

Investigation into fatal Merrillville police shooting could go to prosecutor next week

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ABSTRACT (ENGLISH)

Jimmy Terry, 30, of Sioux Falls, S.D., died in a shooting Wednesday, the Lake County coroner's office said. According to a video recording of the shooting, viewed by the Post-Tribune, the SUV was stopped in the dealership parking lot facing north with a Merrillville squad car parked behind it.

FULL TEXT

Investigators are aiming to wrap up their investigation Friday after police fatally shot a man with a knife outside a Merrillville car dealership, an official said.

Jimmy Terry, 30, of Sioux Falls, S.D., died in a shooting Wednesday, the Lake County coroner's office said.

Merrillville Police Chief Joseph Petruch said two of his officers were placed on paid administrative leave as a result, following standard protocol.

At 11:38 a.m. Wednesday, Merrillville officers were called to Art Hill Ford Lincoln dealership at 901 W. Lincoln Highway for a report of a man chasing an employee with a knife, Greg Mance, chairman of the Northwest Indiana Major Crimes Task Force, said.

Officers were told that the man later identified as Terry got into an SUV, which police believe belonged to him, Mance said. Officers stopped the vehicle near the dealership entrance, and "during the traffic stop the identified armed suspect was shot," he said.

Terry was taken to Methodist Hospitals Southlake where he died, Mance said. The coroner's office ruled Terry's death a homicide, a release states.

The task force, which Merrillville police requested to handle the investigation, is looking into Terry's "recent past actions" and the hours leading up to the shooting, Mance said.

"By doing so we hope to better understand the precipitating factors of the incident," Mance said.

Mance said investigators are expected to finalize their reports next week and submit it to the Lake County prosecutor's office for review.

According to a video recording of the shooting, viewed by the Post-Tribune, the SUV was stopped in the dealership parking lot facing north with a Merrillville squad car parked behind it.

The video shows an officer standing at the open driver's side door, with a second officer a few feet away from him. The officer suddenly takes a few quick steps back and away from the vehicle's door. Both officers unholstered their guns, and pointed them at the vehicle's open door, the video shows.

A man in a yellow and purple jacket then stepped out of the driver's side, according to the video. He took two steps in the direction of the officers before he was shot, according to the video.

He then fell to the ground and an object that appears to be a knife was visible in his right hand, the video shows. While lying on his back, Terry appears to have set the object in his hand down on his left side, according to the video.

Police turned him onto his stomach and handcuffed him behind his back, the video shows.

Mance said investigators were examining evidence Thursday collected from the scene. Mance declined to get into specifics, but he confirmed Wednesday that a knife was recovered.

Merrillville police do not use body or dashboard cameras, Petruch said.

rejacobs@post-trib.com

Twitter @ruthyjacobs

Credit: Becky Jacobs

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