

## **KILLER GETS LIFE TERM IN DEATH OF INFANT**

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Thursday, March 14, 2002

Caption: Family photo, lower right; others by PATRICIA BECK/Detroit Free Press

Above: **Mario Angelo Smith**, 18, listens to Wayne County Circuit Judge Leonard Townsend sentence him Wednesday to life in prison for the beating death of Tatijuana Neal, lower right, 9 months. A jury found that **Smith** beat the girl to get her to stop crying, but he insisted he was innocent: "I did not inflict those wounds."

Left: The girl's mother, Serita Neal, 22, of Detroit wipes away tears as she talks to reporters. Her mother, Sharon Nowell Neal, is at right. "The mother's choice of mates leaves much to be desired," Townsend said of Serita Neal. He said bad choices caused Tatijuana's death Aug. 15 at a Detroit hospital. "The judge was out of order," Neal, a 22-year-old cashier, said later. "I did not know about those things that happened to my child."

Memo: CUTLINE ONLY

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 4B

Index Terms: MARIO ANGELO SMITH; HOMICIDE ; CHILD ; TATIJUANA NEAL ; COURT ; TRIAL ; SENTENCING

Record Number: 0203140290

Copyright (c) 2002 Detroit Free Press