

Apology sought for teens - Supporters say duo face public scorn because police haven't acknowledged mistakenly accusing them of killing woman.

Detroit News, The (MI) - Friday, September 7, 2007

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TAYLOR -- A small but vocal group of protesters called **for** a public **apology** Thursday on behalf of two black teenagers accused -- and later released -- in the murder of Wendy Meinke, a mother of six.

About 15 supporters of Franklin Smith and Devin Plummer chanted "They are innocent" and "Say you're sorry" while holding signs that read "Black Men are human too" during the hour-long gathering outside the police station along Goddard Road.

Family spokesman Adolph Mongo said the outcry is necessary because the two young men continue to face public scrutiny as accused killers because the police have neither acknowledged their mistake, nor caught a killer.

"Until they catch somebody, they will have a dark cloud over them," said Mongo, who led similar protests that spurred the young men's freedom Aug. 15. "We want an **apology** from Taylor **for** traumatizing these young men. This is something they'll never forget. Their lives have been changed."

Smith, 18, and Plummer, 17, were freed Aug. 15 by District Judge William J. Sutherland after Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy agreed to drop the charges. Ballistics tests showed no traces of gunpowder on Plummer the night of the shooting.

Police alleged Plummer was one of at least two people to fire at Meinke, 37, who came to the aid of her son during a fight at the Coppertree Apartments. Smith was charged with driving the getaway car.

A 14-year-old, who was never officially charged, was also released. Jujuan Earl Willis, 22, of Detroit is jailed on two counts of felony assault with intent to murder in the fracas. A preliminary exam is set **for** Sept. 20.

The dismissal came after nearly 50 protesters accused the Taylor police force, which has no African-American officers, of railroading the pair, who have no criminal records.

"It's been a devastating experience **for** all of us," said Gwen Johnson, mother of Smith, who said he has enrolled at Columbus State College in Ohio. He will start school Sept. 19, she said.

"While they are out here in the public, they are being pointed out as murderers. (An **apology**) will change the way the public looks at these boys."

Taylor Police issued a release Thursday afternoon reiterating officers handled the case appropriately. They would not comment any further.

"There were no inappropriate actions taken by either the Taylor Police Department or the Wayne County Prosecutor's office," the release said.

Caption: Meinke

Section: Metro

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Company Name: #keywords2#

Index Terms: BLACKS ; YOUTH ; ARRESTS ; MISTAKES ; POLICE

Dateline: TAYLOR

Record Number: det30759528

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