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Teen faces murder charge in Lathrup shooting

By Pat Murphy
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Police arrested a 15-year-old from Southfield in connection with the shooting death of the pregnant manager of a Lathrup Village restaurant on the night of Oct. 15.

The suspect, identified as Jerome Adam Hamilton, who is charged with first-degree murder in the death of Catherine Marie Solinski-Blain, 21, as she was sitting in her vehicle about 10:45 p.m., after she had closed the Rib Rack Restaurant where she worked.

Hamilton stood mute when arraigned Saturday and a plea of not guilty was entered on his behalf. He was scheduled for a pre-examination conference at 8:30 p.m. on Dec. 3. In addition to premeditated murder, he is charged with using a firearm while committing a felony.

The teen was confined at the Oakland County Children's Village. His attorney, Elbert Hatchett, could not be reached for comment Monday.

More arrests are expected said Lathrup Village Police Chief Robert Jones and Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard in a press conference Monday. They declined to say how many more arrests are likely, and they repeatedly declined to give details about the murder or the arrest.

Saying he did not want to risk jeopardizing their court case, Jones and Bouchard also declined to comment when asked if Hamilton had worked at the restaurant or he knew anyone working there, including the victim.

"Robbery has not been ruled out as a motive," Jones said, though police previously discounted robbery as a likely motive.

Hamilton's arrest was attributed to tips from the public and cooperative police work between Lathrup Village, Southfield and the sheriff's department. Although police believe they have the person who fired the shot, Bouchard said investigators are still hopeful anyone with information about the crime will contact police.

Asked about the sheriff's role in the investigation, Bouchard said his department provided crime scene investigation immediately and additional personnel when later asked for assistance. "Lathrup Village has some great officers," he said, "but there just aren't enough of them."

While gratified by the arrest of a suspect, Bouchard said having the likely killer in custody will provide little comfort to the family of Solinski-Blain, who had recently been married. "There is still a family about to go through the holidays without a loved one," he said.

Solinski-Blain was sitting in her vehicle with the motor running, according to police reports, when she was approached. She was shot once, after which her vehicle rolled against a fence and remained there until neighbors called police. Nothing was reported missing from the vehicle.