



Man shot in scuffle with cops -- Gunfire near CSUS called accidental

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Sacramento police shot a handcuffed man in the buttocks early Saturday, in what police officials say was an accidental discharge fired during a struggle outside a convenience store.

The suspect, 38-year-old Steve Yount, was in fair condition at UC Davis Medical Center on Saturday after being shot once with a 9mm handgun.

Police spokesman Daniel Hahn said the shooting occurred while four officers were trying to subdue Yount outside a 7-Eleven on La Riviera Drive near California State University, Sacramento.

After Yount was stopped on suspicion of driving under the influence, Hahn said, he became wild in the back seat of a patrol car, ramming his head against the metal screen, shattering a window and slightly injuring one of the officers.

Hahn said he did not know how the suspect was shot, only that it was in the course of trying to restrain Yount's legs.

"I can't say how it happened," Hahn said. "The exact particulars of that are under investigation."

Yount was in protective custody at the hospital Saturday and could not be reached for comment. He has been booked on suspicion of felony battery on an officer and driving under the influence.

Three of the officers involved are with the Sacramento Police Department and have been placed on administrative leave in accordance with police procedure. The fourth officer works at CSUS. Officials at the university police department refused to say Saturday whether their officer also would be placed on leave.

Hahn said the officer who shot Yount is a member of the Sacramento force but refused to release the names of the officers involved.

The incident comes on the heels of another officer-involved shooting that left 33-year-old Donald Venerable Jr. dead.

Venerable was shot to death last month following a domestic dispute in south Sacramento, during which police say Venerable used a post to attack the car his wife was using to leave. Venerable removed a small black object from his pocket before police opened fire. The object turned out to be a cell phone.

Family members and friends who witnessed the shooting have said that Venerable had his hands in the air when he was shot and had told officers he had a cell phone. Another witness has said he thought the object was a pistol and that he did not hear Venerable say it was a cell phone.

Venerable, who is African American, was shot by a white officer. The incident has incensed many in Sacramento's African American community and has spurred two lawsuits against the city as well as a series of investigations, including one by the FBI.

Saturday's incident began around 3:30 a.m. when a security guard in the area flagged down a Sacramento police officer as Yount was attempting to leave the 7-Eleven parking lot in a car.

The officer stopped Yount and placed him in the back of his squad car, where police say he became violent, smashing the window and metal screen with his head.

With the help of two security guards, the officer placed Yount in handcuffs, according to police accounts. But he became combative once he was back inside the car, Hahn said.

The three other officers arrived, and one of them used a stun gun to try to subdue Yount.

Hahn said suspects thrashing around in the back of a patrol car can injure themselves and that officers are required to calm suspects before transporting them.

"The screen in a squad car is not like a screen door," Hahn said. "It's made of metal, and he was banging his head against it."

According to Hahn, Yount eventually shattered the back window of the squad car and injured the elbow of one of the officers trying to restrain him. Hahn said Yount was kicking and spitting at the officers when the shot was fired.

The shooting will be investigated by internal affairs and homicide detectives in the Police Department, the city's Office of Police Accountability and the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office.

Hahn said the unnamed officers range in age from their late 20s to mid-30s.

The Sacramento Police Department also refused initially to give the names of the officers involved in the Venerable shooting. The names were released last week after The Bee submitted a request under the California Public Records Act.

A similar request was made Saturday for those involved in the Yount shooting.

Community leaders discuss controversial police shooting

SACRAMENTO, California (KCRA) -- The controversial shooting of a Sacramento man by police spawned a community summit Wednesday to mend a growing dividing line between law enforcement and minority communities.

It was a closed meeting, and Sacramento Police Chief Arturo Venegas refused to comment on his way up to the third floor of City Hall.

Creighton Goodwin was at City Hall hoping to sit in on the meeting.

"This is not a good step, locking people out of the meeting," he said.

Civic leaders are hoping upset community members won't jump to conclusions until a full police report is completed.

"I think the community has concern, valid concerns, whenever a shooting happens," Sacramento Mayor Heather Fargo said. "We're taking those concerns seriously. We are aware of the community's concerns and we want to make sure we get to the bottom of what happened that night."

Fargo also said that some concerns were voiced that the two officers involved in the shooting were already back on duty.

Police Accountability Director Don Casimere is conducting his own investigation into last month's incident in which Donald D.J. Venerable Jr. (left) was shot to death by two police city officers.

"It was helpful to go out and mark off and measure off where people were standing and what their vantage point was," Casimere said.

Casimere was part of a two-hour visit to the neighborhood where the shooting occurred Wednesday. Every element of the incident was re-enacted.

"To look at where Mr. Venerable was standing when he was shot, the police officers, where they were. Also to see what the light was like," Casimere said.

According to police, Venerable dialed 911 while arguing with his wife Feb. 9. She had taken a club to his car, smashing windows. He did the same to her car. Police told him to raise his hands. He did, but his right hand still held the cellular phone he had used to call them.

Officer Casey Dionne fired a non-lethal taser at Venerable while officer Joseph Ellis fired his service weapon, fatally wounding the 33-year-old father of three young children.

Venerable later died at a nearby hospital.

Mayor Heather Fargo, the Sacramento Police Department, the district attorney, the city manager, Police Accountability and members of the community will meet at City Hall.

One of those community members will be NAACP president Ida Sydnor.

"We have all these facets going off in different directions. But the bottom line is equality and justice for all folks in Sacramento. That's what we want," Sydnor said.

Sydnor also said that she's looking for an agenda to solve problems with "the police, 'driving while black,' even 'walking while black' and living in Sacramento."