

# The Daily Pennsylvanian

## New suspects arrested in famed West Philadelphia massacre

The original suspects served 18 months in jail before new evidence led to their release.

By **Emily Sanders** | 12/05/02 10:00am

Philadelphia prosecutors announced last week the arrest of four new suspects in the Lex Street massacre -- the murders of seven people in a West Philadelphia crack house on December 28, 2000.

The arrests follow the July release of four men originally convicted of the crime.

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The new suspects, Shihean Black, 20, Dawid Faruqi, 27, Khalid Faruqi, 26, and Bruce "Snoop" Veney, 26, have been charged with seven counts of murder and related offenses, including aggravated assault and drug dealing.

In 2001, Jermel Lewis, Hezekiah Thomas, Sacon Youk and Quiante Perrin were wrongly convicted and sentenced to death. They spent 18 months in prison before their release over the summer.

"Initially, we were provided with information that led the police down the wrong path," District Attorney Lynne Abraham told The Philadelphia Inquirer last week.

According to District Attorney spokeswoman Cathie Abookire, Veney pleaded guilty to the charges on Friday. In exchange for his testimony against the other three suspects, Veney will receive 15 to 30 years in prison. Prosecutors have said that Veney drove the other suspects to the scene but was not involved in the actual shootings. Abookire added that a preliminary hearing will be held for the other three suspects, who may be tried together.



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Abraham has said that prosecutors will push for the death penalty.

According to The Inquirer, prosecutors were forced to reopen the Lex Street case in May, when Faruqi, arrested for illegal gun dealing, confirmed the murder confession of Black -- whose initial confession had reportedly been viewed by investigators as a suicidal attempt to land on death row.

Edward McCann, the chief homicide prosecutor, told The Inquirer that Veney said that he drove Black and the Faruqi brothers to the site of the crime, 816 N. Lex Street, and parked a short distance away, leaving the engine on. Black and the Faruqi brothers, all armed, then entered the house. Veney, who had gone up to the door and seen the Faruqis herding victims together while Black stood atop another victim cursing, heard gunshots and fled. The other three men met him at the car and they all left the scene, McCann said.

Originally attributed to a drug turf war, the arrest of the four new suspects has now revealed that the dispute was over a car. According to a police affidavit reported in The Inquirer, Black told police that he had traded a Chevrolet Corsica for \$300 for a Dodge Intrepid belonging to George Gibson Porter, one of the victims in the shootings. When Porter

encountered problems with the clutch on the Corsica, he went to Dawid Faruqi, who had traded Black a pistol in exchange for the Intrepid, The Inquirer reported.

On the night of the killings, Black told investigators that the intent had been to corral the victims, but when Dawid Faruqi's mask fell, a shooting spree to protect his identity ensued.

Abookire, who would not comment on the latest evidence, said that no court dates have been set.

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