

MTSU roommates were deadly match

Basketball player, student who killed her clashed from the start

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Tina Stewart's sisters, Monika Jones and Miesha Stewart, cry in Memphis.
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Tina Stewart



Shanterrica Madden



Shanterrica Madden waits for her probable cause hearing to begin in Murfreesboro. Madden is out of jail on bail. / JOHN PARTIPILO / THE TENNESSEAN



Ida Stewart Jackson cries at the grave of daughter Tina Stewart, who was fatally stabbed March 2, at an apartment complex near the MTSU campus. Jackson's sister Tammye Burnham tries to console her. / LARRY MCCORMACK / THE TENNESSEAN



Adrian Jackson pauses as he talks about the photo behind him that daughter Tina Stewart, a Middle Tennessee State University basketball player, gave him for his birthday. / LARRY MCCORMACK / THE TENNESSEAN



Frank and Shantel Madden, parents of the defendant, Shanterrica Madden, listen to testimony in her probable cause hearing Friday. "This hurts," Frank Madden said earlier this month. "This wasn't supposed to be on the agenda." / JOHN PARTIPILO / THE TENNESSEAN



Shanterrica Madden, right, with sister Latisha and brother Frank Jr. She acted as a mother figure to her younger siblings. / FAMILY PHOTO

MEMPHIS — A gunbattle erupted on Ida Stewart Jackson's street as she walked home from the grocery store. Nine months pregnant, she wedged herself under a parked van for cover.

When the shooting stopped, her 12-year-old niece was dead in the front yard where she had been playing.

Weeks later, Jackson gave birth to Clantina Marie and set about bringing up the child in the same violent, poverty-stricken neighborhood.

From early on, Clantina fought it.

When there was no money for Christmas, Clantina and her brother and sisters wrapped the powdered milk and box of Farina grits from the sparsely filled cupboards and gave them as a presents to their parents.

She wanted the family's house kept so clean that no one would know they were poor.

Basketball was her ticket out — out of Memphis, out of poverty, out of violence.

It took her to Middle Tennessee State University, where she saw a successful future taking shape. She dropped "Clan" from her name, asking friends to call her Tina Stewart. She was on the team. She had a boyfriend, KC Anuna. They planned to start their own physical rehabilitation business after graduation.

But on the evening of March 2, far from the streets of South Memphis, in an apartment more luxurious than any place she had ever lived, violence found her.

She was stabbed in her bedroom and left to die.

The accused, Shanterrica Madden, is from the same hometown and same high school. But Stewart and Madden might never have met had they not been paired as roommates at random last fall in a privately owned off-campus apartment.

Now, one is dead and the other charged with first-degree murder.

The women were mismatched from the start.

Madden, an 18-year-old freshman aspiring to be a lawyer, despised Anuna's being over all the time. He wasn't paying rent and wasn't on the lease, she complained to the apartment's management.

Stewart, a 21-year-old junior, didn't like Madden smoking marijuana in the apartment. She could lose her full-ride basketball scholarship if she had even a trace in her system, she complained to the same management.

As much as Stewart relied on athletics, Madden counted on academics.

"She was excellent, hard working," said Karen Ford, an adjunct professor at MTSU in English, who taught Madden in an advanced English class. "She was focused beyond belief. I keep repeating the word 'focused' when talking about her, but she was just fastidious about her work."

The first-born of high school sweethearts Frank and Shantel Madden, Shanterrica acted as a mother figure to 16-year-old Latisha and 12-year-old Frank Jr.

She joined the school choir in third grade, won every perfect attendance award and excelled at academics.

She lived by her parents' message: "Whatever you do, apply yourself."

That attitude got her to MTSU on an academic scholarship — making her the first in her family to go beyond high school.

"Being a father, it was hard to send her this way, so far from home, but she's got to grow up sometime," said Frank Madden, who was guarded and would not talk about his daughter's childhood. He would not disclose his occupation. But the Maddens were able to post the \$100,000 bond to release their daughter from the Rutherford County jail a few days after the stabbing.

Shanterrica Madden had dreams beyond Memphis, too.

She would cut out pictures of big, beautiful homes from magazines and send them home to Memphis with a note: "Daddy, this is why I'm working so hard."

Her MySpace page posts reflected a competitive young woman who preferred to look forward, never back. One post says, "I won't settle for anything less than what I deserve."

She carried a 3.5 grade point average. She was on time for class, her professor said.

Stewart, on the other hand, struggled with conformity.

If practice was scheduled to start at 1 p.m., Stewart might show at 1:05 p.m., said Memphis Central High School Coach Niki Bray. At one point, her refusal to play by the rules got her kicked off the high school team. Her grades fell so low that she barely graduated.

The coach gave her a second chance. To get back on the team she had to run 500 sprints. And she had to put in the extra schoolwork.

Stewart did it. She knew what was at stake.

"Tina was the one in her family who was chasing her dreams," Bray said. "The rest of them have dreams, but they didn't chase them like Tina."

Her father, Adrian Jackson, works in maintenance at an apartment complex. Her mother, Ida Stewart Jackson, is a manager at a gas station convenience store. Her oldest sister, Monika Jones, had two children before graduating from high school. Her older sister, Miesha, is working on her GED.

Tina Stewart wanted to bring everyone with her.

As a teenager, she regularly brought friends home, like stray puppies. Determined to shore up the deterioration in their fragile lives, she would persuade her parents to take them in.

Ciana Calhoun, 20, was one of those kids. A fellow Lady Warrior at Central, Calhoun lived with Stewart's family for the last two years of high school. She knew they didn't have a lot of money, but they never turned her away.

"We stretched a lot of meals," Adrian Jackson said. "A lot of times we didn't know where the next meal was coming from. But we would sit in the house together, with no electricity, no food, and you would think we were rich. That's the relationship we have with each other."

Stewart helped Calhoun get to MTSU with her. When they left for college, Stewart pushed her oldest sister to reconsider her own higher education.

Monika Jones, now 31, is a junior at Lane College in West Tennessee with a 4.0 grade point average.

"You know where we came from," Stewart would remind her sister. "We're (Ida's) kids. We're strong. We can do it. We're going to buy Mom and Dad a house someday."

That tenacity sometimes led to clashes with MTSU women's basketball coach Rick Insell. No one doubted Stewart's talent, but her stubbornness kept her from being a leader on the team, early on. Over time, she conformed to Insell's regimen.

Last summer, she confided to Coach Bray that she couldn't stand being back in her South Memphis neighborhood. She saw people sitting around, not working.

Back at MTSU, she poised herself as a leader for next year's team, Insell said.

It would never be.

Few will talk about defendant

The night Stewart died, the coach and his players cried at a Murfreesboro hospital. A campuswide vigil was held that night, as well as the next night. Friends and teammates poured memories and condolences on her family through social networking sites.

On campus, the talk was of the slain popular basketball player.

Yet, few people seemed to know enough to talk about Shanterrica Madden. Calls and messages to her high school teachers and coaches were never returned. Attempts to reach out to high school and college friends failed.

Her lawyer, Joe Brandon Jr., said his client was the victim, stabbing Stewart only in self-defense. She wanted her roommate's boyfriend gone so she could have some peace and quiet to study, he said, and she ended up in an unfair fight with a college athlete.

Three weeks later, in a Rutherford County courtroom, Madden gently swung her dangling feet under the defendant's chair while Murfreesboro police detective Mike Taylor told the judge he believes the 4-foot, 11-inch Madden calculated the slaying of her 5-foot, 7-inch roommate.

Madden's father listened to the testimony, his arm draped around his wife's shoulder during the four-hour court hearing.

Less than a foot away sat Adrian Jackson, who also comforted his sobbing wife. More than 20 friends, family and teammates sat quietly as prosecutors showed the judge autopsy photos of the slain woman.

"I might shake, I might tremble, I might cry, but I have to be in court," Monika Jones said. "I have to be there to make sure things go right. I want (Madden) to see the pain in my eyes."

Then prosecutors played a videotape of the conversation Madden had with a detective the night of the slaying.

Dressed in a low-cut neon green shirt with no visible injuries, she declined her right to have a lawyer present and spoke softly but deliberately:

Stewart got home from practice, smelled marijuana coming from Madden's room and brought over the apartment's courtesy officer, who told her to get rid of the pot.

Madden was angry as she went back into the room, but she continued to pack for spring break.

She went to Stewart's room, and the two fought verbally, then physically.

Madden walked outside the apartment to call her friend and her mom. When she returned, Stewart was lying on her bedroom floor, bleeding from the chest. And Madden knew who did it. The murderer was a 5-foot, 7-inch black man with dreadlocks, whom she had seen hanging around the apartment three times before. She didn't know his name.

The detective didn't buy it, and he told her as much, but she complained to him that her eye was hurting.

"You do understand that Tina is lying on the cold table at the hospital right now," the detective said sternly. "You're going to sit there and complain that your eye hurts?"

Madden told the same story, just as plainly and without emotion.

"All I know is that Tina was fine when I left," she said.

The detective told her she was at a crossroads. "Trust me, you don't want to live with this for the rest of your life," he said. "You're a good person."

She asked the detective if she was facing life in prison. Thirty years? Forty?

"A lot more than 30 or 40," he said.

Then, she told a different story:

There was an argument.

Madden "might have accidentally bumped into" Stewart.

The basketball player shoved back. Punches. Pain to the head.

Kitchen knife on the bed.

A single jab to the chest.

"She just dropped."

Madden turned off the lights to Stewart's room and shut the door.

She went to the kitchen and took her clothes out of the dryer. They weren't completely dry, but she took them out anyway. Then, she returned to Stewart's back bedroom to see if her roommate was breathing. She couldn't tell. She shut the door again, walked outside, and called her mom and a friend.

She told them she had had a fight with her roommate, but nothing more.

Then, she walked back in the apartment and worked around the kitchen a bit more.

Then, KC Anuna arrived. He wanted to see Stewart.

He walked to his girlfriend's bedroom door, but Madden blocked the door.

"She's not here."

He didn't believe her.

She walked to the kitchen and heard Anuna scream.

"What did you do?! What did you do?! What did you do to her?"

"I didn't touch her."

The tape stopped.

Searching for answers

When the court officer brought up the lights in the courtroom, Frank Madden had traces of moisture in his eyes, but he stared straight ahead, through small, round glasses. His daughter hung her head.

The detective said police arrived to find Madden hiding under a nearby car. When they spotted her, she ran into a field and into a parking lot before officers caught up with her.

He later testified that he believed Madden left Stewart's room after the initial fistfight, went to the kitchen and took a steak knife from the dirty dishes, and went back to Stewart's bedroom to kill her.

Wounds on Stewart's shoulder, head and arm show she tried to defend herself, the detective said.

By the end of the hearing, the judge decided the prosecution had enough evidence to send the case to the grand jury on May 16. Until then, Madden will be in Memphis.

After Judge David Loughry's decision, he called on security to make sure Madden and her parents left the courtroom safely.

Frank Madden finally lifted his arm off his wife's shoulder and walked slowly out of the courtroom. The two sets of parents never made eye contact.

"When you're a father, you try your hardest to do what's best for your children," Frank Madden said earlier this month. "This hurts. This wasn't supposed to be on the agenda. Our child was supposed to be here, getting an education. This wasn't supposed to happen."

Adrian and Ida Jackson left the courtroom briskly, hand-in-hand. They had planned to sit in the hallway, saying they were not yet strong enough emotionally to hear testimony of their daughter's long, painful death.

But they changed their minds. They sat, helplessly, wondering how they could have saved their daughter. What could they have done differently along the way to produce a different ending?

But there was no parked van to shield Clantina Marie this time.

Last week in Memphis, Ida Stewart Jackson placed a firm hand on her daughter's grave.

"My baby, my baby," she whimpered softly. "How could this have happened to her? ... She was my family's whole world."

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