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POLICE

SHOOTING

MAN DIES AFTER FIGHT WITH POLICE

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Article Text:

A 37-year-old West Side man died early yesterday after a violent struggle with police, who shot him before he escaped, drove away in a car and crashed into several parked cars on S. Ogden Avenue.

Columbus police were called to 108 N. Oakley Ave. on the report of a domestic disturbance. At about 2:30 a.m., after what witnesses described as a brief fight in front of the house, Jonathon L. Sharp grabbed Officer Richard Little's gun.

Then Officer Wayne Wright told Sharp to look out, said Clyde Costlow, a neighbor and witness to the shooting.

Wright, who is Little's partner, shot Sharp, who then jumped a chain-link fence, got in a car and eventually crashed shortly after, according to police. It does not appear that Sharp fired Little's gun.

"He crossed (the fence) like it was nothing. It had to be his adrenaline," Costlow said.

Sharp was taken to Mount Carmel West, where he died at 3:11 a.m. Police did not know whether drugs or alcohol were involved.

Columbus Police spokesman Sgt. Earl Smith said a gunshot wound, not the car crash, probably killed Sharp, who has a history of criminal charges. Smith said he doubted a coroner's report would be available until today.

Police would not release information on where Sharp was shot or how many bullets were fired. A witness said he heard four gunshots.

"It was a life-and-death struggle," said Costlow, who lives at 105 N. Oakley Ave. and witnessed the incident after he returned from a late-night fishing trip.

"I'm still shook up about it," said Costlow, who said he talked to Sharp frequently. He characterized him as a quiet man.

"I don't know what caused all of this. I don't know if he'd been drinking or not, but that is no excuse."

According to neighbors, Sharp had been dating a woman who lives at 108 N. Oakley for several months. A visibly upset woman identifying herself as Sharp's girlfriend answered the door at 108 N. Oakley Ave. yesterday afternoon but declined to comment on the shooting.

The owner of the property said a woman and her boyfriend moved in a couple of months ago. A

neighbor, Ron Diles, said the woman's parents and sister lived in the same residence. Police were not releasing information on the woman or any injuries she might have suffered in the incident.

Smith said Little's wrist was severely strained in the struggle and he has bruises. Smith did not know whether Little would miss work for the injury. Both officers will receive mandated psychological support counseling.

"If someone is taking your gun, that's about as serious as it gets," Smith said. "The officers are not obligated to be shot. They have every right to defend themselves . . . and, of course, the other people in the area.

"We have officers die out of these kind of struggles."

The shooting will be investigated by the critical incident response team (made up of specially trained investigators from the homicide squad) and the Firearms Board of Inquiry.

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Caption:

(1) Map

(2) Jonathon L. Sharp, 37, had a history of criminal charges. This is a booking photo from 1993.

MAP, Photo

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