

LOCAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Friday, September 13, 2002

Author: BEN SCHMITT, SUZETTE HACKNEY, MELANIE D. SCOTT AND ERIK LORDS

Free Press staff writers. Free Press staff

DETROIT

DETROIT

Jury selection starts in drive-by killing case

Jury selection began Thursday **in** Wayne County Circuit Court **in** the murder **case** of 3-year-old Destinee Thomas, who was fatally shot this spring as she sat **in** her bedroom watching television.

Police said Destinee was caught **in** the crossfire of rival drug dealers. A **drive-by** shooter with an AK47 riddled the girl's home **in** the 5600 block of Woodrow with bullets March 23. Destinee was struck **in** the head by one bullet and died instantly.

Charged with first-degree murder and assault with intent to commit murder are Detroiters Julian Key, 19, suspected of being the triggerman, and Cedric Pipes, 21, suspected of being the driver. If convicted, both men face a mandatory sentence of life **in** prison with no chance of parole.

In response to Destinee's death, Wayne County Prosecutor Mike Duggan and Detroit Police Chief Jerry Oliver launched Project Destinee, designed to root out two rival gangs whose members were suspected of being responsible for the child's death.

Destinee is one of at least 11 Detroit children age 16 and younger who have died from gunshot wounds this year.

Jury selection will continue Monday **in** Judge Brian Sullivan's courtroom.

By Suzette Hackney

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 2B

Record Number: 0209130448

Copyright (c) 2002 Detroit Free Press