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Milwaukee Police Department – V.A. Hospital Case Report

Incident Report Number: 20-188-0216

Investigative Synopsis of the Officer Involved Death (OID) of Joseph W. Denton

On Sunday, July 6th, 2020, at approximately 9:00 P.M., the Milwaukee Police Department received a request from the Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center to respond to the scene of a fatal officer involved shooting, involving two on-duty Veterans Affairs Police Officers. The Milwaukee Police Department was requested to be the lead investigative agency pursuant to Wisconsin Statute 175.47. Other agencies from the Milwaukee Area Investigative Team (M.A.I.T.), were available, but this incident was investigated by members from the Milwaukee Police Department.

This incident occurred on a driveway to the east entrance of the Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center located at 5000 W. National Ave. in the City of Milwaukee. The subject shot was identified as Joseph W. Denton B/M 01-05-1985. Mr. Denton, after being shot, was taken into the hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Members of the Milwaukee Police Department's Homicide Division, responded to the scene of the incident. Lt. Shelondia Tarver supervised the investigation along with members of the Wisconsin Regional Crime Lab. Milwaukee Police personnel were briefed at the scene by Veterans Affairs Police Department members. The involved officers were identified as Police Officer Glenn L. Stritchko and Police Officer Joseph C. Tripp.

The investigation revealed that at approximately at 8:45 PM Sgt. Brian Brown, was walking out of the east entrance of the Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center with his girlfriend, when he heard someone yell, "Help!" Sgt. Brown looked to the south and observed the suspect, identified as Joseph W. Denton, Jr., B/M, 01/05/1985, near the bus shelters. Sgt. Brown started walking towards Denton. As Sgt. Brown approached the suspect he observed that he was armed with a shotgun. Sgt. Brown informed additional officers and personnel of an armed subject in the eastern parking lot. Sgt. Brown's girlfriend entered the hospital and

Officers Tripp and Stritchko both discharged their duty weapons. The suspect was shot in the left side of the back and on top of the left foot. After the suspect was shot, he fell to the ground and was taken into custody by officers. The officers summoned aid from within the hospital and the suspect was taken inside where he died from his injuries. No officers or other Veterans Affairs personnel were injured during this incident.

Recovered from the suspect was a black Mossberg 500A 12GA Pump/Slide Shotgun containing three (3) black shotgun shells and a chambered shotgun shell containing a mark to the primer. Three (3) additional shotgun shells were recovered in the front pants pockets of the blue jeans belonging to the suspect.

The Veterans Affairs Officers are not equipped with body worn cameras. There was video recovered from exterior video surveillance cameras. The video captured the entire incident, from the beginning when the suspect was sitting on a bench near the bus shelters, to when he was walking up the driveway pointing the shotgun at officers and the shooting.

As officers were giving the suspect commands to drop his weapon, the suspect's only dialogue was when he yelled back at the officers to drop their weapons. The suspect offered no explanation for his actions. After being shot, the suspect was unconscious and did not regain consciousness before dying. During the investigation it was learned that the suspect lived in an apartment at 5103 W. National Ave. Investigators went to that location to search for additional evidence. There were no additional firearms located and no notes or documentation found that would provide insight into the suspect's actions. The motive for the suspect's actions is unknown.

On Thursday, July 23rd 2020, final discovery was provided to District Attorney John Chisholm for review.