

4 men charged in shootout

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Suspects arraigned on drug, armed robbery, conspiracy counts **in** drug bust at strip mall.

By Tanveer AliThe Detroit News

WESTLAND — **Four** men arrested **in** a parking lot **shootout** with police, **in** which one suspect died, were arraigned this morning and face life **in** prison if convicted.

Roberto Reed, Benjamin Pringle and Demond Sanders, all of Detroit, and Joseph Boldizar of Garden City were ordered to Wayne County Jail on \$1 million bond each on drug, armed robbery and conspiracy charges.

Five men, who police say were targeted for a drug bust, shot it out Tuesday with Romulus police officers conducting the sting **in** the Merri-Warren Plaza parking lot.

Sanders, 29, drove Detroiters Brian Thomas and Boldizar, 49, into the plaza to meet with an informant who had brought 3 kilos of cocaine to sell to the trio, said Westland Police Lt. Dan Karrick.

Police said while Sanders remained **in** the green Chevrolet Lumina, Thomas and Boldizar got into the back seat of the informant's silver Mercedes with a black bag police initially believed had the \$60,000 to \$75,000 needed to pay for the drugs.

"There was no money **in** the bag. This was set up to be a robbery from the get-go," Karrick said.

Shortly after, a black Buick Rendezvous driven by Reed, 32, pulled into the parking lot, police said. Pringle, 32, got out from the passenger side and approached the informant, brandishing a semiautomatic handgun, police said.

"You know what time it is," Pringle told the informant pointing a gun to his head, police said.

The informant grabbed the gun barrel and both Pringle and Thomas, who had a handgun **in** the back seat, tried to shoot the informant, police said.

Nine officers jumped from two undercover vans parked behind the Mercedes, police said, as Thomas and Pringle ran toward the Bob's of Canton-Westland grocery store while shooting at police.

Thomas, 28, died **in** front of the market, taking **four** bullets to his lower extremities, police said. Pringle and Boldizar were arrested shortly thereafter — with Pringle shot **in** the abdomen and fleeing into the store, sending customers and employees into hiding, police said.

Both drivers fled **in** their vehicles. Sanders was tracked to Detroit and arrested late Tuesday night; Reed surrendered **in** northwestern Detroit on Wednesday night, police said.

Karrick was hesitant to estimate how many shots were exchanged, but witnesses said up to 100 shots were fired.

No officers or bystanders were injured, and the informant had minor injuries, not caused by gunfire.

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