

Police shoot man to death

Walter K. Collins ran from police and reached for a gun, Chief Olson said.

By David Chanen
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Walter K. Collins, 21, died at the Hennepin County Medical Center after being shot by a police officer.

A Minneapolis police officer shot and killed a 21-year-old man who reached for a gun in his waistband during a foot chase in the Phillips neighborhood early Friday, authorities said.

Officers Charles Greaves and Jamie Conway, in uniform

and a marked squad, had stopped to investigate what they believed was a drug deal in a van parked in the 2200 block of Park Av. S. about 4:45 a.m., investigators said. Walter K. Collins and another man ran from the van in separate directions. Within a block Collins grabbed for his gun and turned

toward Conway, said Police Chief Robert Olson.

Conway shot Collins, of Minneapolis, once in the chest. He died four hours later during surgery at the Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis.

"I'm thankful the officer wasn't injured," Olson said. "I'm sorry somebody had to be killed, but that's what happens when you pull a gun on an officer. This reflects the danger of guns on the street."

SHOOTING continues on B9:

— *Man had been arrested several times.*

SHOOTING from B1

Victim's parents say they don't believe police account

The gun, which police said belonged to Collins, was found next to his body. Police weren't able to arrest the other man. Olson asked the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office to investigate the shooting, but he said the Police Department will review it to make sure the officers didn't violate any policies or procedures.

The officers were placed on three-day paid administrative leave, which is standard after an officer-involved shooting. Greaves has been with the department for eight years and Conway for seven. They have had no disciplinary action taken against them.

Collins' parents, Sara Collins and Walter Bell, said that they didn't believe the Police Department's account of how their son was killed.

"Police say he's a gang member because he associates with people in gangs, but he isn't," she said. "I don't want him to be labeled as a gang member or a drug dealer. He was a good son."

Collins is known to police, something his parents readily acknowledged. He has been arrested several times, once for fleeing a police officer in north Minneapolis in 2001. He also was charged that year with first-degree aggravated robbery of two people in Peavey Park, which is around the corner from where he was shot Friday. The charges were dismissed when the victims didn't appear for the trial.

In 2002, Collins was shot during two different incidents. In January, he was shot at the Subway restaurant at 1924 Chicago Av. S. in Minneapolis. His mother said he lost a kidney because of the shooting.

Five months later, Collins was shot in the leg in the 3000 block of Vincent Av. N. in Minneapolis.

Sara Collins said her son spent some time at the juvenile correctional facility in Red Wing, Minn. He has no felony charges in Hennepin County as an adult.

She also said her son earned a high school diploma while he was in prison. He also had a scholarship to Hennepin Technical College to study automotive repair and was trying to make money to get books, his father said.

"Next month, he was going to have his first baby with



Source: ESRI, GDT

his girlfriend," he said. "Walter was our first born."

The last fatal officer-involved shooting in Minneapolis was May 7 when an officer shot and killed Eric Netters, 31, who dragged another officer with a sport-utility vehicle while trying to flee police. A grand jury found that the officer who shot Netters didn't do anything criminal.

"Department policy allows an officer to use deadly force if there is a threat of great bodily harm or death to themselves or others," Olson said. "They are to stop the threat. The officers aren't trained to shoot to kill, but to hit the largest part of the body."

Olson said there had been six drug-related homicides within two blocks of Friday's shooting, and some recent gun violence in the area has been caused by feuding between three gangs. State Patrol troopers, who had been helping the department for about two months until Sept. 20, freed up officers to do undercover work, Olson said.

The department has also used a variety of tactics to lower crime in what Olson called "a challenging hot spot." Officers have worked with federal law enforcement agents to build federal firearms cases, and 23 felony warrants were recently served, he said.

Collins was shot on the lawn in front of Ear, Nose & Throat Speciality Care of Minnesota, which is next to the Phillips Eye Institute. No employees were working at the time of the incident, said Margie Schmidt, communications manager for the institute.

"We feel we work hard with the community to be safe and we feel safe," she said.

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