

## Charges from page A1

John Santomauro said. "Simply put, he murdered that 8-year-old child."

Moffitt's passenger, Joseph Respondek, 43, of Detroit, pleaded not guilty to felony larceny and obstructing police. The two were riding in a 1988 Chevy flatbed pickup truck, which had been reported stolen from Redford Township in November.

Santomauro said in a Tuesday press conference Respondek and Moffitt, along with two other men, had spent the day using heroin and cocaine. Upon depleting their drug supply they needed cash to buy more drugs and headed to a residential construction site, and were caught in the process of stealing roofing shingles, Santomauro said.

Suspects in one of the vehicles, Joseph Foreman, 54, of Farmington Hills, and Virgil Cagle, 47, of Detroit, were both taken into custody without incident. They were arraigned Tuesday on felony larceny and obstructing police, and misdemeanor larceny charges respectively.

Both men pleaded not guilty. All four defendants were remanded to the Wayne County Jail pending a Feb. 26 preliminary examination in 36th District Court. Moffitt is being held without bond, and the other three are being held on a \$10,000 cash bond.

Police said the chase on Cherry Hill reached speeds as high as 70 mph in a 40 mph zone. The flatbed truck ran through at least seven red lights.

At Cherry Hill and Venoy, the truck barreled through a red light and was struck by a 1999 Chevy S-10 pickup truck that was traveling south on Venoy, Westland police Officer Tom Lessnau said.

Travis was a passenger in that S-10, which was driven by neighbor and longtime family friend, 25-year-old Michele Burgess. The impact of the collision spun the Chevy S-10 into the westbound lanes of Cherry Hill where it came to rest, Lessnau said. The flatbed truck slid sideways and rolled over and landed

upright in the driveway of Tourmain's Pizza, he said.

Moffitt's vehicle then accelerated, the wheels spun and it took off north across the east and west lanes of Cherry Hill, where it struck the Chevy S-10 again, Lessnau said.

Moffitt's truck rammed into Burgess' vehicle, hitting it broadside on the passenger side where Miles was riding, Lessnau said. Miles was declared dead at the scene. Burgess was transported to Ann Arbor Hospital in Wayne, where she was treated and released the next morning.

Moffitt was admitted to Saint Joseph Hospital for his injuries. Santomauro said the charges "send a very clear message that this person (Moffitt) is responsible for, and his actions directly caused, this death."

Mike Dugan, Wayne County prosecutor, said if the police had not pursued, and Moffitt had simply driven away, desperate for cash, he could have just as likely tried to rob a convenience store and shot the clerk. (Moffitt was not armed.)

Santomauro said an internal investigation supported the officer's decision to pursue and his compliance with the department's guidelines.

## Law could create uniform chase policy

By JON HUBERT  
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Police officers in the majority of police departments across the state are trained to handle the kind of high-speed chase that killed an 8-year-old Garden City boy Saturday, according to Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police President Bill Dwyer.

However, legislation will be proposed in the next few days that would offer all communities a model policy that Sen. William Van Regenmorter, R-Hudsonville, chairman of the Senate Judiciary committee, believes will better protect both residents and police officers.

Dwyer, who serves as chief in Farmington Hills, couldn't say all departments have policies about high-speed chases, but he believes most do.

"There probably are some general standards that have been established," he said. "Our order would probably mirror that in other departments."

The Hills' general policy allows

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## Tragedy from page A1

Wing in the making and was buried in a St. Ignace cemetery.

A third-grader at Memorial Elementary School, Travis was "a kind, considerate and very loving little boy who would do anything for his best buddy," Robby Spellman, said Principal Mary Horner.

Students in Travis' third-grade class heard about the tragedy from their parents, who had been contacted by Horner or their teacher, Linda Wasil.

The district also had six psychologists at the building Monday to meet with the staff before school and work with the children. Horner anticipated that they would be at the school all week.

"Our main concern is dealing with the children, making sure they feel safe. Even the staff comes second today," said Horner. "Travis has been here since kindergarten. He's one of our Memorial kids."

Students have made cards for the family and a bus was available to take those classmates who wanted to attend the service at the funeral home.

"We're thinking of what else we can do to comfort them," Horner said. "The family is just

devastated."

The family said the community's response to what has happened is more than they ever expected. They can't believe how their family and friends and even strangers have pulled together to help.

A flower shop donated the flowers for the funeral. Kinko's donated its printing services and Dr. James Armstrong of Garden City Hospital called the family Monday to tell them he would pay for the funeral.

Armstrong had performed an appendectomy on Travis two weeks ago and was moved by the family's plea for financial assistance in wake of the accident.

"I can't thank him enough," said Miles. "It shows how a community can come together. It's too bad it had to be because something like this happened."

Travis is survived by his parents, Donald and Cheryl Miles; and Roxanne and Michael Dowd; brothers, Shawn Layton, Michael Dowd Jr., and Drew; Colvin; sister, Marianne Dowd; and grandparents W. Michael Miles, Ronald and Gail Truesdell, Rolland and Irene Carraway and Michael and Marjorie Dowd.

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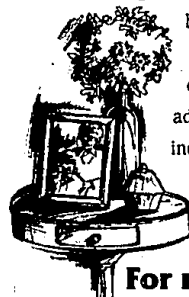
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