

Tyner: A.C. police shooting tragic, justified - - Press of Atlantic City, The (NJ) - July 4, 2018 - page 1A

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ATLANTIC CITY - The June 22 shooting of **Timothy Deal** on Kentucky Avenue was tragic but justified, as Deal attacked an officer with a knife, Atlantic County Prosecutor Damon G. Tyner said Tuesday.

Tyner released video footage from the body cameras worn by the officers on the scene of the shooting.

"We must not lose sight of the fact that a sworn police officer reported to the scene of an accident to protect the public, and was attacked for no apparent reason," Tyner said in a statement. "The officer defended himself and protected the public from untold harm. This incident reminds us of how fragile life can be, and we should all be thankful that no innocent bystanders were injured."

Tyner also cautioned that the shooting of Deal should not be compared to police shootings elsewhere in the country, "where unarmed individuals have been assaulted and in some instances killed."

"Each incident has its own set of facts and must be investigated separately," the prosecutor said.

Steve Young, chairman of the Atlantic City chapter of the National Action Network, said the prosecutor's decision to release the videos on the same day as Deal's funeral was disrespectful. Deal's services took place Tuesday at the All Wars Memorial Building on Adriatic Avenue, Young said.

"This has disturbed and interrupted (the family's) mourning," Young said. "We are asking everyone to still come together and support the family."

Later Tuesday evening, family and community members gathered where Deal was shot for a small memorial. Latasha Whaley placed her hand on the photo of her late cousin, saying Deal was a great man and a great member of the Atlantic City community.

"The hardest part of this whole thing to watch is our family and his sister, his nieces ... they're heartbroken," Whaley said. "To see our cousin tell her daughter that her uncle - her best friend - is never coming home was the hardest thing to watch."

The group that met on North Kentucky Avenue wore red shirts with family photos of Deal, some shirts with the slogan "Justice for Tim."

The shooting death of Deal happened June 22 on the 600 block of North Kentucky, where officers were investigating a hit-and-run crash with injuries, according to previous reports. During the

investigation, Deal, who was not involved in the accident, approached and allegedly stabbed one of the officers with a knife, police and the prosecutor said.

WARNING GRAPHIC VIDEO

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The body camera video - two segments were released, each a little more than one minute long - show Deal approaching one of the officers with a knife and then lunging at him. The officer, who has not been identified, yells at Deal to drop the knife and then shoots him several times as Deal swings the knife.

Deal stumbles backward and then falls to the ground.

The officers then tell him to drop the knife and roll him over and put him in handcuffs.

After shooting Deal, the officer, whose face is blurred in the video, yells into his radio, "Shots fired, male down, officers OK. ... I might be stabbed; I'm not sure."

The injured officer and Deal were transported to AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center, City Campus. Deal was pronounced dead at the hospital's trauma center. The injured officer was treated and released, according to the Prosecutor's Office.

The shooting led to a rally outside the Atlantic City police station and at the spot of the incident June 24.

People at the rally, which was organized by Young and Deal's family, demanded the body camera footage be released as well as Deal's body so it could be buried.

Young said the Prosecutor's Office allowed the family to view one of the body camera videos last week and released the body.

"This is not the fault of the family or the community," Young said. "We are proud that the Atlantic City community came together and protested this peacefully."

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Whaley said the vigils and demonstrations will continue, with the next community vigil being held this Friday. "There's other things (the police) could have done. ... We just want justice for my cousin," Whaley said.

The Southern Regional Medical Examiner's Office conducted an autopsy of Deal and determined he died from multiple gunshot wounds, according to the Prosecutor's Office. The investigation is ongoing pending, but not limited to, submission of evidence to the New Jersey State Police Ballistics Laboratory, according to the Prosecutor's Office.

The prosecutor's Major Crimes Unit is conducting the investigation without the participation of the

Atlantic City Police Department, as per guidelines from the New Jersey Attorney General's Office.

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