MEDIA RELEASE

Texas Rangers and Temple Police Department investigates use of force, suspect deceased

TEMPLE, TX (December 20, 2024) – The Temple Police Department received the cause of death report from the Office of the Medical Examiner from the Southwestern Institute of Forensic Sciences in Dallas; a medical examiner's report documents the cause and manner of death but does not provide conclusions regarding whether a crime has been committed.

The Medical Examiner deemed the cause of death as physiological stress associated with prone physical restraint including conducted energy weapon (CEW) injury in conjunction with the toxic effects of cocaine. The report listed other significant contributing factors as congestive heart failure, hypertensive cardiovascular disease, morbid obesity, diabetes mellitus. The manner of death has been classified as a homicide.

For context, definitions of or links to information regarding cause of death, manner of death, homicide, and criminal homicide are provided below.

Cause of death is the specific medical condition, injury, or disease that leads to death.

Manner of death is the determination of how the condition, injury, or disease led to death. There are five manners of death (natural, accident, suicide, homicide, and undetermined).

Homicide is death that occurs at the hand of another person, either by commission or omission. However, the classification of homicide does not necessarily mean that a crime was committed and can be criminal or non-criminal.

The following link provides additional information regarding the definition of Criminal Homicide.

Link to Criminal Homicide

This incident continues to be investigated by the Texas Rangers, and no other information will be released at this time.

TEMPLE, TX (October 4, 2024) – The Temple Police Department has identified the individual as 43-year-old Billy Gordon from Temple, TX.

TEMPLE, TX (October 3, 2024) – *This release is an initial condensed timeline of a use of force event that occurred on October 3, 2024. This is preliminary information and may change as the investigation continues.*

At around 12:13 p.m. on Thursday, October 3, officers were dispatched to the 2400 block of S 13th Street for a welfare concern. The dispatch center noted "yelling" and stated the caller seemed "out of breath." The caller advised that someone was tearing up his house. The caller confirmed that the confrontation was physical in nature. The caller advised an individual had been over earlier in the day and had now returned later acting erratically. The caller also advised saying the male was possibly under the influence of narcotics. The caller advised that the suspect had all the groceries on the floor and dumped the milk all over the floor.

The first officer arrived and contacted the caller at approximately 12:18 p.m. This officer contacted the caller who was crying and stated the suspect is freaking out in my house.

The first officer contacted the suspect at approximately 12:19 p.m. with a second officer coming into the residence behind the first officer. The first officer announced, "Temple PD." The suspect was observed in the kitchen pulling items out of the refrigerator. The first responding officer pointed his Taser at the suspect telling him to stop his actions. The second officer advised the suspect that "we are here to help you." The suspect drank miscellaneous liquids such as dish soap, oil, and other liquids. The suspect was unintelligible.

At approximately 12:20 p.m. the officer gave an audible warning to the suspect with the Taser arch, warning the suspect to stop. The suspect was seated in front of the refrigerator and grabbed an item to drink. Observing this the first officer stated, "I can't let him drink that."

The officer deployed the Taser. The deployment appeared to have minimal impact on the individual as the suspect continued to move around. The officers gave commands telling the suspect to stop and roll over on his stomach. The suspect turned towards the officers and attempted to drink the item in his hand again. The officer then deployed the Taser a second time. The suspect was again not fully incapacitated and the second officer attempted to go hands on. The suspect continued to resist and thrashed around ignoring commands of the officers.

The first officer initiated the third cycle of the Taser, and the second officer tried to control the suspect's arm. Both officers gave commands to roll over but the suspect continued to thrash around and resist the officers. The suspect then began to reach into the refrigerator again.

The first officer advised the suspect that he will be tased again as both officers continued to tell the suspect to stop and roll over to his stomach. Officers continued to struggle attempting to get the suspect into custody.

The officers attempted to get the suspects left arm behind his back and he continued to struggle with the top half of his body inside the refrigerator. The suspect was told that this is his last warning, and the suspect would be tased again. At approximately 12:22 a fourth Taser cycle was initiated, but the suspect again continued to struggle and not comply with commands.

The suspect then went limp and the second officer advised he had gone unconscious. The officers pulled him out of the refrigerator and get him handcuffed. One of the officers stated “he is breathing.” The officers rolled him on his side and continued to try and wake the suspect by initiating a sternum rub and calling for EMS. At approximately 12:23 p.m. the officers advised that he was not breathing. Officers began life-saving treatment; initiating CPR on the individual and deploying Narcan to the individual.

The caller advised officers at the scene that the suspect explained to the caller he spent the caller’s money purchasing crack cocaine before returning to the apartment and exhibiting odd and abnormal behavior. The caller further stated that he had tried by force to remove the individual from his residence prior to calling police.

Justice of the Peace Reed declared the time of death to be 12:59 p.m. and an autopsy was ordered.

The Temple Police Department called in the Texas Rangers to investigate the incident due to the death of the suspect.

As a matter of standard practice, the officer that deployed the Taser in this incident has been placed on administrative leave with pay. To fully understand the timing, sequence of events and fully understand the incident, an internal affairs investigation of the incident has been ordered as well.

This is an active investigation and no other information will be released at this time.

This case is under investigation. Anyone with information should contact the Temple Police Department at 254-298-5500 or the Bell County Crime Stoppers at 254-526-8477, where callers can report anonymously. Tips can also be submitted anonymously at bellcountycrimestoppers.com.