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## **Rockiett says attack on Officer Davis was mistake**

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CEDAR RAPIDS -- Jose Rockiett said he panicked and lashed out on the night he devastated two families' lives.

A day after pleading guilty to the attack on police Officer Tim Davis that shook Cedar Rapids last March, Rockiett sat down for a jailhouse interview with The Gazette.

Rockiett, now 18, said he remembers a car whipping up beside him, the driver's door opening, and a man getting out.

"(The car) almost hit us. As soon as he got out, he was right up to my face," Rockiett said.

He said he punched the man between the eyes.

"I hit him once, I saw him start to fall and I ran," Rockiett said.

Davis suffered severe head injuries, probably from the combined trauma of the blow to his face and his head hitting the pavement. Surgeons inserted a titanium plate to protect his brain, and he has returned to limited office duty at the Police Department, but Davis may never fully recover. He and his wife Stephanie have two young sons.

Rockiett said he searches constantly for news of Davis' improvement and prays for the Davis family every day: "That he'll heal stronger, that he'll forgive me, that everything will go back to normal and even better than normal," Rockiett said. "I'm sorry. I couldn't care less about the jail time. All I want is forgiveness."

Under a plea agreement, Rockiett will likely be sentenced to a maximum of 25 years in prison, with prosecutors estimating he'll serve 15 years. The plea deal was fair, he said, considering the harm he caused and the amount of prison time he could have received.

The attack happened on March 29. Police were searching for Rockiett and two other teenagers in connection with two robberies. When an unmarked police car pulled up next to them at the corner of 16th Street and A Avenue NE, Rockiett insists he did not know officers were inside, and he did not see a badge or hear the word "police."

He said he knew what Davis' partner, Officer Tracy Brumbaugh, looked like, but didn't see her and didn't recognize Davis. Instead he saw a man jump out of the car that had pulled up quickly next to him.

"I believe if I would have seen her first, I would have stopped," Rockiett said.

Brumbaugh ran after one of the other teens, and Davis confronted Rockiett . Police later found Davis unconscious at the scene, and he spent hours in surgery at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City. Police have never released details of the assault. Davis does not remember what happened.

Rockiett was arrested the next day, and has been in jail since.

He said he moved from Chicago to Cedar Rapids at the age of 14 with his mother in 2005. After spending the winter months in 2008 and 2009 in San Diego with his father, who runs a tattoo shop there, Rockiett said he returned to Cedar Rapids at the beginning of March because his father's life was too chaotic.

He said he was studying at the Lincoln Learning Center through Kirkwood Community College at the time of the assault, and working part-time gutting flooded homes.

That night, he insists he did not rob anyone, but only witnessed two beatings and helped chase someone before Davis and Brumbaugh pulled up. He pleaded guilty, however, to two counts of second-degree robbery in addition to willful injury for the attack on Davis.

Police have never said whether Rockiett used a weapon to strike Davis, but

Rockiett said he used only his fist, only once, and regrets it profoundly.

Disturbingly, fellow inmates at the jail used to occasionally congratulate him for knocking down a police officer, he said.

"God doesn't want that," he said. "I don't want that. I don't want praise for that."

What happened was a horrifying mistake, he said, that he wishes were a dream he could wake up from. Sadly for him, and tragically for the Davises, it is not.