

Print Clips

SUBJECT: Atlanta Police

Department

FOX 5 Atlanta

Body Camera Program Halted by Atlanta Police

By: Morse Diggs

Another setback for Atlanta police command which has been trying to outfit cops with body cameras.

A firm who did not receive the bid sued the city, claiming it was not treated fairly. A court handed down an order putting a temporary halt to APD going forward until the bidding process could be reviewed.

Atlanta told officers participating in a pilot program to turn their cameras in. City lawyers are advising to scratch a new legal battle and instead start all over. That would require new bids and will take, at the least, several months.

Chief George Turner, obviously frustrated, told city council members he started working on cameras two years ago before all the notoriety. He believes the officers and the public need the protection that can be provided with this technology.

<http://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/82625599-story>

SUBJECT: Public Safety

Creative Loafing

Learning how to survive a mass shooting

By: Adriane Quinlan

We had sat through a 90-minute course on tactics to survive a mass shooting. We had tried to keep positive and take notes while we watched videos with audio of women screaming and read bar graphs that showed the “percentage of the dead.” We tried to convince ourselves that, in such a situation, we would run down a hallway, throw a chair through a window, or close off a door with a stack of desks.

But near the close of the Atlanta Police Department's mass-shooting survival course last night at the Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center, Sharifah Parks, a 41-year old woman in a red coat, asked what we were all, to some extent, thinking.

“What if all the options you talked about are not available?” she said.

The answer? “There’s always options, even if the option is to get up and start running.”

How’s *that* for assurance? While mass shootings the world over seem to increase and the GOP-controlled Georgia General Assembly [**sets aside a proposed ban on assault weapons**](#), police in Douglasville and Woodstock have held meetings on survival tactics to avoid shooters.

APD's event seemed grim and sad: a low turnout, a cold room, and a raft of tactics to survive that often appeared about as helpful as a spoon would be to paddle through a hurricane.

APD Chief George Turner opened the meeting on a weary note. “It is unfortunate that this is the place we find ourselves in America,” Turner said. “When I started out 35 years ago in policing, I never really thought we would talk about issues such as this in our country.”

Still, the department will hold three more such events before March, Turner said. After all, they can't hurt.

Here's what you'll learn from one.

Be the person ready with an escape plan

When you go somewhere new, look for exits. Learn routes of escape. Practice them in your mind. And think about new ways out: a window you could break with a chair; the exit you could probably find through the rear of the kitchen; the Jurassic-Park style ascent into the ceiling tiles.

In an emergency, "Your human brain, your logical brain that you use to come up with a plan literally turns off, shuts off," said Paul Merritt, a senior patrol officer. "If you've thought about it before, you'll take action."

It's not "fireworks" or "popcorn," guys

People who hear gunfire – even officers – find themselves looking to each other to acknowledge it, said Merritt. That's an unnecessary step. So is what you'll likely do next: freeze in place.

When you hear what you think is gunfire, immediately acknowledge it loudly to help both yourself and those around you react as quickly as possible. (Yell something such as, "gunfire" or "emergency" and start moving)

Become a Zen Navy SEAL

A slide counseled the audience: "You are not helpless."

"What you do matters," said APD Sgt. Charles Oyeni. "Try not to make yourself a target."

Step one is making sure you stay calm enough to make rational decisions, said Merritt. In an emergency, your heart rate will rise – causing you to see in "tunnel vision" or to not hear sounds clearly. Practice what police call "combat breathing": breathe in, count to four, breathe out. Stay as calm as possible, as aware as possible, and ready to fight if necessary.

“You don’t necessarily have to be a police officer to have that survival mindset,” Oyeni said.

Clever hiding places mean nothing to bullets

Survivors who played dead survived “not because they played dead, but despite it,” said Merritt. After all, an active shooter could choose to shoot again, regardless.

And in many situations, don’t hide: if a gunman is “deliberately searching for someone to kill,” Merritt posited, once he finds someone hiding behind a desk or in a cabinet the hider has no way out. Also, if he simply sprays the room with bullets, there is almost no material “in our world” that is bullet proof, Merritt said.

If you run while the shooter is present, “moving side to side as I run makes myself a harder target” Merritt said.

Dial 911 like a police officer does

Once you’re out, call 911 and start by giving the operator the location of the shooting as precisely as you can. This is not intuitive. Don’t start by saying a long description of what the gunman is doing; the first thing police need to know is where the shooting is, which entrance to the building is closest, which floor was the shooter last on. Do you know a room number?

The next information is a description of the gunman. “This is not the time for political correctness,” said officer Merritt. Describe their race, their weight, and whether they’re wearing a t-shirt with a picture of Bart Simpson burping.

Build a fortress with everything in sight

Lock the door. If you can’t lock it because a door opens out the other way, loop a rope or a string around its handle to pull it closed from within. If you can’t lock it for another reason, use every piece of furniture, every piece of equipment – anything – to stack up against it.

“I want a barricade – the heavier the better”... even if it’s simply an “obstacle for them to get

through,” said Oyeni. A barricade will at least slow a gunman down, making the next step in your plan safer.

Help others know about this guy with a gun

If your building has armed guards, you should know how to reach them and you should have their number on speed dial, police said.

In the event of an emergency, you might not remember how to find that phone number and might not be able to dial 7-digits, the officers said, but calling these guards quickly could allow other people in the building to escape.

Make a weapon, get close to the gunman

You’re in a room and you’ve attempted to block the door with an obstacle, but the gunman is coming in despite it. Your best option is to close the distance between yourself and where the gunman will come in, so you can fight the gun out of his hands, police said. With distance, a bullet wins. But if you stand as close as possible to the entrance and you find a potential weapon in the room — a chair, a piece of machinery — you can use it to try to separate the gunman from his or her weapon.

“I’m going to get as close to the door as I possibly can,” said Oyeni. “I’m going to have some type of object in my hand to assist me in that defense stage.”

If you have a gun, don’t be an idiot

In the event you have a gun, the only time it is advised to use it is if you have already hid from the gunman and you are now trying to fight him face to face.

Do not go through the halls with your gun looking for the gunman. When police arrive, they will have a hard time knowing whether or not you were the original shooter or not, and you could even end up shooting an undercover police officer who may have shown up on the scene to help, Oyeni said.

'Don't make me a target'

When police arrive on the scene — typically, three minutes after the first alert — they are in a high-stress situation where they are seeking out a shooter or perhaps multiple shooters. Don't let them think you're the one they are looking for. If you do have a weapon, drop it. When they enter a room where you are, stay absolutely still and follow their directions exactly.

And if you're injured, don't delay police, Oyeni said. Their goal is to search for the active gunman and stop him from killing people. Only once they do that can they begin to help the injured.

Make your workplace or home safer today

In response to a question about a workplace without locks on the doors, Atlanta Police said it's the responsibility of that corporation or entity to get those locks. So go lobby your boss — or your university president — for a door that locks shut. Install them in your home. Have a door that only closes from the inside? Keep that rope nearby in the event you have to use it to pull the door closed from within.

Teach your co-workers, friends, classmates, etc. what to do in the event of a shooting and encourage them to practice. Police used the example of a boss who made his World Trade Center staff regularly conduct drills of escape, saving the lives of every one of his employees.

<http://clatl.com/freshloaf/archives/2016/01/20/learning-how-to-survive-a-mass-shooting>

SUBJECT: Public Safety

FOX Atlanta

Atlanta Police Make 5 Arrests in Midtown Robberies

By: Nathailie Pozo

ATLANTA - A special team with the Atlanta Police Department made a big announcement Thursday night.

“Midtown residents can breathe a little easier tonight knowing these guys are behind bars,” said Sgt. Robert Albertini with Atlanta Police. Officers arrested five young adults and linked them to two robberies in Midtown

Police are not releasing their identity at this time because they believe they are connected to a string of crimes and are speaking with victims in other cases.

In surveillance video from one of those crimes on 8th Street Tuesday night, you can see the alleged robbers taking off in a white Charger after officers said they pistol whipped a man and stole items from him and his girlfriend.

Investigators said that same white Charger was used Wednesday night in an armed robbery on Vedado Way. The special unit, who take a pro-active approach in fighting crime flooded the area.

“We had the Calvary come and we were able to box them in,” said Sgt. Albertini. “In their attempt to flee they hit one of our vehicles and we were able to extract them from the vehicle,” said Sgt. Albertini.

Investigators said the white Charger was stolen with a stolen tag and the robbers possessed two loaded weapons. The suspects face a long list of charges, including armed robbery, aggravated assault, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, and various traffic charges.

<http://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/70807580-story>

SUBJECT: APD

11 Alive

GBI to investigate APD officer involved shootings; asks legislature for more money

By: Kristen B. Reed

ATLANTA -- All use of force cases that end in serious injury or death at the hands of Atlanta Police Department officers will now be investigated by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. In a joint press conference Tuesday at APD headquarters, the director of the GBI and Atlanta's police chief announced the partnership.

APD Chief George Turner said the move will allow their investigators to concentrate on investigating other issues within the department while promoting transparency and keeping the community's trust.

"We need to do everything we can to be as transparent as possible," he said.

Currently, APD investigates their own officer involved shootings while other departments in the metro such as Gwinnett and DeKalb, have opted to hand them over to the GBI. Fulton and Cobb county police say they make the decision on a case by case basis.

Either way, the GBI says its caseload is mounting. The Governor has proposed giving the agency another \$3.7 million to hire 20 additional agents to assist. If approved, five of those agent would be located in metro Atlanta. The past two fiscal years the GBI says it has investigated 79 officer involved shootings and use of force cases across the state. Only halfway through this fiscal year, it has already been called to 54.

"This weekend we had two police shooting cases we investigated and this morning we have an in-custody death case in Chatham county that we're now investigating. So we've been extremely busy," said GBI Director Vernon Keenan.

While there's a push to have an independent law enforcement agency investigate these cases, our review last May found the GBI's involvement did not increase the likelihood an officer would be indicted. Of 51 fatal shootings in metro Atlanta, we found only one went to trial. And while the shift in work isn't leading any police departments to reduce staff, taxpayers are being asked to spend millions to hire GBI agents to do the work.

Keenan described the volume of cases the agency has taken on as “taxing” and says they have pulled agents from other areas to work on these investigations.

<http://www.11alive.com/story/news/2016/01/19/gbi-investigate-all-apd-officer-involved-shootings/79003128/>