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Crash leaves cyclist dead, officer injured

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Article Text:

A bicyclist is dead and a Hammond Police officer injured after an accident on Thursday night caused by a Ponchatoula man who may have been under the influence of synthetic marijuana, law enforcement officials said Friday.

Around 8:30 p.m. Thursday, Officer Brad Core was assisting a motorist who had broken down in the left hand lane of East Thomas Street near the bridge on Morris Road push his car up onto a trailer. Core's police vehicle was parked in the road with his emergency lights on when a car driven by Carlos Mosley of Ponchatoula approached at what Police Chief Roddy Devall called "a high rate of speed" and struck the back and passenger's side of the cruiser.

"We're not sure if the bicyclist was just sitting on his bike watching or if he was riding, but he was in the vicinity and the driver hit him with the car," Devall said. "Officer Core is fine. He is bruised and shook up a little, but is okay."

The bicyclist, Jerome Fields, was pronounced dead at the scene. Police believe the 56-year-old man lived on Sun Lane in Hammond.

Core was also struck on his leg by the car. He and Mosley were taken to the hospital for injuries sustained in the accident, but were released Friday.

Core was helping a stranded motorist when his vehicle was hit, according to Spokesman Vince Giannobile.

"Somehow the officer was hit, but it scraped him," he said. "He was very lucky

Core's squad car was totaled. Officers are still investigating the incident.

"If (Mosley) will be charged, it will be next week, Monday or Tuesday," Devall said. "I do anticipate charges being filed, but at this point I don't know what the charges will be."

Mosley's public Facebook page hosted a recent post showing a photo of cigarillos and a packet of Black Magic Herbal Smoke, a synthetic marijuana that is legal, but is known to cause sweating, vomiting and even hallucinations in addition to the "high" similar to that of pot. The

accompanying caption read "This is what I'm smoking on" and was posted a few hours before the accident.

Mosley has since taken the post down.

A police spokesman said Mosley's blood was taken at the hospital to test for drugs and alcohol.

"He was traveling at a high rate of speed," Devall said. "That indicates he might have been under the influence of something."

Potential charges could range from a ticket, to vehicular homicide.

In the state of Louisiana, vehicular homicide is defined as the killing of a human being while operating a motor vehicle, or other means of conveyance, under the influence of alcohol and/or controlled substances. The minimum punishment is a fine of at least \$2,000 but not more than \$15,000 and 5–30 years in prison.

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