

News

No Charges Against Minneapolis Officers in Black Man's Death

Thurman Blevins was killed June 23

By Youssef Rddad, Amy Forliti, Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS— Two Minneapolis police officers who shot and killed a Black man last month were justified in using deadly force, a prosecutor announced Monday, saying the man was fleeing police and turned toward them with a loaded gun before he was shot.

Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman said Thurman Blevins had refused commands to stop and show his hands, and was clearly a danger to the officers and community.

"Their decision to use deadly force against Mr. Blevins under those circumstances was authorized," Freeman said, adding that the officers will not be criminally charged.

His statements were in prepared remarks that were handed out to the media. Freeman had tried to make the announcement during a news conference, but he was shouted down by Blevins' friends and family members. They argue Blevins was no threat to anybody and was just sitting with a woman and his child.

"He was forced to run away from his family so they wouldn't shoot him

down in his own community in front of his kid," said Sydnee Brown, a cousin.

Freeman's decision came after the city released the officers' body-camera video late Sunday. Freeman's report says Officers Justin Schmidt and Ryan Kelly were responding to a 911 call of a man firing a gun into the air June 23 on the city's north side. Body camera videos show them pulling their cruiser up and Blevins seated on a curb near a woman with a child in a stroller. As the officers pull up, one says, "He's got a gun!" and they jump from the squad car.

Schmidt yells "Put your (expletive) hands up now!" as Blevins runs. Schmidt also yells, "Put your hands up! I will (expletive) shoot you!" Kelly yells, "Stop or I'll shoot!" repeatedly.

In a chase that takes less than a minute, Blevins yells back, "I didn't do nothing bro," "Please don't shoot" and "Leave me alone." An enhanced version of the videos has a red circle drawn around what appears to be a gun in Blevins' right hand, as he looks over his left shoulder at the officers.

After the chase turns down an alley, Blevins is

shot, still running.

At Freeman's aborted news conference, Jennifer Rohr, a friend of the Blevins family, criticized the officer who said "He's got a gun."

"He just gave himself a license to shoot Mr. Blevins," Rohr said. She said Blevins was "assassinated." Others were upset that Blevins was shot while running away.

In interviews with investigators, Schmidt said he feared for his life when he saw Blevins take his gun out of his pocket. Kelly said he believed the gun was aimed directly at him, and he was "pretty sure" Blevins fired the weapon at him.

The report from Freeman's office says a shell casing from Blevins' gun was found near his body. In a conference call with reporters, Freeman said authorities can't be certain that Blevins shot at the officers, but it is irrelevant to the charging decision. He said merely pointing a handgun at officers is a threat that allows the officers to protect themselves.

"For our evaluation, the mere fact that he pointed a loaded handgun that he had fired earlier in the day ... gives officers justification to fire his weapon," Freeman said.

Freeman said toxicol-



This June 23, 2018, image from multiple police cam videos provided by the Minneapolis Police Department shows a chase between Officers Justin Schmidt and Ryan Kelly and suspect Thurman Blevins, in Minneapolis. Authorities in Minneapolis released the body camera video Sunday, July 29 from the two police officers in the fatal shooting of Blevins, with the footage showing the man shot from behind after a frenetic foot chase and what appeared to be a gun in his hand.

ogy reports on Blevins showed his blood-alcohol content was 0.162, double the legal limit for driving. Blevins also had THC, a component of marijuana, and other drugs in his system. Freeman said that was also irrelevant to his decision.

Freeman said the officers fired 14 shots and

Blevins was hit four times.

Lt. Bob Kroll, the head of the police union, said the body camera footage proved the two officers acted justifiably.

"The officers deserve the Minneapolis Police Department's highest award — the Medal of Honor — and the respect of the population it

swore to protect," Kroll said.

A protest of Blevins' death was planned for Tuesday afternoon at the Hennepin County Government Center.

Some witnesses had disputed Blevins was armed, saying he was carrying a bottle or a

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Celebration of Life: James Harmon Unthank September 3, 1938 - July 12, 2018



James Unthank

A memorial service for James Unthank is scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2018, 2 p.m. at St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church, 120 N.E. Knott St., Portland, Ore.

Arrangements by Terry Family Funeral Home.

Obituary: Zane Hanks February 19, 1930 - July 25, 2018



Zane Hanks

Zane Hanks died at his home on July 25, 2018, at the age of 88. He was born February 19, 1930 in Kansas City, Mo.

He attended Manhattan High School, graduating in 1948. Zane was drafted into the Navy after high school and served in the Korean War.

In 1952, He was transferred to the Navy station in Astoria, Ore. In 1957 he met Fern McCoy and they married in February 1957. Zane

worked for Bonneville Power Administration for 25 years, retiring in 1985.

Zane is survived by three sons, Michael, Laurence, and Stephen, and

several cousins, nephews, and nieces. He was preceded in death by his wife Fern, and his brother Billy Hanks.

A memorial service was held at Hustad Funeral Home on Sunday, July 29, 2018 at 1 p.m. Interment will be at Willamette National Cemetery, Portland, Ore.

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