

MOM HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO BIKE AT NIGHT

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Who rides a **bike** along Woodward Avenue near 12 Mile **at** 1:30 a.m.?

That question arose on blogs, message boards and e-mails in the past several days since the Free Press reported Friday on the ghost **bike** memorial that someone anonymously placed **at** Linwood and Woodward in Royal Oak to commemorate the hit-and-run death Sept. 19 of Jacqueline Robinson, 40, of Detroit.

The answer: a single **mom** raising two kids. With **no** car, she commuted by **bike** from southwest Detroit to Royal Oak to care for a 92-year-old man.

Friends and family members describe Jackie Robinson as a fighter who **had** battled adversity and was working hard for her two boys, Bruce, 13, and Keith, 11.

"She was a good person," said Heather Weeks, a cousin. "She would give you the shirt off her back."

Royal Oak police say Robinson was struck while riding northbound on Woodward a few blocks south of 12 Mile and was dragged about 100 feet. They are searching for a 2008 white Jeep Liberty.

Family members said medical personnel reported Robinson suffered massive internal injuries and multiple broken bones in her chest. Friends say she was about 4-foot-11 and weighed around 100 pounds.

"Someone left her on the side of the road like a pile of garbage," said Weeks. "What kind of a person can do that?"

Robinson grew up in Dearborn and **had** a relatively uneventful life until she **had** trouble overcoming a bitter divorce and custody battle over two children who are now grown. She encountered financial problems.

She **had** the two younger boys in another relationship, and lived with them and her mother near Livernois and McGraw in Detroit.

"She loved them dearly," Weeks said.

She **had no** car, so she depended on two wheels to get around, just like many adults in Detroit neighborhoods.

"Whenever you saw her, she was on a **bike** ," said Lena Rice, another cousin.

She rode the **bike** to the Royal Oak home of the elderly man for whom she cared. She **had** a room **at** the house, and sometimes stayed overnight, **but** she thought nothing of making the commute day or **night** .

Those who know Robinson aren't sure what route she took, **but** assuming Robinson traveled north on Livernois to Oakland County, her trip to the man's home would have been **at** least 13 miles, one way. Riding a **bike** on multilane Woodward north of 8 Mile can be harrowing: The speed limit in Royal Oak is 45, and an average of about 75,000 vehicles pass 12 Mile every day.

The man Robinson cared for, who could not be reached for comment, came to Robinson's funeral Thursday. Crying, he told family members: "I lost a good friend."

Police and family members aren't sure why Robinson was riding north on Woodward when she was hit. She told her mother in a call earlier that she would be coming home, which would have meant traveling south.

"Her **mom had** told her she didn't like her riding her **bike** out late," Weeks said. "She told her 'Just be careful.' "

Deputy Chief Chris Jahnke said Monday that Royal Oak police are looking for any witnesses, or people who might have noticed a neighbor who hasn't been driving a late-model white Jeep Liberty lately.

"We'll get him, **but** we need help," Jahnke said.

Said Weeks: "Those two little boys are suffering. She was a good mother to them."

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo

CAPTION: Jacqueline Robinson of Detroit was killed on Woodward. She didn't have a car to get to work.

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