

## DRUG WAR MURDER SUSPECT ACQUITTED

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Thursday, December 22, 1988

Author: JOE SWICKARD Free Press Staff Writer

**Lodrick Parker** was acquitted Wednesday of murdering Detroit drug figure Richard (Maserati Rick) Carter at Mt. Carmel Mercy Hospital three months ago.

A Recorder's Court jury deliberated 10 hours over three days before clearing **Parker**. Carter was shot in the face Sept. 12 while recovering from wounds sustained in a gun battle two days earlier.

**Parker**, 29, grabbed his lawyers' hands and buried his head in his arms as the verdict was announced.

Judge Isidore Torres, who spoke with jurors privately, said "they weren't satisfied with the way the evidence was presented. They said there was a lack of sufficient evidence" to convict **Parker** of first-degree murder.

The prosecution, in its opening statement, labeled **Parker** a "gangster" and "a hired killer," a tactic the defense lawyers said ultimately backfired.

The jury was quickly escorted from the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice through a rear entrance after leaving the courtroom on a private elevator.

**Parker** was wounded in the arm in the same shoot-out at Seven Mile and Mansfield that sent Carter to the hospital. Defense lawyer Rene Cooper said **Parker** was an innocent bystander who had been walking on the sidewalk when shooting erupted among three cars containing Carter and his adversaries.

**Parker** was treated for his injury and released, while Carter remained hospitalized after surgery for stomach wounds.

Investigators believe Carter was a casualty in a struggle for dominance in Detroit's lucrative cocaine trade. He was buried in a casket with a Mercedes-Benz grille after a funeral with flamboyant floral tributes and a fleet of Rolls-Royces for the mourners.

Cooper said the earlier shooting was the only thing linking **Parker** with Carter. Jurors heard no testimony about the earlier shooting.

Deliberations began Monday afternoon, and the jury twice sent out notes saying it was deadlocked. On Wednesday morning jurors were read the testimony of Sandra Harbour, the prosecution's key witness, and less than 30 minutes later they acquitted **Parker**.

Cooper and co-counsel Raymond Burkett said the acquittal hinged on prosecutor Richard Cunningham's opening statement and Harbour's shaky testimony.

Harbour, a patient in the hospital at the time of Carter's killing, was the only witness to identify **Parker** as the man who ran from Carter's room after a gunshot.

A nurse, Editha Dinaano, testified she was within four feet of the man who ran from the room. While she saw his face, she said, she was unable to make any identification.

Under withering cross-examination by Burkett, Harbour -- who testified while disguised in heavy-framed glasses and knit cap pulled over her brow -- was repeatedly tripped up, and admitted mistakes in her statements to police and in earlier testimony about the circumstances surrounding the shooting.

Despite frequent stumbles in her testimony, Harbour remained unshaken that it was **Parker** who ran from the room while tucking a pistol into his waistband.

But Cooper said that identification was undercut because "she could remember nothing else."

Cunningham, in his final argument, told jurors the case rested squarely on whether they believed Harbour's identification of **Parker** .

Harbour, he said, was willing to endure the ordeal of coming to court when she could have chosen to remain silent.

## CUTLINE

### **Lodrick Parker**

\*\*\*\*

Caption: Photo

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 3A;

Index Terms: HOMICIDE ; HOSPITAL ; LODRICK PARKER; RICHARD CARTER

Record Number: 8802250912

Copyright (c) 1988 Detroit Free Press