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Man shot by cops target of rival; Records detail events preceding shootout in St. Clair Shores

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Body

St. Clair Shores - On the night of Nov. 4, **Theoddeus Gray** was under a lot of stress.

His girlfriend was pregnant and family and friends were gathering at a baby shower.

He had other things on his mind, too. Gray, 29, had been arrested six days earlier in a North Dakota motel by federal narcotics agents, and was facing a Nov. 9 hearing on a charge of drug possession with intent to distribute.

Compounding matters, Gray had an ongoing beef with an associate to whom he owed a drug debt, a debt his rival was intent on settling.

As Gray greeted guests at the Lakeland Manor Banquet Hall on Harper Avenue, two cars carrying the associate and three other people were headed for the banquet facility.

After speaking with someone by phone, Gray became agitated and displayed a handgun, leading an alarmed woman to call 911. St. Clair Shores Police descended on the facility, and an ensuing exchange of gunfire left him and a department dog dead.

State and federal records obtained by The Detroit News under the Freedom of Information Act shed new light on what happened on the last night of Gray's life and the days leading up to it.

It was shortly after 6 p.m. Nov. 4 when Gray pulled out his gun, displaying it inside and outside the banquet hall and sparking panic.

"I need the police here now ... we have a man with a gun. I am going to have a heart attack," the frantic caller told a dispatcher. "This is no joke, you need to hurry ... he's outside throwing a fit with a gun. Now he's coming back inside. I have 70 people inside my hall right now... Jesus Christ, what is taking so long?"

The woman can be heard shouting "oh, my God" and ordering workers to get back inside the office, to lock the door, to stay against the wall, shut off the lights and "do not (expletive) move!"

Police reports, including witness statements, indicate several police cars arrived within minutes. According to the reports, Gray ignored orders to drop the weapon and lie down, bolting away from the facility with K-9 Axe in pursuit.

According to the reports, while on the run, Gray turned and fired one shot, hitting the dog, before his FN 5.7 handgun jammed with 15 live rounds still in its magazine. Five officers fired their weapons - at least 42 rounds in all - wounding him six times in the head, arms, legs, chest, left back and foot.

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At least one round of "friendly fire" is believed to have also hit Axe, who died from a wound in the left shoulder and lungs, necropsy records show.

The five officers were placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of an independent investigation by the Macomb County Sheriff's Office, which issued a report Nov. 27 that "did not locate any evidence to substantiate requesting criminal charges against" any of them.

All five have been returned to active duty, according to an attorney, John Goldpaugh, but the incident is still under a police internal investigation.

The status of that internal probe is unclear. St. Clair Shores Police Chief Todd Woodcox was on vacation Thursday "until after the holidays," according to a staff member, and his deputy chief did not return a call from The News.

A. Vince Colella, an attorney hired by Gray's family, declined to discuss the case.

"I would like to comment on some of my theories but we are still awaiting reports to review," he said.

Colella said Gray's relatives were not satisfied with the report issued by the sheriff's office.

"The family was very disappointed in it," he said.

In the days leading up to his death, Gray's world was rapidly tightening around him, according to records, which say he had been trafficking prescription drugs from Detroit to Tennessee, Virginia and Kentucky.

He was far from any of those places on Oct. 29, when special agents of the Metro Area Narcotics Task Force of the Drug Enforcement Administration showed up at the Country Suites Inn in Bismarck, North Dakota, armed with search warrants for the motel and a rental car with a Michigan license plate parked outside.

Around 3:30 p.m., one of the agents encountered Gray and a woman in the hallway. The agent tried to handcuff Gray, who resisted, then wrestled him to the ground.

The woman - whose name was redacted from a DEA report obtained by The News - initially said she had taken a train from Detroit to Bismarck, then recanted and said she drove the rental car.

The woman said she worked at a "call center making \$17 an hour" but had the week off. She denied knowing how Gray earned money or having any knowledge of a cylindrical package of pills seized by agents.

She admitted she received gifts from Gray, including shopping trips, and that the pair frequented bars and restaurants together. Agents returned \$1,200 in cash they found in her purse and released her.

Gray, however, was arrested and charged with possession of a Schedule II controlled substance with intent to distribute, an offense that can carry up to 10 years in prison. Gray received a \$10,000 cash bond, was required to wear a drug testing patch and received permission to travel to Detroit, on condition that he return for a court hearing Nov. 9 in North Dakota.

When Gray did not appear, an arrest warrant was issued for him.

"He was found with an estimated 1,000 doses of oxycodone inside a prophylactic hidden inside a pillow," said Julie Lawyer, an assistant attorney general familiar with the case. "He told agents he had come to North Dakota to sell drugs in the past and was owed \$10,000 from individuals on the Fort Berthold reservation."

At a news conference last month, Macomb County authorities expressed relief that a larger shootout had been avoided at the St. Clair Shores hall.

FBI documents obtained by The News reveal that an unidentified attendee at the baby shower was an "associate" of "Teo" - Gray's nickname - and both were involved in trafficking prescription drugs from Detroit to West Virginia, Tennessee and Kentucky.

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"Teo" also was involved in drug trafficking with a gang member whose name was redacted from the report.

The FBI provided Instagram accounts for some of the redacted names. The News has reported how Detroit gangs had communicated through Instagram.

"Recently Teo and (redacted) had a falling out over money that Teo had not given to (redacted) in their latest trafficking of prescription narcotics agreement," according to the FBI document.

"(Redacted) had been looking for Teo and had threatened him physically if Teo did not come up with the money. While at the party (redacted) called (redacted) to let him know that Teo was at Lakeland manor. (Redacted) and three other unknown individuals came to the party driving two separate vehicles.

"...While speaking to (redacted) Teo became very upset and went outside and got a handgun from his vehicle."

The writer said the individuals looking for Teo apparently tried to enter the building through a side door but were stopped and Teo "then went outside, armed with a weapon, looking for (redacted)."

"While police were dealing with Teo, (redacted) and the individuals with him hid an AK-47 long gun behind a shed which (was) located behind Lakeland Manor. (Redacted) left at least one individual behind to wait for the police to leave so he could retrieve the AK-47."

Graphic

Gray

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