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'No pressure' not to file charges in FSU Bobo Wilson case

Sean Rossman, Tallahassee Democrat 6:29 p.m. EDT October 14, 2014



The father of the Florida State student whose scooter was stolen by FSU football player Jesus "Bobo" Wilson in June says the Tallahassee Police Department and FSU's Police Department did not pressure him or his son to not press charges against Wilson.

"There was no pressure on my son or on my side not to file charges," Gonzalo Bellini told the Democrat Monday. "They let (Wilson) go because he mentioned that the scooter had been lent to him."

Bellini's account appears to contradict what his son told The New York Times, which quoted the student as saying Wilson's status as a football player played a part in the police department's treatment of him.

The Times did not give the victim's name but said in email exchanges with the victim that Bellini's son said TPD officers told him Wilson wouldn't be arrested because he was a football player and they didn't want to ruin Wilson's record. The allegation was so strong that Tallahassee Police Chief Michael DeLeo opened an internal investigation on the case Friday, once the Times story was available online.

"The allegation that an officer might have tried to influence a citizen not to file charges in a possible felony theft is a serious allegation," said Officer David Northway, spokesman for TPD. "Due to the allegation in this case, that an officer acted inappropriately, the chief has requested an internal affairs investigation."

Bellini, who is now serving as a spokesman for his son, said an investigator working for attorney Tim Jansen shared her concerns with him over what could happen to Wilson's reputation should he be found guilty. Bellini's son did not wish to comment directly to the Democrat.

"An investigator hired by the lawyer, the attorney for Jesus Wilson, called me and tried to see if there was any way to solve this problem without it getting out of hand," Bellini said. "I feel that special steps were taken, I don't know by who or how, to resolve Jesus Wilson's problems faster than what it would usually be for someone involved with this."

Bellini said his son was never questioned about his mental state, as he's quoted saying in the New York Times story, which appeared in print on Sunday. Bellini believes that Wilson was treated differently because of his status as a football player.

Wilson was originally charged with grand theft of a motor vehicle, a felony, but later pleaded out to misdemeanor charges of petty theft and criminal mischief. He paid \$1,074 in restitution, will serve one year of probation and will complete 30 days of jail work camp after the football season.

It's not uncommon, according to Jansen, Wilson's attorney, for community service hours to be scheduled around a student's schedule. Jansen said he had no comment on the victim's allegations in the Times story since he never talked to him and that police charged his client with the most serious charge possible.

Bellini's son said he parked his scooter, valued at \$1,000, in front of the Love building along Atomic Way the morning of June 11, according to court documents. When he returned, the scooter was gone. Tallahassee Police officers stopped Wilson June 17 while he was driving the stolen scooter, which was damaged in multiple spots. Wilson said he borrowed the scooter from another student but couldn't provide any contact information for the student. A week later, Wilson didn't show up for an appointment to view a photo lineup. He emailed investigators to say he took the scooter and crashed it. Jansen said his client did not receive special treatment and said lesser charges were appropriate because Wilson had no criminal record.

"I knew he was a football player," Jansen said. "I knew he couldn't plead to a felony," which would have prevented him from playing football. "But I don't think anyone did anything special."

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