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Paper: Kansas City Star, The (MO)  
Title: Wounded teen-ager denies misdeed

Officer shot boy wielding BB

gun

Date: January 30, 2002

A 15-year-old boy, who was shot in the chin by a Kansas City police officer in December, has denied pointing a weapon at the officer. The weapon turned out to be a BB gun. The boy, whose name was not released because he is a juvenile, appeared in Jackson County Juvenile Court on Monday to face a charge of assault of a law enforcement officer.

The boy's attorney, John Picerno, said his client denied the charge. A trial was set for 10 a.m. March 5 and will be closed because the boy is a juvenile.

The incident occurred about 9:45 p.m. Dec. 30 in front of the boy's home near 25th Street and Jackson Avenue.

Police reports gave this account:

Two officers on patrol saw two youths on the southwest corner of the intersection. One officer said he saw one of the youths with a gun in his right hand. He said his partner got out of the patrol car and ran north along Jackson.

The officer who eventually shot the boy said he got out of the patrol car after he saw one of the youths try to conceal a handgun inside his jacket. As he followed the youths, the officer said he identified himself as a police officer and repeatedly told the youth to drop the gun.

The youth then turned with the gun in his right hand and pointed it at the officer's chest. The officer said he fired one shot. The boy needed 10 stitches to his chin.

The boy's family gave a different account. They said the boy had dropped the gun and was surrendering to police when the officer fired. Picerno said the BB gun had been found four to five feet behind the injured boy.

"If he dropped the gun when he was shot, it would have landed in front of him, not behind him," Picerno said.

He questioned the police version about the direction his client was facing when he was shot. Picerno said the trajectory of the bullet indicated his client was turning, not facing the officer.

Picerno also said it didn't make sense for someone to point a BB gun at a police officer.

"It defies logic," he said.

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