

Two more US children face murder charges

Our reporter
31 July 1998

In a practice which is now becoming commonplace in the United States, two more children have been indicted on murder charges, one 11 years old, the second only 10.

The 11-year-old boy from northern California is being tried in the city of Martinez, in the San Francisco Bay area, for the shooting death of a playmate. The child shot 13-year-old Larry Kiepert on June 6 with a high-powered rifle.

The boy appeared in court handcuffed and shackled. He colored with crayons while the proceedings took place. He admits to having fired the rifle from his window, not knowing that it was loaded. The defense is calling the shooting an accident, pointing out that the bullet went through window blinds and Kiepert's fence. The boy would not have been able to see his friend.

The prosecution claims that the boy had aimed for Larry through a powerful scope, brushing the blinds aside, in retaliation for having been wounded by Larry with a BB gun three days earlier.

As is regularly done in cases like this, the boy was questioned by police outside the presence of his parents or lawyer, in violation of his constitutional rights. The judge in the case, Lois Haight, will have to rule on the admissibility of that evidence.

The second murder case is in Orange, New Jersey, near Newark, where a 10-year-old boy was charged July 29 with murder and aggravated sexual assault in the beating death of a four-month-old girl who had been left in his care by the baby's teenage mother.

The 18-year-old mother, Rhakida Daniels, had left her daughter with the boy while she ran out to a nearby fast food restaurant. When she returned she found the baby unconscious in a crib. The cause of death was a fractured skull.

As in the Nathaniel Abraham case in Pontiac, Michigan, the authorities and the media are ignoring the role that social conditions play in creating such

tragedies. No one asks why the United States leads the industrialized world in children killing children.

In both of the latest cases the prosecutors are taking the position that the accused children should be treated as criminals. In the New Jersey case, Essex County Prosecutor Patricia Hurt has also brought criminal charges against the mother of the four month old, charging her with child endangerment for leaving her baby with the 10 year old.

See Also:

The case of Nathaniel Abraham: background to the prosecution of a child for murder
[2 July 1998]

The Capitol shooting as the symptom of a social crisis
[28 July 1998]



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact