

TRIAL IS ORDERED IN DEATH OF CHILD - POLICE SAY BABY-SITTER BEAT 3-YEAR-OLD BOY

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Tuesday, December 2, 2003

Author: JACK KRESNAK FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

"Didn't I tell you, let me know when you have to go to the bathroom?" the teenage baby-sitter demanded of the 3-year-old boy.

Cesol Thompson, who had soiled his pants, could do little more than cry on the morning of Nov. 3. That's the day his father left him in the care of a girlfriend, 18-year-old **Jhonna Sullivan** of Detroit. And that's the day the boy died.

"I hit him again and again in his stomach," **Sullivan** told Detroit Police Homicide Investigator Barbara Simon. "I told him to get up. He fell and hit his chin."

Blood poured from his chin and nose, **Sullivan** said.

Those words, taken from a confession given a few days after the slaying, were read in court Monday by Simon during the preliminary examination for **Sullivan** who is charged with child abuse and murder in Cesol's death.

Sullivan, who showed little emotion during the hearing, was ordered to stand trial on the charges by 36th District Judge Ruth Ann Garrett. The trial will be in Wayne County Circuit Court, where **Sullivan** will have a Dec. 8 arraignment. She is being held without bond pending that court date.

Cesol died of at least 30 blows to the abdomen, many hard enough to damage the liver, kidneys and pancreas, according to a Wayne County Medical Examiner's Office report submitted by Assistant Prosecutor Patricia Leonard.

The boy's father, Hendricks Pedereaux, 37, testified that he had driven to work at about 7 a.m. that morning with his 11-year-old daughter, **Sullivan** and Cesol in the car. Pedereaux said his son was healthy when he left him with **Sullivan**, who drove off to take the daughter to school.

Dawn (Goldie) Miller, who says she's a longtime friend of **Sullivan**, testified that she arrived at Pedereaux's home on Bedford Street at about 9:30 a.m. and found Cesol unconscious. She said she called 911, tried to resuscitate Cesol and finally waved down a couple traveling in a passing car.

The couple started driving to St. John Hospital but stopped a police car, which then took Cesol and Miller to the hospital.

Miller denied a portion of a report published by the Free Press on Nov. 8 that quoted a social worker's court report saying a woman named Goldie had helped **Sullivan** escape from a juvenile facility in October 1999.

Simon testified that **Sullivan** confessed to killing Cesol about three days after the incident.

Cesol had been under the jurisdiction of Wayne County Family Court since July 2001, when he was placed in foster care due to his mother's drug addiction and disclosures that two of his three sisters had been sexually assaulted.

He and his sisters were sent to several foster homes by the Lula Belle Stewart Center, a Detroit-based agency.

In July 2003, a court referee approved a recommendation from Lula Belle Stewart and the state Family Independence Agency to return Cesol and one of his sisters to the care of their father, Pedereaux. Agency workers had visited the children several times and did not see any signs of abuse or neglect, according to the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office.

The state now is trying to terminate Pedereaux's parental rights to two of Cesol's sisters.

Contact JACK KRESNAK at 313-223-4544 or kresnak@freepress.com.

Caption: Photo ERIC SEALS/Detroit Free Press

Jhonna Sullivan, 18, showed little emotion during the hearing.

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 1B

Index Terms: JOHNETTA SULLIVAN; DEATH ; CHILD ; BEATING ; BABY-SITTER ; TRIAL ; CESOL THOMPSON

Record Number: 0312020347

Copyright (c) 2003 Detroit Free Press