

Unsecured gun, lack of supervision led to shooting death of boy, 11, police say.

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By Ben Schmitt, Staff Writer

The 11-year-old boy gasped for life with a bullet wound to the chest, shouting to his sister, "Taylor, Taylor," as his grandfather sped to a nearest police station.

"He was fighting," Kimberly Shelton, the boy's mother, said family members told her. "He was trying to make it."

But Korie Meriweather didn't make it. He was dead on arrival at Henry Ford Wyandotte Hospital on Tuesday afternoon.

"He was just a young boy," Shelton, 30, said Thursday, as she wiped away tears. "I still don't really know what happened."

Police say a combination of access to a parent's gun, unsupervised children and curiosity led to Korie's death in southeast Detroit.

Now, his 12-year-old friend, who used to sleep over, play video games and go roller skating with Korie, is in juvenile detention center charged with careless discharge of a weapon causing death.

"He was over here all the time," Shelton said of the 12-year-old. They were just good close friends."

The boy's father, Gino Solomon Jr., 34, was arraigned Thursday in 36th District Court and released on personal bond on a misdemeanor charge of contributing to the delinquency of a minor for failing to secure the gun.

"I blame his dad, most definitely," Shelton said. "But I also blame the boy. He was old enough to know what a gun can do."

Shelton wasn't home when the shooting occurred. She had been pulled over and detained earlier in the day by Lincoln Park Police for driving on a suspended license.

It's still unclear why Korie wasn't at Boynton Middle School on Tuesday, where he is a sixth-grader. His friend had been expelled last month for breaking into the school, officials said.

Shelton said her son loved to dance, roller skate and devoured her lasagna and peach cobbler whenever she made it. He hung out at the nearby Roller-cade on Schafer with his friends every weekend.

Korie's father, Willie Merriweather, died of complications related to multiple sclerosis in 2002, Shelton said.

On Thursday morning, workers from the Michigan Department of Human Services visited Kimberly Shelton's home on the 1300 block of Patricia. Officials later declined to comment about the case.

Korie's grandfather, Jerry Shelton, who lives down the block on Patricia in the shadow of I-75, said he was cooking pork chops and drove down to his daughter's house to get some rice when he saw Korie lying on the front porch.

"I really couldn't believe what I was seeing," Jerry Shelton said Thursday, shaking his head. "I still don't."

Jerry Shelton got in touch with his daughter, who had been released from the police custody, as she was driving home. "We have some very bad news," she said he told her.

Korie also is survived by a sister, Taylor, 12, and a brother, Alan, 14. Funeral arrangements were pending late Thursday.