

PONY DOWN CREW

Drug Ring
1980-1986



Modeled after the highly successful Young Boys Inc., operation, Pony Down was the brain trust of the Buttrom Willis brothers. Leroy Buttrom the leader of the group followed Young Boys tactic of using juveniles to peddle their product in an effort to confound law enforcement groups who were virtually powerless to stop the legion of preteen dope dealers running drugs for these two groups. Pony Down sprung up from an area near West Seven Mile rd and Murray Hill in northwest Detroit. Buttrom \Willis began focusing in on more profitable locations held true by sellers employed by Young Boys Inc.

Pony Down infractions upon Young Boys turf resulted in several shootings among the enforcement arms of both gangs. Pony Down was unexpectedly assisted in their expansion efforts when Young Boys leaders were arrested and convicted of drug smuggling, money laundering and tax evasion in 1983. Leroy mobilized and unleashed his troupes on areas previously considered out of bounds for his workers. Willis expansion plans not only included usurping Young Boys territory but also the recruitment of the best and brightest of Young Boys enforcers, runners and alsmen.

Many of those targeted chose initially to remain loyal to Young Boys Inc., but Willis and his troops began making them offers they could refuse only under the pain of death. This operation set fourth in early 1982 allowed Pony Down to move into the vacuum created with the convictions of Y.B. leaders Seal Murray, Raymond Peoples and Butch Jones followed soon thereafter by the fall of Reginald Davis head of the DFG (Davis Family Gang). Within three years of it's inception, the Pony Down Crew had reached it's goal of replacing the troubled Young Boys Inc., ring as the most lucrative of Detroit's crack gangs. Buttrom and his ring were selling an estimated \$100,000,000 a year in sales at their peak commanding an army of

approximately 300 soldiers and associates.

The former high school dropout and juvenile delinquent impressed all with his penchant for organization and shrewd business acumen. By 1983 Pony Down had secured former Young Boys stronghold housing project areas like Herman Gardens and Brewster Douglas under the Pony Down flag. Their territory was marked by the presence of graffiti proclaiming "I Pony Down". Members of the Pony Down crew were identifiable by the Pony brand of shoe that they wore.

Blue and White Pony sweat suits replaced Young Boys fur-lined Max Julian jackets as the hot selling clothing item among inner-city youth. Pony Down peddled their product by delivering them in name brand packages marked with names like Pony, Atomic Dog, Nodd City, Shotgun, GQ, Renegade, Disciple and Top Ten down. Buttrick Willis was aided in running his empire by his brothers Walter and Anthony, Robert Latinee and Willie Birch Dawson. Pony Down was brought down by federal efforts in 1985 after several high profile shootouts with members of a resurgent Young Boys Inc., crew. Willis and his entire leadership squad were arrested and ultimately sentenced to prison terms. Willis himself received a six and a half year sentence for directing the murderous ring.