

Detroit cop held in hit on his wife

Detroit News, The (MI) - Monday, April 21, 2008

Author: Paul Egan and Francis X. Donnelly / The Detroit News

Detroit cop held in hit on his wife

Authorities arrest 2nd man **in** killing at CVS, suspect him **in** slayings of eight others for hire.

By Paul Egan and Francis X. DonnellyThe **Detroit** News

DETROIT — Authorities **on** Sunday arrested a **Detroit** police sergeant accused of putting out a contract **on his wife** after earlier arresting the accused "hitman," a 27-year-old Detroiters who could be responsible for as many as nine killings.

Sgt. David Cobb, 38, who works **in** the department's eastern district, was arrested without incident at **his** home early Sunday morning, police said.

His wife , Rose Cobb, 47, was fatally shot **in** the head several times **on** Dec. 26, 2007, as she sat **in** the couple's van **in** the parking lot of a CVS pharmacy **on** East Jefferson. David Cobb was shopping inside the store at the time.

The arrest of Cobb came hours after a multi-jurisdictional violent crime task force arrested Vincent Smothers, 27, **in** Macomb County's Shelby Township. Police questioning of Smothers linked him to the Cobb killing and much more.

Smothers described himself as a professional hitman who was paid \$1,500 by David Cobb to kill Rose Cobb and who also was responsible for a long string of killings, police said.

When arrested Saturday night, Smothers was wanted by **Detroit** police for first-degree murder **on** a warrant issued **on** April 11 by 36th District Court **in Detroit** .

That murder warrant related to a June 21, 2007, drug house shooting **on** the east side of **Detroit** , **in** which a man and woman were killed and another woman was critically injured.

Smothers and another man targeted the victims, seeking money and drugs, an FBI agent who was looking for Smothers said **in** a sworn affidavit filed Tuesday **in** U.S. District Court **in Detroit** .

Smothers and the other man entered the apartment **on** Gravier, tied up the two women occupants and ransacked the apartment, according to the affidavit and news reports of the incident.

Smothers then shot the two occupants, killing one of them, the affidavit said.

Smothers and the other man then went out to the parking lot, where they shot and killed a man who had been lured to the apartment, the affidavit said.

Killed were Clarence Cherry, 35, who police say was shot at least 15 times outside the apartment building, and Karisa Rice, 18, who was inside.

Lakari Kareem Berry, 27, also known as James Morgan III, who was arrested **in** 2007 at a motel **in** St. Clair Shores, is serving a life sentence for murder **in** connection with that incident.

Both Cobb and Smothers were **in** custody Sunday night and neither had been arraigned.

Smothers has served time **in** state prison for firearms offenses.

He was described by an uncle Sunday as a man who was profoundly and adversely affected by the 1999 handgun killing of **his** 15-year-old sister **in** the driveway of **his** family's home **on** Vinton **in** **Detroit** .

The girl, a promising athlete who had been offered volleyball scholarships, was shooting hoops **on** Easter Sunday when she was shot by a man who came from next door to threaten another of her brothers, said Simon Smothers, an uncle of Vincent Smothers.

Family members say that "after that, he lost it," Simon Smothers said.

"That boy must have felt the world was nothing but murder and if someone could murder **his** baby sister like that ... he may hate the world enough to murder people."

Still, "there's no excuse for murdering anybody," Simon Smothers said.

Vincent Smothers, who attended Kettering High School **in** **Detroit** , is the son of Willie Frank Smothers, a former Chrysler employee and former construction worker who died of cancer **in** 1999, not long after **his** daughter's killing, the uncle said.

Rose Cobb's family, who had **held** a vigil for her **in** January, said they were stunned by the arrest of her husband.

"I mean, I'm just very shocked," said a Hamtramck nephew who declined to give **his** name. "I don't know what to say."

Workers at Hutzel Women's Hospital, where Rose Cobb worked as a social worker, said they also were stunned by the arrest.

They described Rose Cobb as a sweet, kind person full of grace and dignity. She was always willing to listen to other people and help with their troubles, they said.

"I just miss her very much," said Renee Crosby, an administrative assistant **in** the hospital's social work department.

After the arrest, which happened about 6:30 a.m., neighbors said they were surprised to see an armored vehicle and SWAT team descend upon their neighborhood **on** the city's east side.

They said they were even more surprised to see the person being marched from **his** condominium **on** Edlie Circle — a police officer.

"They seemed fine to me," neighbor Gwen Johnson said about the Cobbs' marriage. "They're just regular people."

Detroit News freelance writer David Grant and Staff Writer Rob Snell contributed to this report. You can reach Paul Egan at (313) 222-2069 or pegan@detnews.com.

Edition: 2-dot

Section: Asection

Page: 1A

Correction: Gaudrielle Webster and Clarence Cherry were the victims of a June 21, 2007 double homicide in Detroit that Vincent Smothers was charged on Monday with committing. In a Page 1A article on Monday and earlier, in a June 28, 2007, article, Webster was misidentified as Karsia Rice, who was also shot but survived the attack.

Record Number: det27782236

Copyright (c) The Detroit News. All rights reserved. Reproduced with the permission of Gannett Co., Inc. by NewsBank, inc.