



Milwaukee Police Department  
Police Administration Building  
749 West State Street  
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<http://www.milwaukee.gov/police>

**Michael J. Brunson**  
Acting Chief of Police

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## **Milwaukee Police Department – Wauwatosa PD Investigation Case Report**

**Incident Report Number: 20-033-0135**

### **Investigative Synopsis of the Officer Involved Death (OID) of Alvin T. Cole**

On Sunday, February 2, 2020, at approximately 6:15pm, the Milwaukee Police Department received a request from the Wauwatosa Police Department to respond to the scene of a fatal officer involved shooting, involving an on-duty Wauwatosa Police officer. 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.) responded as well.

This incident occurred in the southwest portion of the parking lot of Mayfair Mall, 2300 N. Mayfair Rd. in the City of Wauwatosa. The subject shot was later identified as Alvin T. Cole. Mr. Cole subsequently succumbed to his injuries while being treated at Froedtert Hospital.

Members of the Milwaukee Police Department's Homicide Division, Lt. James Henner, Detective Guy Fraley, Detective Christopher Fritz, Detective Tyler Kirkvold, Detective Alexander Klabunde, Detective Lori Rom, and Detective William Schroeder, responded to the scene of the incident. Detective Klabunde conducted the scene investigation along with members of the Wisconsin Regional Crime Lab. Milwaukee Police personnel were briefed at the scene by Wauwatosa Police Lieutenant Michael Schultz. The involved officer was identified as Police Officer Joseph Mensah of the Wauwatosa Police Department.

The investigation revealed that at approximately 5:41pm, Wauwatosa officers were initially dispatched to Mayfair Mall regarding a domestic violence complaint that included numerous subjects creating a disturbance inside of the mall. One of the subjects, who was later determined to be Mr. Cole, was observed by a mall patron (witness) with a firearm in his fanny pack. The witness notified a uniformed security guard of the initial disturbance inside of the mall. When interviewed by detectives, the security guard stated that he was notified by a mall patron that there was a subject (Mr. Cole) inside of the mall who was armed with a semi-automatic pistol. The witness stated to the security guard that Mr. Cole pulled the firearm out of his fanny pack and threatened him. The police were then called to the location.

When Wauwatosa officers arrived on scene in their squads, they observed four subjects exiting the mall near Nordstrom, which is located along the south side of Mayfair Mall. It should be noted that all of the officers were dressed in full Wauwatosa Police Department uniforms. All of the squads were marked Wauwatosa Police Department squads. The officers observed that



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one of the subjects (Mr. Cole) matched the description of the subject who was in possession of a firearm. The subjects began to run west along the south side of the mall's parking lot. Officer Jeffrey Johnson was one of the first officers to arrive at the location. Officer Johnson exited his squad and pursued Mr. Cole on foot. Officer David Shamsi arrived on scene and began to chase these subjects while in his squad. Officer Shamsi's squad was outfitted with a squad camera that was operating. Officer Shamsi drove west through the parking lot chasing the subjects and a Mayfair security vehicle also pursued Mr. Cole. The security guard exited his vehicle to pursue Mr. Cole on foot also. Officer Shamsi parked his squad just as Officer Dexter Schleis ran in front of Officer Shamsi's squad and arrested one of the juvenile subjects who fled with Mr. Cole. The security guard can be seen running rapidly from Officer Shamsi's squad video after Mr. Cole. Officer Shamsi then exited his squad to pursue Mr. Cole as well. Just as the security guard was about to catch Mr. Cole, a radio transmission indicating a pursuit was broadcast. Officer Joseph Mensah then entered the video running towards Mr. Cole followed by Officer Johnson. From the squad video a distinct gunshot was heard and muzzle flash seen coming from Mr. Cole's location, and Mr. Cole went to the ground with a firearm in his right hand. Mr. Cole was ordered to surrender the firearm by Officer Shamsi who was closest to him. Officer Evan Olson responded to the foot chase and stopped his squad on N. Mayfair Rd. just north of W. North Av. Officer Olson exited his squad and ordered the other two juvenile subjects who were running towards him to the ground. Officer Mensah, Officer Olson, and Officer Shamsi all stated that at some point Mr. Cole pointed a gun in their direction and did not surrender the firearm. Officer Mensah then fired five rounds at Mr. Cole, which ultimately led to his death.

The video recovered from Officer Shamsi's squad depicts officers chasing after three subjects on foot after Officer Shamsi stopped his squad. The officers can be heard over their squad radio reporting that shots were fired prior to Officer Mensah firing his duty weapon. A subject (Mr. Cole) appears to be on the ground and then shots can be heard being fired from Officer Mensah's direction.

The video recovered from Officer Olson's squad depicts the encounter between Olson and one of the two juvenile subjects as they approached him. Officer Olson ordered the juvenile subjects to the ground. The juveniles can be heard saying "No gun" and "I'm down." A gunshot to the east of Officer Olson is heard. Officer Shamsi is heard ordering Mr. Cole to drop the gun and to throw it. Officer Mensah can be heard shouting, "The gun is out." Five gunshots are then heard coming from the same area.

Officer Mensah was interviewed by Detective Rom and Detective Schroeder on February 6, 2020 regarding this incident. Officer Mensah stated that he arrived at Mayfair Mall and



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observed a foot pursuit of several subjects. Officer Mensah stated he exited his squad and began chasing the subjects. Officer Mensah stated as he was gaining on the fleeing individuals he heard a gunshot. Officer Mensah stated "Shots fired" was broadcasted over the police radio. Officer Mensah stated he was not aware who fired the shot and did not see any muzzle flash. Officer Mensah stated after the gunshot was fired, he observed two of the subjects go to the ground. Officer Mensah stated the subject closest to him was on his knees. Officer Mensah stated this subject (Mr. Cole) had both knees and his left hand on the ground. Officer Mensah stated he observed Mr. Cole to have a black handgun in his right hand. Officer Mensah stated either Officer Shamsi or Officer Johnson shouted, "Drop the gun" several times to Mr. Cole. Officer Mensah continued to command Mr. Cole to drop the gun. Officer Mensah stated Mr. Cole pointed the firearm with his right hand at him. Officer Mensah stated stop and then discharged his duty weapon. Officer Mensah stated he fired his duty weapon 4-5 times at Mr. Cole out of fear for his life. Officer Mensah stated he believed the firearm was a real handgun and was not certain if Mr. Cole fired the initial gunshot. Officer Mensah stated he fired multiple shots because the subject was still armed, and he last observed the firearm pointed at him.

All of the other officers involved were interviewed separately and provided statements that were consistent with Officer Mensah had provided. The security guard who was chasing Mr. Cole was interviewed, and he too provided a statement that was consistent with the officers. One of the juvenile subjects who was arrested near where this incident occurred also provided a statement consistent with all of the other witnesses.

The scene of this incident was the southwestern portion of Mayfair Mall's parking lot just south of the Cheesecake Factory. There were five 9mm casings recovered that were later determined to be fired from Officer Mensah's firearm. A black Smith & Wesson M&P 9mm pistol, which Mr. Cole had in his hand, was recovered with a 9mm casing stuck in the chamber of the gun. Also recovered was a fanny pack that contained an extended 9mm magazine. The magazine contained 35 9mm cartridges. These items were later determined to be Mr. Cole's. There was no exterior video from the Cheesecake Factory near where this incident took place. A check of Officer Mensah's gun revealed that he discharged his weapon five times, which was consistent with the number of 9mm casings recovered on scene. All of the evidence from this investigation was later submitted to the Wisconsin Regional Crime Lab for examination.

The autopsy on Mr. Cole was performed on 02-03-2020 by Dr. Wieslawa Tlomak at the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office. The following injuries were noted: a gunshot wound to the left lateral chest, a gunshot wound to the left upper chest, a gunshot wound to the left upper back, a gunshot wound to the right back, and a superficial gunshot wound to the



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left forearm. The wound to the left forearm had gunpowder residue (stippling) around it. The wound to the left forearm is believed to have been self-inflicted by Mr. Cole.

On Monday, February 24, 2020, final discovery was provided to District Attorney John Chisholm for review.