

Warrant: Police say they were fired upon first

Investigation continues into Dale City shootout

» BY NOLAN STOUT
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Police say they were shot at first in an alleged exchange of gunfire during an undercover drug sting in Dale City last week.

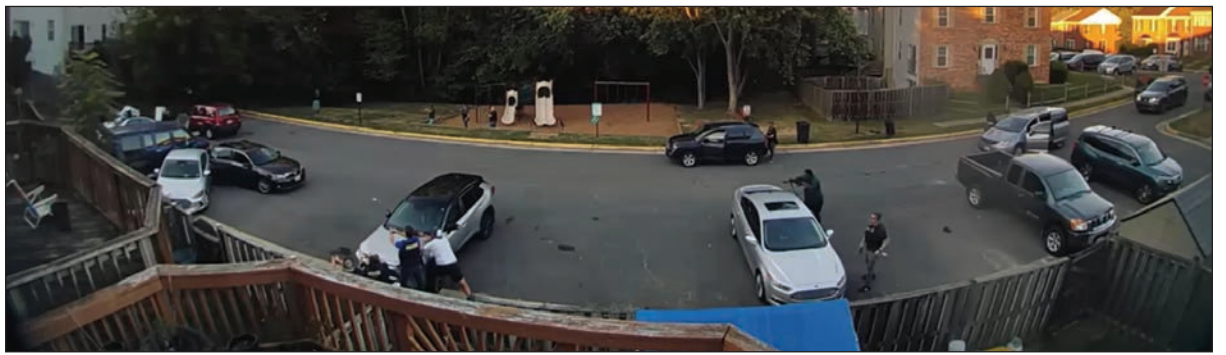
Jaiden Malik Carter, 19, of Dale City, died Sept. 4 after the shooting on Sept. 1. A search warrant filed Sept. 6 in Prince William County Circuit Court indicates investigators believe they were shot at first. The warrant does not indicate who among the three people involved in the incident fired a weapon.

A confidential informant and an undercover Manassas city detective arranged to purchase 1,000 pills of Fentanyl and one firearm from a suspect for \$6,000 on Sept. 1 in the area of 14700 Fox Glove Court, a townhouse community off Cloverdale Road, according to the search warrant.

The search warrant says that three suspects arrived in a vehicle and two of them, identified as Carter and Jalil Michael Turner, 18, got into the undercover detective's car for the purchase. The filing says that 30-year-old Shane Dareon Pollard of Woodbridge remained in the driver's seat of the suspect vehicle.

During the purchase, the warrant says that video inside the undercover vehicle shows that Turner pulled out a gun and demanded money from the detective.

After stealing the money, the warrant says Carter and Turner got back in their vehicle. The vehicle attempted to flee the area as members of the Northern Virginia Safe Streets Taskforce converged on the scene.



Police released a Ring video that shows a Sept. 1 undercover drug buy and ensuing shootout unfold. The shooting left 19-year-old Jaiden Malik Carter of Dale City dead. PROVIDED

The warrant says that responding officers were “immediately fired upon, resulting in assisting officers returning fire” and hitting Carter and Pollard. Turner was not injured.

In surveillance video released by police from a nearby home, a puff of smoke can be seen coming from the vehicle as police surround it, but it's unclear if that is from shots hitting it or being fired from it.

The 12-minute video shows the vehicle then driving in reverse before crashing into parked cars. One person, who appears unharmed, is ordered out of the vehicle and arrested. Police do not approach the vehicle during the eight minutes after the shooting that are included on the video.

Officers, who swarmed the scene in unmarked vehicles, cannot be heard identifying themselves before any shots are fired on the video.

Police have said they recovered two handguns, one of them illegally modified to be fully automatic with an extended magazine. The search warrant notes “firearms, spent shell casings, bullet fragments.”

Two Prince William and two Manassas police detectives were involved in the exchange of gunfire, according to authorities, and they have been placed on routine administrative leave pending the outcome of the criminal and internal investigations. No agency involved in the shooting will be part of the criminal investigation.

Police have declined to say if there is any body-worn camera footage from the shooting.

Arlington County Police, handling the investigation through a regional Critical Incident Response Team agreement, have charged Turner and Pollard in connection with the shooting. Turner is charged with robbery resulting in a death and use of a firearm in a felony.

Pollard is charged with robbery resulting in death and will also be served outstanding warrants in connection with an unrelated October carjacking, according to police.

The search warrant was filed by an Arlington County detective seeking DNA swabs from Turner to compare to evidence at the scene.

Editor Kari Pugh contributed to this report.

Newsham rebuts claims of 'watchlist' in D.C.

» BY NOLAN STOUT
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Prince William County Police Chief Peter Newsham is rebutting claims that as chief of the Metropolitan Police Department he created a "watchlist" of lawyers, activists and journalists whose requests for public records would be delayed or denied.

Attorney Amy Phillips filed a lawsuit against Washington, D.C., on Feb. 2 in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia claiming that Newsham created a list of people whose requests would receive extra scrutiny to limit the release of information that "may lead to criticism of the department."

Newsham was asked about the lawsuit during a virtual town hall Monday held by Delta Sigma Theta, a historically African American service sorority.

"There was not a watchlist," he said. "Some of the folks who have reported on this issue, what I've asked them to do is read the lawsuit."

Before being hired in Prince William, Newsham was chief of the Metropolitan Police Department from 2017 to early 2021, overseeing 4,500 employees.

Phillips' lawsuit is based on information provided by Vendette Parker, who was MPD's Freedom of Information Act officer from October 2017 to January 2020. The lawsuit is accompanied by a 12-page statement signed by Parker.

In her statement, Parker says that on her first day in the office, she was told by a supervisor that Newsham "felt he was being blindsided as the media and others confronted him with questions regarding records they had obtained from FOIA, records he was unaware had been released."

Parker said she was advised of an "unofficial, unwritten policy that required the FOIA officer to notify Chief Newsham ... of any FOIA request originating from the media, certain identified individuals, or requests for certain records."

"The purpose of presenting the records to [the supervisor] was to allow her and Chief

Newsham an opportunity to inspect what records were about to be released in order to prepare in case any of the records being released would have a reputationally detrimental impact to Chief Newsham or MPD before the requester received the potentially detrimental records," the statement says.

On Monday, Newsham said the policy was not to restrict access to records. He said that, as a department head, he simply wanted to know what information was being released.

"You need to know information is going to be public so you can respond [and] thoughtfully discuss the information that's going to be released," he said. "But there was never an effort to make it more difficult for anybody."

Parker notes that she has "no knowledge of whether [the supervisor] and Chief Newsham actually met to discuss any proposed releasable records. I was never a part of their meetings. I only know that [the supervisor] told me she would discuss them with Chief Newsham."

Newsham pointed out that "as we all know, the pleadings in a lawsuit are a one-sided filing."

"If I was going to create a list of everybody that was critical of the Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, D.C., it would be more than just a couple of people," he said. "Criticism of our agency made us better."

Discussion of the lawsuit was only a small part of the town hall Monday. Newsham also used his time to discuss measures the Prince William Police Department is taking to improve diversity, build relationships with the community and issues facing law enforcement.

"We are not a diverse police department," Newsham said. "We need to inspire young people of color to do this work because if we don't we're going to miss an opportunity."

Newsham was also asked about no-knock warrants, which allow police to serve a warrant without first announcing their presence.

Newsham said the practice is not used in Prince William. "There's just no place for that in law enforcement today."



PETER NEWSHAM

Black History event on health set

In observance of Black History Month, the Prince William County Black History Committee will host a live virtual event on Saturday, Feb. 19, featuring local professionals discussing mental, physical, dental and internal health.

The event begins at 10 a.m. with a health and wellness panel focused on the theme of "Black Health and Wellness."

The theme acknowledges the legacy of Black scholars and medical practitioners in Western medicine as well as other practitioners throughout the African diaspora. The theme also considers the activities, rituals and initiatives that Black communi-

ties have practiced to improve wellbeing.

Scheduled to appear on the panel are Dr. Nahee Williams McDonald of Precious Smiles of Virginia pediatric dentistry; Dr. Aminah Jones, a family and lifestyle medicine physician; Thesa Cowart, Art Square Jr, and Laurie Wilson with the Prince William County Community Services Board, and physical health professionals.

Moderators for the panel will be Keona Palmer, vice-chair of the Prince William County Black History Committee, and Sgt. Byron Jenkins of the Prince William County Police Department.



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STARS OF THE SHOW



Santa and Mrs. Claus delighted the thousands of people on hand for the 76th Annual Greater Manassas Christmas Parade Dec. 3. Need more holiday cheer? See where you can scope out some of the best lights in the region on Page 12. **ANDREW FAREWELL | FOR INSIDENOVA**

MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 27

Lawsuits filed over Gateway approval

Residents claim board violated state code

» BY NOLAN STOUT
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Two groups of Gainesville residents are asking a Prince William County judge to overturn approval of the PW Digital Gateway.

The separate lawsuits, filed in Prince William Circuit Court, are asking to vacate the Board of County Supervisors' Nov. 1 vote to approve an amendment to the county's Comprehensive Plan to create the data center complex.

The PW Digital Gateway project, which proposes 27.6 million square feet of data centers on 2,139 acres along Pageland Lane, is the biggest and most controversial and contentious local land-use proposal in decades. It would firmly put Prince William on track to dethrone Loudoun County as the data center capital of the world.

The board voted to approve the guidelines for the project after a more than nine-hour public hearing and a roughly 14-hour meeting. The guidelines for the overall development, which were an amendment to

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Public safety initiative rolled out

Local leaders seek to combat rise in violent crime, drug abuse

» BY NOLAN STOUT
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Prince William County is taking the first steps to combat rising violent crime.

County officials presented an outline for a new Community Safety Initiative to the Board of County Supervisors on Tuesday.

"It's not just violence we're talking about; it's anything that could impact our community," said Deputy County Executive Dan Alexander.

The program seeks to address violent crime, vehicle and pedestrian safety and substance-abuse problems throughout the county.

"This presentation and this initiative couldn't have come at a better time," said Supervisor Andrea Bailey, D-Potomac.

Violent crime has been a concern with several shootings this year, particularly since May.



DAN ALEXANDER



"It's not just violence we're talking about; it's anything that could impact our community."

— DAN ALEXANDER,
DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Through Dec. 6, at least 12 people have been killed and 22 injured in shootings in the county this year. One person has been killed and eight injured in other violent attacks, such as stabbings.

"It is certainly very alarming as we are approaching a near

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INSIDE

Kline Farm development project moves forward

» BUSINESS, PAGE 4

Overton helps Freedom land spot in state finals

» SPORTS, PAGE 24

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record homicide rate,” said Supervisor Jeanine Lawson, R-Brentsville.

Through Nov. 28, Prince William County police have also made five arrests and recovered 12 weapons, including five guns and four knives in county schools this year.

The initiative would be supported by four employees: a manager, data analyst, administrative support and a community engagement specialist. The employees would help determine where and how to target education and outreach in the county to try to prevent violence.

As part of the initiative, the county would create a 20-member community safety advisory committee of representatives from a variety of stakeholders, including public safety, the school system and community-based organizations.

The county plans to shift two existing vacancies to hire the manager and data analyst. The administrative support and community engagement specialist would be hired and included as part of the budget for fiscal 2024, which starts July 1.

Alexander said the two positions would cost about \$166,000 over the next six months. Funding all four positions for a full year is estimated at \$515,000.

The county plans to apply for a \$500,000 Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services grant to support the program.

Lawson wanted the initiative to include

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“This presentation and this initiative couldn’t have come at a better time.”

— ANDREA BAILEY, POTOMAC DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

more “practical” measures, such as supporting stronger families. She said an important issue is “the erosion of the family unit.”

“I think that is America’s biggest problem,” Lawson said. “And the dwindling church attendance.”

Supervisor Yesli Vega, R-Coles, said the initiative needs to include data from the commonwealth’s attorney’s office about reduced or amended charges and how that could increase criminal activity.

Supervisor Margaret Franklin, D-Woodbridge, said the initiative will continue ongoing conversations with property owners and developers to make sure properties aren’t conducive to crime, such as through poor lighting or heavily screened areas.

“This is only the beginning,” she said. “We have a long way to go. It will take



Supervisor Andrea Bailey, pictured here at an event earlier this year, welcomed news of the county’s new public safety initiative. FILE PHOTO

every facet of our community to address these concerns.”

The initiative will also focus on traffic and pedestrian safety, which has been a problem this year.

At least 10 pedestrians have been killed on county roads so far this year. Additionally, at least 11 people have been killed and 19 injured in crashes.

2022 VIOLENT CRIME

- » 12 people killed in shootings in county
- » 22 people injured in shootings
- » 1 person killed in non-shooting violent attack
- » 22 people injured in non-shooting violent attacks