

WEEKEND SHOOTINGS KILL 1 TEENAGER, HURT 6

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The teenagers planned their party just the way their parents wanted them to.

It was a goodbye-to-summer event, and all the 50-or-so guests were juniors at Benedictine High School. They didn't go with dates; just a bunch of 16-year-olds having some fun at a classmate's home on the 17500 block of Sunderland. With chaperones.

But before the night was over one of the teenagers was dead and another injured in one of several Detroit incidents that left a total of seven youths age 16 or younger shot.

About midnight, the Benedictine party broke up. By 12:15 a.m. Sunday, all the young men had left, but a few of the young women were there, waiting for parents to pick them up.

They stood out front with **Melody Rucker**, who'd helped plan the party and was going to stay to clean up, then spend the night with the hostess. Just as a waiting guest's parents pulled up, shots rang out from a passing car. **Rucker** and classmate Vinita Smith fell.

They were taken to Mt. Carmel Mercy Hospital. Smith, shot in the chest, was in serious but stable condition.

Rucker, shot in the throat, an eye and shoulder, wasn't so lucky.

"At the hospital, they had about 20 people working on her," Betty Combs, a cousin, said Sunday while sitting in the **Rucker** home. "They kept us informed moment by moment . . .

"But about 3:30, quarter to 4, they told us she was gone . . .

"I've known her all my life. She was happy-go-lucky, with love. It was written all over her: love. You can see that by her friends. They're out front, out back. They're all around."

Rucker was a cheerleader at Benedictine High School, where she played volleyball and basketball, went out for track and was a class representative. She belonged to St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church and was a member of the diocesan youth task force and the choir.

Police said a group of young men in a gray Ford Thunderbird and a red Chevrolet Cavalier had tried to crash the party, left, then returned as the party was ending and fired the shots. **Rucker** and Smith had no connection with the young men, they were just in the way, police said. No one had been arrested Sunday, a police spokesman said.

Rucker was the third of four children of John and Vera **Rucker**. Her older sister, Penelope, is in the Army. Her older brother, John Jr., just graduated from Benedictine High and plans to go to an electronics and computer college this fall. Her younger brother, Samuel, is 12. She is also

survived by her paternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Emmette **Rucker** , of Griffin, Ga.

The funeral will be at St. Cyprian's at a time to be decided later. Arrangements are by the Stinson Funeral Home, on Meyers near the Lodge Freeway.

RUCKER AND SMITH were two victims of a bloody weekend for teenagers in Detroit in which five others were shot. All but one said they were shot from passing cars.

- * At 2:15 a.m. Sunday, Ronell Penn, 16, was found lying on the ground in the 6400 block of Clifton with a gunshot wound in his head. About 100 people were in the area, but none gave police any information, an initial report said. Penn was in serious condition Sunday at Henry Ford Hospital.
- * Sixteen-year-old Herschel Riggins was shot in the back Saturday night. He told police he was standing in front of his house in the 19100 block of Marx when shots were fired at him from a moving car.
- * Delvin Silver, 16, was shot in the hip Saturday evening as he walked in the 600 block of Gladstone. He told police shots were fired at him from a passing car.
- * Reginald Tarleton, 15, was shot in the stomach, the groin and the arm Saturday night, and he, too, told police he was shot from a passing car. He was in stable condition Sunday at Detroit Receiving Hospital.
- * Terrance Davis, 16, told police he was walking near Annsbury and Chelsea Saturday when a shot was fired from a passing car, hitting him in the leg. He was in fair condition Sunday at Samaritan Hospital.

CUTLINE

Melody Rucker

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