



Press Release

Incident: May 29, 2017 Officer Involved Shooting Incident

Location: 5000 Block of Mowry Ave

Date/Time of Incident: May 29, 2017 at 4:55pm

On May 29, 2017, an officer involved shooting occurred in the City of Fremont. The following summary is based on the Fremont Police Department's investigation to this point:

At 3:55 p.m. Fremont Police Patrol Officer William Gourley was in the 5000 block of Mowry Ave in the parking lot of a grocery store. He was flagged down regarding a male, later identified as Rolonte Simril (27 year old Oakland resident), brandishing and waving a metal pipe at people. The reporting party told Officer Gourley that Simril was swinging the pipe threatening people and was going to hurt someone.

Surveillance video, later recovered from a business, depicted Simril swinging an object at customers and the reporting party. Customers appeared frightened and visibly shaken by Simril's behavior. The video included the reporting party seeing Officer Gourley in the parking lot and driving over to tell him what was taking place.

After receiving a description of Simril, Officer Gourley transmitted the information over the radio and asked for cover units. Officer Gourley drove east through the parking lot and quickly located Simril holding the metal object. Simril walked towards the patrol car. Officer Gourley got out of his vehicle with his weapon drawn and ordered Simril to, "drop it." Simril immediately took off running with the metal object in his right hand, in a westbound direction through the crowded parking lot. Officer Gourley holstered his firearm, took out his TASER and yelled multiple times, "stop, police, drop it." Simril ran around a vehicle and back the opposite way towards the south parking lot of the grocery store. Officer Gourley continued to assess the situation and realized the TASER would not be effective due to the suspect wearing a large backpack. He re-holstered his TASER and drew his firearm. Recognizing the shopping center was crowded and it was dangerous to run with a weapon, he again re-holstered his firearm during the approximate 200-250 yard chase. Officer Gourley's plan as he closed-in was to overtake the suspect from behind and dislodge the weapon. His plan was interrupted when a driver in the parking lot, who had seen what was taking place, tried to assist by driving into Simril's flight path. Simril fell slightly onto the hood of the intervening vehicle. He spun around landing directly facing Officer Gourley, still armed with the metal object, in what was described as a fighting stance. Out of concern for safety, Officer Gourley yelled at the driver to move his vehicle and get out of the way. The vehicle quickly reversed leaving skids on the pavement. Witnesses at the scene reported Officer Gourley gave Simril several verbal commands at gunpoint to drop the metal object. Officer Gourley described Simril as making a movement towards him. Feeling he was in imminent danger, Officer Gourley fired his weapon three times, striking Simril.

Officer Gourley immediately called for an ambulance and held Simril at gunpoint until additional officers arrived. The officers approached Simril, removed the weapon from his right hand and placed him in handcuffs. The same officers then immediately began rendering lifesaving field trauma care. During a search of his person a glass pipe, commonly used for smoking illegal drugs, was located. Fremont Fire Paramedics arrived and Simril was subsequently transported to a trauma center. Simril underwent surgery and is currently recovering in the hospital.

On Wednesday, May 31, 2017, Fremont Detectives attempted to interview Simril, but it was unproductive. Simril was arrested on charges of brandishing a weapon and obstructing/resisting arrest. Due to being hospitalized, he was released from custody and will be arraigned on these charges at a later date. Simril has related past criminal history of drug and weapon use, as well as exhibiting violence towards others.

During the investigation, several independent witnesses gave accounts and interpretations based on their perspective and vantage point. The Fremont Fire staff who responded to provide medical aid had witnessed Simril behaving in a similar manner approximately 30 minutes prior to the incident, in the area of Mowry Ave and Argonaut Way. Officer Gourley's patrol car was equipped with in-car video that captured a portion of the foot pursuit. No video has been made available to our department depicting the incident in its entirety. The metal pole recovered at the scene was measured to be 16.5 inches long. Officer Gourley has been a Fremont Police Officer for more than 7 years. Officer Gourley is a member of the Fremont Police Department's SWAT Team, an Arrest and Control Tactics instructor and has recently attended a 38 hour Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) course, designed to teach de-escalation during crisis situations.

The incident is being investigated by the Fremont Police Department's Investigative Unit. A separate investigation is being conducted by the Alameda County District Attorney's Office.

If anyone has information about this incident, you are asked to please contact Fremont Police Investigators at 510-790-6900 or email Detective Gebhardt at MGebhardt@fremont.gov.
Press/Media: Please contact Public Affairs Manager Geneva Bosques or PIO Sgt. Ricardo Cortes at 510-790-6802 or email FremontPDPIO@fremont.gov.

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