

ACCUSED OF ABUSE, 2 CANTON DADS IN CUSTODY - 6-MONTH-OLD BOY IS DEAD; 9-MONTH-OLD BOY IS IN CRITICAL CONDITION

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Friday, March 4, 2005

Author: JACK KRESNAK

Two Canton fathers are in custody in connection with separate incidents of child abuse that left a 6-month-old boy dead and a 9-month-old boy hospitalized in critical condition. The first incident occurred at about 7:30 p.m. Tuesday when Canton police and fire personnel responded to a mobile home in the area of Old Michigan Avenue and Haggerty Road after a report of a child not breathing, police said.

The 9-month-old boy, Roman Style, had bruises on his body and internal head bleeding. He was flown to the University of Michigan's Children's Hospital where he was in critical condition Thursday. Late Thursday, the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office charged the boy's father, Harold Wright, 27, with three counts of child abuse. He is in police custody and is expected to be arraigned today on the charges. At about 7 p.m. Wednesday, Canton fire and rescue workers responded to a home in the Cherry Hill and Haggerty area after a 911 call about a sick child.

The boy, a 6-month-old whose name was not released, was taken to St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ypsilanti where he died. An autopsy showed that the cause of death was a skull fracture, severe trauma to the liver and shaking. The manner of death was listed by the Washtenaw County Medical Examiner's Office as homicide, police said. The boy's 20-year-old father is in custody and is expected to be charged in the boy's death today. Meanwhile, 36th District Court Judge Donald Coleman in Detroit bound over 20-year-old James Earl Johnson on charges of premeditated murder and felony murder in the Feb. 6 beating death of **Tashona Holmes**, 19 months old, in Johnson's Detroit home.

Although Johnson is not the biological father of **Tashona**, the girl considered him as her father, according to testimony by Johnson's mother. Johnson admitted striking the child with his hand to get her to stop crying. Detroit police said he slept in a bed with the baby's corpse for a few hours after assaulting her. Johnson said he was high on illegal drugs. The baby had 66 bruises and 15 scrapes, including 39 bruises on her head and face alone, according to an autopsy report. The child also had a lacerated liver and bleeding inside her skull. Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Lora Weingarden said, "It was the worst beating death of a child that I've seen in 19 1/2 years as a prosecutor."

Contact JACK KRESNAK at 313-223-4544 or kresnak@freepress.com. {DISCLAIMER} THIS ELECTRONIC VERSION MAY DIFFER SLIGHTLY FROM THE PRINTED ARTICLE

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS; NEWS

Page: 3B

Index Terms: child ; abuse ; death ; injury ; Canton ; parent ; james johnson ; tashona holmes; Roman Style ; Harold Wright

Record Number: 0000106733

Copyright (c) 2005 Detroit Free Press