

## **Girl breaks silence on fatal beating rumors**

**PHILADELPHIA (AP) —** False rumors of a teen-age girl's rape led a mob of suburban youths on a rampage that ended with Edward Polec's beating death, police say.

The girl insists she never said she was raped.

Meanwhile, Philadelphia's police commissioner has announced he would place more supervisors in the department's radio room at least until it completes its investigation of the way operators handled incoming calls the night Polec, 16, was attacked.

The rape rumors have been cited as leading to the Nov. 11 attack on Polec on the steps of his Roman Catholic church as he tried to flee from teen-agers swinging baseball bats. He died the next morning with a fractured skull.

The girl from Abington in suburban Philadelphia broke the silence she had held since the beating in an interview published Monday in the Philadelphia Daily News. Her identity was withheld.

The girl said she and a friend had stopped at a fast-food restaurant a week before the attack. There they were accosted by youths from the Fox Chase section of Northeast Philadelphia, where Polec lived, she said.

“They were pushing us around,” she said. “There was a whole group of them. ... They were really mad when they found out we were from Abington. They were spitting on us. They threw soda inside my car. They were throwing stuff at the car.”

She did not explain what brought on the conflict or how she reacted.

She said she later told her friends about the incident but “I did not say anything about rape. People said, ‘you could have been raped.’ But I did not say anything about that.”

The rape rumor persisted, however — and became a major impetus for retaliation by a group of about 20 Abington-area teens, police said.

Three teen-agers have been arrested and charged with murder. Police have said two of the teens swung the bats that killed Polec and the third kicked him as he lay bleeding on the sidewalk.

More arrests remained possible as investigators analyzed interviews with witnesses.