

## FOSTER FATHER IS CHARGED - PROSECUTORS CALL BEATING DEATH OF BOY, 4, MURDER

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For the second time in the past month, a Detroit foster parent has been charged with beating a foster child to death.

Roderick Hall, a 40-year-old foster parent licensed by the Michigan Family Independence Agency, was charged Friday with first-degree felony murder in last weekend's death of 4-year-old **Rufus Manzie Young Jr.**

Hall allegedly confessed to striking **Rufus** with his fist and hand after the boy soiled himself the morning of Saturday, April 5, officials said. The boy seemed to lapse in and out of consciousness that day but his foster parents did not take him to a hospital until about 3 a.m. Sunday, officials said.

The case is similar to the fatal beating last month of 4-year-old Joshua Causey, whose foster mother, 47-year-old Lynda Baker, failed to seek prompt medical attention for Joshua after she allegedly beat him with her fist.

Baker, too, is charged with first-degree murder and is being held without bond pending trial in Wayne County Circuit Court.

Hall was in the Wayne County Jail in lieu of 10 percent of \$150,000 bond set Friday by 36th District Magistrate Robert K. Costello, pending an April 23 preliminary examination.

Costello said the investigator's report filed with the court did not contain much information about the evidence against Hall.

Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor James Gonzales, who heads the homicide unit, said his office and Detroit police continue to look for "anyone who may be criminally responsible in **Rufus** ' death."

**Rufus** and two of his siblings, girls ages 6 and 8, had been placed in the home of Roderick and Tara Hall by the FIA last year. The couple has three older children.

According to Wayne County Family Court records, the three foster children displayed bizarre behaviors including sexually acting out, smearing feces and eating garbage.

Asked about **Rufus** in November, Roderick Hall told a court employee that: "I have to bathe him and brush his teeth. He won't bathe himself and he becomes sexually aroused when bathed."

Hall said he suspected that **Rufus** had been sexually abused.

Tara Hall told a court worker that "these children need help and we need results" from counseling, the records said.

The children all suffered from psychological trauma, the records show. **Rufus** was on medication to stop him from sleep-walking. He was not potty-trained when he came to the Hall home.

The parental rights of the children's biological mother and two fathers were terminated by the court in January.

Detroit police child abuse officers continue to investigate the March 1 death of another foster child, 15-year-old LeRon St. John, at her foster mother's home. LeRon died of untreated tuberculosis and the Wayne County Medical Examiner's Office ruled her death a homicide.

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