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Cops stare down S.I. slay suspect

Gun thought to be murder weapon found

By MICHELE McPHEE, RALPH R. ORTEGA and DAVE GOLDINER
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

Hundreds of angry cops packed a Staten Island courtroom yesterday and came face-to-face with the suspected triggerman in the execution of two undercover detectives.

A nervous-looking Ronell Wilson, 20, said nothing during a 10-minute arraignment on murder charges that could carry the death penalty.

Meanwhile, Wilson's alleged accomplices scrambled to cut deals as cops found a .44-caliber handgun thought to be the murder weapon near the Stapleton Houses after one suspect tipped them off.

Even as outrage filled one-half of the courtroom, about 80 relatives of Wilson crowded behind the defense table, and his father feebly tried to shift the blame to the slain cops for Monday's killings during a gun buy-and-bust operation gone bad.



Antonelli for News

Ronell Wilson is walked out of the 120th precinct in Staten Island.

"I send all my condolences to the cops and their families, but sometimes you have to know what you're doing and not screw up," said the father, Robert Earl Barnes, 51.

Barnes and other relatives insisted Wilson did not pull the trigger and was being set up by his criminal buddies.

"Cold-blooded killer? Hell no," Barnes said. "Everybody's born an angel until you're proven a devil."

Wilson was arraigned on first-degree murder charges in the shootings of Rodney Andrews, 34, and James Nemorin, 36.

Staten Island District Attorney William Murphy has said he will consider asking for the death penalty.

"When you take the life of any human being, it's a tragedy," said Chief Assistant District Attorney David Lehr. "When you take the life of somebody who's here to protect us and serve us, it's even more of a tragedy."

Judge Alan Meyer ordered Wilson, a reputed Bloods gang member, held without bail in protective custody.

Off-duty cops packed into the courtroom struggled to keep their emotions in check during the hearing.

"He never, ever, deserves to see the light of day," police union chief Patrick Lynch said of Wilson. "These are people who have no regard for human life."

Police say Wilson's pal Omar Green, 18, hoped to lure the cops for a robbery after agreeing to sell a Tec-9 submachine gun for \$1,200 Monday night.

Wilson and Jesse Jacobus, 17, got in the cops' car and Wilson shot both officers after backup cops lost their trail and the signal from a transmitter device failed, police said.

Mitchell Diaz, 16, and Paris Bullock, 21, also face murder charges for helping set up the cops, who are the first NYPD officers slain in the line of duty since the terror attacks.

Instead of facing a judge, Wilson's co-defendants rushed to tell their story to a grand jury in hopes of cutting deals.

"Why do you think they weren't in court for their arraignment?" asked an attorney familiar with the case.

With Bill Farrell

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