

INVESTIGATIVE SYNOPSIS OF THE OFFICER INVOLVED DEATH (OID) OF DEAN G. THOMAS

On Sunday, October 27, 2019, at approximately 9:15 p.m. the Dane County Communications Center received a 911 call. The caller was slow to talk to them, but subsequently stated there was a guy shooting a gun outside the building at 6526 Raymond Road. Dispatch relayed the following information to responding officers...“the caller was unable to give a description of the suspect, and sounded out of breath”. The 911 caller, later identified as Dean G. Thomas, was subsequently determined to be the same person as the “guy outside the building” he had reported.

Law enforcement officers were dispatched to the location. Upon arrival, law enforcement officers did not locate anything pertaining to the call. Dispatch then advised officers that the phone number of the caller was associated with Thomas at the address of 6526 Raymond Road Apt. #5. Officers indicated they were not finding anything outside and were going inside the building to make contact with apartment #5. The City of Madison Police Department officers involved in the shooting incident were Officers Justin Nelsen, Joe Buccellato, Sonny Martinez and Sergeant Ryan Gibson.

Law enforcement officers entered the unlocked main door on the south side of the building and entered the vestibule area. The inside door was secured and locked. Officers buzzed apartment 5 utilizing the electronic door buzzer. While waiting at the door, officers were able to look inside through a glass panel and could see a set of stairs which led to the upstairs level of 6526 Raymond Road. Officers could see Thomas come walking down those stairs, holding a black handgun in his right hand.

Law enforcement backed out of the apartment in order to get distance. Thomas continued to walk down the stairs in the direction of the officers.

Law enforcement gave Thomas multiple verbal challenges in a loud voice, directing him to “Drop the gun!” “Drop it!” Law enforcement continued to yell, “Stop, drop the gun!”

Thomas ignored law enforcement commands to drop the gun and continued walking aggressively towards officers with the handgun in his right hand. Thomas was then seen bringing the firearm up and pointing it in the direction of law enforcement. Thomas fired his weapon; officers observed the muzzle flash and heard as the gun was being fired in the direction of law enforcement. Officers reported fearing for their own lives and the lives of others, and fired their firearms until the threat had been stopped. The investigation determined that the officers fired at Thomas at 9:25 p.m. Once it was deemed safe to approach Thomas, officers rendered lifesaving aid, assisted by EMS personnel. Thomas was transported by ambulance to the University of Wisconsin-Madison hospital, where he was later pronounced deceased.

At approximately 9:46 p.m., the Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) received a request from the City of Madison Police Department (MPD) for assistance related to the officer-involved death

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at 6526 Raymond Road, in Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin. DCI Special Agent (SA) Lourdes Fernandez was assigned as the lead investigator, and SA James Holmes was assigned as the secondary investigator. The Wisconsin State Patrol Traffic Reconstruction Unit (WSP TRU) assisted with the investigation and created a scene diagram. The Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory Crime Scene Response Team (CSRT) collected evidence from the scene.

The Madison Police Department maintained security of the scene until the scene was cleared on October 28, 2019.

Family members of Dean G. Thomas were identified, and a death notification was made by Cape Coral (Florida) Police Department in coordination with Dane County Medical Examiner's Office Investigator Ashley Page. Wisconsin Crime Victim Services forms were also provided to the family.

On October 29, 2019 DCI agents conducted interviews with Madison Police Officers Nelsen and Buccellato. On October 30, 2019 DCI agents conducted interviews with Madison Police Officer Martinez and Sergeant Gibson.

A neighborhood canvas was conducted by DCI and the Madison Police Department; approximately fourteen people were interviewed during the neighborhood canvas.

Video from four squad cars was obtained and reviewed by DCI. Body cameras are not issued by the Madison Police Department; therefore, none of the responding officers were wearing body cameras. No security cameras were located in the area.

Evidence included one officer rifle, two officer handguns, one semi-automatic pistol, numerous cartridge casings, metal fragments, unfired bullets and magazines. All evidence was transmitted to the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory.

An autopsy of Dean G. Thomas was conducted at the Dane County Medical Examiner's Office on October 28, 2019 by Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Vincent Tranchida, and was attended by DCI SA Marshall Ogren. As of this date the final autopsy report has not been received by DCI.

On Wednesday, November 27, 2019, the completed investigative file as of that date was turned over to Dane County District Attorney Ismael Ozanne for review.