



GAINESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

PRESS RELEASE



Thursday, April 18, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News Release

UPDATE to shooting death of Bernard Carter III

Gainesville, FLA - After an intensive follow-up investigation conducted by GPD Detectives, it has been determined that Bernard Carter III was accidentally shot while inside his home by a toddler who had access to a firearm. After receiving an anonymous tip, interviews were conducted with eyewitnesses to the incident. Detectives learned that a toddler who was living in the home had immediate access to an unsecured handgun. The toddler grabbed the handgun, causing it to fire, striking Carter. Adults within the home knew what occurred, but chose to cover-up the incident and actively misled law enforcement about the events surrounding Carter's death for multiple weeks. This also deprived the toddler and two other juvenile witnesses from receiving necessary crisis-related services.

The follow-up investigation took up untold hours and multiple resources from multiple agencies, but has ultimately led to the arrest of Bernard Carter's mother and the pending arrest of his brother. **Lawanda Wade (DOB: 7/22/73)** and **Quante Whitaker (DOB: 8/9/94)** have both been charged with Tampering with a Witness and two counts of Child Abuse. Mr. Whitaker has also been charged with Tampering with Evidence and Perjury during an Official Proceeding. Ms. Wade was arrested on the evening of April 17th. This case remains an open investigation and Mr. Whitaker is still outstanding as of this release.

The Gainesville Police Department urges citizens who possess a firearm within their home to properly secure and store it in order to keep another tragedy such as this one from occurring again. For more information on firearm safety you can follow the link to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services <https://www.fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources/Concealed-Weapon-License/Firearm-Safety-Tips>

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