

## **WOMAN CHARGED IN TOT'S DEATH - CARETAKER FACING A MANSLAUGHTER COUNT**

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Wayne County prosecutors charged the caretaker who shot an 18-month old girl in the head with involuntary manslaughter on Monday.

In addition to the 15-year felony, officials charged **Tonya Hardaway**, 46, with felony firearm possession.

**Hardaway** is accused of killing Dai'Janell Clark as she slept in a bed around 3:50 a.m. Sunday at **Hardaway**'s home on Detroit's east side. Police said **Hardaway** told them she discovered a shotgun while cleaning her house on Frederick. At first, she said the gun fell, hitting the child.

She later told authorities she was trying to determine whether the gun was loaded when it went off. The gun belongs to **Hardaway**, said Maria Miller, spokeswoman for the Prosecutor's Office.

The baby, sleeping on her stomach, was hit by the shotgun's slug on the right side of her head. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Dai'Janell was sharing a bed with her twin sister, La'Shawnell, who was not injured.

Dai'Janell is the only child younger than 17 killed so far this year in Detroit, police said. In all, 20 children were killed in Detroit in 2003 -- two accidentally by gunshots -- compared with 26 in 2002.

**Hardaway** was interviewed and released by police Sunday. She is expected to turn herself in to be arraigned today.

"We are not disagreeing with the charges," said LaShonna Smith, Dai'Janell's aunt.

The girl's mother, LaDonna Lenoir, 17, was at her home on Wade Street when the shooting occurred.

Lenoir had dropped off her children -- the twins and 3-month-old Desmond -- at **Hardaway**'s home.

Smith said Lenoir, who is 17, often dropped off the children at **Hardaway**'s house and with other relatives.

"She's 17, so when she needed a break, everyone helps out," Smith said Sunday.

Lenoir spent Monday planning her daughter's funeral, which is scheduled for Saturday, Smith said.

Frederick Street residents said gunfire is not uncommon in the neighborhood, where boarded-up houses and corner stores stand in the shadow of a sprawling industrial complex.

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Caption: Photo

Dai'Janell Clark died in what was called an accident.

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