reassuring patients.

"Nothing like this has happened **in** 50 years," said **hospital** spokeswoman Kay LeMon.

On Saturday, police said, Carter and another **man** , Lodrick Parker, 29, pulled guns after arguing at the car wash. Parker, who was shot **in** the arm, was released from Sinai **Hospital** on Sunday. No arrests were made **in** the shooting and it was not known why the two had argued.

Mt. Carmel spokeswoman Rose Dill said Carter had not requested that any restrictions be put on his room. Dill said visitors must receive passes from security personnel.

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