

# Police kill father of 5, stir protest

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p.m. Friday by a plainclothes officer, John Shuell, who had stopped Solomons' son Alvin, 22, as an armed robbery suspect.

Alvin Solomons, who had no police record, was released yesterday after a police lineup.

Areeda, head of Western Operations, said the Shuell and a partner, also undercover, were asking Alvin Solomons to identify himself when they saw what turned out to be a pellet gun in his waistband.

POLICE SAID THAT the two officers had been in an unmarked blue Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme, following the son and a woman friend when he parked in front of his home on Strathmoor.

Police and neighbors both said the undercover officers approached Alvin Solomons. But from there on, the accounts of what happened differ.

Areeda, whose command encompasses Detroit's west side, said Shuell, who is white, and his partner, Richard Nixon, who is black, spotted what they thought was a .45-caliber revolver when Alvin Solomons reached for his wallet. They two officers, who had identified themselves, Areeda said, slammed the young man against their car and were handcuffing him when the father appeared at the front door, armed with a handgun.

"They shouted they were police officers and waved their badges," Areeda claimed. When the father fired his gun, Areeda, Shuell fired back.

AREEDA SAID the two officers, as part of a surveillance team investigating recent car stickups and rapes, report directly to him.

Ray Frank, an officer in the Homicide Section's special assignment unit, said that "all circumstances" of the shooting are under investigation. Frank said he "had reason to believe" that the officers identified themselves.

But neighborhood witnesses said the undercover officers — dressed in tattered hippie clothing — failed to identify themselves as police and started wrestling with Alvin Solomons.

Joseph Solomons' niece, Barbara Pennington, 25, said the elder Solomons was preparing to go shopping at the request of his wife, Charlotte, when he suddenly looked out of the window and yelled:

"They've got my baby. They've got my baby."

IT WAS THEN, they said, that Joseph Solomons ran out of his front door and fired shots at Shuell and his partner.

Joseph Solomons' relatives — Miss Pennington and Charles, 24, his son said the elder Solomons was carrying a .22-caliber pistol but insisted he never fired it.

Miss Pennington and Charles Solomons described Joseph Solomons as "a humble, nonviolent" type of person who would have halted had he

known that his son was involved with police officers — and not just two men beating him up.

"My brother started yelling for my father," said Charles. "My father looked out and, quite naturally, if you see a white man choking a black kid, you react."

"My father never hurt anyone in his life but they didn't holler police, halt, or anything. I was on my way out of the door behind my father. When he fell over (shot), I came out to rescue him and another policeman told me if I make another move he'd blow my (blank) head off."

WHEN THE SHOOTING started, a next-door neighbor, Henry Harris — an off-duty police officer and Joseph Solomons' close friend — sprang into action. Harris' wife, Margaret, said he raced from their home shouting: "Police!" She said he was too late to aid Joseph Solomons, who lay in the driveway dying. Police said he was shot "several times" in the chest.

Later, Mrs. Harris said, Joseph Solomons' wife, Charlotte, told her that her husband had grabbed the gun and had run out to help, shouting: "Two white men got Alvin!" According to Mrs. Harris, Mrs. Solomons said that by the time she had walk-

ed to the window, her husband already lay in the driveway.

Joseph Solomons' relatives said he lay there for 15 to 20 minutes until an ambulance arrived. During this period, the relatives insisted, police rendered no assistance to Solomons and told the family, at gunpoint, to return to the house.

AREEDA SAID TAPES show that the two officers called for Emergency Medical Service "within seconds" of the shooting.

"When EMS is busy and can't immediately respond, that's not the Police Department's fault," said Areeda. "Police do not run the EMS. The two departments are separate."

Insp. Gilbert Hill of the Detroit Homicide Section said several uniformed officers were later dispatched to the scene. He also said that Alvin Solomons knew the two undercover officers were police and that he sent his girl friend to get his father.

Joseph Solomons, an employe of the Peerless Cement Co. and a part-time worker for a custodian service, was described by neighbors as the peacemaker of the neighborhood. Most said he was "churchgoing, warm and hardworking."



NEWS PHOTO / CHARLES V. TIMES

Charles Solomons (left), son of slain man, expresses feelings.

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