

## **TEEN FULFILLED OWN DEATH WISH FRIEND'S CONFESSION CLOSES SHELTON CASE, COP SAYS**

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Author: JACK KRESNAK Free Press Staff Writer; Staff writers ARIANA E. CHA and SUZANNE SIEGEL contributed to this report

Lorenzo Shelton III was killed because he wanted to be killed.

Shelton, the 18-year-old who police say killed his girlfriend and two other girls in a marijuana-enhanced rage, asked his best friend to do him a favor and shoot him, a Detroit police official said Tuesday evening on condition of anonymity.

The official said the 17-year-old suspect, who confessed late Tuesday, could be charged as early as today. The official said there still are loose ends to tie up, such as who beat Shelton before he was killed, and why. But he said the killer has been found.

"Case closed," the official said of the tragic chain of events that began Sunday morning with a hail of shotgun blasts and then sharper pistol shots that ended the lives of Mindee Kalka, 14, Aleisha Belcher, 15, and Rachelle Goodwin, 17.

Although gang activity had been blamed for the senseless killings of the three Lincoln Park girls, "There was no gang involvement at all. It had nothing to do with gangs," the official said.

Shelton claimed that members of a southwest Detroit gang had driven up to his mother's house on Waterman Avenue and unleashed a fusillade that was meant for him but killed the girls.

According to Squad Six homicide detectives, Shelton, the girls and two male friends had been smoking marijuana in Shelton's home. Shelton grew angry about Kalka's assertion that she was probably pregnant with his child.

As the girls were leaving around 4 a.m., Shelton fired at them, the official said. Shelton and the two friends, stuck by the story of a drive-by shooting under questioning on Sunday and police released them.

Detectives had their doubts about the story, but letting the youths leave police headquarters thinking they had gotten away with lying followed a common investigative technique.

The technique allows police to use the false statements later in court because they are not protected under the Miranda rule. Since the youths were not technically suspects -- as shown by their freedom to leave headquarters -- there was no need to give them the standard Miranda warnings about anything they say being used against them in court.

Shelton had a long history of emotional, psychological and criminal troubles.

He began attempting suicide at age 10. At 13, he threatened a teacher with a knife, for which he got probation to Wayne County Juvenile Court. By 15, he was stealing cars and selling them to a chop shop that turned out to be an undercover FBI sting.

At home, Shelton often was incorrigible, rude and surly. His father kicked him out and told authorities that his son "glorifies street hustlers, crooks and hoodlums."

Shelton claimed to be a member of gangs, although police think he mostly pretended.

At Western High School, where Shelton was a junior, he told classmates he was an American Indian and had spent his summers at a reservation. Actually his mother is white and his father is black.

Shelton's absence from school was due to a 14-month stay in Oakland County's Children's Village after he had held Oak Park police at bay for 10 hours and tried to commit suicide with a gun.

His hands shaking, Shelton said he couldn't do it, and the gun went off. The bullet nearly struck a police officer.

With an appeal on technical grounds delaying his trial, Shelton's mother, Virginia, mortgaged her home to bond her son out of Children's Village a year ago.

Since then, Shelton did A- and B-grade work at Western.

"He was smart -- and aggressive," said 17-year-old Kianna Coleman who did a history project with Shelton. "It seemed like he was going places."

But Shelton stopped going to school about three weeks ago.

Shelton's best friend, whose name has not been released, was detained at about 10 p.m. Sunday while police searched for Shelton, who had been released from police headquarters a few hours earlier. Detectives let the friend go sometime after midnight.

Detectives have determined that Shelton was killed about an hour before his best friend was picked up.

"He was nervous," said another police official of the best friend. "He wasn't giving up anything, and everywhere he took the police was dry."

The official said the suspect had lived with Shelton up until two weeks before the triple murders.

At 10 a.m. Monday, in a deserted section of Patton Park, a homeless man stumbled across Shelton's body. He'd been shot and was still clutching the Indian head nickel he kept as a good luck charm.

Under questioning Tuesday evening, the friend told police that he had shot Shelton for just one reason:

Shelton wanted help committing suicide.

Staff writers Ariana E. Cha and Suzanne Siegel contributed to this report.

Caption: Photo

Lorenzo Shelton III \*\*\*

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