

BODY IS THAT OF MISSING GIRL, 15 - 'IT'S A PURE TRAGEDY,' DETROIT INSPECTOR SAYS

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Wednesday, April 9, 2003

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The body of a teenage girl found Tuesday afternoon in the upstairs of a vacant house on Detroit's east side is that of a Northern High School student who was reported abducted last month, according to Detroit police.

Bryona Williams, 15, of Detroit was last seen March 20 at Harper and Evanston. A witness told police that someone pulled the girl into a blue Oldsmobile Delta 88 with chrome rims and a dent in the back.

Tuesday evening, Detroit Officer Glen Woods said two men who had broken into the partially boarded-up house to take drywall found **Williams'** body shortly after 4:30 p.m. The men left the house, on Longview near Chalmers, and flagged down a police car.

It was not immediately apparent to police how the girl died. Woods said there were no wounds and no other visible signs of trauma. He said it looked as if she had been dead two or three days.

An autopsy has been scheduled for today. The death is being investigated as a homicide, Woods said.

The girl was found nude from the waist down and wasn't wearing shoes. Her body was face down with her clothes nearby in the room, which like the rest of the house had no furniture, according to Inspector William Rice. "It's a pure tragedy," Rice said.

As police investigated, neighbors gathered to watch. At 6:45 p.m., four cars arrived at the Chalmers end of the block and several people got out and rushed toward the house but were stopped by police.

The people included relatives and friends of the girl. One of her grandmothers, Valerie Clemons, shouted, "It shouldn't have happened. They should have been on their job," referring to the police.

Family members stood in the cold, sometimes retreating to the warmth of their vehicles, as they waited for confirmation about the victim's identity. An unidentified neighbor told family members she had been in the house and had seen the body.

They asked the woman what she looked like. "What was she wearing?"

"A red jacket," the woman answered.

"That's her because she had a red jacket on," Clemons said.

Some began to cry.

At 7:45 p.m., the dead girl's other grandmother, Nadine Whigham, arrived sobbing and hysterical. She had to be restrained as she ran toward the house.

"I want to see if it's her," she cried.

When someone suggested that she might not want to see the body loaded into the gray van from the Wayne County morgue, Whigham said through her tears, "That's my first granddaughter. I watched her being born. I sure can watch her come out the building."

At 7:56 p.m., Officer Lonz Reynolds approached the family which eagerly asked if it was **Williams**. He quietly confirmed the dead girl was **Williams**.

As the grandmothers collapsed onto the pavement in grief, Reynolds said this was the part of the job he didn't like.

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Caption: Photo SYLWIA KAPUSCINSKI/Detroit Free Press

Nadine Whigham, right, grandmother of the victim, reacts as she arrives near where the body was found Tuesday on Longview near Chalmers in Detroit. The teenager was her first grandchild.

(PHOTO RAN IN METRO FINAL, PAGE 6B.)

Edition: METRO FINAL CHASER

Section: NWS

Page: 1B

Index Terms: BRYONA WILLIAMS; HOMICIDE ; JUVENILE ; DETROIT

Record Number: 0304090423

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