

Timeline / Summary / Questions for Sheriff's Dept (SD)

(Matthew Denton / Jeffery Thomas Case)

8:02 PM – Time-stamped Wal-Mart receipt found in Matt's backpack at scene.

8:02 PM – Time of sunset for Charleston, SC (according to chart from timeanddate.com).

CPD Event Log:

8:39 – First Call [Dispatch audios: a) witness at 861 Riverland, across from Park; a driver hit person, in ditch, and driver just took off. b) man was doing CPR, jumped up and said call 911.]

8:51 – Req for Chas Cnty and Hwy Patrol to be notified of incident.

8:57 – Chas Cnty was advised. (SD didn't arrive until 9:40 per SD Incident Report.)

9:05 – Spoke with Garrett at Hwy Patrol.

9:10 – Chas Cnty & Hwy Patrol updated.

9:11 – Chas Cnty advised to have their fatality team ERT.

9:11 – Address change from 861 to 778 Riverland Dr.

9:18 – Suspect came back, in custody. (Audio: suspect at Riverland & Central Pk; returned w/ wife.)

9:38 – Chas Cnty on scene.

SD Event Log:

8:41 – Wireless caller

9:16 – Adv. Sgt. Grimsley to adv him of situation.

9:18 – Sgt. Grimsley adv to contact Sgt. Williams.

9:26 – SD notified by CPD it had custody of suspect.

(SD Event/Call logs missing between 8:48 - 9:16. Assume use same dispatcher as CPD?)

SD Incident Report

9:25 – SD notified by CPD it was not going to handle collision.

9:40 – SD arrives on scene.

Questions:

- Why no CPD reports regarding Thomas being taken in custody?
- It was later reported that Thomas went to West Ashley to pick up his "girlfriend." Why do no reports identify this person – a material witness?
- Why the change of crime scene address? (across street, 50-100 ft. away).
- Why did this require change from CPD to SD, after CPD had secured scene & had custody of Thomas?
- What was going on for the approx 30 minutes that CPD had custody of Thomas before SD arrived?
- Why no CPD reports of observations or conversations with Thomas?
- When & to whom did Thomas ID himself as being a DNR officer?

Traffic Collision Report:

1. Thomas contributed to accident; and Matt Denton did not.
2. Thomas travelling at 35 MPH at time of incident (Dan's Note: should slow down when biker present – obviously Thomas was not paying attention – had been drinking.)
3. Thomas struck Matt from behind, who was lawfully riding bike on Riverland when struck.

CPD Event log states Hwy Patrol was notified and updated on collision.

SCHP's MAIT guidelines provide that its specially trained investigators will generally be called to investigate collisions when involving:

1. Felony DUI;
2. A fatal collision involving a law enforcement officer;
3. Hit and run accidents.

Questions:

- Why was the SC Hwy Patrol MAIT not called in to do the investigation?
- Who made the decision not to request a MAIT investigation?
- When & to whom did Thomas ID himself as being a DNR officer?

Aug 23 – Notice of Rep & Denton Family Contact – Karl Twenge, Esq, notified SD he is representing Denton family & is contact person for all notices. Victim Services faxes him SD Incident and Traffic Collision Reports. Same or next day, Karl talks to Sgt. Grimsley who stated that at the scene Thomas was impaired & smelled of alcohol (& later told Matt’s mother that he had a BAC expert available), but a decision was made not to charge him with DUI.

Flashlight - Sgt Grimsley also told Mr. Twenge that a flashlight was found at the scene and was turned on & SD kept it as evidence.

- Why no mention of flashlight in any reports?

Sept 10 – Prelim Hearing – No attempt made to notify Denton family – required by law. (Charges of Leaving Scene dismissed. See Summary of Transcript – Asst. Solicitor made no arguments or objections.)

Sept 11 or 12 - Cassy Denton Calls Sgt. Grimsley - After hearing nothing from the SD or Solicitor’s Office since the accident, Cassy Denton, Matt’s mother, called Sgt. Grimsley to find out status of case & learned that charges were dismissed. Grimsley was upset to have learned the hearing was held while he was out of town & said the case was a “slam dunk” & he didn’t know why case got dismissed. Grimsley confirmed evidence of alcohol involved in case as discussed with Twenge.

Evidence of Alcohol - Fatality Report, p.30 - Sgt. Grimsley reports that Thomas was impaired; that he “did appear to have been drinking, but had left the scene and then returned. This was the only reason he was not placed under arrest for Felony DUI.” [911 caller said driver had white T-shirt, blue shorts that looked like swim trunks, & barefooted. (p. 13)]

Questions:

- Why no field sobriety test or Breathalyzer?
- Why leaving scene a reason not to charge Felony DUI?
- **Who made decision not to charge Felony DUI and why?**
- **If not DUI, why not charged with Reckless Homicide?** (Death from reckless disregard of other’s safety.)
- Why evidence of alcohol not in initial SD Incident Reports & made available to prosecutor at Prelim Hearing on Leaving Scene?
- Wasn’t Dept. Martin, who testified at Prelim Hearing, aware of alcohol evidence?
- Why was hearing held without Grimsley’s knowledge?
- Does defense atty have any control over scheduling prelim hearings and/or picking judge?
- **Why was Denton family not notified of Prelim Hearing?** (Dentons not contacted one time)
- Why was Subpoena for search of Thomas vehicle necessary?
- Because he refused to talk and cooperate? (Judge at prelim assumed he cooperated.)
- What does color coded accident scene diagram show?
- **Will any charges be presented to Grand Jury?** (For Leaving Scene & Reckless Homicide)