

Police identify man shot and killed in stolen car by injured St. Louis officer

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FULL TEXT

ST. LOUIS - Police have identified a man fatally shot by a St. Louis police officer who was injured while investigating a stolen SUV on Wednesday afternoon.

Demario Bass, 29, was shot in the chest by the police officer and died at a hospital, police said.

The officer, 31, was injured when Bass sped backward in the stolen SUV, trapping the officer between the open door and body of the SUV, police said. He suffered a head injury that Chief John Hayden described Wednesday as "very significant." The officer, who has been a member of the force for two years, was in fair condition at a hospital with a cut to his head and trauma to his mouth, police said in an update Thursday.

Bass lived in the 8500 block of Mora Lane in St. Louis, a little over a mile from the gas station at Goodfellow Boulevard and Lillian Avenue where he was killed. A woman at his home Thursday said she was Bass' mother but was too distraught to speak to a reporter.

In a more detailed account of what happened Wednesday, the police department said Thursday that a license plate reader had seen a plate belonging to a stolen 2004 Hyundai Santa Fe heading south on Goodfellow from West Florissant Avenue at 12:49 p.m.

The description of the vehicle was broadcast, and two officers in a patrol car spotted the maroon SUV at the BP station at 5003 North Goodfellow within minutes, police said. The stolen SUV was parked at the gas pumps facing south. The officers pulled in front of the vehicle.

One officer got out and walked to the SUV, spotting Bass inside, the department said. The officer opened the car door to arrest Bass.

"The suspect suddenly put the stolen vehicle into reverse and accelerated backwards at a high rate of speed," the department said in a statement.

The officer became lodged between the open door and the SUV, the statement said. The SUV moved backward and crashed into a canopy support, causing the door to close on the officer and throwing him at least partly into the vehicle.

The SUV rolled forward and came to a stop, and the officer fell backward to the ground.

The officer fired at least one time during the encounter, hitting Bass in the chest, the department said. Hayden said Wednesday that it wasn't immediately clear when the officer fired, but that video captured the incident and that will be part of the investigation.

The other officer did not fire his weapon and was not hurt, Hayden said.

The gas station is just north of Interstate 70 in the Walnut Park West neighborhood.

CREDIT: From staff reports

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