



# COP KILLER WILL GO

## Impending release of getaway driver in '88 assassination of Edward

BY THOMAS TRACY  
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One of the four men who gunned down rookie NYPD Officer Edward Byrne more than 35 years ago has been granted parole — a move that opened old emotional wounds and angered the city's law enforcement community Wednesday.

Scott Cobb, 60, will walk out of the Clinton Correctional Facility in upstate Dannemora a free man next month, Police Benevolent Association President Patrick Hendry said.

"All cop-killer paroles are infuriating, but this one is especially outrageous considering the shock waves this crime sent through the NYPD, the city and nation," said Hendry, who worked in the 103rd Precinct in South Jamaica,

Queens, where the 22-year-old Byrne was assigned when he was blasted in the head five times by drug dealers while guarding the home of a witness on Feb. 26, 1988.

As a young officer, Hendry would often walk past the plaque for Byrne as he started his tour, the union president said.

"New York City police officers are absolutely sickened by this parole decision, and New Yorkers who care about safe streets should be, too," Hendry said, calling on state legislators to "fix the broken parole system so that none of the other Byrne assassins go free."

Cobb, who was the getaway driver for the hit squad, is expected to be released Aug. 9, according to state prison records. He's been eligible for parole since 2013, but this is the first time the

Parole Board granted his request.

Paul DiGiacomo, the president of the NYPD's Detectives' Endowment Association, said Byrne's death was a "planned execution."

"PO Byrne was murdered because he was a cop, and no one involved should ever see the light of day," DiGiacomo said. "This is just another kick in the face of New York's Finest."

The three others accused of killing Byrne, David McClary, Todd Scott and Phillip Copeland, are still in prison, but are expected to go before the Parole Board in the next few years.

The foursome were acting on orders from notorious drug dealer Howard "Pappy" Mason, who orchestrated the hit — meant to send a message to cops — from prison and fronted the \$8,000 for

the deed.

Mason is serving a federal life sentence for organizing the assassination.

The witness, known only as Arjune, a Guyanese immigrant, was going to testify against Mason's drug crew. Drug dealers had already firebombed Arjune's home at 107th Ave. and Inwood St. when the department decided to have a cop posted in a squad car outside.

Arriving officers found Byrne sitting upright in his cruiser, a folded copy of the Daily News and a portable AM-FM radio on the seat. Testimony at the trial showed that vengeful dealers had driven by the home at least twice, but decided it would look weak to kill a female cop or a Black officer.

Byrne's death would forever be

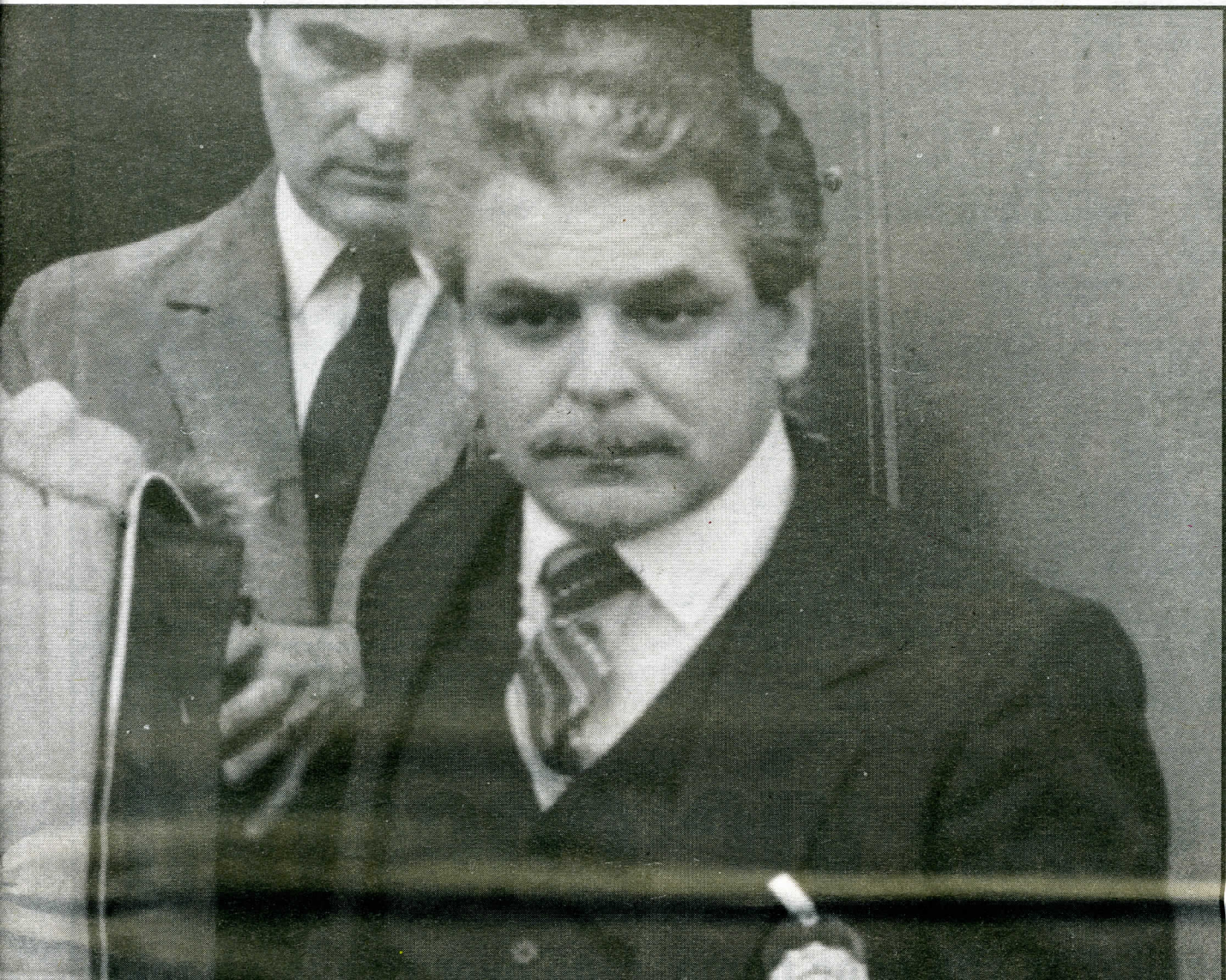
known as a turning point in the NYPD's war against drugs. The NYPD marks the anniversary of his death each year with a special service.

"The assassination of Police Officer Eddie Byrne was a ruthless act that captured the city's attention like few others," Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said in 2008.

"When Eddie Byrne was assassinated, it galvanized cops and the community to work together to take our streets back from these violent drug gangs," Hendry added. "That was Eddie Byrne's legacy, and the insane Parole Board is tearing it to shreds."

According to figures compiled by the PBA, the state Parole Board has released 36 cop killers since 2017, 32 of whom killed New York City police officers.





# FREE ON PAROLE

Byrne, who was protecting a witness, outrages Finest



Scott Cobb (main photo, center) in custody two weeks after the Feb. 26, 1988, drug-dealer slaying of NYPD Officer Edward Byrne (left). Above, police attend service for Byrne in 2018.