

Police building case against felon as shooter of Tamara Greene

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DETROIT – Authorities say they have reason to believe – if not yet evidence enough to prove – that Darrett King killed stripper Tamara Greene.

King, 35, was expecting to be released from prison next month. Instead, he was in court Thursday to face new charges related to a 2004 Christmas Eve gas station stick-up.

King knows, however, the assault charges are meant simply to keep him in custody while investigators attempt to cement his role in Greene's April 30, 2003 slaying, according to his lawyer.

The life and death of the exotic dancer and call-girl known as Strawberry has taken on mythological proportions in the annals of Detroit city lore. Identifying the 5 1/2 -foot-tall, 160-pound street hustler known as "Little D" as the suspect in the slaying could deflate the legend.

Greene was 27 when shot to death in a car on the city's west side. She is said to have danced months earlier at a raucous and raunchy party at the mayor's Manoogian mansion sometime late in 2002 and is said to have been caught in a compromising position with the mayor by Kilpatrick's wife, Carlita. Greene allegedly was beaten for it by Carlita Kilpatrick.

Greene, the story goes, was killed because she knew too much or because she was shaking the mayor down for hush money.

But the very existence of the party never has been confirmed, nor has any connection ever been shown between Green's early morning slaying and city hall.

Investigators believe they have nailed-down the true scenario, working from the recollection of informants who said King went around town bragging about the killing and from a statement given by Eric "Big E" Mitchell, who was in the car with Greene when she was gunned down. "He knows what it's all about, and it's bull," King's lawyer Carl Jordan said Thursday. Jordan described his client as "flustered" when he appeared in 36th District Court Thursday.

King has a long rap sheet. He currently is doing time for being a **felon** in possession of a firearm. King pleaded guilty to the charge in June of 2004 and drug dealing charges dating to 2002 were dropped.

The new charges, two counts of assault with intent to murder and being a four-time felony offender, stem from a **case** that somehow slipped through the cracks years ago during the **police** investigation and are being brought now to keep King locked up, authorities told The News.

The scenario surrounding Greene's death pieced together by investigators goes this way: Mitchell and King, both of whom have been arrested for narcotics possession, were colleagues in the rough and tumble of the Detroit drug scene.

The two were business associates, authorities say, who bickered bitterly in the summer of 2002 about a load of cocaine gone missing. The beef culminated with the torching of Mitchell's SUV, parked in his condominium parking lot. A security guard said it was a man in a white SUV. As, it happened, King's wife owned a white SUV and King bragged around town, that he was the one who torched Mitchell's car, informants told **police** .

Greene, a known consort of both men and something of a famed talent in Detroit, was caught in the middle. Two weeks before her murder, Greene danced for another party of men that was attended by both "Little D" and "Big E."

King made sexual overtures toward Greene, authorities say, overtures that Greene declined. Angered, the King punched her first in one eye, then the other. Autopsy reports show Greene died with two black eyes.

Her beating was confirmed by Greene's grandmother, Bertha Powell, of Columbus, Ohio. "She told me she got beat up at a party," Powell said. "She told me she was afraid."

Mitchell, who stands 6-feet 5-inches-tall and weighs in excess of 250 pounds, intervened, authorities say. The large man beat down the little man – an embarrassment for King because it was witnessed by Detroit's gangland scene.

The feud escalated, investigators say. A week after the party, and a week before Greene's death, an expensive car leased by Greene's grandmother and used by Greene and Mitchell – was shot-up.

A week later, in the early morning hours of April 30, 2003, Greene and Mitchell sat in her car idling in front of his home in the Bagley section of Detroit. According to a statement Mitchell gave to the **police** , a white SUV turned the corner, a left hand emerged holding a pistol from the driver's side window, and unleashed a barrage of at least 12 bullets, according to crime scene investigators.

Greene was struck three times, including once in the face and once in the neck. Her body slumped over the steering wheel, her eyeglasses were broken and the car, still in drive, crept down the street.

Mitchell was struck five times, but having seen the SUV, he ducked without warning next to Greene. He was not seriously injured, he told **police** . In fact, Mitchell got out of the car, called a friend on his cell phone and knocked on a neighbor's door. A few minutes later, Mitchell told the **police** on the scene. "It was Little D."

Still, the **case** went cold. Until the mayor's spectacular problems began and the Detroit **Police** Department stepped up efforts to solve the **case** .

"He slipped through the cracks of a broken system," an investigator said of King. "A broken system in a broken city."

A preliminary examination on the new assault charges was postponed Thursday. Judge Katherine Hansen ordered King returned to court on Aug. 26. He is being kept, temporarily, in the Wayne County Jail.

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