

## **Man charged in killings of 4 - Family friend held as prosecutor blasts 'inhumanity' of act**

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DETROIT -- A 31-year-old ex-convict police picked up at a Royal Oak Township motel was charged Friday with multiple counts of murder in the shooting deaths of four people, including two children.

**Patrick Albert Young Smith** was charged with four counts of felony murder and four counts of first-degree murder, both of which carry mandatory life sentences with no chance of parole. He was also charged with felony firearm and felon in possession of a weapon.

"We are crossing into uncharted territory when small children are brutally killed while they are sleeping. I can't think of anything much lower than killing innocent children," said Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy in a press release.

"As a mother, I am outraged by the inhumanity. We as a society cannot afford to tolerate or accept this criminal behavior."

Police said **Smith** and a 23-year-old woman from Las Vegas checked into the Royal Inn on West Eight Mile at 5 a.m. Thursday and had a black Ford Bronco that belonged to Jason L. Davis, 34.

Davis, Lynette Lawson, 28, and her two children, Alexis Eppinger, 9, and Terrance Eppinger, 6, were shot to death less than two hours earlier in a house on Clairmont Street.

Relatives said **Smith** is a family friend.

During a Friday evening press conference, Detroit Police Chief Ella Bully-Cummings described the shooting as one of the most "repulsive acts of violence" in recent Detroit history.

"Cases like this tear at the soul of our city," Bully-Cummings said.

Police described **Smith** as "a very close associate of the male adult who was killed."

During a neighborhood vigil Friday night, Davis' mother, Georgia Davis, confirmed that her son's suspected killer was well-known to the family.

"We fed and clothed ( **Smith** )," Georgia Davis said. "... I would like to ask him why he killed Jason."

**Smith** was discharged from prison in 2002 after serving five years for drug convictions and a prison escape. Worthy added a charge of being a habitual criminal.

Bully-Cummings credited an anonymous tip with helping to identify the suspect in the case.

"We don't know who you are," she said, "but you allowed the police to bring closure to this case in less than 24 hours."

Police found **Smith** and the woman at the motel on Thursday afternoon.

The woman was questioned for several hours and released, police said.

Police have also recovered a weapon investigators believe was the one used in the killings.

"The weapon is consistent with shell casings recovered at the scene," said James Tate, the department's chief spokesman.

Bully-Cummings said neighbors described the home where the victims were found as a "known narcotics location." Georgia Davis acknowledged the home had a bad history but said her son had only recently moved in and had never had any trouble with the law.

Once inside, police discovered that boards had been installed at the home's entrances "so the door could not be easily kicked in."

But the police chief said that regardless of the home's reputation, nothing warranted the violence there.

"There is no amount of drugs, no amount of money, no amount of so-called disrespect that justifies taking someone's life -- let alone four lives," Bully-Cummings said.

Caption: Alexis Eppinger Lynette Lawson Terrance Eppinger **Patrick Albert Young Smith**

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