

Warrant: Suspect threatened to kill himself before - Danville Register & Bee (VA) - April 12, 2018

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The 25-year-old Danville man shot dead by police early Sunday had threatened to kill himself just moments before he was gunned down, court records show.

Court documents also note that four shell casings were found at the scene — a wooded area along Sunset Drive in Danville — suggesting that four shots were fired by police officers that morning. **Juan Markee Jones** was shot twice in the chest, the Roanoke Medical Examiner's Office has confirmed to the Associated Press, but it is not known how many officers shot him.

Police body-camera video shows officers firing at Jones as he abruptly whirls toward them with arms outstretched by his chest. The incident followed a call to emergency dispatchers about the domestic assault of a man on a woman.

Just moments before that final confrontation, Jones made a phone call to the woman who reported an assault, and "told her not to press charges against him and he reminded her that he would not go back to prison he would kill himself first," reads a search warrant affidavit filed in Danville Circuit Court on Tuesday.

It could not be determined if Jones had a prison sentence in his criminal background. It is known that Jones had an assault case pending in Danville General District Court when he died, court records show. He was arrested Jan. 29 and charged with misdemeanor assault, as well as two counts of threats over a telephone. He was accused of threatening a woman who lived on Sunset Drive with a gun, court records show, and had a hearing set for Tuesday, just two days after he died.

The narrative of the woman's Sunday-morning call to dispatchers is part of a search warrant filed by Special Agent Matthew Wade of the Virginia State Police, the agency tasked with investigating the shooting. According to the affidavit, Wade has specialized training in police officer use-of-force investigations.

She called dispatchers from the Sunrise Store on North Main Street and accused Jones of assaulting her there, the search warrant states. She later called dispatchers again, this time from her house in the 200 block of Sunset Drive, and said Jones had kicked her front door in an attempt to get inside. The woman said he got into his car and drove away, towards the dead-end section of her street.

Wade filed the affidavit to search the land between 211 and 224 Sunset Drive. In a video, released by Danville police on Tuesday, officers arrive near the end of the dead-end street around 1 a.m. as Jones attempts to leave in his blue Hyundai Veloster.

"Go ahead and get out of the car brother," an officer said in the video. "Don't be stupid"

"You did it. You kicked my door. You did it," a woman can be heard shouting.

"Get out of the car," an officer yells.

Jones instead backs the car around toward the cul-de-sac. That's when a phone ringtone can be heard. The body camera turns around to show what appears to be a woman on a cellphone. She answers with a "What?" then verbally dismisses what the caller is saying.

"No, they're going to lock you up," the woman says. "You shouldn't have kicked my door."

The officers eventually follow Jones to a brush-filled wooded area at the end of the road where he stopped his car. Officers repeatedly tell him to get out of the car and to show his hands.

When Jones finally does step out of the vehicle, his left side is facing the officers and his left hand is at his side. His right hand cannot be seen.

Police fire a Taser at Jones, but only one of two prongs hits his body — the second prong gets stuck in the brush. Both prongs must hit the suspect to complete the circuit needed to stun the person with an electric jolt, police said.

Jones, with his back turned to the police, suddenly swivels around with his hands and arms outstretched. Police almost immediately open fire, and Jones drops to the ground.

Wade — who also led an investigation into the January shooting involving police officers that killed Richard Towler, 54 — also included Jones' blue car as a location to be searched. The state police officer wrote in the document that he was looking for: firearms, ammunition, cartridge casings, deployed Taser leads and accompanying equipment, alcohol and containers that could contain alcohol, cellphones, blood and bodily fluids and receipts.

The warrant's return inventory lists: two Glock pistols, four 40-caliber shell casings, a Taser, a black Taser cartridge, a Taser wire, a black ball cap and an iPhone.

The two pistols likely belonged to the police who fired their weapons. State police, when asked if Jones had a weapon, told the Register & Bee on Tuesday that a weapon was not recovered at the scene.

On Wednesday, Danville police named officers Christopher S. Simpkins, with the department since late 2012, and David J. Branch, with the department since early 2016, as those involved in the shooting. Both will remain on administrative leave until the investigation is complete.

The investigation, when finished, will be turned over to the Danville Commonwealth's Attorney's Office for review and adjudication.