

2 EXPECTED TO TESTIFY AGAINST DAD ARE HELD - FATHER ACCUSED OF SHOOTING INTO HOME, KILLING 7-YEAR-OLD

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Thursday, April 7, 2005

Author: BEN SCHMITT

Two teenagers expected to testify against their father - who is accused of shooting up a house and killing a 7-year-old girl in a dispute over a video game - have been detained until he goes to trial next month. Wayne County Circuit Judge Timothy Kenny on Tuesday ordered the youths, ages 16 and 15, held at the Wayne County Juvenile Detention Center until their father, **Ronald Brown**, 42, of Detroit goes to trial May 26.

Brown is charged with first-degree murder in the shooting death of 7-year-old Deva White in a dispute over the controversial "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas" video game. His two children had skipped out on previous hearings for Brown, which prompted Kenny to order them detained Tuesday, the day the trial was supposed to begin. The trial is delayed because Brown's attorney, Randall Upshaw, withdrew from the case Tuesday, and Kenny had to appoint a new counsel.

Upshaw said he and his client had disagreed recently about trial strategy. "If a client disagrees with my strategy, I withdraw," Upshaw said Wednesday. Prosecutors say Brown fired as many as four shots into a house in the 14300 block of Glenfield near Chalmers on Nov. 30. Deva White was struck in the chest and killed. Prosecutors have said Brown fired into Deva's home after his children allegedly argued with Deva's older brothers over the video game.

In December, Assistant Prosecutor Lisa Raymond said the children's mother left a voicemail at the prosecutor's office, saying she was being threatened and did not feel safe bringing the teens to court. Raymond said the family members had fled their residence and prosecutors were having trouble locating them. The teens, who are witnesses, missed three preliminary examinations in two weeks last year.

Maria Miller, a spokeswoman for the prosecutor's office, declined comment Wednesday on the latest developments. Detroit attorney David Burgess has replaced Upshaw. He did not return a call Wednesday. Other charges against Brown include three counts of assault with intent to murder and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

If convicted, he faces mandatory life in prison. Contact BEN SCHMITT at 313-223-4296 or schmitt@freepress.com. 'Grand Theft' "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas," the latest iteration of a video game franchise that has sold millions of copies, puts the player in the lead role of a former gang member who returns home after a long absence to find his mother murdered.

The game spotlights his struggle as old friends draw him back into thug life, participating in drive-by shootings, carjackings and vandalism. Critics have assailed the game for its graphic violence.

Fans laud it for its groundbreaking game play, which features the freedom to roam large expanses of virtual cities and choose different missions. "Grand Theft Auto" titles also are famous for their soundtracks of popular songs and the many stars who have lent their voices to the game's characters, including Ray Liotta, Samuel L. Jackson, Ice-T and James Woods.

{DISCLAIMER} THIS ELECTRONIC VERSION MAY DIFFER SLIGHTLY FROM THE PRINTED ARTICLE

Caption: Photo

Ronald Brown

Memo: SIDEBAR ATTACHED

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS; NEWS

Page: 7B

Index Terms: Ronald Brown; court ; video game ; homicide ; child ; Deva White

Record Number: 0000119459

Copyright (c) 2005 Detroit Free Press