

## **House where baby found boarded up - Mayoral candidate's effort won't prevent repeat, neighbors say**

Detroit News, The (MI) - Wednesday, August 15, 2001

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DETROIT -- Regina Williams watched in tears Tuesday morning as plywood was used to board up the abandoned house where 3-month-old Isaiah Lewis' body was found on Thursday.

Mayoral candidate Charles C. Costa, who was at the site, bought the wood and enlisted a contractor to volunteer his services.

But Williams, 41, who lives in the neighborhood near Woodward and seven Mile, said she believes the effort was futile.

"They shouldn't be boarding up that house," she said angrily. "This should be a demolition crew. We all know the crackheads will take those boards down. It's just another tragedy waiting to happen."

Shaniqua Betty, 20, the slain baby's mother, told police she had left little Isaiah with a stranger at a bus stop on Aug. 3 after an argument with her son's father, Ivan Brown Jr. She said she needed to retrieve items from Brown's house. But when she returned to the stop, the stranger had vanished.

Six days later, police arrested 48-year-old **Harold Reed**, who led detectives to a second-floor bedroom in the vacant home at 999 Penrose, where the body lay under a mattress. **Reed** has been charged with murder.

On Tuesday, workers stepped over a colorful pile of stuffed animals that form a makeshift shrine to Isaiah. In Costa's view, the crime was an extreme example of the danger from neglected, accessible homes -- though police haven't said where the baby died.

"This did not have to happen," he said pointing at the house. "People should not have to live near this blight."

Roma Wilson, owner of Wilson Cement Floors in Detroit, came with three workers at Costa's request. "I felt bad about what happened, and just wanted to do something," he said.

Burdell Burns, who lives across the street with his six children, aged 7 to 17, would rather see the eyesore razed.

"I've lived here for two years, and in less than a year, at least 10 houses on this block have been set on fire and many were torn down," said Burns, 47. "But there are some squatters a couple of doors down who just took the boards down and moved in.

"I don't believe boarding up that abandoned building where they found the dead baby is going to make any difference. It should be torn down."

Caption: Volunteers, led by Detroit mayoral candidate Charles Costa, cover windows and doors at the abandoned house on Penrose. Neighbors said it should be torn down.

Edition: No Dot

Section: Metro

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Index Terms: HOUSING ; DETROIT ; NEIGHBORHOODS ; MAYOR ; CANDIDATES ; BABIES ; (TO ; AGE ; 2) ; DEATHS

Dateline: DETROIT

Record Number: det10261369

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