

## **Dad arrested in slaying of 3; 1 child survives - Girl, 9, who witnessed deaths of siblings, names father, now clings to life**

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DETROIT -- Antonia **Bailey** looked up at the stranger who was trying to save her life and said: "My daddy killed me."

"My daddy killed my whole family," the 9-year-old girl told the emergency medical technician who administered first aid to her Tuesday night, police said.

Antonia's father, **Anthony Bailey**, is accused of killing three of his four children. He shot them at close range with a 12-gauge shotgun, then set their house on fire to cover up the crime, police said.

Now that **Bailey**, 37, is in custody, questions remain about whether the tragedy could have been avoided.

Officers had been called to the **Bailey** home at least twice this year to investigate reports of domestic violence. Both **Anthony** and the children's estranged mother, Essie **Bailey**, are currently on probation for separate instances of assaulting each other.

**Anthony Bailey** had been charged with beating his wife and his 6-year-old stepson because he lost his glasses, court records show. In another case earlier this year, Essie **Bailey** hit her husband in the head with a coat rack, which also hit their infant son.

"I called protective services before, but they didn't call me back," said **Bailey's** stepfather, David Bradley. "The situation wasn't getting any better.

"I was afraid something like this was going to happen."

The deaths could attract much the same national attention as the cases of Andrea Yates of Houston, who two years ago drowned her five children, and Susan Smith of Union, S.C., who in 1994 drowned her two sons by driving her car into a lake.

Antonia **Bailey**, who survived Tuesday's rampage, was in critical condition Wednesday at Children's Hospital. She has a gunshot wound to the stomach.

Her siblings -- Sharnice, 11 Ayana, 3 and **Lamar**, 1 -- were found dead Tuesday on a bed and a sofa in the basement of the **Bailey** residence on the 19900 block of Ashton near Pembroke on Detroit's northwest side.

They were discovered by firefighters, who had been called to the house about 9 p.m.

Astonishing news

As the emergency medical technician administered first aid to Antonia **Bailey**, she mustered the strength to tell him who had shot her and her siblings.

Detroit firefighter Lamont Gilbert was standing nearby when the little girl uttered the astonishing news.

"One of the medics working on her told me to go tell the police what the little girl said to him," Gilbert said on Wednesday. "Those were her exact words he told me she said: 'My Daddy killed me.'"

Antonina **Bailey** also told doctors her father had shot her and her siblings, police said. Hours after doctors successfully removed 15 shotgun pellets from her abdomen, she regained consciousness and told doctors: "My daddy did it."

Police believe **Bailey** shot his children between 8 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Tuesday. About 9 p.m., investigators say he called his wife at Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills, where she works as a nurse's aid.

"Watch the news tonight at 11," **Bailey** reportedly told his wife before hanging up the phone.

Police said they are trying to determine what motivated **Bailey** to kill his children.

"Who can say why somebody would do something like this?" Homicide Insp. Marilyn Hall-Beard said. "What is the motive for killing your children?"

Neighbors stunned

The slayings shocked neighbors, who say **Anthony Bailey** seemed like a caring father.

Margaret Wasuikanis, 84, and her husband, Walter, 79, who live next door to the **Baileys**, said they never witnessed signs of violence.

"When I heard about it, I thought, 'No, no, no. Not Tony.' He loved those kids so much. If anything, he was overprotective of them," said Walter Wasuikanis, who has lived on Ashton for 42 years. "He was such a good provider and worried about those kids more than most parents would. My mind won't even let me think of it."

But Margaret Wasuikanis recalls **Bailey** being agitated about his personal life.

"He seemed ... nervous and jittery, but I thought it was because he was out of work," she said.

"He came to borrow a tool from my husband, and I asked him how his family was doing and he said, 'I'm about to go crazy. I'm not working and I'm trying to fix my truck. I've just got so much on my mind.' "

The couple said they often wondered about the children's mother, Essie **Bailey** . They said they had not seen her in weeks.

"When they first moved in, they used to work on that house together, cleaning up the yard, and we were so grateful because the people who lived there before never kept the place neat and clean," Margaret Wasuikanis said. "We'd see them walking to the store together, doing everything together."

Behind the **Bailey** home, a Jungle Jim toy, a miniature gas station, a toy washing machine and other toys filled the back yard.

"That yard was a holy mess before they moved in, and Tony spent hours clearing out that back yard, hauling all the debris and tree limbs onto the curb," Walter Wasuikanis said.

Wasuikanis said he often saw **Anthony Bailey** walking to the store carrying one of his children on his shoulders. "He kept those kids in the house most of the time," he said. "They were very quiet kids, but very mannerly."

Domestic abuse

But court records show all was not well in the **Bailey** household.

**Anthony Bailey** pleaded guilty in March to domestic violence after punching his wife in the face and stomach and choking her. He was sentenced to six months of probation, and ordered to attend a domestic violence program. The sentencing judge also ordered him not to take drugs, although it is unclear whether **Bailey** had a history of drug use.

The same day **Bailey** pleaded guilty to beating his wife, prosecutors dropped a 1993 misdemeanor case that charged him with beating his stepson, Deshawn, with a belt and a cord.

In May 1992, **Bailey** left welts on the boy's back, stomach and thighs that were visible a month later, investigators noted. At the time, Essie **Bailey** told police her husband had attacked the boy "because he was talking back, lost his eyeglasses and was playing with matches," according to court records.

In June of this year, Essie **Bailey** pleaded guilty to aggravated domestic violence and was sentenced to one year of probation and six months of counseling. She struck her husband in the back of his head with a coat rack following a late-night argument on May 30, according to police reports. The blow deflected off his head and struck their son, **Lamar** , in the face.

Following that case, Essie **Bailey** was ordered to have no contact with her husband or anyone with a felony record, which is why investigators believe she was not living at the home at the time of the killings.

A police matter

Karen Smith, spokeswoman for the Michigan Family Independence Agency, which investigates allegations of child abuse, said her agency doesn't usually get involved when parents fight each other.

"I'm not allowed to comment on this specific case. But if it was a domestic violence case, that's a police matter," Smith said. "If the police who responded to the abuse thought there was child abuse happening in the home, it would be up to them to call us, and then we'd likely do an investigation."

Police did not see a reason to call child abuse investigators, Hall-Beard said.

"There was abuse in the family, but it was between the husband and wife," she said. "We weren't aware there was child abuse going on."

**Anthony Bailey** was also convicted of misdemeanor theft in January 1992, and police had stopped him several times for various driving infractions, investigators said.

Divorce talks

David Bradley said his stepson, whom he had raised since infancy, didn't show signs of violence as a child.

"He wasn't a bad kid. In fact, he was very smart," Bradley said. "He had a 'B' average and graduated from Mumford High School. He loved to play tennis and was on the tennis team."

He broke down in sobs Wednesday while standing in front of the house where the shootings occurred the night before. Family members formed a circle around him, their arms interlocked.

Bradley's stepson sometimes talked to him about his marriage problems.

"I tried to offer advice, but he wouldn't take it," he said. "Their marriage started to go from bad to worse after about the second year."

Bradley said Essie **Bailey** wanted a divorce, which upset his stepson.

"My son had been depressed about the marriage. He didn't want the divorce," Bradley said. "I told him he'd have to change, because he had a real good wife."

At the house, a memorial of teddy bears and other toys continues to grow in the front yard. A cardboard, handwritten sign read: "God Bless the Children. We Love You."

Caption: A neighbor snapped this photo of the four **Bailey** children two weeks ago. The three children killed Tuesday night were, from left, **Lamar**, 1; Sharnice, 11; and Ayana, 3. Antonia, 9, holding Ayana, survived. Neighbor Margaret Wasuikanis was stunned by the shooting of the children, who she said were quiet and mannerly. A memorial of teddy bears and notes to the **Bailey** children takes shape at their home on Ashton in Detroit. Detroit Firefighter Lamont

Gilbert of Engine 54 was called to the house fire about 9 p.m. He heard Antonia **Bailey**, 9, say, "My Daddy killed me."

**Bailey**

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