

A SHOOTING VICTIM - OR ON THE RUN? LAW OFFICERS DIVIDE OVER DETROITER'S DISAPPEARANCE

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Maybe **Demetrius Holloway** just ran out of luck. Maybe he just ran out.

His mother, his lawyer and police would like to know.

Witnesses have told police that **Holloway** , self-described gambler and reputed major narcotics dealer, was shot four times by four men in ski masks the night of Nov. 12 in the parking lot of an east side hamburger stand. **Holloway** was thrown into the trunk of a red car that sped away, they said.

Police are not so sure.

He has not been seen since, but some investigators believe that **Holloway** -- a close associate of recently slain drug figure Richard (Maserati Rick) Carter -- had more than enough reasons to stage his own disappearance.

The Detroit police public information office will say only that "an allegation of a shooting" is being investigated at the Top Hat hamburger stand on Gratiot at the Ford Freeway.

People who were in the restaurant and a woman who said she was with **Holloway** that night described a shooting. Slugs and shell casings were recovered from the scene.

However, investigators appear divided on whether it was a crime or an elaborate ruse by **Holloway** , 30, to escape mounting pressure from drug world rivals, federal investigators or his own associates.

Holloway is suspected by some law enforcement officials of being a prime drug supplier to Detroit's east side. Some investigators believe he is as big as the Chambers Brothers organization, recently broken by federal convictions.

But his attorney, Steven Fishman, said: "I've been representing him since 1985 and he's never been convicted of anything other than disorderly conduct." But **Holloway** had served time in federal prison for taking stolen property across state lines, and had been convicted on a drug charge while in prison.

Holloway 's mother, Everleen, and Fishman said they have not heard or seen him since the reported shooting.

"I heard he was shot and some boys threw him in the trunk of a car," said Everleen **Holloway** , adding that she does not know why police link her son to drug trafficking. "I haven't seen or heard from him since. . . . Yes, I want to know what happened."

Fishman said he has heard the same reports from police and street sources.

"With the amount of shooting going on, I have to be concerned," he said.

Homicide detectives, speaking on condition that they not be identified, said they backed off after initial investigations pointed toward a staged disappearance. Other investigators remain convinced **Holloway** was killed.

There are valid arguments to support either theory, both factions concede.

According to one theory, **Holloway** was taken out by the same drug dealing rivals responsible for killing Maserati Rick Carter in Mt. Carmel Mercy Hospital, where he was recovering from an earlier gunshot wound.

Lodrick Parker is awaiting trial on a charge of murdering Carter.

The day after Carter was shot, **Holloway** testified for the defense in the drug trial of James (Red) Freeman that he and Carter were childhood friends and card-playing buddies. He said Carter's family called him within an hour of Carter's death.

As for himself, **Holloway** testified he was a gambler who won big at Atlantic City casinos, always remembering to file the proper federal tax forms.

Holloway 's rivals, according to one theory, did not want a replay of the publicity that arose from the hospital killing.

Making **Holloway** vanish -- like former Teamsters boss Jimmy Hoffa's unsolved disappearance - - would generate speculation but no criminal charges, this theory goes.

Supporting the theory that **Holloway** was a victim in a battle for control of the east side, according to some investigators, is the Oct. 15 killing of Steve Washington, who was shot to death in his Mercedes-Benz by two men wearing ski masks. Washington, according to law enforcement officials, was affiliated with **Holloway** .

On the other hand, some investigators said, **Holloway** may be laying low.

"He's done it before," said one investigator, noting that **Holloway** has been the object of increased law enforcement attention in recent months.

The Wayne County Prosecutor's Office recently seized \$95,000 from him, successfully arguing that the cash was narcotics proceeds.

Three weeks ago the U.S. Attorney's Office seized a 1986 Mercedes-Benz from Everleen **Holloway** , arguing that the car was her son's and bought with drug money.

Federal officials also closed two athletic stores -- one in Detroit and one in Southfield -- owned by **Holloway** . A forfeiture trial on those properties is set for April.

Fishman discounted the forfeitures as "nothing."

Memo: SHORTER VERSION IN METRO FINAL EDITION page 3A

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