

'FAR TOO MANY OF YOU DYING,' GRANDFATHER SINGS IN HIS PAIN - PROSECUTOR SHAMED BY SHOOTING THAT KILLS ONE CHILD, INJURES 3 MORE

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Wednesday, February 27, 2002

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Harold **Pollard** Jr. spent a sleepless night listening to Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On" over and over after a drive-by shooting left his 7-year-old granddaughter dead and three grandchildren wounded.

"That song really means something," **Pollard** said Tuesday, reflecting on its tragic theme of young people killing young people. "I just don't understand it."

Wayne County Prosecutor Michael Duggan was also dumbfounded Tuesday as he announced murder charges against two 24-year-old men who allegedly opened fire on a car full of children because of a dispute over a \$40 radio.

"I guess I'm supposed to be the chief law enforcement official in a county where kids can get murdered in the middle of the day," Duggan said. "And my reaction is I'm doing one lousy job as prosecutor. If we don't get the violence rate down dramatically in two years, I need to turn it over to somebody who's doing a better job."

The alleged gunman, Willie Robinson, is a relative of a Wayne County sheriff's deputy. The alleged getaway driver, Joel Allen, is the son of a Detroit police officer. Both are accused in connection with the shooting death Monday of **Ajanee Pollard**.

The men are scheduled to be arraigned today in 36th District Court in Detroit on charges of first-degree murder and assault with intent to murder.

Ajanee's 6-year-old brother, Jason **Pollard** Jr., is in critical condition at Children's Hospital in Detroit and lost his pancreas and part of his intestine, according to his grandfather. Her 4-year-old sister, Alyah, has a shattered bone in her right leg and her 6-year-old sister, Aerica, was treated and released from Children's Hospital with a gunshot wound to the hand.

"They're just lovable kids, my heart. I love them all," Harold **Pollard** Jr. said, while making funeral arrangements. "They're all so special. And they're all close to each other."

The children's mother, Aelizabeth Niebrzydowski, also suffered gunshot wounds to her ear and hand and has been released from the hospital.

According to Duggan, Robinson and Allen got into a dispute with Niebrzydowski's brother, Anthony Niebrzydowski, on Monday. The argument centered on the disputed sale of a stolen radio, Duggan said.

Either Anthony Niebrzydowski or his friend at the scene threw a baseball bat at Robinson's Cadillac during the argument, Duggan said. Robinson drove off, got a rifle and switched seats with Allen, making Allen the driver.

Duggan said the men returned to Dolphin Street about 12:25 p.m. in northwest Detroit and Robinson got out of the car, firing about 12 shots from the rifle. Aelizabeth Niebrzydowski was in a Buick Regal in front of her home with three of the children. Her brother grabbed a fourth child -- Duggan wasn't sure which one -- and dove into the car during the shooting.

Investigators from the prosecutor's office were less than a block away on Rockdale seizing a suspected drug house and heard the shots.

"People think they can drive down the street and shoot people and get away with it," Duggan said.

Duggan pointed out that there were 31 murders in Detroit in January. During the same period, Duggan said, there were 33 murders in New York City, which has eight times more residents.

"We're doing an incompetent job in Wayne County and that's just the bottom line, we're doing a really lousy job," he said. "I just can't believe that you can get mad, go get your hands on a gun and come back and shoot someone."

Three of the **Pollard** children attend Houghton Elementary School, but were on winter break this week. A Detroit Public Schools spokesperson said grief counselors and social workers will go to the school Monday to help their schoolmates as they return to class.

Mike Cox, chief of the prosecutor's homicide unit, said it's unusual that neither man accused in such a major crime has much of a criminal record.

In 1993, Robinson had an arrest for an unarmed robbery but the case was dismissed in Wayne County Juvenile Court. His license has been suspended eight times, according to the Michigan Secretary of State's Office.

Ralph Kinney, chief of staff with the Wayne County Sheriff's Department, confirmed that Robinson is related by marriage to a recently hired deputy, but would not reveal the deputy's name.

"We've confirmed that there is a department employee whose wife's stepson is Mr. Robinson, one of the accused in this shooting," Kinney said.

Allen was charged with a misdemeanor of assault and battery in February 1999, but the case was dismissed three months later. His license was suspended 16 times by the Secretary of State for various moving violations.

Allen's father, Detroit Police Officer Joel Allen, a 24-year veteran, works in the Detroit Police Department's 3rd (Vernor) Precinct, police said. He could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

The family of the children wounded in Monday's shooting has set up a fund to help with medical and funeral expenses. Donations can be sent to: **Pollard** Children Family Fund, c/o Dearborn Federal Credit Union, P.O. Box 6048, Dearborn 48121.

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Caption: Photo WILLIAM ARCHIE/Detroit Free Press; Photo; Family Photo

Harold **Pollard** Jr. holds pictures of his grandchildren **Ajaneer**, left, Jason and Aerica, who were shot Monday. **Ajaneer**, 7, was killed. A fourth grandchild, Alyah, was also injured. The incident came during a dispute between the suspects and the children's uncle over a \$40 radio. Joel Allen, 24, drove the car Monday during the shooting, police say.

Willie Robinson, 24, is the alleged gunman who fired 12 shots into a car.
Wayne County Prosecutor Michael Duggan

Alyah **Pollard**, 4, was among three children wounded in the shooting.

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

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Index Terms: MIKE DUGGAN ; REACTION ; SHOOTING ; CHILD ; INJURY ; DEATH ; DETROIT ; MULTIPLE ; AJANEER , POLLARD

Record Number: 0202270296

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