

Portrait of the

SOUL-JACKER

Robert Nash stares at 12 grand jurors who are hearing evidence in a gang murder investigation. Nash has been called to the grand jury room as the prosecution's "star witness" this August day in 1996. He would rather be anywhere — anywhere — else.

After he takes an oath, swearing to tell the truth, Nash begins the process of rattling out his childhood friend, Bernard Temple, whom the district attorney wants to charge with murder in the first degree.

In halting testimony, sometimes limited to monosyllabic responses of yes and no, Nash and another witness tell the grand jury this mundane and chilling tale:

On the morning of Oct. 29, 1988, Bernard Temple, then 20, lent his Cadillac to Walter Mullins, an acquaintance.

Nash accompanied Temple that afternoon to a Toys "R" Us store where Nash watched Temple purchase the type of mask worn by hockey goalies (and, of course, by the character Jason in the *Friday the 13th* movies).

Later that evening, as Temple and Nash were partaking in a sidewalk craps game at Oakdale Avenue and Baldwin Court, Mullins, gobbling down some fast food, returned Temple's car, which should have been back hours before.

Nash already had an inkling that Temple had taken an assignment to kill Mullins, who's suspected of robbing street-level crack dealers. When Assistant District Attorney Floyd Andrews asks why Temple bought the mask, Nash reluctantly stumbles through this explanation: "Either — you know, I mean, get the car back or probably murder him or kill him or something."

At some point, Temple left the game of craps and, putting on his Jason mask, prepared to execute his grisly job. Because he suspected Temple had murder on his mind, Nash says, he started talking to Mullins about girls and other noncontroversial topics. Nash felt that while he and Mullins were engaged in conversation, Temple might not kill the tardy car-returner.

A minute or two later, Mullins left Nash and crossed the street. Temple, wearing the Jason mask, walked up behind Mullins and pumped one well-aimed shot to the base of the back of his head — execution style, as they say in the daily newspaper reports — sending Mullins crashing, dead, to the sidewalk, fast-food containers spilling all around. One shell casing clinked to the sidewalk, landing near Mullins' outstretched foot.

Still wearing the hockey mask, Temple disappeared around a corner. Seconds later, Temple, sans mask, came back around the same corner, panting, asking what had happened.

After Nash wraps up this awful narrative for the grand jurors, Andrews peppers him with a few additional questions, trying to get more definite answers about the hit. The prosecutor gets exactly the opposite.

Nash begins to hedge and hem and haw and backtrack. Frustrated, Andrews finally has Nash repeat his basic points and quickly dismisses him from the stand.

The prosecutor turns to the grand jury and apologizes

"Sorry about that," Andrews says. "It should be pretty obvious he's pretty concerned about his name leaving the room, and I hope everybody respects that he's a nervous wreck."

Bernard Temple, the 28-year-old son of a part-time minister who knows the Scripture by heart, calls himself the Soul-Jacker because he believes that when he kills someone he acquires the soul of the victim and thereby makes himself stronger.

Editor's note: For safety reasons, the names of confidential government informants have been replaced with pseudonyms. All other names in this article are real.

Police call Bernard Temple the meanest hit man ever to roam the gang-infested streets of Bayview-Hunters Point. Temple calls himself a soul-jacker — someone who kills to steal the spiritual power of his victims.

Street names are common in the crack-infested ghettos of San Francisco, where people go by monikers like Little Disease, Smurf, Ne Ne, and Nina Boo. Bernard Temple went by several nicknames: Mani, short for Maniac; Nardy; and Nard T. The Soul-Jacker business was different, though. One San Francisco cop who has investigated Temple says the Soul-Jacker takes his psycho-spiritual title seriously. "He's a sick fuck," the officer says.

Police say Temple is a hit man for major cocaine suppliers. He stands charged with two murders, and officers familiar with his history say he's killed 15 people on orders from dealers who pay him thousands of dollars a pop. In the limited universe of drugs and death and drive-bys that unfortunately but extensively defines Bayview-Hunters Point, Bernard Temple is a terrifying legend.

He's simply the hardest, the baddest, the meanest who's ever come to the meanest part of San Francisco

"If Nard T comes to town, someone is dying," says E.R. Balinton, a San Francisco police



By George Cothran

officer who has known Temple since the accused killer was a juvenile offender learning to box at San Francisco's Youth Guidance Center.

So far, Temple has been charged with killing Mullins and another man, Jacky Williams, who Temple allegedly riddled with bullets in 1991. Andrews says both men were killed because they were suspected of stealing drugs from dealers.

Veteran homicide inspector Napoleon Hendrix, who has relentlessly tracked leads on Temple for years, says he isn't done with the Soul-Jacker yet. "This isn't over," says Hendrix in his telltale deep East Texas growl. For most of 1995 and 1996 Hendrix commanded a now-disbanded special unit of officers who set out on stone-cold trails of years-old black-on-black homicides, nabbing several killers who had seemingly gotten away with murder. So when Hendrix says he isn't done, he probably isn't.

Thanks to the testimony of Nash and Charles Johnson, who is now in state prison, the Soul-Jacker was arrested on Aug. 29, 1996, a little more than two weeks after the grand jury returned a bill of indictment. He was in a park near his Modesto home playing with

his 2-year-old son. He went quietly, the cuffs slapped on by Officer Balinton, his old juvenile hall counselor.

The arrest capped a six-month investigation by the Bay Area arm of the new federal Violent Gang Task Force. A Department of Justice invention that started forming on paper in the waning days of the Bush administration, the task force was resuscitated by Attorney General Janet Reno and launched in 1994 during a nationwide teleconference with the nation's top law enforcement officials.

The Temple case is the first state court prosecution to come out of the Bay Area portion of the task force, which joins local police and district attorneys with the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Several San Francisco police officers have been cross-sworn as federal agents, so they can participate in the task force.

Led by FBI Special Agent Thomas J. LaFreniere, federal agents and police officers have rattled cages all over Bayview-Hunters **Continued on page 12**

Soul-Jacker

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Point, pressuring drug dealers and gang-bangers to "turn" and snitch against their associates and running undercover investigations of suspected drug dealers. The full-court press on gangs is founded on the fairly reasonable belief that crack cocaine and drug gangs who terrorize urban communities are at least as large a security problem for Americans as the terrorists who bombed the World Trade Center. And clearly, crack-related gang warfare is an ongoing terror in Bayview-Hunters Point.

Federal drug war task forces are certainly nothing new. But the Violent Gang Task Force is the first to go after home-grown gangs who ply the crack trade in poor neighborhoods.

And the task force has ambitions far beyond busting the Soul-Jacker. The cases against Temple are interwoven with a larger, high-stakes federal prosecution, involving far-ranging drug conspiracy charges filed against 16 defendants accused of belonging to a drug gang called the Michael organization, after its purported leader, Charles Michael (aka Mr. Biggs), a sometime rap music promoter who, government informants say, ran one of the biggest crack operations in Hunters Point out of a hair salon and laundered his money through a rap record label.

Both the Temple and Michael cases come out of the same four-square-mile, drug-and-crime-ravaged slice of San Francisco: Hunters Point. The confidential informants who have provided information crucial to the federal case are also deeply involved in the Temple case, law enforcement sources and some of the witnesses themselves say. LaFreniere has led the Temple and the Michael probes, and the same SFPD officers have worked on both. (LaFreniere, other federal officials, and the top S.F. police officers involved in the task force declined to be interviewed.)

An attorney familiar with the Michael case expects Temple to be linked to the federal drug conspiracy probe by allegations that he was the enforcer, the hit man for Mr. Biggs. Such a charge would introduce an element of violence probably necessary if the government is to get long sentences in the Michael cases, and currently missing from them. A local law enforcement source confirms that the renewed Temple investigation grew out of the federal investigation into the Michael organization.

Temple's attorney, V. Roy Lefcourt, also believes the government would like to link his client to Mr. Biggs. Lefcourt has formally requested FBI documents and other federal records, trying to establish a link between the Temple and Michael investigations. Obviously, Lefcourt and his client contend any such link is a fabrication; Lefcourt says he has seen federal and local police documents that indicate that the FBI persuaded San Francisco police to reopen the Temple murder cases after they had been closed because

the feds couldn't find any witnesses brave or foolish enough to take the stand against the Soul-Jacker while he was a free man.

A few simple facts are sufficient to illustrate the fear Temple inspires: More than 100 people saw him gun down Mullins. The Williams killing was done in broad daylight with no disguise. It took years of work and enormous law enforcement

declaration to that effect, and Lefcourt is trying to throw out the indictment alleging Temple murdered Mullins, citing a tainted grand jury hearing.

If these developments do not destroy the two cases, they do illustrate how hard it is for the government to penetrate and break up the loose criminal structure characteristic of most crack gangs.

Floyd Andrews under-

wanted to get into boxing. But you have to throw back to the day. Understand what Oakland [a main strip of crack commerce in Hunters Point] was like [in the mid-'80s]. Everybody from the Bay Area came there. It was a party all the time."

Long before Bernard was arrested on murder charges, the black hole of drugs and violence had consumed the life of his twin brother, Larnard.

Larnard Temple had strikes against him from day one. He was borderline mentally retarded and suffered from hyperactivity syndrome and attention deficit disorder, according to the assessment of Dr. Thomas Hilliard, a court-appointed psychologist. In 1984, the twins' mother, Betty Temple, told a psychologist that Larnard was "mentally slow, immature, unable to comprehend events around him very well, and possessing little common sense."

A former associate of the Temple twins says Larnard was a hit man for crack dealers, just like his brother. The associate describes the twins' relationship simply: "Bernard was the bully, and Larnard was his backup."

At 16, Larnard was sent to Log Cabin Ranch, a Bay Area juvenile detention center, for grand theft. The next year, rushing to defend Bernard in a gang-related fight, Larnard shot a rival gang-banger with a sawed-off .22-caliber rifle. He pled guilty to assault with a deadly weapon and spent three years in a juvenile detention facility.

In another psychological report on Larnard, CYA staff psychologist Dr. Larry Nicholas came to a conclusion that mixes the comic, the tragic, and the delusional: "It appears this somewhat passive youth, feeling himself to be vulnerable and inadequate to deal with threatening situations, used this gun as a crutch to bolster his self-confidence and his psychological defenses."

Larnard Temple's life was all but completely circumscribed in 1993 when he was handed a life sentence for killing two people in Sacramento, a gang rival and a man named C.C. Cottonreader, a 400-pound cross-dresser who took care of the Temple brothers' dying grandmother.

During his trial in Sacramento, Larnard frequently quoted from the Bible, and referred to God in asides.

"I remember his saying things like, 'My arms are too short to box with God,'" Sacramento Assistant District Attorney Steve Grippi says.

The Temple twins and their two brothers and one sister were apparently damaged by their parents' marriage, which can be described as rocky, at best.

During the mid-1980s, Betty Temple split from her husband and left for the state capital with Larnard and the other children. (The couple now live together in Sacramento; both declined to be interviewed for this article.)

Bernard stayed behind in San Francisco and lived with his father, Lawrence, a City College custodian. Not yet a self-styled Soul-Jacker, Bernard racked up a "very vicious" juvenile record, filled with rape and assault, says Inspector Hendrix.

Bernard excelled at football, track, wrestling, and basketball at Woodrow Wilson High School, where he spent his freshman and sophomore years, and at Mission High School, where he graduated with a C+ average in 1986. He was known as a smooth talker and a sharp dresser. "He had those smooth edges," says James Calloway, a former dean at Mission High.

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INCIDENT REPORT FORM CONTI. JATION		S. FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT	
INCIDENT NO. 900767233	REPORTING OFFICER FOULKE	STAR 674	DATE(S) & TIME(S) OF OCCURRENCE 6-13-90
EVIDENCE SHEET			
E-1	RIFLE - "KFS" SERIAL # (316) CS04F94	MODEL AKS-762	CHL 7.62 X 39mm MADE IN CHINA
E-2	ONE RED SF HAT KNIT CAP W/ ONE HOLE CUT OUT	(FROM BERNARD'S BEDROOM ON TOP OF DESSER BY 437)	
E-3	ONE BLUE HOODED SWEATSHIRT W/ "HARD T" INSCRIBED ON IT	(FROM BERNARD'S BEDROOM DESSER BY 674)	
E-4	ONE BLUE "RANGERS" KNIT CAP W/ TWO EYE HOLES CUT OUT	(FROM BEDROOM IN BERNARD'S BEDROOM BY 674)	
E-5	ONE BLUE JACKET WITH "SF REC / PARK STAGE" INSCRIBED	(FROM BERNARD'S BEDROOM CLOSET BY 674)	
E-6	"CHUCK CHARLIE RPD" MEDALLION	(FROM HALL CLOSET BY 513)	
E-7	SF RECEIPTION + PARK DEPT. CERTIFICATE IN THE NAME OF BERNARD TEMPLE	(FROM LIVING ROOM HALLWAY)	
E-8	2 LETTERS OF RECOGNITION IN THE NAME OF BERNARD TEMPLE FROM WILLIE BROWN		
E-9	"SINGING" SHOULDER HOUSTER	(FROM BERNARD'S BEDROOM BY 674)	
E-10	1 BLACK KNIT CAP W/ HOLE FOR FACE - SKI MASK -	(FROM CHL BY *5)	
E-11	1 DARK BUCK LEATHER GLOVES	(FROM CHL BY *5)	
E-12	1 BLACK KNIT CAP W/ 2 HOLES CUT OUT FOR EYES	(FROM CHL BY *5)	
E-13	1 "SNEAK" BATTING GLOVE - BLACK -	(FROM CHL BY *5)	
E-14	9 PHOTOS OF BERNARD TEMPLE (8 BARNARDIS - 1 FRAMES)	(FROM BERNARD BY 674)	
E-15	1 BOX "REMINGTON" .35 CAL AMMO CONTAINING 25 LIVE ROUNDS	(FROM BERNARD BY 674)	
E-16	1 BOX "WINCHESTER" .41 CAL TRAP LOADS \$12 GAUGE SHOTGUN SHELLS CONTAINING 15 LIVE SHELLS		
E-17	L.A. RANGERS COLOMBIA (CONTINUOUS NOTES)		
E-18	JUDICIAL IN NAME OF BERNARD TEMPLE - P62 JENSEN (CABLE TV STATEMENT)		
E-19	1 CAMOFLAGE FRANK JACKET	(FROM BERNARD'S BEDROOM BY 674)	
E-20	3 MAGAZINES LOADED W/ LIVE ROUNDS FOR E-1		
E-21	"MOSSBERG" 12 GAUGE SHOTGUN BARREL + STOCK SERIAL # K368145		
P-1	US CURRENCY - \$2000.00		

Armed to the Teeth: The inventory page from a 1990 gang investigation police report lists the astonishing arsenal uncovered in Bernard Temple's car and home.

pressure to persuade even a few witnesses to tell what they saw.

Even now, the murder cases against Temple seem to be relatively weak. There is no ballistic, blood, or other physical evidence. Assistant District Attorney Andrews has elicited eyewitness testimony against Temple — but that testimony has been given by convicted killers and drug dealers who were associates of the alleged hit man and who have astonishing criminal records of their own. Lefcourt thinks that Temple was taken off the streets to make some defendants in the Michael case feel more comfortable with the idea of turning against their former partners and becoming government witnesses.

But so far, none of those defendants has turned. In fact, it is the federal government that has a turncoat problem. One of the government's eight confidential witnesses — apparently someone the Justice Department had been counting on as a key witness — has already had sub rosa discussions with the Michael defense team and is helping those attorneys in their attempts to exclude key wiretapping evidence from trial.

And in November, three months after testifying against Temple, government witness, Robert Nash contacted Lefcourt and told the defense attorney that he had lied under oath to the grand jury. Nash has since signed a

stands this. "If it wasn't a tough case, it wouldn't be a gang case, and I wouldn't have it," says the prosecutor, who has specialized in gang investigations for the past two years.

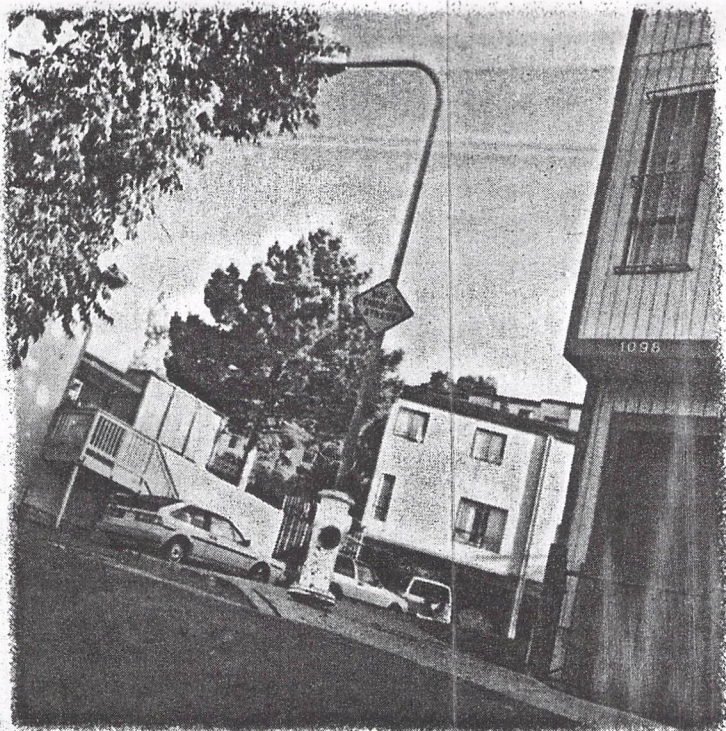
Bernard Temple was born and raised in Bayview-Hunters Point. When he turned 18 in 1986 — as he stepped into manhood — crack cocaine hit the streets big time.

The yellowish-white nugget changed everything. Crack took the African-American neighborhoods of the city by the feet, held them upside down, and shook them until they were sick.

There seemed to be no escape. "I don't think you could find someone of our age group who didn't get caught up in drugs, in using it and selling it," says one of the federal task force's confidential witnesses. "It was in our homes. It wasn't hidden from you. It was out there on Front Street."

Temple and other young men in his neighborhood had plans that were bigger than crack. But the force of crack — the easy money, the prestige that went with it, the simple thrilling rush of the drug itself — always pulled them back into what is known in Bayview-Hunters Point as, simply, "the life."

"We had long-term goals," the informant says. "We wanted to use our street savvy to create something of ourselves. Bernard



Amy Douglas

Last Exit for Walter Mullins: The alleged first victim of the Soul-Jacker was gunned down at a crap game at this intersection of Oakdale Avenue and Baldwin Court in Hunters Point.

Soul-Jacker

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Beverly Hubbard, a former counselor at the school, says she remembers Temple being interested mainly in the time and location of the next party. "He was one of the students who I would ask about plans for the future who didn't have any," she says. "I remember the ones who had plans, and I don't remember him that way."

His graduation year, Temple was arrested for locking a girl in a schoolroom and sexually assaulting her. Details of the event are scarce in the public record; the case was dismissed after Temple spent three days in jail, according to court documents. But Inspector Hendrix, who is familiar with the case, says, "As I remember, his friends held the door while he went in there and brutalized the girl."

In 1987, Temple was convicted of raping a 14-year-old girl. In a pre-sentencing interview with a court-appointed psychiatrist, Temple downplayed the seriousness of his first adult offense.

"The defendant stated that the victim looked like she was 16, and that if she had looked 14, he would have nothing to do with her because he is not interested in children," the psychiatrist wrote. "The defendant stated that he had known the victim for about a month. He described her as very fast, and stated that she was overly friendly."

"On the day of the offense, the defendant stated that he was at home with a friend and she called wanting to come over. He stated that she came into the house and walked directly to his room, sitting on the bed, and they talked. He described the talk as 'boring,' and felt that she was simply stalling, 'like she came over for one thing.' He stated that she took off her coat, he turned off the radio, and they held each other. Then she lay back on the bed, he unzipped her pants and pulled them off. She told him not to tell anybody. He stated that he put on his tape recorder, and 'I recorded me and her.' When asked why, he stated that it was 'to give proof to his friend, Caesar, that he had had sex with her.'"

Temple claimed that the girl bragged about the sex, the bragging got back to her mother,

and when the mother confronted the girl, she cried rape. After pleading guilty to statutory rape in December 1987, Temple was sentenced to three years probation based in part on the recommendation of the psychiatrist, Ronald Levy.

"I find nothing from a psychiatric point of view which would lead me to the conclusion that this defendant constitutes a danger to the health and welfare of others. I conclude he is suitable for probation," Levy wrote to the court.

Levy couldn't have been more mistaken.

Less than a year after the rape, in October 1988, the Soul-Jacker baptized himself in the blood of Walter Mullins. According to a former gang associate, it was Temple's first hit. "He got scared and he backed off for a while," the associate says. "But then he came back like the Tasmanian devil."

By the time Temple allegedly killed Mullins, the Soul-Jacker was a legend in Hunters Point. In his 1996 book *Street Soldier: One Man's Struggle to Save a Generation — One Life at a Time*, Joseph Marshall Jr., the co-founder of the Omega Boys Club, a group that helps reform youthful offenders, described Temple in this way: "A rock of a kid ... widely known as the toughest gang-banger in Hunters Point. His nickname was Mani, for Maniac. There was nothing on two legs — and probably four — that Bernard couldn't beat up. He was the kind of kid who would walk up to you and knock you out just because he felt like it, the classic 'crazy nigger.'"

A San Francisco police officer who has worked extensively in Hunters Point over the years backs up that assessment. "He would always try and make a calm situation into a hostile one," the officer says. "If we were talking to a couple of youngsters, he would say something like, 'Why are you harassing them?' He was a shit disturber who would always try and disturb the calmness of the contact."

In the late '80s and early '90s, turf wars raged among the gangs of Hunters Point, Sunnydale, and the Fillmore. By virtually all

accounts, Temple was an instigator of the violence, a divisive force who opposed community leaders trying to stop the warfare. In fact, Temple was a leader of the HP mob and, therefore, at the center of the most vicious confrontations. But not even a Soul-Jacker is bulletproof.

On April Fools' Day of 1990, Temple's chief rival from the Sunnydale mob, Ernest Hill, shot him in the stomach with a shotgun, and Temple almost died.

A police report shows that Temple was uncooperative with investigators on the shooting case, telling them he'd "take care of business." Temple's "business" would lead to the most deadly cycle of gang violence in Southeast San Francisco in recent memory.

Amazingly, as Bernard Temple was planning retribution for being shot, he was chosen by then-Mayor Art Agnos to serve on an 18-member committee called "The Mayor's Team" that was expected to advise Agnos on gang-related issues. (Agnos once dressed the group in tuxedos and feted them at the swanky Carnelian Room.)

Agnos' decision to tap Bernard Temple for public service wasn't merely the result of Agnos' tendency to listen to stupid or ill-informed advisers, although that certainly played a role in the insanely inappropriate choice. To put it simply, Bernard Temple had and, by most accounts, still has charisma. There's an odd coloration to his character that softens the violent streaks of red.

Temple fooled more than white liberal former social workers like Agnos. The Soul-Jacker seems to have been able to fool people in his own community. One of Temple's old friends from Bayview-Hunters Point, Shirletha Calhoun, spun into voice-cracking hysterics when informed that Temple is in jail, awaiting trial on two counts of murder.

Back then, Calhoun said, Temple was reading the Bible, quoting Scripture in daily conversation, and telling people he was going to use his powers of persuasion to do the Lord's work. At the time, Calhoun was trying to negotiate a peace between warring gangs in Sunnydale and Hunters Point. She organized a "peace caravan" and loaded up several cars with fatigued gang-bangers from Sunnydale — gang-bangers who were Temple's sworn enemies.

The caravan was driving down Third Street toward HP, Calhoun said, when she spotted Temple coming out of a store. "I still remember it like it was yesterday," she said. "I told Bernard what we were doing, and as soon as the words 'peace caravan' came out of my mouth, he started getting all excited and jumping up and down."

Temple jumped into a convertible with his Sunnydale rivals, sitting right up front for all to see as the caravan drove slowly toward his Hunters Point turf. On the way, Calhoun said, Temple stood up in the convertible, not unlike a campaigning politician, exhorting people on the sidewalk, yelling, "Peace. Peace."

People began calling back to Temple, Calhoun recalled. "Peace, peace," they chanted; some jumped in their cars.

By the time the caravan reached HP, it included a long line of HP cars and kids. The drivers were honking their horns, Calhoun

to build his "rep" as the Soul-Jacker, gang-banger extraordinaire.

"While monitoring gang activity and narcotics dealing in the Potrero District [the S.F. police district covered by Potrero Station, which includes Hunters Point and the Bayview] for the past two and a half years, Temple has come to the attention of this unit on an almost daily basis.

Temple was the acknowledged leader of the Oakdale and Baldwin set [sub-gang] of the Hunters Point gang," John Fowle, a veteran narcotics inspector who is now serving on the federal gang task force, wrote in a June 1990 report. "Temple's police contacts have mostly been involving crimes of violence."

At the time, Fowle was watching Temple closely, waiting for him to violate the terms of the probation he received as part of his 1987 sentence for statutory rape. Under the probation agreement, Temple could not carry a firearm.

After the April shooting, street sources told Fowle that Temple was packing a gun. But Fowle was playing against time; the probation would expire at the end of 1990.

On the afternoon of May 22, 1990, shots were fired in the Army Street projects on the back side of Potrero Hill. Police informants attributed the shots to Temple, who, the informants said, was gunning for Hill. The shots missed their target — at least that afternoon.

That evening, however, was stained by one of the bloodiest drive-by shootings in the history of a Sunnydale-Hunters Point gang war that has included dozens of rolling gun battles. The carnage at Third Street and Palou Avenue is still legendary in police circles. Homicide detectives — Hendrix in particular — are still looking for some of the shooters.

The massacre began this way, according to Hendrix: Hill was cruising in a car filled with fellow Sunnydale gangbangers, one named Harold Kyer (who happened to be another of Mayor Agnos' gang experts). Hill spotted Temple's car in traffic. But Temple was not in it or anywhere near the intersection of Third and Palou. Temple's car was being used by a friend who was giving a ride home to two Omega Boys.

Hill wanted desperately to get at Temple's car, but there was a car in between, driven by Kim Sturdivant, an innocent bystander. Hill started ramming Sturdivant's car with his own, trying to get her out of the way. But her car spun out, ending up side by side with Hill's car, still blocking the way to Temple's vehicle. "Shoot the bitch," Hill ordered one of his gangmates, and a shotgun blast ended Sturdivant's 24-year life.

Temple told Fowle he was the intended target, and the incident does appear to have been a retaliation for the shooting earlier in the day on Army Street. In all, two vehicles and five people were shot up. A pregnant girl standing on the corner — her name was Muffin — also died.

Hill was subsequently convicted of Sturdivant's murder and is serving a life sentence in Mule Creek Prison.

After the Third and Palou massacre, Fowle was intent on getting Temple off the street. Otherwise, the cycle of retribution would only escalate. Temple soon offered himself up on a silver legal platter.

The California Highway Patrol arrested

In the limited universe of drugs and death and drive-bys that unfortunately but extensively defines Bayview-Hunters Point, Bernard Temple is a terrifying legend.



Last Exit for Jacky Williams: Temple allegedly filled Williams full of lead inside H&K Liquors and Deli on Fitzgerald Avenue in 1991.

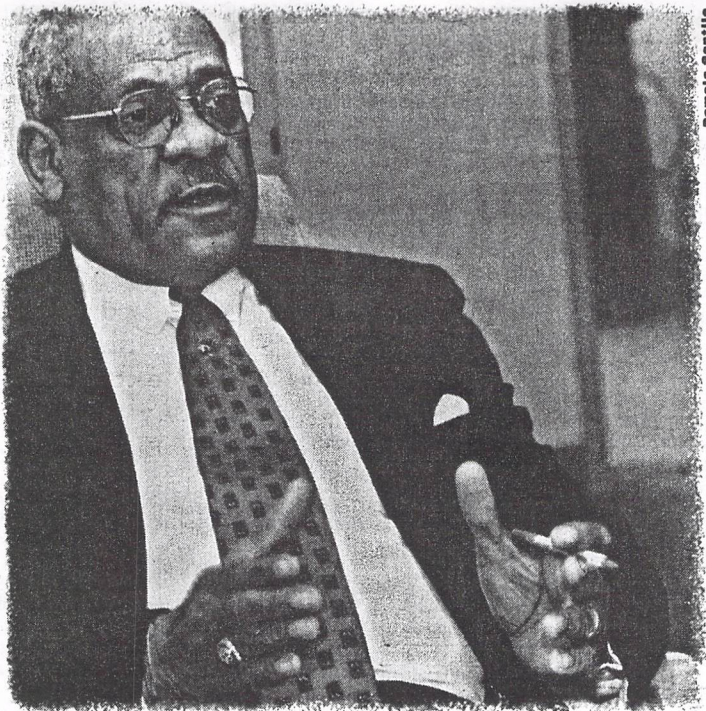
"I thought he was going to be a minister!" she screamed.

Calhoun knew Temple when he had just gotten out of the hospital after being shot. She was close enough to Temple to have been part of a group of people who prayed over Temple's supine body in the hospital. "We lifted him up," she said.

said. They continued yelling the word, "Peace."

It appears that Temple was conducting business as usual during the few weeks of quiet that followed the peace caravan. He was looking for Ernest Hill, the man who shot him on April Fools' Day, and trying

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SFPD's Inspector Javert: Like the dogged policeman from Victor Hugo's classic *Les Misérables*, veteran homicide inspector Napoleon Hendrix has pursued Bernard Temple with unrelenting zeal.

Soul-Jacker

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Temple in Modesto for carrying a stolen .357 Magnum pistol. In fact, the pistol had been stolen from the Highway Patrol. Possessing the weapon constituted a violation of Temple's parole, and the San Francisco Probation Department planned on revoking his probation at his next scheduled court appearance. That would have been June 14.

Bayview-Hunters Point exploded in gang warfare — again — on June 12 and 13. Gang attacks and gunshots ricocheted all over the neighborhood, culminating in a melee on Whitney Young Circle, which borders Ridgetop Park in the heart of Hunters Point.

On June 13, more than 100 mourners, a mixture of members of several different gangs who were drunk or high on drugs or both, poured out of a funeral for a Hunters Point gang member. They started shooting up the general area with semiautomatic weapons. Fowlie's police unit was among those answering the call. "Among this crowd were nearly all the known gangmembers from Shoreview, Harbor Road, Northridge, Oakdale and Baldwin, the Flatlands to the 3 The Hard Way crew," Fowlie reported at the time.

Bernard Temple was there too. And Fowlie saw his chance to nab the Soul-Jacker for a clear probation violation. Temple gave the officer permission to search his house, Fowlie's report states. The officer discovered more than enough to end Temple's probation.

What Fowlie found may not have constituted legal proof that Temple was the Soul-Jacker, a complete, badass killer. But the haul, as listed in a police report, is impressive, nonetheless:

One Chinese AKS-762 assault rifle.

A red S.F. 49ers knit cap with eyeholes cut out.

One black Oakland Raiders knit cap with two eyeholes cut out.

One side-kick shoulder holster.

One black knit cap with two eyeholes cut out.

One box of Remington .38-caliber ammo containing 25 live rounds.

One box of Winchester AA plus Trap Loads 12-gauge shotgun shells containing 15 live shells.

One camouflage flak jacket.

Three magazines loaded with live rounds for an AKS-762.

A Mossberg 12-gauge shotgun.

Two thousand dollars in U.S. currency.

In court, Temple pled guilty to violating his parole and was sentenced to three years in San Quentin State Prison. It seemed Fowlie had succeeded in eliminating, until 1993 at least, one of the motivating forces for the deadly cycle of retribution and death in Hunters Point.

But Temple did less than one year in prison and was back on the streets in June 1991. Almost immediately, it is alleged, he picked up another murder contract.

A warm summer afternoon fades into evening. Around 6:30 p.m., Jacky Williams makes a fatal decision: He buys some beer and snacks at H&K Liquors and Delicatessen in Hunters Point, one block from the desecrated Alice Griffith projects.

The deadly nature of this decision is connected to a decision Williams made earlier, when he broke into the home of a major crack supplier and stole large amounts of drugs and cash.

As the clerk rings up Williams' purchase, Temple jumps from a car at the curb, pulls a hooded sweater over his head, and walks up behind Williams, according to the grand jury testimony of two eyewitnesses.

One of the witnesses, Otis Gains, was on the phone in the store when Temple walked in. "He didn't say anything," Gains told the grand jury last November. "He just walked up to Jacky Williams and shot him."

Actually, Temple is alleged to have shot Williams twice at the base of the neck. The bullets didn't kill Williams immediately. One cut through a carotid artery. Both lodged in Williams' shattered jawbone, but somehow the dying man managed to stagger from the store and fall face up in a pile on the street. Temple finished the job, firing several more bullets into or toward Jacky Williams' chest.

He fired so furiously that, the coroner's report will show, some of the bullets missed their target and ricocheted off the cement.

Before the air went still, Temple was back in the waiting car, manned by an accomplice still unknown to law enforcement authorities. The car drove off.

By the early 1990s Bernard Temple had developed a fearsome reputation not only for precision murder, but also for the art of turf-warrior ultraviolence.

Consider the 9th of September, 1991, three months after Temple whacked Williams. It's a clear day, and approximately 10 gangbangers from Hunters Point load up in several cars: a raggedy-ass brown Olds Cutlass; two Mustangs, black and green; another Olds Cutlass, stripped of paint and primer gray; a Buick Skylark; a Mercury Cougar; and a gray, two-door Datsun.

Bernard Temple is driving his girlfriend's four-door Honda. Riding with him are Danny Boy Williams and Robert Crittle.

The HP mob have armed themselves with golf clubs and guns. They aren't going to the driving range. The previous night a Hunters Point kid had his ass kicked by a kid from Oceanview.

It's payback time.

Their caravan rumbling into the rival neighborhood, Temple and his crew spot Andrew Isler and Robert Blackman standing at Randolph and Head streets.

"Is that the nigga?" one of the HP crew asks, referring to the two men.

The cars come to a halt and gunshots ring out. Blackman runs off, successfully evading his would-be attackers. Isler is less fortunate as he high-tails it up the hill on Head Street and dives under a car to hide.

"Should we kill him?" someone asks as the HP contingent spots Isler cowering under the car.

"Yes," the answer comes.

A furtive grasping of hands, and Isler is dragged out to what he thinks is his certain doom.

He feels a violent force strike the back of his head, and he thinks he's been shot. But Isler is in luck (which is, granted, an extremely relative concept at this point). He's merely being beaten into submission with golf clubs.

After the beating, Temple and his posse drive off looking for more action. They find their next victim, Russell Winston, waiting for a haircut appointment in front of a barber shop on Broad Street, three blocks from where the HP gang left Isler bleeding on the sidewalk.

Jumping out of Temple's car, Danny Boy confronts Winston, demanding money he says he is owed. Winston is less than forthcoming, and Danny Boy raps him over the head with a golf club. As Winston tries to escape into a nearby liquor store, Danny Boy whacks him in the face, severely damaging his eye and breaking the club.

Apparently satisfied with their violent mission, Temple and the other cars load up and head onto nearby Highway 280 toward the safety of Hunters Point. Screaming down the highway in clear weather, Temple flies across all lanes of traffic and loses con-

trol of his Honda, 150 feet from the Germany Boulevard offramp. He sideswipes the center divider, spins out, slams head-on into the divider, spins 180 degrees, and, heading backward, hits the divider one more time, turning the front end into an accordion and his own head into a bloody mess. Temple and his passengers scramble across lanes of freeway traffic to jump into one of the other HP cars and head off for the hospital.

When police and state troopers show up at San Francisco General Hospital to investigate the Oceanside beatings and the hit-and-run accident on 280, they find a strange situation indeed. Temple and his passengers lie on gurneys in the hall outside the emergency room; inside, doctors are working to save Winston's eye and patch up Isler.

Despite all the mayhem of that day in September 1991; regardless of the negative opinions of Temple's probation officer, developed over two years of work with the gangbanger; regardless of the 2-1/2-year gang investigation by Officer Fowle that established Temple as a gang leader; regardless of the man's widespread reputation as a hard-ass gang member, a killer, a soul-jacker; regardless of his well-known and pivotal role in the gang war frenzy in Bayview-Hunters Point; regardless of all these horribly incriminating realities, as a result of the mayhem of Sept. 9, 1991, Bernard Temple is required only to plead guilty to one minor charge: receiving stolen property, a beeper he took from Isler.

Temple is sentenced on Feb. 27, 1992, to 16 months in jail. Even that is eventually reduced to nine months of actual lockup in the county clink. By Christmas, he's back on the street.

Robert Nash is trapped in the worst imaginable way. Now that he has rattled on the Soul-Jacker and screwed the DA by recanting his testimony against Temple, Nash has a contract killer and a task force full of prosecutors and federal agents dropping him from their Christmas card lists. But lives have a way of getting tangled up like uncoiled fishing line when the federal government brings its power to bear.

Gang prosecutor Floyd Andrews says Nash, his former star witness, turned snitch in 1993 when, at the foggy bottom of a fumbling criminal career, FBI agent LaFreniere was there waiting for him with an offer he didn't refuse.

At the time, Nash was going to Fresno State University under an assumed name and playing tailback for the college football team, the Bulldogs. His rap sheet at the time, which was launched in 1987 at the age of 19, included three convictions for possession of crack for sale.

He says he had moved to Fresno hoping to leave behind a San Francisco arrest warrant for attacking his wife with a knife. Down in the San Joaquin Valley, though, Nash couldn't help screwing up again: He got busted carrying crack and was ordered to participate in a drug program.

Somehow, LaFreniere found out, and Nash says he was returned to San Francisco. There, he faced the possibility of seri-

ous prison time for the knife attack and the violation of the probated sentence he received for a 1992 drug bust.

Back in S.F., with the state pen staring at him, Nash made a deal. Court records show that he was sentenced to a mere 79 days in jail — a sentence that happened to precisely equal the time he had already served in jail.

Back on probation and out of jail, Nash was free to help the federal gang task force.

In June, Nash was busted for shoplifting and passing bad checks; he got probation again, he says. At the same time, he decided to split the state. It's unclear if he had LaFreniere's permission.

Nash landed in Kansas, where he attended a state college until May 1995. He also accumulated yet another criminal charge; this time it was sexual assault. Nash says he was tracked down again by LaFreniere, who convinced the Kansas authorities to hold off on the sex charge and allow him to take his informant back to S.F. Landing here in the summer of 1995, Nash promptly got in trouble again. He was arrested twice, for car theft and for yet another wife-beating. He got three months and in December was out on the streets again, working for the feds.

Nash says LaFreniere managed to develop another hammer to hold over him. In April 1996, Nash's brother was arrested for assaulting police officers in S.F. and faced up to five years in prison. "It was the weight over me," Nash says. "If I did the right thing, the case would go away."

In August, Nash took the stand against the Soul-Jacker. Apparently, though, Nash thought he had done the task force enough favors. In November, he called Lefcourt, and in a matter of hours was in Temple's lawyer's office, drafting a declaration.

In his sworn declaration, Nash recants his grand jury testimony, describing how, he says, he was spun to rat on Temple. Nash's version is thick with police and FBI heavy-handedness. He says Hendrix, the S.F. police inspector, told him on two occasions that "street sources" were saying Temple was going to kill Nash's family.

Nash also says LaFreniere and Andrews called him to a meeting on Treasure Island. "I was told by [the men] that they wanted to get Bernard on drug-related homicides that were capital offenses and were using this case to incarcerate Bernard to encourage other witnesses to come forward," Nash's declaration says.

On Aug. 13, 1996, that declaration claims, Nash was arrested in Alameda Superior Court and returned to Andrews' office in the San Francisco Hall of Justice.

"I was threatened with being incarcerated and 'bounced around the system' for a long time and that I would never see daylight if I did not cooperate," the declaration says. "They told me that I didn't want to end up like my friend Eric Thomas, who had been shot and paralyzed by the police. If I did cooperate, they would get me whatever I wanted, and they would help me

change my face and fingerprints and relocate my family. Later on I found out that someone was spreading my name around the street as an informant. I believe that this was another tactic of the police to pressure me into helping them."

Nash says his handcuffs were taken off only as he was being led to the grand jury room to give his shaky testimony against Bernard Temple.

"Even though I lied about everything else," Nash's recantation concludes, "I could not lie that I saw Bernard shoot Walter Mullins because I never saw it happen."

Andrews says the declaration is a pack of lies.

None of Nash's erratic behavior surprises Andrews. He knows well who his witnesses are, how much of a credibility problem each of them will present. Any conceivable jury will be highly unimpressed with this cast of characters.

Would you take the word of Otis Gains, who, a police source says, turned state's evidence only after he was caught with a "pharmacy" of drugs, including heroin? Gains is a guy who was convicted of car-jacking someone in 1992 and shooting up the car in the process. The same year, Gains was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison for possession of sale amounts of heroin. When Gains was a juvenile, he was convicted of vehicular homicide.

And then there's Charles Johnson. He's a witness against Temple. He's a killer, too. In October 1981, Johnson and another man walked into a grocery store in Bayview-Hunters Point and shot and killed 35-year-old Jamil Abed, the counterman, during a botched robbery. After two mistrials, the DA allowed Johnson to plead guilty to voluntary manslaughter, for which he received four years in prison.

Andrews drops into an imitation of a possible address to the jury in a trial of Temple: "Ladies and gentlemen you are going to hate everyone you hear from today."

That's just the way it is when you try to break up gangs, Andrews says. The witnesses are bound to be as bad as the defendants.

"We are rarely able to go to trial in gang cases because of witness reluctance and other problems," Andrews says. "And when we do, it's really painful."

How successful the task force will be in the Temple and the Michael cases is hard to predict. But even if state and federal authorities get everything they want — if Bernard Temple goes to prison for life, if all 16 Michael organization defendants get heavy sentences — police familiar with crack gangs say there will always be someone to pick up the slack in Bayview-Hunters Point. There will always be new dealers, and people willing to kill for profit.

"He's just one of many," says an S.F. police officer who is an expert in crack gangs. The officer is talking about Charles Michael, but his words apply even when the gangbanger in question is Bernard Temple, assassin extraordinaire, the one and only Soul-Jacker of San Francisco.

"People have already filled his shoes." ■

Both the Temple and Michael cases come out of the same four-square-mile, drug-and-crime-ravaged slice of San Francisco: Hunters Point.

The Temple case is the first state prosecution to come out of a task force that joins local police and prosecutors with the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, the IRS, and the DEA.

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