

## **WOMAN'S TROUBLES BEGAN AT AGE 12 - COURT SYSTEM RUNAWAY FACES MURDER CHARGES**

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When she was 12, **Leslie Gordon** insisted she was pregnant. She was nauseated, she told her juvenile court interviewer in June 1992. Her stomach was protruding, and, she said, she had been sleeping with her 20-year-old boyfriend.

But two tests showed that Gordon wasn't pregnant. Yet, she continued to say she was, according to a report written for a court referee charged with deciding what to do with the incorrigible and chronically truant girl.

Twelve years later, Gordon is facing the most serious of charges: murder. She is scheduled to appear in 18th District Court in Westland today on four counts of first-degree murder, four counts of felony murder, two counts of assault with intent to murder and two counts of assault with intent to rob while armed. She faces life in prison if convicted.

She's charged in the Sept. 11 shootings and attempted robbery at Neil's party store in Westland. Her boyfriend, Michael Schofield, who police say was the triggerman at the store, later killed himself.

Like Gordon, Schofield, too, was a troubled teen.

At 14, Schofield shot and killed a 17-year-old classmate at Detroit's Murray Wright High School in 1987. He spent 17 months at the W.J. Maxey Training School. He underwent rehabilitation efforts at Maxey and in other programs until he turned 19 and was released from state supervision.

In 1997, he was caught carrying a gun and pleaded to a lesser charge of attempting to carry a concealed weapon.

But the presentence report prepared by the probation department failed to note that he had been convicted of murder as a juvenile. In 1987, juvenile records were closed to the public although they were available to law enforcement.

Wayne County Circuit Judge Daphne Means Curtis sentenced him to a 1-year probation. Curtis declined to comment on her sentence.

Gordon, however, never was convicted of a violent crime, according to juvenile court records, but spent much of her teen years in the juvenile justice system.

Her father, also named **Leslie Gordon**, had left his wife, Rosemary, and their only child when she was just a few years old, court records show. While Rosemary Gordon worked to maintain the family home on Roland Avenue on the city's east side, **Leslie Gordon** became more and more restless, then she became incorrigible, according to court records.

During the 1990-91 school year, **Leslie Gordon** missed 23 days of school. In the first three months of the 1991-92 school year, **Leslie Gordon** skipped 25 days of classes at Our Savior Lutheran School, a private school her mother paid for so she could get more attention, court records show.

**Leslie Gordon** had to be "walked" into the school by her uncle, escorted so she wouldn't skip, the principal wrote in a letter to Rosemary Gordon, explaining why her daughter wasn't welcome at the school anymore. Reached by the Free Press, Rosemary Gordon declined comment.

"It's obvious that either more counseling is needed or a more rigid school system is more appropriate for her," wrote principal Howard Alexander. "All I know is that Our Savior Lutheran School is not the answer."

In December 1991, her mother had **Leslie Gordon** committed to Aurora, then a private psychiatric hospital for children in Detroit. There, Gordon set a fire in a locked ward and used the commotion to escape, the records show.

Rosemary Gordon tracked her daughter to dope houses in Detroit and Hamtramck, but she kept running away.

**Leslie Gordon**, then 12, was made a ward of juvenile court in 1992.

For her part, **Leslie Gordon** blamed her mother for being too strict and for objecting to her relationship with a 20-year-old boyfriend. She told a court evaluator that her mother was "too impossible to live with."

The evaluator concluded that **Leslie Gordon** was a "self-centered youth who shows little concern for others. She is highly anxious and easily overwhelmed and has a strong disregard for authority.

"She has a tendency to be self-indulgent and may become hostile to demands when she does not get her way," the report said.

The court placed Gordon in the care of the Family Independence Agency. She was sent to several facilities, including Vista Maria in Dearborn Heights.

In February 1996, Gordon ran away from Vista Maria and was not seen or heard from again by the juvenile justice system. The court terminated her wardship on Aug. 6, 1998, her 19th birthday.

Six people were shot during the attempted robbery. Feras Yousif, a 29-year-old store employee, and customers James Kubler, 35; Kenneth Littlefield, 63, and Keith Gaddis, 44, were killed.

Wayne County Prosecutor Michael Duggan has said Gordon was "a full participant" in Schofield's actions.

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Caption: Photo

**Leslie Gordon** was made a ward of juvenile court at age 12. At age 14, Michael Schofield shot and killed a classmate.

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