

## ALLEGED HIT MAN WILL STAND TRIAL

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Tuesday, August 14, 1984  
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An accused 18-year-old drug underworld hit man was ordered Monday to stand trial for first-degree murder, despite the failure of the prosecution's key witness to appear as scheduled.

**Charles Victor Obey**, of the 13500 block of Woodmont, was ordered by Judge William Bolle of Troy's 52d District Court to stand trial for the May 30 torture and murder of Ricky Darnell Gracey. Gracey was killed apparently in retaliation for the bungled robbery of an Obey associate's home.

Obey has been identified by police as an alleged member of the A-Team, the street enforcement unit of Young Boys Inc., Detroit's most-notorious drug-trafficking organization.

Key witness Katherine Combs, who broke a promise to appear in court last Friday, will be sought to testify in the upcoming trial, Assistant Oakland County Prosecutor Gary Chopp said Monday.

"Since she is an eyewitness, we have a duty to bring her back," Chopp said.

THE GOVERNMENT had hoped to get Combs' testimony on the record during the preliminary exam in case she fails to appear for trial.

Warrants issued last month in Troy charged that Obey and others killed Gracey after the 26-year-old Detroiters unsuccessfully tried to rob Portia Sturdivant Jones, 26, at her home along the Birmingham-Bloomfield Township border in Troy.

Jones is the wife of Milton (Butch) Jones, convicted Young Boys kingpin now serving a 12-year sentence in federal prison.

He was among 32 Young Boys members successfully prosecuted in U.S. District Court in Detroit last year.

Portia Jones and Spencer Tracy Holloway, 20, of Southfield, also have been charged in Gracey's murder and are being sought by police.

Three others have been killed in apparent retaliation for the attempted robbery, police say.

A fifth victim of the A-Team was killed April 30 in a dispute over control of drug trafficking in the area of Dexter and Richton in Detroit, authorities said.

Guns used in the A-Team killings, including a fully automatic 9mm Uzi, originally belonged to Norman (Snead) Johnson, a midlevel drug dealer who was killed Feb. 7 on Linwood in Detroit, authorities said.

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Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 3A

Index Terms: DRUG ; MURDER

Record Number: 8401280984

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