

BEHEADING DEFENDANT ON TRIAL IN ANOTHER CASE

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Thursday, December 1, 1983

Author: JOE SWICKARD Free Press Staff Writer

Sensational crimes, like horrific soap operas, never really end -- the characters just keep evolving.

Almost three years after the last jury handed down its verdict **in** the third and final **trial** of the Michigan Federated Democratic Club triple murder and beheading case, the names of defendants Adolph (Doc Holliday) Powell and James (Red) Freeman once again are heard **in** separate Recorder's Court cases.

In one case, Freeman is charged with another first-degree murder.

The second case involves the killing of Powell who -- with the help of a sawed-off shotgun and a .357 Magnum -- evolved into a dead victim the afternoon of Jan. 22 as he sipped cognac and clutched a \$50 bill **in** La Player's Lounge on Joy Road.

FREEMAN'S new case -- the January 1979 murder of Edward (Shuge) Brown -- is now before Judge David Kerwin, where defense attorney W. Otis Culpepper and Assistant Prosecutor Timothy Kenny are debating pre- **trial** motions. Jury selection started last week, but Kerwin dismissed the panel Monday when it became clear the preliminary maneuvering may take weeks.

The first-degree murder **trial** of Powell's alleged **killers** , Roy Walker, 35, and Gregory Barnett, 37, began Tuesday before Judge James Chylinski. A barmaid, Jeanette Askew, 23, also was killed, and a customer, Edward Marshall, was wounded **in** the shooting.

If convicted of first-degree murder, Freeman, Walker and Barnett face mandatory sentences of life **in** prison without parole.

ALTHOUGH Freeman's case is unconnected to the 1979 triple- beheading, law enforcement officials speculate that Powell -- reportedly suspected **in** criminal circles as a **snitch** -- was the victim of "an **ordered** hit" motivated by the multiple murder.

The ghastly murders at the Michigan Federated Democratic Club, which has no links to the political party, shocked even hardened Detroiters. The victims, two men and a woman, were forced to lie down on the floor and were shot to death **in** what is believed to have been a drug-related dispute. The bodies, with the heads and hands chopped off, were found wrapped **in** rugs **in** a van.

Five people originally were charged with the murders. Frank (Frank Nitti) Usher and Robert (Lefty) Partee were convicted of first-degree murder, but Powell, 50, and Freeman, 37, were acquitted. Charges against Benjamin (Shorty) Fountain were dropped because of insufficient evidence.

FREEMAN'S current **trial** does not have the shock of executions and mutilations.

Authorities charge that Freeman was parked **in** a van at Chene and Garfield the night of Jan. 27, 1979, when he motioned Brown over and shot him to death. Investigators believe Brown was killed over a drug debt.

A warrant charging Freeman with first-degree murder was issued eight months after the **slaying** . The case has been tied up **in** protracted appeals and legal arguments since then.

Powell, who greeted his acquittal **in** the beheading **trial** saying, "As long as you believe **in** God, you're always as free as the rain that falls," was killed **in** classic gangland fashion.

WITNESSES at preliminary hearings said four men walked into La Players; two moved toward a back telephone, and the other two positioned themselves on either side of Powell at the bar.

Edward Marshall said he just glanced toward the men before resuming his video game. His game was interrupted when a shotgun blast ripped through the bar. He ran toward the bathroom but was hit **in** the back with a blast. When the police arrived, they found Askew dead behind the bar and Powell still holding a \$50 bill.

After the killing, Barnett, according to testimony, **bragged** about how surprised Powell was but felt some pangs about Askew's death.

"Did you see that mother f----- when he got hit?" a witness quoted Barnett. "I hit him so fast till he doesn't know what hit him."

The witness, who claimed to have heard the confession by placing a water glass to a wall, said Barnett thought "it was too bad about the girl. He was sorry it happened .

But Barnett thought Powell got what was coming, the witness said. The witness quoted Barnett: "When you **snitch** , things like this happen to you. You know what you know, and that's how things are taken care of."

Memo: SEE ALSO STATE EDITION
Edition: METRO FINAL
Section: NWS
Page: 3A
Record Number: 8303130491
Copyright (c) 1983 Detroit Free Press