

# Court witnesses recount duck's fate

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

A witness to a duck's decapitation recalled feeding the animal only a few minutes before two men killed it.

Independence Green Apartment resident Brian Tabaka said 15-20 birds had congregated at his door when he noticed three men walking around the complex before the incident late afternoon Sept. 1. Tabaka testified during preliminary examination testimony in 47th District Court Friday.

Judge Marla Parker bound Bradley Jon Woons of Grand Rapids and Michael Gregory Prasher of Ann Arbor - both 22 - over to Oakland Circuit Court where they'll be tried on one count each of animal cruelty. Both remain free on \$10,000 bond.

While Woons waived his exam, the attorney for the man identified in court as the one who swung the golf club down on the duck's neck proceeded with his hearing.

Tabaka testified the three men appeared at first to be looking for errant golf balls when he then saw one try to grab a duck.

"I heard the duck squawking for its life," Tabaka said. "I realized this was not a friendly interaction. They had intended to do harm."

"I yelled, 'Hey.' They picked up the duck and went out of my view."

When Tabaka went outside, he saw the animal flopping around with most of its head removed. He phoned police as a neighbor held one of the men.

"There was nothing wrong with that duck," Tabaka said. "I

was feeding that same duck only 10 to 15 minutes earlier."

Another witness said he saw three men crouched down feeding the animals. David Galvin described the duck being on its back when one man - whom he pointed out as being Prasher - swung the 6-iron club.

"I said, 'Oh, my God. Oh, my God ... They cut his head off,'" said Galvin, who ran outside and grabbed one of the men.

A third man, who was seen with both men during the attack but hasn't been charged, appeared ready to testify. However, after speaking with a court-appointed attorney, he declined.

Prasher's attorney, Lisa Kirsch-Satava, said she was "disappointed but not surprised" by his refusal to take the stand. Kirsch-Satava added she doesn't believe the third man will be charged.

She decided to proceed with

the preliminary exam as a matter of strategy.

"There's certain facts that these witnesses had knowledge of that needed to be put on the record," Kirsch-Satava said.

A few people outside the courtroom wondered what would prompt someone to maim and kill a defenseless animal.

Such attacks are not uncommon, said the president of an organization that looks out for the welfare of ducks and geese. Ducks and geese have had arrows shot through them and have been drowned.

"It's usually kids," said Debby Glascock, Friends of the Ducks & Geese president. "It's not these adults."

This case has drawn attention because horrified witnesses either saw the act or the aftermath, Glascock said.

One Independence Green resident who was at the scene doesn't believe the attention over a dead animal is overblown, especially compared to human tragedy such as abuse and murder.

"This leads to it," Kristi Pitts said outside the courtroom.



Court: Defendants Michael Gregory Prasher (left) and Bradley Jon Woons, who is with his attorney Robert Mirque, were ordered to stand trial Friday.

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