

The Atlanta Voice

INDICTED: Former APD Officer indicted on murder charges

By: Staff Writer

(CNN) - In a rare occurrence in Georgia, a law enforcement officer has been indicted for murder as a result of his actions while on duty.

Former Atlanta police officer James R. Burns was indicted Wednesday on murder charges in the shooting of an unarmed black man, a defense attorney told CNN.

Burns also was charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, one count of making a false statement, and two counts of violation of oath by a police officer, attorney Drew Findling said.

“He was there during the (grand jury) testimony and he is obviously devastated,” Findling said. “As his attorney, I recognize the tragedy here. I am completely empathetic and two families are suffering right now.”

In June, Burns responded to a call from an off-duty officer of suspicious activity at an apartment complex. Burns and two other officers saw Devaris Caine Rogers attempt to leave in a car, the district attorney’s office said when the officer was arrested last month.

Burns, who is white, blocked Rogers’ path to leave and fired one shot into the passenger side of his vehicle, striking Rogers, who was black, in the head and killing him, the statement said.

“(Burns’) perception is that the car is coming at him. The car is a deadly weapon,” Findling said Wednesday. “A car has tremendous volume and width. His reasonable belief is that this car was going to be used as a weapon against him.”

But footage from another squad car that arrived on the scene showed Burns walking from behind his patrol car after he had fired his service weapon and that he was in no immediate danger.

Prosecutors have said that Rogers wasn’t identified as the man the off-duty officer reported and said Burns wasn’t given information that would have indicated Rogers was a threat.

According to CNN affiliate WSB, demonstrators outside the courthouse cheered when the decision was told to them. More than 30 demonstrators with included Rogers’ mother, friends and activist groups held a 24 hour vigil outside the courthouse before the grand jury met.

One of them was Gerald Griggs of the Atlanta chapter of the NAACP.

“We are excited that we will get a chance for a jury of 12 to hear this case,” he said. “And now we are going to push for a swift conviction ... because it is a clear-cut case of murder.”

CNN attempted to reach the Fulton County District Attorney's Office on Wednesday, but didn't get a reply.

Georgia law allows police officers involved in use of deadly force cases that occurred before July 1 to be inside the room during grand jury proceedings and give a statement without being questioned. The law was amended so that law enforcement officers can only attend to give testimony and face questions from prosecutors or grand jury members.

Atlanta Police Chief George Turner testified against Burns at the hearing. The police internal affairs investigation showed that Burns had no knowledge if Rogers, 22, was involved in any illegal activity, the officer was not reasonably in fear for his life and the firing of his weapon was unnecessary and excessive use of force.

The case was also investigated by the District Attorney's office and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

The evidence was so overwhelming that the grand jury returned an indictment in less than 10 minutes.

Burns, who had been an officer for two years, according to his attorney was fired by the Atlanta Police Department in July.

"We determine right away that the shooting was not something this department could stand behind," Sgt. Warren Pickard told reporters.

Rogers's father said that his son had started a new job the day he was killed.

"He was young. He had dreams and aspirations," said Thomas Rogers to 11 Alive News. He had dreams and goals. I was proud of him and I'm still proud of him."

CNN's Ralph Ellis, Keith Allen and Stan Washington of The Atlanta Voice contributed to this report.

http://www.theatlantavoices.com/news/local_news/indicted-former-apd-officer-indicted-on-murder-charges/article_e9ffc398-7ecb-11e6-a8c6-3f12dba5b6ce.html

SUBJECT: APD

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

How Atlanta police handle calls involving the mentally ill

By: Ellen Eldridge

When an Air Force veteran wandered through his Chamblee apartment complex naked, he was in crisis. Anthony Hill's service in Afghanistan contributed to his post-traumatic stress disorder, which was complicated by his bipolar disorder.

The DeKalb County police officer who responded to calls about Hill, and who sent bullets tearing through his chest tattoo — “Be sensible” — had been trained to de-escalate situations, avoid excessive force and handle persons in crisis.

In Olsen's case the training didn't work, but law enforcement isn't giving up.

Agencies continue to work with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and the National Alliance of Mental Illness to train officers how to recognize those suffering from mental illness, problems of addiction and diseases such as Alzheimer's and autism.

In 2004, a group from NAMI approached the GBI about bringing a national program to agencies across Georgia, Director Vernon Keenan said. He talked about the course during a recent event at Brookhaven police headquarters for NAMIWalks, [a nationwide fundraising and mental health awareness program](#).

Keenan spoke about Crisis Intervention Training in front of about 50 state troopers, sheriffs, deputies, police chiefs and officers from all over the state Sept. 2, ahead of a 5-kilometer fundraising walk scheduled for Oct. 8 in Atlanta's Grant Park.

Seeing ‘the human side’

Sometimes “regulars,” people known by police officers, are easier to calm.

Atlanta police Officer Cerrina Leeks, who received the CIT Coordinator of the Year award in 2014, said safety always comes first, but she strives to see the human side of the people she interacts with.

While working with the Homeless Outreach Prevention Emergency team, Leeks met a 25-year-old woman who had six children and was living on the street because she refused to get help for her crack-cocaine addiction.

About five years ago, she was high, roaming the streets and looking in trash cans.

“She became somewhat violent, but (because) she was one of our regulars we pretty much knew how to handle her,” Leeks said.

Leeks said she had sympathy for the 25-year-old woman, but only to a point.

“Being pregnant and doing crack was not something I was going to allow (her) to do — and she was about seven and a half months,” Leeks said. “I arrested her for urban camping because she was sleeping on the sidewalk.”

Leeks and the other officer found out who her mother was and convinced her to show up to the woman’s court hearing. Leeks and officers from the HOPE team spoke to the judge on the young mother’s behalf. Though the 25-year-old protested a rehabilitation program, the judge mandated her to drug treatment, which is what Leeks said the woman needed.

When she protested and said, “I’m not going to do it; I’m not taking medication,” the judge said he would keep her in jail until she had the baby so they would know the baby was OK, Leeks said.

<http://www.ajc.com/news/news/local/does-crisis-training-for-cops-really-work/nsdqT/>

SUBJECT: APD

11 Alive

Suspicious device in Midtown thought to be a bomb deemed a 'hoax'

By: Adrienne Haney

ATLANTA -- Businesses at Colony Square in midtown are reopening as usual Saturday morning, after a suspicious item forced authorities to issue an evacuation of the area overnight.

According to Capt. Cliff Johnson with the Atlanta Police Department, a suspicious item was found inside the stairwell at the Colony Square complex at Peachtree and 14th Streets. The shopping and business center is home to a number of broadcasting radio stations and is connected to the W Atlanta Midtown hotel.

Bomb squad, Homeland Security and Joint Terrorism Task Force agents all responded to the scene and closed Peachtree Street between 14th and 15th Street while they investigated.

After inspecting the device, officials determined the modified "electronic" item was a battery charging pack and not a bomb, and therefore was harmless.

"At this point we're treating this as a hoax because the device is electronic," Johnson told 11Alive cews.

Officials will process the item to see if they can identify any finger prints and figure out who might have left it.

This suspicious item is the most recent in a string of incidents that forced a shutdown of Atlanta streets. On Tuesday, investigators closed several blocks of Moreland Avenue in the Little Five Points neighborhood after someone reported a suspicious package outside a bar. Officials determined that item was a part from an A/C compressor.

<http://www.11alive.com/news/local/midtown/suspicious-device-thought-to-be-a-bomb-deemed-a-hoax/325012498>

SUBJECT: APD

11 Alive

GSP still investigating fatal crash involving off-duty APD officer

By: Staff Writer

ATLANTA -- The Georgia State Patrol is still looking into the crash that severely injured an Atlanta Police officer and killed his passenger earlier this month.

On Sept. 14, off-duty Officer Shawn Jones, Jr. was driving his Dodge Challenger down Peachtree Street near West Peachtree when his car slammed into a stone wall. The impact of the crash killed 20-year-old Ramish Attai of Lilburn, who was riding in the front passenger seat.

Jones, who has been with the force since November 2011, is the son of the assistant chief of the same name and a member of APD's airport division. The Atlanta Police Department released Officer Jones's photo to 11Alive News Monday.

<http://www.11alive.com/news/local/gsp-still-investigating-fatal-crash-involving-apd-officer/326309342>

SUBJECT: The Mayor

Fox 5

Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed responds to weekend protests

By: Staff Writer

ATLANTA - Demonstrators took to the streets outside one of Atlanta's busiest malls over the weekend. Many with the Black Lives Matter movement were picketing Saturday afternoon. Monday, Mayor Kasim Reed said he was disappointed with the behavior of some of the protesters, and said it will not be tolerated.

Mayor Reed said some shoppers were insulted and intimidated while trying to get in and out of Lenox Square. The mayor's message about protesting has always been simple: "Demonstrate all you want, but don't infringe upon the rights of others who want to come and go as they please."

Protests by Black Lives Matter or any other group will be tolerated to a point, said the mayor.

"The racist language is totally unacceptable to me. It was being directed at people who were simply trying to live their lives and it won't be tolerated," said Mayor Reed.

Some white customers who were trying to go inside Lennox Square also said they were hassled. And around the mall police used measured enforcement to try to keep everything moving. For motorists it was a headache.

"Blocking intersections is unacceptable to me. We will work to make sure that doesn't happen in the future," said Mayor Reed.

For 15 to 20 minutes at a time, the demonstrators rotated through the various mall entrances to block them, a bit of a cat and mouse game. The mayor said a segment of the demonstrators were determined to try officers' patience.

So, what happens next time? Will police officers allow protesters to once again choke off entrances to businesses?

"The answer is 'no.' But we have to manage it as best we can. What you're doing is, is you're trying to create a series of events from escalating into something more," said Mayor Reed.

"Managing hundreds of people expressing their First Amendment rights is much more complicated than it might appear to be on television. We don't just make snap judgments or snap decisions. And I'm really proud of our police officers and the way in a they're handling it."

<http://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/207951443-story>

SUBJECT: Atlanta News

11 Alive

APD patrol car rammed multiple times, suspect flees

By: Tiffany McCall

ATLANTA - Atlanta Police are searching for a man who they say repeatedly rammed a police cruiser with the officer inside, then sped away.

Clif Johnson with Atlanta police says around 1:20 a.m. on Wednesday, an officer was patrolling Donald Lee Hollowell Pkwy when he noticed a vehicle parked at a gas station that fit the description of a vehicle that was speeding.

The officer pulled into the parking lot and began running the tag number. At that time, the suspect exited the store, got into the car and immediately began ramming the patrol car about 4 to 5 times. Afterwards, Johnson says the suspect hit another parked car before driving off. The vehicle was found about a half mile away at a dead end on Azlee Place NW.

Police determined the car was stolen out of Cobb County. Fortunately, the police officer was not injured.

<http://www.11alive.com/news/local/apd-patrol-car-rammed-multiple-times-suspect-flees/318660116>

SUBJECT: APD

Fox 5

Atlanta officer accused of public indecency

By: George Franco

ATLANTA - An Atlanta Police officer is accused of exposing himself at a popular Atlanta mall.

Atlanta police said one of their own, officer Jimmy Currie, is accused of public indecency at Lenox Square on August 19. The police report states a mall security officer, an Atlanta police officer working an extra job, heard a call on the radio about a male exposing himself inside the restroom of the food court.

The report said the suspect walked into a bathroom stall where the victim was sitting, pulled down his pants and started to pleasure himself. The report said the victim, a male whose age was not listed, jumped up and the suspect ran out of the restroom.

The report also said the victim called his mother, who is a security guard at the mall. It said she called the dispatcher who alerted other mall security officers.

One of them according to the report stopped the suspect in the food court parking lot. The report said the victim followed the suspect outside and was asked by the security officer was this the right person. According to the reports the victim said "Yes that's him." The report goes to state that the suspect handed the security officer a police identification card with the name "Jimmie L. Currie Atlanta Police" on it.

In a statement, Lenox Square praised the security officer involved, saying "Lenox Square Management commends our officer for his quick thinking and proactive role managing the situation with this individual, who was visiting the center as a shopper, not in any official role, during the reported incident."

Atlanta police said Officer Jimmy Currie is assigned to Zone 4 in southwest Atlanta and has been with the department since 2001.

In a statement the APD said "The Atlanta Police Department takes these allegations very seriously. Chief Turner has always prioritized officer accountability and honesty and will continue to take decisive action when necessary to hold his employees to the highest standards."

Atlanta police said Currie is on leave with pay while the investigation continues. Currie has not been charged.

<http://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/205238317-story>

SUBJECT: APD

11 Alive

APD hitting the road to recruit new officers; looking in and out of state

By: Neima Abdulahi

ATLANTA – The Atlanta Police Department is hitting the road and traveling to other states to recruit police officers for open positions.

APD plans to host two separate events this week in order to recruit new officers. One will be held on Friday right here in Atlanta at the police headquarters. The other, across the border in Birmingham, Ala.

11Alive wanted to know why police are looking outside the state for officers, so reporter Neima Abdulahi asked the department how often they travel to other cities. A lieutenant from the recruitment team told her it's done regularly.

“They pick a targeted location and personally reach out to interested applicants,” Lt. Kimberly Payne said. “Birmingham, Ala. has been a good target for us before, so we're going back there, and we try to get those locations that are within close driving distance.”

When asked whether their efforts were because there are not enough officers patrolling the streets, APD said that’s not the case and the department is always looking for qualified candidates.

Payne said they’re also hoping to target veterans to join the force and are reaching out to sworn officers and those without a badge.

<http://www.11alive.com/news/local/apd-looking-outside-state-to-recruit-new-officers/318245788>

SUBJECT: City Council

Patch.com

More Security Cameras Coming to Buckhead

By: Tim Darnell

The city is spending up to \$300k for more than 20 cameras.

ATLANTA, GA — At least 23 new security cameras will be installed in Buckhead.

The Atlanta City Council last week approved up to \$300,000 for the cameras, according to Buckhead View.

The Atlanta Police Foundation is overseeing the installation.

The cameras are part of the Council District 8 Public Safety Master Plan, sponsored by Councilwoman Yolanda Adrean.

The cameras would feed into the police department's Atlanta Video Integration Center. Once connected, they would become the property of the police and the city.

<http://patch.com/georgia/buckhead/more-security-cameras-coming-buckhead>

SUBJECT: City Council

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Atlanta installs police camera near where storekeeper was slain

By: David Ibata

Calling the device a “force multiplier,” city officials recently unveiled a security camera at a southwest Atlanta intersection near where a popular storekeeper was stabbed to death during a robbery.

“Cameras are a force multiplier for our officers, and we must ensure that they are present in all parts of the city,” City Council President Cesar Mitchell said in announcing the camera at Lawton Street and Westview Drive.

Baik Sung, 62, described by neighbors as a foundation of the community, was found slain July 2010 inside the grocery he had run for more than 30 years on the corner of Lawton and Westview. In June 2012, Oderrick Boone, 28, was sentenced to life plus 15 years for Sung’s murder.

The surveillance camera, paid for by Renew Atlanta funds, also will provide security for children going to and from M. Agnes Jones Elementary School, said Council Member Cleta Winslow, whose district includes the area.

The camera’s images will feed into the city’s Loudermilk Operation Shield Video Integration Center, where police monitor images from more than 5,700 cameras throughout the city.

<http://www.ajc.com/news/news/local/atlanta-installs-police-camera-near-where-storekee/nsSBh/>

SUBJECT: APD

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

I-85 blocked after fatal shooting

By: Steve Burns

Several lanes of I-85 northbound have been closed following a fatal shooting, Atlanta police said.

Three of the interstate's four right lanes were blocked before Cleveland Avenue, according to the Georgia Department of Transportation. The investigation created major northbound traffic backups.

No other details were released.

<http://www.ajc.com/news/news/crime-law/i-85-blocked-after-fatal-shooting/nsScm/>

SUBJECT: APD

WSB-TV

APD: 80% of confiscated guns stolen from outside city limits

By: Nefertiti Jaquez

ATLANTA - Only Channel 2 Action News is getting an exclusive look at the number of illegal guns the Atlanta Police Department has taken off the streets from criminals.

Dozens of guns on display in an evidence room show the magnitude of the battle Atlanta police say they're in while trying to curb crime.

"Eighty percent of those guns we've determined have been stolen and they've been stolen outside of the city of Atlanta," said Sgt. Warren Pickard with the Atlanta Police Department.

Pickard tells Channel 2's Nefertiti Jaquez that curbing gun violence in the city is a priority so the department is pushing to get illegal guns off the streets.

"They're still falling into the neighborhoods where we see the most criminal activity," Pickard said.

<http://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/atlanta/apd-80-of-confiscated-guns-stolen-from-outside-city-limits/438234304>

SUBJECT: APD

WTVM

Dragon Con organizers: Woman sexually assaulted during parade

By: Staff Writer

ATLANTA (CBS46) -

An Atlanta woman has taken to Facebook to report that she was sexually assaulted during the Dragon Con parade on Saturday.

Officials with the Atlanta Police Department released the incident report Tuesday morning. According to the report, the assault occurred between the 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. at the intersection of Andrew Young Boulevard and Peachtree Center Avenue during the Dragon Con Parade..

A representative for Dragon Con said Atlanta Police told them a complaint is under investigation.

"We are aware of the situation. A report was filed with the Atlanta Police Department by the victim and they have the name and contact information of the alleged perpetrator," organizers of the event said in a statement

The woman wrote in the post, which has been shared more than 7,500 times, that a man pressed against her from behind and was entirely exposed. She says she screamed and hit him several times before running away.

She also said a woman from the Fulton County District Attorney's Office saw it happen and said she'd help press charges if the man is found.

Assault reported at Dragon Con 2015

Gary Hood was arrested in a reported sexual assault at Dragon Con last year.

Hood was charged with aggravated sexual battery and misdemeanor sexual battery after a woman said she was assaulted by him in an area outside the Hyatt Regency in downtown Atlanta.

<http://www.wtvm.com/story/33014757/dragon-con-atlanta-parade-sexual-assault-allegation>