

[http://jg-tc.com/news/article\\_010bc0c2-08c7-11e0-9bcd-001cc4c002e0.html](http://jg-tc.com/news/article_010bc0c2-08c7-11e0-9bcd-001cc4c002e0.html)

Charleston Journal Gazette and Times Courier

## Testimony describes Thomasson's emotions during police search

By [DAVE FOPAY, Staff Writer](#) JG-TC.com | Posted: Thursday, December 16, 2010 5:15 am

CHARLESTON - Jamie Thomasson never mentioned anything during his first interview with police about what could have injured Holden Jones enough to cause the trauma an autopsy revealed, a retired police officer testified Wednesday.

Thomasson said Holden fell out of bed and had been "acting funny" for a few days, perhaps because of an earlier fall, former Charleston police Detective Jerry Woods said. Woods was one of the officers who investigated the 2-year-old boy's death and he attended the autopsy, which revealed extensive injuries to Holden's brain, he said.

"At that point, the investigation clearly changed," Woods said. A case that had apparently been an accident turned into a homicide, he told the jury.

Thomasson, 32, is on trial on charges of first-degree murder and aggravated battery of a child. He's accused of injuring Holden, the son of Amy Bennett, his girlfriend at the time, while baby-sitting the boy at her apartment on Union Street in Charleston on June 21, 2009.

On Wednesday, Woods said when he interviewed Thomasson, he never said that he wrestled with Holden or that the boy hit his head except for when he fell out of bed. In another police interview of Thomasson after the autopsy took place, he added those details to his story about how Holden might have been injured, according to the prosecution.

Jurors saw a video recording of Woods' interview with Thomasson, during which Thomasson said Holden fell out of bed around 9 p.m. on June 20. The boy's arms were unusually stiff after the fall but relaxed after Thomasson held him for a while, he said.

Thomasson said he discovered that Holden had soiled his diaper around 1 a.m. on June 21, so he showered the boy and changed the diaper. He said he then went to sleep and woke around 7:30 a.m. and found that Holden wasn't breathing. Thomasson also said Holden had been taking a children's pain medicine because he hit his head while playing a few weeks earlier.

Also testifying Wednesday was a man who said he spoke with Thomasson a few hours after Holden was found dead and described him as angry and defiant. Joseph LaRue of Chicago said he was visiting his girlfriend, who lived in the same apartment building, and said he spoke with Thomasson outside the building while police searched the apartment.

"He wasn't acting like a kid just died on his watch," LaRue said of Thomasson, whom he described as "very animated" and "basically mad." Thomasson also referred to police and said "these (expletive) better not come and lock me up," LaRue also said.

He said Thomasson's behavior alternated between "laughing and joking around" to "how somebody would throw a temper tantrum." LaRue said he asked what happened to Holden, and Thomasson told him he was wrestling with the boy, who hit his head after Thomasson tossed him onto a couch.

During defense attorney Mark Wykoff's cross examination, LaRue said he didn't tell police about Thomasson's behavior and comments when they first questioned him later that day. He said officers only took his contact information and he gave them the account later.

Circuit Judge Teresa Righter sustained a prosecution objection to Wykoff's questions about LaRue's girlfriend possibly knowing a man who was a jail cellmate of Thomasson. Wykoff did get LaRue to say he heard stories from other people about what Thomasson might have said about what happened. The prosecution's list of possible witnesses includes jail inmates who reportedly heard Thomasson talking about injuring Holden.

Also, Coles County Coroner Ed Schniers testified that he ordered an autopsy and the pathologist who conducted it concluded Holden's injuries were because of child abuse, adding that he agreed with the finding. The pathologist is scheduled to testify later during the trial.

The trial is scheduled to continue today and is expected to end Friday.

Contact Dave Fopay at [dfopay@jg-tc.com](mailto:dfopay@jg-tc.com) or 238-6858.