

## **OAK PARK: TEEN, OFFICER TESTIFY IN FATAL SHOOTING - DETROITER'S EXAM TO CONTINUE FEB. 5**

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A teenage girl testified Thursday that her friend - a teen accused of fatally shooting an Oak Park officer in her apartment building - called her just minutes after the shooting.

He said, "I'm sorry for what I did," after running away from the Rue Versailles apartment complex, the 15-year-old girl testified in Oak Park's 45B District Court during the preliminary exam for **Jonathan Belton**, 16, of Detroit. He is charged with first-degree murder and murder of a peace officer in the killing Officer Mason Samborski on Dec. 28.

The preliminary exam is to continue Feb. 5.

The Free Press previously reported and the girl testified that after she heard the gunshot, she entered the hallway from her apartment and saw **Belton** holding a gun and standing over Samborski's body. The girl said she told **Belton** in a phone conversation that she didn't see him shoot Samborski.

"And he told me, 'OK, that's good,' " the girl said.

Also Thursday, the first officer at the scene, Eric Washington, who lives in the building, testified he heard a struggle unfold near his apartment and said he saw a young man who resembled **Belton** at the building after the shooting.

**Belton**'s family didn't comment after the hearing, but released a statement which said that the teen volunteers at his family's church, was born to childhood sweethearts and "has never been in a gang or used a gun."

"Many people have been drawing their conclusions about **Jonathan**'s guilt or innocence through news reports," the statement said. "Our son is not a criminal nor does he have disdain for law enforcement."

The girl testified that she and **Belton** had been hanging out in the evening Dec. 27. She said that just after midnight Dec. 28, **Belton** called her from the back of Samborski's patrol car and said the officer was bringing him to her apartment.

In a hushed voice, **Belton** told her to "play as his big sister," she said. But the girl testified that once she told Samborski that no adults were home, the officer told her to call her mother. **Belton** also called his sister, she said. But, soon after they arrived at the complex, Samborski realized that **Belton** didn't live there, she said.

" **Jonathan** said that he didn't want to go to jail," the girl testified. Samborski "asked was **Jonathan** getting smart with him and **Jonathan** said, 'No.' "

She said **Belton** ran into the building and up a flight of stairs, Samborski followed and the two ended up wrestling and tumbling down the stairs.

Then she and resident Washington, who had heard the struggle outside of his second-floor apartment, heard the gunshot.

Oak Park Officer Scott Dichtel testified Thursday that he was at the apartment complex on a malicious destruction of property investigation when Samborski radioed for help.

"It sounded like he was in distress and he was involved in a struggle," said Dichtel, who took off on foot to look for Samborski because Dichtel's patrol car was too far away.

He found Samborski lying in the hallway of the building on South Montmartre Court, shot once in the head.

The building was locked.

"I had to kick out the glass" of the door to get in with the help of another officer, Dichtel testified.

He tried to administer CPR to Samborski, but couldn't stop the bleeding coming from his head. A spent bullet was found behind Samborski's head and his gun was missing from its holster.

Dichtel said that officers have discretion in who they arrest, but the policy is to take minors driving without licenses "to the station and release them to an adult."

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo

CAPTION: **Jonathan Belton** , 16, is charged in the death of Officer Mason Samborski on Dec. 28.

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