

Police: 8 officers open fire, kill armed man - - Austin American-Statesman (TX) - August 18, 2018 - page A1

August 18, 2018 | Austin American-Statesman (TX) | Mary Huber and Mark Wilson | Page A1

The sound of gunfire reverberated on Sixth Street on a busy back-to-school weekend and sent crowds scrambling as eight Austin officers shot and killed a 21-year-old man who was carrying a gun and ran toward them early Friday, police officials said.

Family members said the victim was **Aquantis Givens**, a rapper from Baton Rouge, La., who was performing Thursday night at the Terminal 6 bar. Police officials said the slain person was a black man but did not publicly name him Friday.

Police said dispatchers started receiving calls around 12:24 a.m. about a confrontation outside the bar at 302 E. Sixth St., where a back-to-school concert was taking place. No one was reported injured in that fight, police said.

Shortly after 1 a.m., police received several calls about shots being fired in the same area, Assistant Police Chief Troy Gay said.

He said police public safety cameras captured footage of a fight in the alley behind the club, where two people with firearms could be seen shooting at each other.

Officers who were nearby on Sixth Street responded and, after hearing the shots, positioned themselves near the alley, Gay said.

"At that point they saw an individual that was running toward them... with a handgun in his right hand," Gay said.

He said officers gave multiple commands for the man to drop his weapon before eight of them fired their guns, and the suspect fell to the ground.

Another officer discharged his stun gun on the man, Gay said.

Police then performed life-saving measures on the man until Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services medics arrived to take him to the hospital.

He was pronounced dead at 1:22 a.m.

No one else was injured in the shooting, police said.

Givens' relatives said they were shocked to hear the news on social media Friday morning.

"Everyone is taking it hard right now," Givens' cousin, Darren Bourgeois, said by phone.

Bourgeois described Givens as a family man with a great personality who would give anyone the shirt off his back.

"He wasn't really a troublemaker like that," he said.

Givens has a 3-year-old daughter named Serenity, said his father, Sheldon Givens.

Sheldon Givens said his son was just starting out as a rapper and had traveled to Texas to perform. He said the last time he talked to him was Monday to wish him a happy 21st birthday.

"I tried to stop him from going out there; he still wanted to go," Sheldon Givens said. "I had a funny feeling, like something bad was going to happen."

Family members did not know whom **Aquantis Givens** could have been fighting with early Friday.

Several rappers were performing at Terminal 6 Thursday night, according to an event posting on the bar's Facebook page.

Witnesses who were on Sixth Street early Friday described a chaotic scene with people scrambling amid the gunfire.

Bryan Miller, who was deejaying at the bar Pour Choices on the corner of Sixth and Trinity streets, said the entertainment district was particularly busy with college students returning for the school year.

He said he heard about five shots shortly after 1 a.m., which were clearly audible over the music blaring from the speakers.

"It sounded like bullets were ringing off the buildings," Miller said. "Then I saw people stampeding."

Miller said he saw police officers running from all directions, and people were confused.

"I was blown away by the reaction as a whole," he said.

Things return to normal shortly after the incident, he said.

Police said a gun was recovered at the scene of the shooting. No one was taken into custody. Police have asked anyone with information to contact homicide detectives at 512-974-5210.

"Tonight was a very dynamic situation, which involved video footage from multiple cameras," Gay said. "It's going to take a long time for our investigators to go through our public safety videos, as well as videos" from all the officers' body-worn cameras.

The eight officers who fired their weapons have been placed on administrative leave, which is standard Austin police protocol after a police shooting. They range in service from one to six years, Gay said.

The officer who used his stun gun also has been placed on leave, putting nine officers on leave at one time, the most ever from a single shooting, police officials said.

Internal affairs will conduct an administrative investigation, along with a concurrent criminal inquiry by the special investigations unit and the Travis County district attorney's office.

"As with any officer-involved shooting, it is a very tragic situation. It is a very sad day for our city," Gay said. "We have lost an individual, 21 years of age, but we also had officers that were involved in a critical incident. So our hearts go out to our officers, they go out to our community and the individual's families."

Contact Mary Huber at 512-321-2557.

Twitter: @marymhuber Contact Mark Wilson at 512-445-3636.

(Box)

Jan. 26: An officer shot and killed Christopher Eric Giles of Albuquerque, N.M., while responding to a home invasion in Central Austin, police have said.

Feb. 19: Police shot and killed 23-year-old Thomas Vincent Alvarez after he reportedly led officers on a chase in Southeast Austin that ended at an apartment complex in the 4900 block of Edge Creek Drive, near the Onion Creek Greenbelt.

March 7: Victor Ancira, 46, was shot by officers while holding a pickax in the 4800 block of Tanney Street, near Springdale Road in East Austin, officials said.

March 12: Kyle Thomas Garcia, 24, was wounded after exchanging gunfire with Austin police in the 6200 block of La Naranja Lane, officials have said. Police initially responded to the home in Southwest Austin after receiving a call from a woman who said her son was threatening his father with a gun.

March 25: Police in Southeast Austin shot and killed a man who had earlier fired at officers, wounding one, officials have said.

June 7: Police officers fatally shot a woman inside a Southeast Austin home in the 7300 block of South Glenn Street after getting a call about a woman chasing people with a knife, police said.

Aug. 3: Officers wounded 27-year-old Craig Anthony Carter at Spicewood Springs Road and Mesa Drive after a chase through Northwest Austin, officials have said. Police said Carter assaulted his mother earlier in the morning and that he had then fired at officers when they moved in to arrest him.

(Box)

Officer-involved shootings in 2018

Friday's deadly encounter marked the eighth Austin police shooting this year and the second in August:

Copyright (c) 2018 Austin American-Statesman