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Driver fatally shot by police -- Officer investigating domestic violence call

Author: Chris Conley conley@commercialappeal.com

Article Text:

A man fatally shot Monday night when he tried to run over a police officer had been drinking all day, had beaten his girlfriend and was believed to be armed with a shotgun, police said.

Marcus Watkins, 24, was felled by a single shot to the head when the officer fired through the windshield of Watkins' car.

The car careened into a sheltered bus stop, injuring two people slightly, and slammed into a guardrail, injuring another person.

The unidentified officer who fired the shot was relieved of duty with pay pending an investigation.

About 11 p.m. the officer was taking a domestic violence report from Watkins' girlfriend, Shamela Womble, 23, who had come to Methodist University Hospital at 1165 Union for treatment.

As the officer was taking down information, Womble's stepfather ran up to alert the officer that Watkins was circling the area in his green Dodge Neon.

Womble had told the officer that Watkins had threatened her with a shotgun earlier in the day, according to incident reports.

"Look, there is the guy you all are looking for in that green car," the stepfather called out.

The officer started toward the car and identified himself as an officer. Watkins gunned the engine and tried to run him over, reports said.

When the officer shot Watkins, the car, which was eastbound on Eastmoreland, jumped the curb, hit the bus shelter and rammed into the steps of the hospital emergency room entrance. Watkins had been drinking gin and beer since early morning and was extremely intoxicated, Womble told police.

She said Watkins had roughed up her daughter earlier, then punched her in the face, bouncing her head off the wall.

Watkins then took a shotgun from under a bed and asked Womble if their relationship was over, according to reports.

Watkins put the shotgun in his vehicle, and had been circling the hospital as she sought treatment, Womble said.

Police had been called to the couple's home twice recently on domestic violence calls, which had grown more serious lately, according to reports.

Watkins' car was taken to the crime scene unit for forensic examination. It was not clear whether

police found a shotgun inside the car.

Investigators took the single spent cartridge from the officer's gun as evidence.

- Chris Conley: 529-2595

Caption:

Marcus Watkins

Photo

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