

STATE WAS WATCHING DEATH SUSPECT - HE WAS IN A PROGRAM FOR DELINQUENT YOUTH

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Saturday, May 4, 2002

Author: JACK KRESNAK FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Terrill Johnson, the 17-year-old Detroiter charged in the fatal shooting of 15-year-old Cherrel Thomas this week, **was** under close watch Friday by the Wayne County Department of Community Justice, the department director said Friday.

A caseworker from Starr Commonwealth, an agency under contract to the department, had visited Johnson the day before the shooting to discuss why he **was** not in school that day, department Director Jeriel Heard said.

Johnson had been regularly attending the Charlotte Forten Academy, a school for delinquent youths operated by Boysville of Michigan. He had been going there since his release from the **state** -operated W.J. Maxey Training School, according to reports given to Heard by the StarrVista Care Management Organization which **was** supervising Johnson. Johnson also " **was** intensively drug-tested, which means he **was** intensively monitored," Heard said.

Johnson, a delinquent ward of Wayne County, and Jesse Freeman, 21, of Detroit were arraigned Friday in 36th District Court in Detroit on murder and firearms charges in Cherrel's **death** .

Cherrel **was** shot in the back Tuesday night while hiding in the backseat of a car parked near Johnson's home on Cloverlawn, according to Detroit police. Police say Johnson fired an AK47 handed to him by Freeman.

The motive for the shooting is unclear, although one witness told police that Johnson claimed he **was** afraid people in the car were about to shoot up his house.

Johnson is charged with first-degree murder and use of a firearm in a felony; Freeman with second-degree murder and felony firearm use. Magistrate B. Pennie Millender ordered both men jailed without bond pending a May 15 preliminary examination.

Johnson had no attorney. Freeman, who has no criminal record, **was** represented by Lynn Jovanovich.

Contact JACK KRESNAK at 313-223-4544 or kresnak@freepress.com.

Memo: CORRECTION RAN MAY 14, 2002

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 8A

Correction: A May 4 headline on an article in the Local News section about Terrill Johnson, the 17-year-old juvenile court ward charged with fatally shooting Cherrel Thomas, should have said it was Wayne County that was supervising him after his release from the W.J. Maxey Boys Training School.

Index Terms: TERRILL JOHNSON ; SUSPECT; HOMICIDE ; PROFILE

Record Number: 0205040376

Copyright (c) 2002 Detroit Free Press