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Shooting under investigation

Preliminary autopsy results expected today on 22-year-old shot, killed by BPD during a drug raid; involved officers on leave

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Correction: A story on page 1A Friday should have said the officers involved in Wednesday's fatal shooting during a drug operation were identified as Sgt. Lance Tiner and Officer Brad Beaulieu. The story incorrectly gave Beaulieu's first name as Brian. A reporter made the error. (Correction ran on 1-26-08). A story on page 1A Friday, Jan. 25, about the use of deadly force by Beaumont police officers included a list that should have been headlined "Fatal Beaumont Police shootings since '92." The headline omitted the word fatal, which made the list appear to be incomplete. (Correction ran on 2-8-08).

Article Text:

It could take four weeks for Beaumont police to finish an investigation into two officers' involvement in a fatal shooting during a drug operation, department officials said Thursday. Sgt. Lance Tiner and Officer Brian Beaulieu -- the ex-husband of slain police officer Lisa Beaulieu -- were placed on paid administrative leave in accordance with department policy. The two were involved Wednesday in the shooting of Michael Mitchell during a sting in the Jack In The Box parking lot at 590 Washington Blvd.

The incident came on the eve of the conviction of Willie James McCray on intoxicated manslaughter charges in the death last year of Officer Lisa Beaulieu.

Preliminary autopsy results on Mitchell were expected today from the Jefferson County morgue, Beaumont spokeswoman and Officer Crystal Holmes said.

The 22-year-old Mitchell, wearing a bulletproof vest, had gunshot wounds and was pronounced dead at Christus St. Elizabeth, Holmes said. No weapons were found in the car, but investigators said they did find a bag of crack cocaine and a wad of \$20 bills.

Two other men inside the truck, Avery Mims, 22, and Jamison Monroe, 24, were charged with delivery of a controlled substance and booked into the Jefferson County Correctional Facility, she said.

Bond was set at \$15,000 on each man.

The incident occurred about 9:10 p.m. while Mitchell was in a 2001 Chevy truck. Holmes said he had just sold drugs to an undercover police officer, Holmes said.

After the buy, a maroon, unmarked police vehicle pulled up behind the truck in the fast-food parking lot, she said. The truck reversed and slammed into the police vehicle, Holmes said.

As officers approached, the driver, Mitchell, threw the vehicle into drive and began to move forward toward the officers, Holmes said.

Tiner, 37, and Beaulieu, 36, were wearing black shirts with "POLICE" emblazoned in white across the front and repeatedly identified themselves as police to the three men inside the truck, Holmes said.

The truck continued forward, and the officers fired at least four shots, leaving a tight grouping of bullet holes through the windshield.

The back window of the truck's cab and driver's side window also were partially shot out, she said. Further details will not be released until an internal investigation is concluded, she said.

The Jefferson County District Attorney's Office and a grand jury also will review the case.

Carolyn Mitchell, Michael Mitchell's mother, said she knows her son "wasn't doing right" by dealing drugs, and she had told the former Central High School football player to straighten up his life.

"He had a warehouse job for a while, but he went back to (drug dealing)," Mitchell said. "I guess he was used to that quick money."

Mitchell said while her two daughters are taking their brother's death hard, she's been "in a tailspin" over the incident.

She added she believes her son "wasn't going to run those boys over."

Mitchell said she just wants to see her son.

"My son, my son, please release him," Mitchell said, adding she was not allowed to see him at the hospital.

Holmes said Beaulieu and Tiner had been on numerous Tactical Narcotics Operations before, and Wednesday night's incident was the last of the evening.

Beaulieu, a 12-year police veteran, has more than two years' experience with the Street Crimes Team. Tiner, another 12-year veteran, has more than two years experience with both the SWAT team and Special Response Team.

Beaulieu was described in annual reviews as a "productive officer" who worked well with co-workers and "doesn't draw complaints," according to civil service records.

"Officer Beaulieu continues to be a valuable asset to this unit and one of the hardest working officers I have worked with," Sgt. Ky Brown wrote in an April 2005 evaluation.

In July, a Drug Enforcement Agency special agent wrote a letter of commendation to the police chief for the work Beaulieu and seven other officers did in a 90-day drug investigation that resulted in the seizure of two vehicles and \$15,000 in cash.

Beaulieu and another officer were congratulated by former police Chief Tom Scofield for their work in catching a suspect in a sting targeting a rash of robberies. He and the other officer spotted a robbery at Calder Avenue and Ninth Street and chased the man down.

Tiner is described as the model police officer with a positive attitude who files thorough reports, is a problem-solver and "has a good rapport with citizens in his zone."

In a 2006 annual review, he was described as "conscientious" with work that is "always accurate, well-written and complete."

One reviewer wrote that his cases are well documented and hardly ever returned for additional information.

"Good officer, I will miss you," Scofield wrote in December 2005.

In several annual reviews then-Deputy Chief Frank Coffin praised Tiner.

"Lance is one of our best officers," Coffin wrote in a 2000 review. "I wish everyone handled themselves as he does."

Reporter Dee Dixon contributed to this report.

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Caption:

(1) Photo by Guiseppe Barranco /The Enterprise - Beaumont Police Department forensic investigator Sue Kelly examines the truck in which Mike Mitchell was shot by police during a drug sting operation Wednesday night.

(2) Photo - Mike Mitchell, 22, was pronounced dead at Christus St. Elizabeth.

Photo

Memo:

Beaumont police shootings since '92

* On March 8, 2003, Jay Wesley Schlett, 39, was shot and killed by a single bullet after he lunged at Officer Barry Scarborough, who had repeatedly warned the man to drop a knife, according to the officer's report. A witness confirmed the report.

* In January 2000, Officer William Martin Fisher responded to a domestic disturbance where a man became agitated and brandished a gun.

* In 1997, Officer Lawrence Pete shot an armed man who attempted to rob AJ's liquor store where Lawrence was on duty as a security guard.

* In January 1996, Officer Al Johnson responded to a domestic dispute and found a man holding a knife to his girlfriend's throat. Johnson shot the man to save the woman's life, Officer and department spokeswoman Carman Apple said.

* In September 1994, officers stopped a Wisconsin teen who later was convicted of stealing the car he was driving. Officer Ricky Anderson shot the 17-year-old after the teen pointed a gun at Anderson's partner, Apple said.

* As SWAT team officers entered a house in 1992 with a search warrant, a man opened fire on them, striking one officer's body armor, Apple said. Officer James Riley shot the man.

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