

## OAK PARK: DETAILS EMERGE IN OFFICER'S DEATH - DETECTIVE'S STATEMENT QUOTES A TEEN WITNESS

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Saturday, January 10, 2009

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A 15-year-old girl told police she saw the Detroit teen accused of fatally shooting an Oak Park officer last month standing over the officer while holding a gun "with smoke still coming from the barrel."

The teen ran out of the building, she said.

A recording of a sworn statement by an Oak Park detective released to the Free Press on Friday reveals new details in the shooting of Oak Park Officer Mason Samborski.

**Jonathan Belton**, 16, has been charged with first-degree murder and murder of a peace officer in Samborski's death. **Belton** is to be back in court Wednesday, with a preliminary examination scheduled for Friday.

If convicted, he faces life in prison.

**Belton**'s attorney did not return a call for comment Friday. Oak Park Public Safety Director John McNeilance and officials at the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office also wouldn't comment on the case.

"We want to keep the case as pristine as possible," said Paul Walton, acting deputy chief prosecutor and the new chief of the warrants division for the prosecutor's office.

Police have said that early on Dec. 28, Samborski, 28, of Howell stopped the teen, who didn't have a driver's license, then took him to the Rue Versailles apartment complex with the intention of turning him over to an adult.

In a recording of the hearing on Jan. 1, Detective Jason Ginopolis said that some time around 12:30 a.m., Samborski radioed dispatch, requesting assistance. It's unclear at what point during the sequence of events that call was made.

Ginopolis said the girl told police that **Belton** called her, saying he was in a patrol car. The girl, identified by police as **Belton**'s friend, said **Belton** told her she needed to cover for him when he and the officer arrived at her building on South Montmartre Court.

Here's what Ginopolis said happened next, according to what the girl told police:

Once they got to the building, Samborski asked the girl if her parents were home. She said no.

**Belton** said he would contact his mother, made a call on a cell phone and handed the phone to Samborski, who determined the person on the line wasn't **Belton**'s mom.

**Belton** ran into the building and Samborski followed.

At one point, they ended up tumbling down a flight of stairs, crashing into a window.

The girl told police she picked up the cell phone, which had fallen on the floor, and went back into her apartment. Then she heard a gunshot.

She looked out and said she saw **Belton** holding a gun. Samborski was shot in the head.

Ginopolis said Samborski's gun was missing and hadn't been recovered as of Jan. 1. McNeilance and Walton wouldn't comment Friday on whether the gun has been found.

The girl told police that, as Samborski lay on the carpeted floor in the building's vestibule, **Belton** ran off.

It was three minutes after Samborski called for assistance that a 9-1-1 call was transferred to Oak Park, saying an officer had been shot, Ginopolis said.

Within a minute, he said, police were on the scene, trying to revive Samborski. He was taken to Providence Hospital in Southfield and pronounced dead at 1:25 a.m.

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo

CAPTION: Oak Park Officer Mason Samborski, left, died Dec. 28. **Jonathan Belton** is accused of shooting him.

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Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS; NEWS

Page: 3A

Index Terms: homicide; shooting; officer victim; Mason Samborski; Oak Park Police

Department; suspect; juvenile; Jonathan Belton

Record Number: dfp0000667760

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