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Columnist's 'sloppy' piece on White Boy Rick left out one damning FBI tidbit

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Richard "White Boy Rick" Wershe Jr.

To the Editor: My name is Vince Wade. I'm a former TV news investigative reporter in Detroit. I wrote a book called "Prisoner of War: The Story of White Boy Rick and the War on Drugs."

Your columnist John O'Neill ought to be ashamed of putting out such a sloppy, inaccurate piece. It sounds like he's a public relations flack for certain narcs.

Rick Wershe is no angel. But nowhere does O'Neill mention Wershe was recruited as a paid FBI informant — at age 14 — because he lived in a "changing" neighborhood and knew a black drug gang the feds were interested in. Law enforcement taught him the drug trade, and when he went astray, they let him go to prison for life rather than step forward and tell the truth.

White Boy Rick was no kingpin. He was a wannabe at best. And the second case against Wershe was thrown out because it was a shaky investigation filled with police "testilying." If O'Neill had read the transcript, he would know this.

The real story is how the FBI recruited a kid to become a paid snitch in the War on Drugs, taught him how to be a dooper and when everything went bad, the feds left him to twist in the wind rather than admit they were paying kids to snitch to win a conviction or two in the failed War on Drugs. Moreover, Rick snitched to the FBI on police corruption involving the late Gil Hill, a politically powerful ex-cop.

The "system" was determined to make him pay for telling. One former Detroit FBI agent said White Boy Rick was arguably the best drug informant the FBI had in Detroit in the '80s. O'Neill doesn't mention this because he doesn't know this story. This is quite a tale. It's too bad O'Neill doesn't know the truth.

Vince Wade

Cave Creek, Arizona

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