



Ivan Romero

# COLLISION HAS FRIENDS ASKING WHY AND HOW



Oscar Ramirez, 25, spoke of his friend Ivan Romero Olivares, 24, who was killed Friday in a collision with a police vehicle. "He was a great friend," Ramirez said. BRIAN PETERSON • briamp@startribune.com

- Those close to Ivan Romero Olivares have questions after he died in a crash with a police SUV.

By MATT MCKINNEY • mckinney@startribune.com

Riding his motorcycle down Blaisdell Avenue S. in Minneapolis on Friday, his girlfriend seated behind him, Ivan Romero Olivares had money in his pocket and a plan: it was Mother's Day in Mexico, and he was on his way to wire cash to his mother before calling.

In a split second, everything changed for the 24-year-old baker, who was widely known as Ivan Romero. A police SUV rushing along W. 26th Street to a deadly shooting in Uptown pulled across Blaisdell. Romero

struck the rear passenger side of the vehicle and flew off the Yamaha, landing on the pavement. He died instantly, according to an autopsy report issued Tuesday. His girlfriend, Joselin Torrejon-Villamil, survived.

The deadly chain of events has shaken Romero's friends, including Oscar Ramirez, who said Tuesday he's still looking for answers from police.

"I feel like the police try to make excuses," he said, referring to a Minneapolis Police Department state-

Victim continues on B8 ►

**« I FEEL LIKE THE POLICE TRY TO MAKE EXCUSES. WE WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH. »**

Oscar Ramirez, friend of Ivan Romero

## Motorcyclist's friends still seeking answers

◀ VICTIM FROM BI

ment issued a day after the collision that said the police vehicle was traveling below the speed limit and had its flashing lights and siren on. "We want to know the truth."

The Police Department has not said who had the green light in the collision, though three witnesses to the crash, two of whom gave statements to the police, told the Star Tribune that the police squad went through a red light. Two of those witnesses estimated the police vehicle's speed at 40 mph to 50 mph as it passed vehicles heading west on W. 26th Street. A third witness said she couldn't estimate the police vehicle's speed, saying she didn't get a good look.

The police statement said witnesses, accident recon-

struction evidence and video show the squad car was traveling "well below the posted speed limit," but police officials have said they could not comment further or release the video because the investigation was continuing.

Authorities also have been reluctant to offer many details of the shooting that preceded the crash by half an hour, saying that they wanted to continue gathering facts and not respond to speculation.

According to a Saturday news release, Terrance T. Franklin, 22, died during a struggle with officers in a basement at 2717 Bryant Av. S. Police said that they were chasing Franklin because of a tip he had committed an earlier burglary and that the shots were fired after he tried to grab an officer's machine pistol.



In this provided photo, friends of Ivan Romero gathered on Sunday at the intersection of 26th Street and Blaisdell Avenue S. — the scene of the crash — in memory of Romero.

Two officers were wounded, but police haven't described who fired the fatal shots or whether the officers and Franklin were shot with the machine pistol. Franklin's family members also have called on police to explain how he died.

On Tuesday, Mayor R.T. Rybak, defended Police Chief

Jancé Harteau's handling of the case, saying it was important to get a thorough understanding of the incident before speaking publicly.

"This is an incredibly serious, tragic incident that has taken a life and deeply upset many people," Rybak said. "Our hearts go out to this family. We

recognize how significant it is. That's why we're doing everything we can to understand what happened."

Ramirez said he met Romero several years ago when they both worked for the New French Bakery. Romero, originally from Morales, Mexico, didn't have many relatives

### FUNDRAISER SET

**Ivan Romero fundraiser**  
7 p.m. Thursday  
Las Mojarras Restaurant  
1507 E. Lake St., Minneapolis  
Music, food and drinks  
Donations taken at door

### Ivan Romero Memorial Fund

**U.S. Bank**  
Acct. # 104781842703  
Routing # 091000022

in Minnesota. He and Ramirez bought motorcycles and sometimes took longer trips through western Wisconsin.

Last year, Romero bought the sleek, black Yamaha he was riding when he died.

"He was like a baby with a new toy," said Benjamin Garcia, another friend of Romero's.

"He was a great friend; a hard worker," Ramirez said, adding that it was Romero's uncle who had to call his parents in Morales.

"That was their only boy, so they are really heartbroken," Ramirez said.

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