

FATAL CHILD ABUSE ALLEGED - WOMAN, 18, HELD IN BOY'S DEATH

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An 18-year-old woman who escaped from a juvenile detention facility nearly three years ago was charged Friday with first-degree murder in the battering death of a 3-year-old Detroit boy.

Johnetta Sullivan was arraigned on charges of first-degree murder and first-degree child abuse before 36th District Court Magistrate Thomas Shannon. **Sullivan**, who was not represented by an attorney, was ordered held without bond pending a Nov. 17 preliminary examination.

Sullivan is charged in connection with Monday's battering death of Cesol Thompson, who had been a temporary ward of Wayne County Juvenile Court since May 2002 because of neglect by his mother, a self-described crack cocaine addict.

In July, a juvenile court referee ordered Cesol and his 12-year-old sister placed with his father, Hendricks Pedereaux, 34.

Authorities described **Sullivan** as Pedereaux's girlfriend, and she was supposed to be baby-sitting Cesol on Monday while Pedereaux was at work. Police said friends of **Sullivan** came to visit, saw that the child was not breathing and called police. He was dead on arrival at a hospital.

Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Patricia Leonard, head of the child and family abuse bureau, said Cesol died of blunt force trauma to the abdomen. Leonard said the boy had fresh bruises on both arms and a severe gash on his chin.

According to Wayne County Family Court records, **Sullivan** had a record of running away from home and skipping school since 1996, when she was just 12 years old.

Her mother told court employees that her daughter liked hanging out with adult women who smoked marijuana and drank alcohol. The mother suspected the women were prostitutes and ordered her daughter to stay away from them, the records said.

But **Sullivan** would not obey her mother and a juvenile court referee placed her in a low-security program operated by HelpSource, a child-serving agency then based in Ypsilanti.

In October 1999, **Sullivan** told HelpSource staff that there was a death in her family and she needed to go home to stay with a step-sister named Goldie, the records said. A HelpSource worker drove **Sullivan** to the Chandler Park Drive-Cadieux area of Detroit and dropped her off without seeing which house **Sullivan** was going to.

Someone calling herself Goldie phoned HelpSource the next day and said her car had broken down and **Sullivan** would be late. She arrived the following day, stayed long enough to grab her belongings and said "she was out of there," the records said.

A court report said **Sullivan** walked out and got into a car driven by Goldie, whom the agency later learned was running a drug and prostitution house.

Sullivan was rearrested on Jan. 12, 2000, and placed in the St. Rose juvenile detention center in Detroit. On Feb. 23, she escaped St. Rose with another detained girl, taking a staff member's purse.

A warrant was issued for larceny and escape but, according to court records, **Sullivan** was not heard from again until her arrest this week.

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