

DETROIT: GIRL SHOT , KILLED WHILE OUT FOR RIDE - 15-YEAR-OLDS CAME UNDER FIRE WHEN ANOTHER CAR PULLED UP

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Tiffany Whatley heard the **shots** slice into the car and turned her head to see her best friend slump over dead next to her in the backseat.

"There must have been seven gunshots," Tiffany, 15, said of the shooting early Monday at Wyoming and Fenkell in northwest Detroit. "I don't know how. I don't know why. All I know was that was my best friend."

Martha Ann Barnett, 15, a Cooley High School student, was **shot** in the head and **killed** . Dominique Spillman, also 15, was struck in the shoulder and was in serious condition Monday night at Sinai-Grace Hospital.

Detroit Police Sgt. Eren Stephens-Bell said investigators are still trying to determine why the three **girls** had been **out** on foot in the bitter cold after 2 a.m. before jumping into a car with two strangers: a 34-year-old Oak Park man, who was driving, and his 16-year-old brother.

Around 2:30 a.m., a Jeep Cherokee pulled alongside the car and someone opened fire, police said.

The 16-year-old boy was struck in the hand. He was treated and released from Sinai-Grace, police said.

Tiffany said a bullet grazed her coat. The man driving the car pulled away as quickly as possible and rushed to Sinai-Grace.

Tiffany later explained that the three **girls** were at Martha's home and decided to walk to a friend's home to spend the night. They planned to stop at a gas station **for** pop and chips, she said.

"These guys asked us if we wanted to **ride** around and have some fun," she said. "We were just riding around and laughing, listening to music. All of a sudden we're at a red light, and someone pulled up next to us and started shooting."

Tiffany said she does not know who the gunman was or whether he had a dispute with the Oak Park man and his brother.

"The police had a lot of questions," she said. "I talked to so many police. I told them all I know."

The 34-year-old did not answer the door at his home Monday and did not return a phone call seeking comment.

Martha's grandmother, who shares the same name, said the three **girls** were at her home when she went to sleep around 11 p.m. Sunday.

"Whoever **killed** my baby granddaughter doesn't know how bad they're hurting me," she said.

Melissa Barnett, 18, sister of the dead **girl**, said she was upset by a TV report that portrayed the three 15-year-olds as prostitutes.

"That's just not true at all," she said. "I don't know who would say such a thing. They were just kids having fun and going to the store."

Anyone with information on the shooting is asked to call Detroit police at 313-596-2260 or Crimestoppers at 800-773-2587.

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ILLUSTRATION: Map Detroit Free Press;Photo

CAPTION: Martha Ann Barnett, 15, was **shot** in the head. She and two friends accepted a **ride** from strangers.

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