

What Makes Kenneth Run?



Surveillance photograph of Kenneth Garrett (left) and Glen Cheaves, also known as "Bird Dog" (right).

When Kenneth Garrett was 14 years old he came to Detroit with wild ideas on ways to make a fast buck and a yen for fancy cars.

In his school years he managed a string of prostitutes along the bars that line "Cass Corridor," a typical inner-city area inhabited by those on low fixed incomes and frequented at night by loan sharks, gamblers, and narcotics dealers.

The Corridor was Garrett's type of place and over the years he kept it as a base of operations. But it was not long before he moved to a luxury apartment in an upper-middle class neighborhood. Reportedly, he parlayed his earnings into a bankroll of \$150,000 by backing a pool hustler.

Within ten years of his arrival Garrett is alleged to have had his own heroin distribution ring that was grossing \$6 million a year.

The Drug Enforcement Administration's investigation into Garrett's activities, which began in December 1973, extended through 11 months of 1974. All things considered it was a lucky year for Garrett, who is now safely in custody in spite of a Western-style shootout with fellow traffickers at his apartment on Providence Drive in Southfield.

Returning to pick up some clothes before a trip to the West Coast to buy brown heroin, according to intelligence reports, he was carrying \$60,000 in cash. A trio of gunmen were waiting for him to emerge from the elevator. But he decided to walk up the stairs. By the time they spotted him he had pulled out a 9 mm 13-shot Browning automatic. When DEA agents arrived on the

scene, they counted 14 bullet holes in the walls and ceiling of the hallway.

Meanwhile, a search warrant had already been executed by DEA agents who found lactose, mixers to cut heroin, and traces of heroin in plastic bags on the premises. But more evidence was needed. Garrett continued to operate out of a bar in the Cass Corridor, but he was now extremely cautious. He sold to his customers, mainly street wholesalers, only one-ounce quantities of heroin—approximately 12 percent pure—for \$1,300 to \$1,400 an ounce. He made deliveries only through his lieutenants. The heroin was contained in heat-sealed bags, and he refused to guarantee the drugs if a seal was broken.

In the early hours of November 27 the final roundup took place. In the Red Dog Bar, Garrett, now 25, his brother Ronald, 24, his top lieutenant Glen Cheaves, 34, also known as "Bird Dog," and eight other ring members were arrested. DEA agents seized a half-pound of heroin, two ounces of cocaine, six guns, \$8,000 dollars in cash, and three of Garrett's prized possessions—two 1973 Cadillacs and a 1974 Mercedes-Benz.

The roundup, according to DEA Regional Director Theodore L. Vernier, required the teamwork of federal, state, and local agencies: U.S. Department of Justice Strike Force Attorney Laurence J. Leif; the U.S. Treasury's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; the Intelligence Division of the Michigan Department of Internal Revenue; and the Detroit Police Department.

—Hank Price