

SUSPECT IN COP-KILLING HAS A TROUBLED HISTORY

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Author: SUZETTE HACKNEY and JACK KRESNAK FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS; Staff writers Jim Schaefer and Joe Swickard contributed to this report.

Jason Pinson, accused of killing Police Officer Shynelle Mason, was known around his Detroit neighborhood for having a short fuse that often led him into arguments and street fights with family and friends, police say.

He drifted in and out of legal trouble, police and court records show, and he often received breaks in court when charges were reduced or dismissed.

At 14, he hid a sawed-off shotgun in his grandmother's basement, court records show. After he accidentally fired the weapon, leaving a large hole in the wooden floor tiles, his grandmother called officers from the 2nd (Schaefer) Precinct for help, telling them she feared for her life and begging them to take **Pinson** away.

Seven years later, at age 21, **Pinson** is charged with killing Mason -- who worked in that precinct.

Pinson was arraigned Monday in 36th District Court on charges of open murder, assault with intent to murder, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and committing a felony with a firearm. If convicted, he faces life in prison.

Police and prosecutors said he gunned down Mason on Friday evening at a Mobil station at Fenkell and Schaefer. He shot at Mason and her companions at least eight times after an argument, during which she had identified herself as a cop, police said.

Three other people were arraigned on charges of being an accessory after the fact. They are Darryl Dirrell, 21, Armelda Noel, 36, and Darryl Patton, 19, all of Detroit. They each face five years in prison and \$10,000 fines if convicted.

Police said Noel, **Pinson**'s aunt, and his cousin, Patton, helped hide evidence -- including the gun used to shoot Mason -- and harbored **Pinson**. In addition, police said, Dirrell helped wipe Mason's fingerprints from the car **Pinson** was driving.

On his way to court Monday, as homicide detectives stuffed him into a police car, Dirrell said he was not guilty: "I'm innocent. I didn't know nothing about it. I'm innocent."

At Noel's home, a family friend who would not give her name said, "She's not guilty of anything."

Shirley Dirrell said her son was only acquainted with **Pinson** and was at the wrong place at the wrong time. She said she is convinced he didn't commit a crime.

Surrounded by family members at her home on Detroit's west side, she described her son as a

devoted father of a 9-month-old son who has not had previous brushes with the law.

Karen Dirrell, his aunt from Flint, added, "The last thing he told me when I saw him is, 'I'm just trying to work hard and take care of my baby.' "

Paula Davis, **Pinson** 's aunt, said that although her nephew has had brushes with the law, he is "a good person."

She said the last decade has been particularly difficult for **Pinson** because of the deaths of his mother, brother, grandfather and an uncle. Nine years ago, an uncle he was close to was shot dead. That was followed by the death of his mother in a car accident eight years ago. He also lost a brother and his grandfather. That has been hard on him, she said.

Pinson lived with his girlfriend and their 2-year-old child at his grandmother's. His girlfriend would not give her name, but said **Pinson** is not the kind of person who would shoot someone in cold blood.

Davis said he had to have been defending himself. She and other family complained bitterly about police officers ransacking the grandmother's house Sunday.

Pinson remained silent as he was led from police headquarters to court in socks and with a newly shaved head; police said he had tried to disguise his identity. He will remain in the Wayne County Jail while awaiting a July 31 preliminary examination on the charges. Dirrell, Noel and Patton were each given a 10-percent bond of \$150,000 by Magistrate Margaret Baylor.

According to court records based on homicide reports, **Pinson** and Mason argued at the gas station before he pulled a gun, shot her and fled in a beige Ford Tempo.

Police say **Pinson** and two friends were blocking a car that Mason was in at the station. When **Pinson** was asked to move his car, the records said, he yelled, "Are you asking us or telling us?"

Mason then got out of the car, police said, identified herself as a Detroit police officer and asked, "What did you say?"

Pinson called Mason two vulgar names, the records show, then fired at her.

Pinson has an extensive record in juvenile court, but most charges filed against him were dismissed.

In September 1993, **Pinson** 's grandmother, Leslie Noel, made the call seeking help after **Pinson** fired the shotgun. When officers responded to her house on Snowden, the grandmother said she wanted him out of her house "because she fears for her safety," according to a petition filed in Wayne County Juvenile Court, now known as Family Court.

In December 1993, Cooley High School security officers detained **Pinson** as an unauthorized person in the building, court records show. The petition in that case was dismissed.

In September 1994, **Pinson** was arrested at home after a fight with his then-17-year-old sister. She told police he pushed her into a china cabinet, breaking it and cutting her arm. The petition in that case also was dismissed.

And then in March 1995, **Pinson** was arrested on suspicion of stealing a car after leading police on a high-speed chase. Records from the case show that he was racing down streets in the area of Fenkell and Steel, blowing past one stop sign while driving at least 55 m.p.h.

He abandoned the car, the records show, and police tracked him to his grandmother's house. He was charged with auto theft, receiving and concealing stolen property over \$100, fleeing and eluding police, motor vehicle felony and driving without a valid driver's license.

All the charges except one were dropped in return for his guilty plea to receiving and concealing stolen property. He was convicted in January 1996 and placed on probation by family court referee Catherine Gardner.

In October 1995, **Pinson** was arrested again for attempting to receive and conceal stolen property worth over \$100. Recorder's Court Judge Dalton Roberson sentenced him to two years' probation after he pleaded guilty.

On Oct. 2, 1999, **Pinson** signed a vow of nonviolence through the 36th District Court Handgun Intervention Program as part of his probation. The vow states, "Guns and violence will kill our people! Therefore I claim my heritage as a leader and disavow gun violence." Judge Willie Lipscomb Jr., the program administrator, was a witness.

Pinson was placed in a program through the Holmes Youthful Trainee Act, which allows a defendant's record to be wiped clean upon successful completion of the program. However, that agreement was revoked after **Pinson** was charged last year with three counts of carrying a concealed weapon.

In that case, **Pinson** pleaded guilty to one count. Wayne County Circuit Judge Gershwin Drain dismissed the other charges. **Pinson** was given two years' probation, which he was serving at the time of Mason's killing.

Contact SUZETTE HACKNEY at 313-222-6672 or hackney@freepress.com. Staff writers Jim Schaefer and Joe Swickard contributed to this report.

FUNERAL SERVICES

Detroit police announced funeral arrangements Monday for slain officer Shynelle Mason.

Visitation will be from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday at Thompson Funeral Home, Greenfield Chapel, 15443 Greenfield in Detroit. On Thursday, there will be a family hour at 10:30 a.m. at Greater Grace Temple, 19161 Schaefer at Seven Mile in Detroit.

The funeral will follow at 11 a.m. at the church. Mason will be buried after the service in Beechwood United Memorial Garden on Curtis Road in Plymouth.

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Caption: Photo

Jason Pinson

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