

Teen 'driving too fast' Court records detail survivor's statement from crash Accused teen's lawyer disputes blood alcohol level

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A survivor of a crash that killed two people last week in Central Islip asked his friend to "chill out" because she was driving too fast while the group drank beer in the car, according to court documents.

In a statement given to a Suffolk detective from his hospital bed, Anthony Dormer, 25, said Taylor Nolte, 19, picked him up late on Jan. 28. With Nolte at the wheel, Dormer and three others spent several hours driving around, drinking beer.

Nolte lost control of her 1997 Lexus on a Central Islip street, went right through one tree and hit another. Kelly Mallazzo, 18, of Hauppauge, and Kenyen Gaskins, 23, of Central Islip, were killed. Nolte, Dormer, and another passenger were seriously injured.

"I had told Taylor to let me drive. I told her to chill out with her driving. She was driving too fast. I put my seat belt on. That's why I did not get hurt as bad as the rest," Dormer said in the statement to police.

Nolte's attorney said prosecutors allege her blood alcohol level was .09. The legal limit is .08. Michael Brown of Central Islip, called that alleged reading "borderline."

"The suggestion she had a BAC of .09 in a hospital bed hours after the accident doesn't necessarily suggest she was intoxicated at the time of the accident," Brown said, adding, "Taylor Nolte is extremely remorseful and is beside herself with the loss of these two young innocent people." At her first court appearance since the crash, Nolte walked gingerly into a Suffolk courtroom yesterday, a bruise over one eye. The high school senior now charged with misdemeanor drunken driving will likely face upgraded charges in light of the deaths.

Outside court, Nolte's uncle, David Arees, 56, of Centereach, said she had a fractured pelvis and other injuries. Nolte was raised by her mother and grandmother but moved in with Arees after her mother's death last June and her grandmother's hospitalization a month ago.

"She's a good person. She has a lot of goals. She wanted to do good things with her life and it looks like it's going to be a harder trip than we thought," he said.

Rosana Moran, 19, one of a several Nolte friends who attended the hearing, said she was also close with Mallazzo and others in the car. "She's not a mean person. She made a mistake," Moran said.

"Good people can do bad things and we just have to learn to forgive her," said another friend, Linda Velez, 20.

Arees said Nolte wanted to join the Marines as a member of the military police and had scored high on an military aptitude test. "The families that lost their children, our deepest sympathies and prayers go out to them," he said. "To lose a child, I can't imagine what they're going through."

Nolte pleaded not guilty at her arraignment on Monday. She was released from Southside Hospital on Tuesday and is being held in the Riverhead jail on \$100,000 bail.