

# Newborn thrown away

## Found in bushes with crack packets; mom held

By Toni Guagenti  
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**A** newborn girl thrown from a second-story balcony was found yesterday in the bushes at a motel in Temple Hills.

The baby's mother, Renee Theresa Jones, 25, of the 2300 block of Nova Avenue in Capitol Heights, has been charged with attempted first-degree murder. She was found a short time later at the Branch Avenue Motor Lodge and was taken to a hospital, said Cpl. Mike Montgomery, a spokesman for the Prince George's County Police Department.

The baby, with its umbilical cord attached and crack cocaine packets stuck to its face, was found by the motel's guard dog, Max, a 4-year-old boxer-Labrador retriever mix.

A motel maintenance worker was walking Max around the property in the 3100 block of Branch Avenue near the District line about 11 a.m. when the dog found the whimpering baby, who was wrapped in a hotel towel and inside a bloodied plastic grocery bag, according to witnesses.

The motel's manager, Christine Waldvogel, and head housekeeper, Paula Evette Ford, brought the baby into the lobby and laid it on a desk.

Hours later, a small, blue crack cocaine packet remained on the desk, a reminder of the baby's ordeal.

Miss Jones was charged after being evaluated at a hospital. She faces the possibility of life imprisonment if convicted.

The baby was in good condition yesterday afternoon at Greater Southeast Community Hospital in the District. She had a cut on the top of her head and scratches on the side of her face, Miss Ford said.

"We didn't know what it was until we heard a baby cry," said Miss Ford, who added that the baby had a brown bag over its face to make it look like trash.

Miss Ford, 29, of Suitland, said she saw the umbilical cord and the placenta right away. She also said it was a black baby, although Prince George's police had yet to identify the baby's race.

Miss Ford led two reporters through a lower-level, darkened room to the spot where the baby was found in shrubbery, about 10 feet below Room 206's balcony.

A construction site, with mounds of freshly plowed dirt, lies behind the aging motel. A commercial district surrounds the motor lodge and peddlers sell their wares — used television sets, shoes, toys and the like — in an open-air flea market



A newborn girl was found in the bushes yesterday at the Branch Avenue Motor Lodge in Temple Hills.



Photos by Christopher B. Corder/The Washington Times

The newborn, umbilical cord attached, was tossed from a balcony.

■ "It was the hardest thing I ever did was open that [bag]," said Miss Waldvogel.

nearby.

People in the area didn't know what had happened. They only knew an ambulance had been at the motel.

"I didn't pay it no mind," said a peddler who wouldn't give his name.

A wooden board nailed to the

Branch Avenue Motor Lodge sign reads: "Motel rates \$35.00 to \$65.00."

Another reads: "Weekly \$280.00."

Miss Ford said the mother must have delivered the baby into a motel trash can, which was filled with blood and still in the

room when police arrived.

"My cousin was with the girl," said Miss Ford, a mother of three. "She threw it over the balcony."

Miss Ford knew her cousin was staying at the motel but didn't know the woman he was with. She said she figured out what had happened after she and Miss Waldvogel found the newborn in the shrubs.

The balcony of the room where her cousin was staying was overhead.

Julius Fleischman, the motor lodge's owner, who had it built 35 years ago, said Miss Ford's cousin had been coming to the motel all week and had checked in Wednesday night and paid for another night yesterday shortly before 11 a.m.

Neither police nor Miss Ford would release the man's name. Cpl. Beam says the 40-year-old man was questioned by county police but was then turned over to the Sheriff's Department because he's wanted on an outstanding traffic warrant. He was unsure if the man is the baby's father.

Miss Waldvogel, 50, of Dunkirk, said she was happy the maintenance worker kept a grip on Max, because she feared the dog would have attacked the baby, because he killed a couple of kittens last week.

"It was the hardest thing I ever did was open that [bag]," said a visibly shaken Miss Waldvogel, who has managed the motor lodge for about 18 months.

"To me that little baby is going to be a crack baby," she said. "How do you start your life in that situation?"