

# 4-year-old girl alone 6 hours with bodies of mom, man

By Shirley L. Smith  
and Anne Rochell  
STAFF WRITERS

She is 4 years old and already has lived an unimaginable nightmare.

As the rain poured down outside her Lithonia home on Good Friday, she sat, hungry and afraid, in a house filled with blood and the silence of death.

Her mother lay on the ground floor, dead from multiple stab wounds, strangulation and a blow to the head. A man who lived in the house was also dead — stabbed and strangled on the second floor.

Still dressed in her pajamas, the child stood at a closed window and called and waved for help, but passersby did not understand her gestures. At least six hours passed.

It was children who finally understood that she was not merely waving but appealing for help. They opened the door and saw what she had been living with all afternoon: a house awash in blood.

Today, the 4-year-old's recollection of that horrific afternoon is the key that police hope will unlock the story behind two killings.

"What she knows, apparently no one else could possibly know," said DeKalb police Capt. C.R. Maddox. "We are treating this little girl with kid gloves. . . . She has been through, obviously, a tremendous trauma, perhaps seeing her own mother murdered."

## Very, very gentle treatment

The child is in the state's custody, police said Saturday.

"She is going through debriefing," Captain Maddox said. "She's not going to be taken into a room with a hanging light bulb and be grilled by two tough lieutenants, so to speak. We've got a psychiatrist to do this procedure with this child. She is going to be treated very, very gently."

Police could provide little details about the brutal slaying of Precious Shivers Massey, 27, and Jimmy Johnson, 42, both of 2240 Low-trail Court off Covington Highway in DeKalb County.

Police have no suspects and one witness: a traumatized 4-year-old.

A neighbor who wanted to remain anonymous said she saw the girl at the bedroom window as early as 1 p.m. Friday, but she didn't realize anything was wrong until about six hours later.

## 'I want to get out'

"I was coming from work around 1 p.m. and I saw her, and she was waving in the window and I waved back at her,"

## Easter weekend begins with 5 violent deaths

By Anne Rochell  
STAFF WRITER

Easter weekend got off to a bloody start in metro Atlanta, with five people shot, stabbed or strangled to death on Good Friday and Saturday, police said.

In southwest Atlanta, Gregory Ward, 29, of 1960 Allison Court, died early Saturday at Grady Memorial Hospital after being stabbed during a dispute over a dice game, said Atlanta police Sgt. J.J. James.

Mr. Ward was stabbed once in the chest at an apartment at 1860 Honeysuckle Lane. Police arrested Gerard Gordon, 34, who lives at the apartment where the stabbing took place, Sergeant James said. He was charged with murder.

In southeast Atlanta, an 18-year-old man died at 2 a.m. Saturday when a pistol he was handling accidentally fired, according to the Fulton County medical examiner's office.

The man was "playing" with the gun at his home at 2461 Jonesboro Road when it went off, said Investigator Mark Guilbeau. The victim's identity was withheld until relatives are

notified.

"Apparently he was just playing, loading and unloading it, and it went off and happened to hit him in the head," Investigator Guilbeau said. Friends who were with the victim at the time of the shooting contacted police. Nobody was charged.

At 5 a.m. Saturday, a Calhoun man was shot and killed in Tucker, according to DeKalb police.

Charles Victor Largin, 38, of 325 Evert Springs Road, was shot several times after a dispute at a friend's house at 1665 Cooledge Road, police said. He died at the scene. Police arrested Kirk Douglas Bailey, 35, of 3631 Shoreland Drive in Buford, at the scene. He was charged with murder. Police did not say what the men were arguing about.

In Lithonia, Jimmy Johnson, 42, and Precious Shivers Massey, 27, were found stabbed and strangled and their Lithonia home splattered with blood Friday after neighbors noticed Ms. Massey's 4-year-old daughter in the window waving for help (see story left). Police have no suspects.

the neighbor said.

But, around 6:30, when the neighbor was out walking, her 12-year-old son pointed to the window, where the little girl was pounding on the window and yelling.

"She said, 'I'm locked inside, I want to get out, I'm hungry!'" the neighbor recalled.

"I said, 'Where is your mother?' and she said, 'She's dead,'" the neighbor recalled. "I said, 'How could that be? I saw your mom on Tuesday.' She kept telling me, 'I'm hungry, my mom is dead.'"

The children who entered the home said the doors were unlocked. A neighbor said the girl told her that her mom earlier told her not to leave the house.

After police arrived at 8 p.m., another neighbor made the girl two peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and the child wolfed them down, the neighbor said.

## A second child lived there?

Neighbors knew little about the child, her mother and Mr. Johnson. They moved to the area around Christmas and were rarely at home, neighbors said.

Several neighbors said a second child — a girl about 12 — lived at the residence, but police could not confirm that.

Some neighbors said they were suspicious of the unmarried couple. They drove fancy

cars, and often there was a lot of traffic outside the home at night, they said.

Neighbor Victor Wilder said he sometimes heard disturbances inside the house at night.

Police searched the home with drug dogs Saturday but would not say whether drugs may have played a part in the deaths.

Ed Morris, who lives next door to the victims, said the house was broken into shortly after Mr. Johnson and Ms. Massey moved in. But he said Mr. Johnson told him nothing was taken.

"I didn't know them well," he said. "He [Mr. Johnson] seemed like a pretty decent guy, but he was very secretive."

An officer said Mr. Johnson was known to police, but he would not elaborate.

State Sen. John Parrish (D-Decatur) and Rep. Vernon Jones (D-Decatur) were in the middle-class neighborhood Saturday, trying to calm shocked neighbors.

"We just don't want citizens to start panicking and think it's a bad neighborhood," Mr. Parrish said.

The elected officials have scheduled a community meeting for 7 p.m. Monday at Family Care Center at 6038 Covington Highway.

Staff writer Bill Robinson contributed to this article.



Jimmy Johnson

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