



St. Petersburg Police Department News Release



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For Immediate Release

September 26, 2011

Updated Information - St. Petersburg Police Officer Shooting Resulting in a Death

Please understand this information is preliminary, since the investigation is still in progress.

The St. Petersburg Police Officers involved in this case include:
Officer Michael Weiskopf, 42, a sworn officer since 09-29-2003.
Officer Richard Demesmin, 34, a sworn officer since 12-18-2006.
Officer Ruben DeJesus, 50, a sworn officer since 02-01-1986.

Synopsis:

On Monday September 26, 2011 at about 1:40 a.m. Patrol Officer Michael Weiskopf was on-duty in a marked police cruiser when he observed an unoccupied vehicle in the parking area of the city park at the Jungle Prada boat ramp, 1695 Park Street North.

The city park is closed after dark.

Officer Weiskopf notified a police dispatcher at 1:42 a.m. that he was checking the vehicle. He did not observe anyone walking or moving about in the area.

Officer Richard Demesmin and Officer Ruben DeJesus responded to assist Officer Weiskopf.

All three officers walked down a trail - through trees and dense foliage - that starts at the southern edge of the parking area and ends at the shore of the bay, a total distance of perhaps 40-50 yards. They discovered two white males sitting together on a bench near the water's edge. It appeared they were drinking alcoholic beverages.

The officers questioned the two men and advised them they were checking them (by touching their outer clothing) for weapons. One of them was cooperative.

The second individual, Jared W. Speakman, DOB: 9-12-1993, 100 72nd Street North, questioned the officers' authority to detain them.

Speakman held a small dog in his lap. He turned to hand the small dog to the other individual on the bench when Officer DeJesus observed the butt of a handgun protruding from either his waistband or his right front pants pocket.

Officer DeJesus yelled out to the other officers, warning them that Speakman had a gun.



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Officer DeJesus grabbed the butt of the gun. Officer DeJesus and Speakman began struggling over the gun. During the struggle, both of them rolled down a small, grassy embankment behind the bench.

At some point during the struggle, Officer DeJesus lost his grip on the gun while Speakman retained the gun.

Officer DeJesus drew his Department-issued handgun and fired several rounds, striking Spearman in the upper body and leg.

Speakman died at the scene. None of the officers were injured.

Investigators have notified Speakman's mother and step-father of his death.

The St. Petersburg Police Department and the Pinellas Pasco State Attorney's Office are both conducting a criminal investigation of the shooting. When the criminal investigations are complete, Pinellas Pasco State Attorney Bernie McCabe will issue a letter with his findings. Also, the St. Petersburg Police Department's Internal Affairs Division is conducting an administrative investigation to determine if there were any violations of Department policy.

All of these investigations are standard protocol whenever an officer intentionally discharges his weapon in the line of duty and the shooting results in a death.

We will not release any further details about the shooting until the criminal and the administrative investigations have been completed.

Information by Bill Proffitt on Monday September 26, 2011 at 11:30 a.m.

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