

TRIAL SLATED FOR REPUTED LEADER OF KILLING RING

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The **reputed leader of** an alleged murder- **for** -hire gang that investigators believe to be responsible **for** about 30 **killings** in Detroit this year was ordered in a preliminary hearing Monday to stand **trial for** second-degree murder in the September shooting **of** Steven Roussell.

Reginald (Rockin' Reggie) Brown, 21, also was ordered held without bond by 36th District Court Judge Willie Lipscomb Jr.; Brown is to be arraigned Nov. 9 on the charge, reduced from the first-degree murder charge sought by Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Timothy Kenny.

Roussell, 21, was shot to death Sept. 20 in a house in the 13600 block **of** Glenwood on Detroit's east side. Roussell and a cousin, Patrick McCloud, 17, were asleep in the house that afternoon, McCloud testified Monday, when McCloud said he was awakened by gunshots and saw Brown standing over Roussell shooting into the victim.

Roussell was struck twice by bullets.

"I looked up and seen Reggie Brown and I turned to run. That's when he shot me in the back," testified McCloud, who was struck five times by bullets. Brown was on probation **for** felonious assault **for** a previous shooting incident with Roussell, authorities said.

Assistant Prosecutor Kenny said there was "bad blood" between the two men because **of** disputes in the cocaine business.

Kenny argued **for** a first-degree murder charge because, he said, the shooting was premeditated; "It would appear to be an execution," Kenny told the judge. He cited past disputes between the victim and Brown.

Defense attorney Cornelius Pitts argued there was no testimony establishing premeditation to support a first-degree murder charge. Lipscomb agreed. "I think it's murder in the second degree," he said.

Pitts was asked outside the courtroom about the alleged murder- **for** -hire group investigators said is called "Best Friends" and believe to be linked to 30 **killings** on Detroit's east side.

"I don't know what that group is," Pitts responded. "I just don't know too much about that. I don't want the public giving in to all the allegations the newspapers are capable **of** ."

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