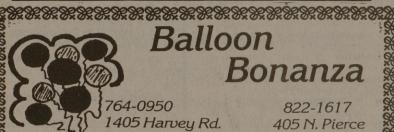
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MIDLAND HEIGHTS INTERNATIONAL

Preteen charged for death

**United Press International** 

Page 6/The Battalion/Tuesday, September 18, 1984

Slouch

FORT WORTH — Authorities Monday charged a 12-year-old girl, who admitted shooting an 11-year-old playmate, then hiding the body behind a hedgerow in her backyard, with two counts of engaging in delinquent conduct.

"In filing two counts, we can present evidence to the judge or jury and let them decide if the child is guilty and whether it was done in-tentionally or wrecklessly," said assis-tant District Attorney Joe Drago. "If they decide it was a wreckless

killing, she will be found guilty of involuntary manslaughter. If they find it was intentional, they would find the child guilty of murder."

The Benbrook girl, who is being held in a Tarrant County juvenile detention center, admitted last week that she shot and killed Kerry Ann Thomas and hid her friend's body in her back yard, where it was found four days later.

The suspect, after confronted with mounting evidence, admitted last Wednesday she had killed her friend with a shotgun on Sept. 8, but

A single blast from a shotgun struck Kerry in the face and killed her instantly as she drank from a glass of milk at the suspect's surburban Fort Worth home, police said.

The suspect dragged the body out of the house and into the back yard to a hedgerow behind the house, po-lice said. Authorities said she had intended to dig a grave, but the ground was too hard so she covered the the body with vinyl, wood and a laundry basket.

Police and neighbors mounted an extensive search after the suspect told the victim's mother Kerry had decided not to spend the entire weekend and had left for home on

Drago said the case was unusual because of the ages of the children

He said the suspect, if found guilty, could receive up to a year's probation, be placed in the custody of her family or other relatives or placed in a foster home or detention

By Jim Earle EARLE

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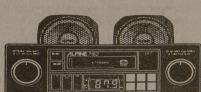
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