

Police Search For Ferguson Shooters

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (TNS)

FERGUSON, Mo. — The Missouri Highway Patrol and St. Louis County Police will take over Ferguson protest security Thursday night after two police officers were shot outside the police department there early Thursday morning.

Ferguson police will continue to handle routine policing services in the city, St. Louis County Police said in a statement Thursday afternoon.

The two officers shot early Thursday are expected to survive, St. Louis County Police Chief Jon Belmar said. They were treated at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and released Thursday, though one still had a bullet lodged behind his ear.

Belmar called the shooting as protests outside the department dwindled an "ambush" on police. At least three shots were fired at police just after midnight as police faced protesters who had gathered outside the police station, police said.

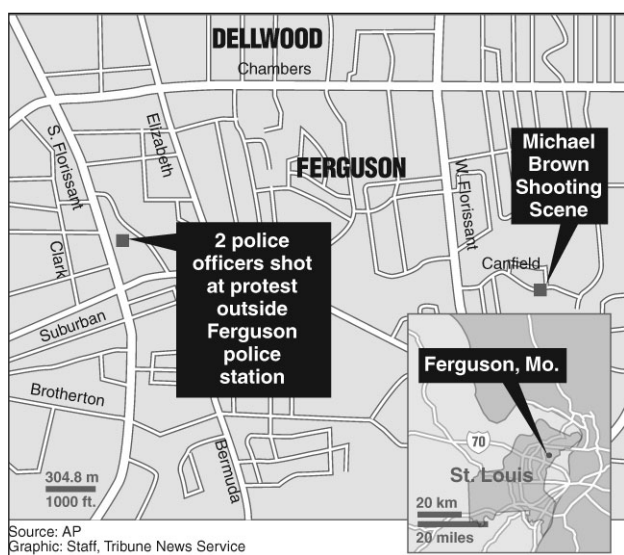
On Thursday morning, officers swarmed a home in Ferguson in their search for those responsible for the shooting of the two police officers.

Tactical officers surrounded a brick bungalow about four blocks west of the police department. Officers went in with dogs about 9:30 a.m. A neighbor said he saw police bring two men out of the home. The woman who neighbors say rents the home was also brought out in handcuffs.

Police said they were questioning the three but they were not under arrest. They declined to provide further details.

Martez Little, 25, of north St. Louis County, said he was in a car Wednesday night near the Ferguson police station with the woman taken into custody Thursday. Little said they witnessed the shooting.

"Bullets were flying past us," Little said. "We heard them whistling by and saw two officers drop to their knees."



Immediately after the shooting, Little said he put his hands up and showed police his waistband to make sure they knew he was not armed.

"The shots were coming off a hill but we didn't see nobody shooting," he said.

He said he went to the protest because he still has questions about the shooting of Michael Brown, but called the shooting of the officers wrong.

Belmar discussed the shootings Thursday morning at the St. Louis County Police Commissioners board room. He said one officer injured in the shooting was with his department. The other is a Webster Groves Police officer. Both were treated at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, but have been released.

The Webster Groves officer was shot just below his right eye and that the bullet was lodged just below the officer's right ear, Belmar said. That officer is 32 and has been on the force for five years.

The bullet that hit the county officer in the right shoulder exited from the right side of his back, Belmar said. That officer is 41 and has been in law enforcement for 14 years.

Belmar said he believes the shots came from a handgun, not a rifle, based on the injuries and the sound of the shots.

The chief said no suspects have been identified in the shootings but that detectives recovered shell casings near the scene. He said it was not clear if those shell casings were from the shooting. He said some witnesses have been "forthright" in helping police with the investigation.

"We're lucky by God's grace that we didn't lose those two officers last night," Belmar said. "We could have buried two police officers next week because of this."

The officers had been standing in a line of about 25 officers when the shots were fired. The gunfire came from the area of a parking lot about 125 yards away and were "parallel to the ground," Belmar said, leading him to believe the officers were targeted.

"When you listen to the audio (in video from the scene), you can actually hear those shots singing," Belmar said.

The chief said that 60-70 protesters had come to the Ferguson Police Department earlier in the night, some of them blocking roads and sidewalks. The protests prompted police departments to send officers, some in riot gear. At least three arrests were made during the protests before the shots were fired. That came later in the night as the protest began to dwindle.

Belmar said he felt police have been fortunate since protests erupted in Ferguson in August after the police shooting of Michael Brown in that officers patrolling those protests have not been injured.

"I think it's a miracle that we haven't had any instances such as this over the summer and fall," Belmar said Thursday.

The chief said one of the biggest challenges facing police on the protest lines is discerning peaceful protesters from troublemakers.

"This is another layer that makes it very difficult for our officers out there," he said.

Attorney General Eric Holder issued a statement Thursday offering the Justice Department's "full range of investigative resources." He noted that "Such senseless acts of violence threaten the very reforms that nonviolent protesters in Ferguson and around the country have been working towards for the past several months."

Speaking later Thursday, Holder described the shooting as the actions of a "damn punk" who was "trying to sow discord."

CrimeStoppers is offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to an arrest in the shooting. They asked anyone with information to call 1-866-371-8477. Tipsters can remain anonymous, and tips can also be submitted online at www.stlcrs.org or texted along with "STL" to 274637.

U.S. Rep. William Lacy Clay, D-Mo., and U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, D-Mo., added a \$3,000 reward for information in the shooting.

Other politicians responded with messages about the shootings Thursday.

"Violence against police is unacceptable," President Barack Obama tweeted from the @WhiteHouse account. "Our prayers are with the officers in MO. Path to justice is one all of us must travel together."

Fresh Problems For Secret Service Raise Questions

BY JOSH LEDERMAN AND ALICIA A. CALDWELL
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The latest in a string of baffling missteps by the Secret Service prompted fresh questions Thursday about whether the Obama administration has done enough to root out deep-seated problems plaguing the agency — and President Barack Obama's decision to put an insider in charge despite his administration's own review that called for exactly the opposite.

The White House said Obama still has full confidence in recently appointed Director Joseph Clancy, despite a new investigation into two agents accused of driving into White House security barrier after drinking. While declining to discuss the investigation, Obama's aides described Clancy as the right man to fix problems.

"Nobody has higher standards for the Secret Service than Director Clancy," said White House spokesman Eric Schultz.

Yet lawmakers charged with overseeing the agency were aghast and wondered how — after intense national scrutiny and a rotating cast of directors — the Secret Service still hasn't corrected problems involving behavior of its agents. In a rare move, the top Republican and Democrat on the House's oversight panel joined forces to say that while many of the agency's top leaders have already been replaced, "this incident begs the question of whether that is enough."

"Clearly this incident is a major wake-up call," the Democrat, Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland, said later in an interview.

The two senior agents — including Mark Connolly, the No. 2 on Obama's security detail — had been with other agents drinking at a bar last week when they returned to the White House in a government car, a U.S. official said. The vehicle entered an area already closed off by the Secret Service, who were investigating a suspicious package and had put the White House on lockdown. Officers on the scene saw the agents' car,

traveling slowly, make contact with a barrier, the official said.

A surveillance video at the White House captured the entire incident, the official said. Congressional staffers were briefed Thursday on the video's contents.

In a stroke of irony, the agents had been attending a retirement party for the Secret Service's spokesman, Ed Donovan, whose job for many years involved answering questions from the press after other embarrassing incidents.

Obama knew both agents personally. The two have been reassigned to non-supervisory, non-operational jobs, a second official said. The officials weren't authorized to comment on an ongoing investigation and requested anonymity.

The Secret Service's response to the incident, first disclosed by the Washington Post, has also come under scrutiny amid a report by that newspaper that a supervisor directed officers on-scene not to perform a field sobriety test on the two agents, and to let them go home. Cummings said that raised serious questions about whether Secret Service agents believe they can follow their own set of rules.

Cummings and Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, the chairman of the oversight committee, sent a letter Thursday to Clancy asking him to brief them on the

THANK YOU
A special thank you to all of my friends and relatives for the prayers, cards, calls and visits, goodies, flowers and gifts while I was recuperating from my recent surgery. Also, to the caregivers at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital and Sister James Care Center. I appreciate all and may God Bless You!
Kay Nickles

incident and provide the panel with any video footage, photographs or audio recordings.

"The bottom line is the Secret Service has to be overhauled," said Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. "What happened the other day shows we have a ways to go and that the overhaul is needed soon and very deeply."

Yet with Obama standing by Clancy, it remained unclear what additional steps could or would be taken to bring the struggling agency in line.

When former Director Mark Sullivan resigned in 2013, the year after a drinking-and-prostitution scandal in Colombia rocked the agency, Obama tapped long-time Secret Service agent Julia Pierson to take over amid hopes she would change the male-dominated culture. Less than two years later, Pierson resigned abruptly in the wake of security breaches.

First, a man with a knife



who scaled the White House fence made it far inside the mansion before agents stopped him. Then, as lawmakers started asking questions, it came to light that the Secret Service earlier had improperly allowed Obama to share an elevator in Atlanta with an armed, private guard — and failed to tell him about it after the fact.

Amid a public uproar, the Obama administration commissioned an outside report by former senior government officials that concluded the agency was too insular — and recommended that Obama bring in an outsider to whip the agency into shape. Obama ignored that recommendation and brought in Clancy — a retired agent who once ran Obama's security detail — as interim director, then named him to the full post in February.

The storied Secret Service, despite its reputation as the world's leading protective agency, has a history of alcohol-related incidents.

In 2012, an officer was arrested after passing out drunk on a Miami street corner about 12 hours after a presidential visit. Two years later an agent was involved in a drunken incident during a trip to the Netherlands. That same year two agents in Florida were involved in a traffic accident that reportedly involved alcohol.

Iraqi Troops Advance On IS In Tikrit

TIKRIT, Iraq (AP) — Iraqi troops clashed along two fronts with Islamic State militants in Tikrit on Thursday as rockets and mortars echoed across Saddam Hussein's hometown a day after soldiers and allied Shiite militiamen swept into this Sunni city north of Baghdad.

Recapturing Tikrit is seen as a key step toward rolling back the gains of the extremist Islamic State group, which seized much of northern and western Iraq in a blitz last summer and now controls about a third of both Iraq and Syria.

The offensive also will serve as a major crucible for Iraqi forces, which collapsed under the extremists' initial offensive last year and now face one of the Sunni militant group's biggest strongholds.

Iraqi forces entered Tikrit for the first time on Wednesday from the north and south. On Thursday, they were fighting their way through the city and expected to reach the center within three to four days, according to Lt. General Abdul-Wahab al-Saadi, the commander of the Tikrit operation.

The IS militants were trying to repel the Iraqi forces with snipers, suicide car bombs, heavy machine guns and mortars, said al-Saadi, speaking to The Associated Press at the front-lines.

J. Bush's Emails Detail Communications

WASHINGTON (AP) — Among the many thousands of emails Jeb Bush received as Florida governor are a string of notes from campaign donors asking for favors and making suggestions.

Invariably, Bush responded quickly. Sometimes, he appointed a person a donor had recommended for a position. Other times, he rejected advice about a piece of legislation.

It's an insight into Bush's work as governor that's possible only because his emails are open for review, something not yet available for those sent and received by Hillary Rodham Clinton as secretary of state. Like Clinton, the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination, Bush used a personal email address and private server. But, positioning himself as a transparent candidate if he runs for the Republican nomination, he has posted online more than 275,000 emails from his two terms in office.

A review by the Associated Press of Bush's emails found that prominent donors to Bush and his family regularly urged him to appoint certain candidates for judgeships, public boards and other committees.

Bush spokeswoman Kristy Campbell said it was not uncommon for the public to make such suggestions to Bush and the recommendations were routed "through appropriate channels."

Obama Urged Sunni Deal In Iraq

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. military and intelligence officials are increasingly pessimistic about the prospects for political reconciliation in Iraq, a key tenet of the Obama administration's strategy to dislodge the Islamic State group and stabilize the country.

Senior officials say they are not seeing significant progress by the country's Shiite-led government on its efforts to strike a bargain with Iraq's deeply alienated Sunni population, from which the extremist force is drawing money and personnel.

President Barack Obama expressed hope in September that a new Iraqi government led by Prime Minister Haider Abadi "understands that in order for Iraq to succeed it's not just a matter of a military campaign; it's also the need for political outreach to all factions within the country." That's a feat his predecessor, Nouri al-Maliki, didn't achieve.

But in the months since, the Shiite-dominated government has taken few concrete steps to accommodate Sunnis, whose frustration helped fuel the Islamic State group's push into Iraq from Syria.

Joint chiefs chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey, who returned from the region this week, told Congress Wednesday he was "concerned about what happens after the drums stop beating and ISIL is defeated, and whether the government of Iraq will remain on a path to provide an inclusive government for all of the various groups within it." Dempsey used an alternative acronym for the militant group.

IRS Scam Targets More Than 366,000

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fake IRS agents have targeted more than 366,000 people with harassing phone calls demanding payments and threatening jail in the largest scam of its kind in the history of the agency, a federal investigator said Thursday. More than 3,000 people have fallen for the ruse since 2013, said Timothy Camus, a Treasury deputy inspector general for tax administration. They were conned out of a total of \$15.5 million.

The scam has claimed victims in almost every state, Camus said. One unidentified victim lost more than \$500,000.

"The criminals do not discriminate. They are calling people everywhere, of all income levels and backgrounds," Camus told the Senate Finance Committee at a hearing. "The callers often warned the victims that if they hung up, local police would come to their homes to arrest them."

The scam is so widespread that investigators believe there is more than one group of perpetrators, including some overseas.

Alabama Ends Probe Into Harper Lee

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — An Alabama official says a state agency closed an inquiry into whether the deal to publish Harper Lee's upcoming novel involved financial fraud.

Some in Lee's hometown of Monroeville questioned whether the 88-year-old "To Kill a Mockingbird" author was capable of consenting to the second novel's publication. A longtime friend says she is mostly deaf, blind and in poor health.

Alabama Securities Commission Director Joseph Borg said Thursday his agency reviewed the matter at the Department of Human Resources' request. Borg said Lee answered questions to an investigator's satisfaction, so they closed the file.

A high-ranking state official said DHR had opened its investigation after the second novel's announcement. The status of the DHR investigation was unclear. The official wasn't authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

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THANK YOU
The family of **Carol Walz** wishes to thank everyone that sent cards, prayers, flowers, food and words of condolences. The outpouring of love and compassion shown by this community has been overwhelming to our family. Special thanks to: Vermillion Hospice, Pastor Anna Peck, the ladies of Pleasant Valley Church, Wakonda American Legion Auxiliary, Cleophus Club and Hansen Funeral Home.
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