

TEENS BROUGHT INTO DRUG RING WITH FREE RIDES, WOMAN TESTIFIES

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Many teenagers who worked for the **Chambers Brothers** drug ring were recruited from Detroit high schools, often enticed by free rides to malls or cab fare to get around town, a witness testified Wednesday at the federal court trial of 14 alleged ring members.

Janice Roberts, 19, of Detroit, who said she once worked as a cook at Mayor Coleman Young's Manoogian Mansion, testified that she joined the drug ring in August 1986 and worked after school cutting crack cocaine at different gang houses. Roberts said she was paid about \$400 a week.

"We'd get a phone call after school or at home, telling us where to go next" and transportation was always provided, said Roberts.

She said she also got \$50 bonuses for recruiting others into the organization, many of them high school students.

Roberts said she worked for the mayor before joining the drug ring but did not specify when or for how long.

Federal investigators say the **Chambers Brothers** -- Larry, Otis, Billy Joe and Willie -- ran one of the largest drug rings in Detroit history.

Roberts, who received immunity from prosecution in exchange for her testimony, said she stopped working for the **Chambers Brothers** at the end of 1986 and fled to Ohio after Larry Chambers' girlfriend, Belinda Lumpkin, threatened to harm her baby.

Lumpkin, one of the defendants, apparently suspected Roberts was co-operating with federal agents when she made the threat, Roberts said.

If convicted on the count of conspiracy with intent to distribute controlled substances, all the defendants face up to 20 years in jail. Billy Joe and Larry Chambers face a maximum of life imprisonment if convicted of running the operation.

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