

# **CUAPB Reinvestigation of the Thurman Blevins Case**

- Reinvestigation Work Group
- Reviews and rechecks existing information
- Determines true narrative

# Thurman Blevins - City Narrative

In the City's version of the story,

- A 911 caller notifies the police that a black man is firing a handgun into the air and into the ground.
- Police officers respond to the call and find Blevins, who has a gun in his pocket and a large bottle of alcohol in his hand.
- Blevins refuses orders to drop the gun and flees the police, until he removes the gun from his pocket and begins to turn toward the police.
- The officers, in danger from Blevins, shot him.
- No charges filed.

# CUAPB's Findings in the Blevins Case:

- Timeline
- Start of the incident: 911 call
- Failure to render aid
- Manufactured “evidence”
- Public safety of witnesses in the alley
- Our demands

# Start of Incident

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| 2:48 pm | Thurman purchased a gun from a friend. He then sat drinking with friends in the back yard behind his apartment.   |
| 5:26 pm | 911 call stating a black man was shooting into the air and ground, walking near Lyndale and Bryant Ave N., light-complexioned, <b>white or grey tank top</b> , black backpack, 35-36 years old, 6-feet tall, 180 pounds, fade haircut with designs. |
| 5:28 pm | Squads 460 & 470 responded. They drove past Thurman, located a man who fit the description, had BB gun.   |
| 5:33 pm | Squad 420 was on the way to back up squads 460 & 470. They saw Thurman who was sitting on the curb with a woman, child in stroller, and a dog. Thurman was in <b>a black tank top and brown shorts</b> .  |

# Squad 420 Interaction with Thurman

- Schmidt and Kelly jump out of squad car screaming, guns drawn. Did not take cover.
- Screamed conflicting orders, “Put your hands up!” and, “Drop it!”
- Thurman, intoxicated, turned and started running and said, “**Why?** My liquor! C’mon man!”
- Schmidt kept yelling, “Put it down, put it down!”
- Thurman thought they were chasing him because of his bottle of alcohol. He eventually dropped the bottle, yelling, “It’s back there! It’s back there!”
- Schmidt finally yelled, “You’ve got a gun, mother\*cker.” Thurman replied, “No. I don’t.” Schmidt called back, “Yes, you do.”
- ***Thurman may not have remembered purchasing the gun, as he had bought it only three hours before getting extremely intoxicated.***



Thurman dropped his bottle of alcohol in the street, following Schmidt's commands to "put it down!" before realizing they were talking about the gun he purchased only hours earlier. [Photo from Ofc. Schmidt's BWC footage.]

# Thurman Runs Away, Pleads for His Life

- Thurman turned southbound into the alley between Aldrich Ave N and Bryant Ave N.
- He pleaded “Please don’t shoot me.” Schmidt yelled “Put your hands up.” He replied, “Leave me alone.” Schmidt said, “Put your hands up.” He again pleaded, “Leave me alone” or possibly “I’m unarmed.”
- Schmidt yelled, “Put your hands...” then opened fire.
- Schmidt fired 3 shots before Kelly had his gun out. Kelly started shooting at Schmidt’s 5th shot. Both officers then began shooting simultaneously.
- Thurman fell during the 6th shot and was on the ground by the 7th shot. Kelly continued shooting after Mr. Blevins was down, shooting 5 shots while Mr. Blevins was on the ground. The pattern of shooting was 11 shots then a pause then 3 shots fired by Kelly. There were 14 shots in total, 8 by Schmidt and 6 by Kelly.

# No Officers Rendered Aid

- After being shot, body camera footage shows Thurman groaning and continuing to move.
- Kelly was a long-time tactical EMS instructor, providing training to emergency medical personnel at Hennepin County Medical Center since 2011.
- Kelly had a trauma kit in the back of his squad car. Yet he failed to use the kit or his training to assist Mr. Blevins in any way.
- Kelly told the BCA he did not render aid because, “the gun was still in his hand,” though it was almost immediately kicked away by Ofc. William Gregory.
- Kelly then offered another excuse for not rendering immediate aid, stating “It’s their job [referring to EMTs that were not yet on the scene] to take care of an injured person.



# Other Issues

- Schmidt was a trainer with Archway Defense, a fear-based law enforcement training company.
- Kelly was at least 120 feet back from Schmidt when he opened fire but claimed he could see down the barrel of Thurman's gun. Even if Thurman had pointed a gun, it's clear he could not have seen it that far away.
- He also claimed Thurman was leading them into an ambush though Thurman had no idea they were going to approach him and thus no ability to preplan.
- THIS WHOLE INCIDENT MAY HAVE STARTED BECAUSE SOMEONE WHO OWED THURMAN MONEY CALLED 911.
- ALTERNATELY, SCHMIDT AND KELLY PURSUED THE WRONG MAN

# The 911 Caller Owed Thurman Money

Cell phone text messages suggest that the 911 caller is the same individual who owed Mr. Blevins a significant amount of money, and **thus had a motive to embellish or even lie when making the 911 call.**

The following are text messages sent from Thurman to the Probable 911 Caller:

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| To: Probable 911 Caller | Yeah but I am not able to pay bills when people say a certain time and I reach |
| To: Probable 911 Caller | I'm not rich or a bank   |

**“Thurman had a Gun in His Hand”**



**FALSE**

## Red Circle

Photo still from the NCAVF's enhanced version of the officer's body-worn camera footage.

Note the red circle around what they claim to be a gun. They also darkened his right elbow that would be holding the gun.



***Enhanced***



***Original***

# Benjamin Franklin Truck



Frame  
1



Frame  
2







**Frame 1:** Bumper, hubcap and headlight frame of plumbing truck clearly seen in yellow square.



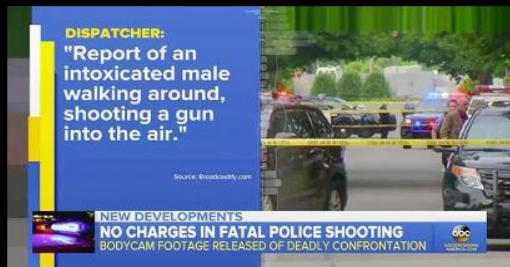
**Frame 2:** As Mr. Blevins approaches the truck, photo captures the pixels merging inside the yellow box. NCAVF circled the pixels, claiming falsely this is a gun.





**Frame 3:** Inside the red circle, NCAVF added pixels to make the merged truck pixels appear more like a gun.

The NCAVF used the story of Thurman Blevins as promotional material on their webpage. The story included a innocent, whitewashed photo of Officers Kelly and Schmidt.



The suspect was shooting his weapon into the air and into the ground. And as officers arrived he ran away. Officers yelled to drop his weapon, and he yelled back that it was "back there."

Local and state law enforcement agencies became involved in the investigation. The mayor of Minneapolis, the county attorney, and the governor of Minnesota closely monitored the situation.

### EVIDENCE FROM TWO BODY WORN CAMERAS

Two body worn cameras recorded the incident, but the video was difficult to analyze because it was very shaky as officers and suspect were running at full speed.

NCAVF was contacted by the state of Minnesota's police oversight bureau to analyze and enhance video and audio from the officers' cameras. They wanted an objective 3rd party to be involved in the investigation. Would details recorded by the body cameras help investigators understand the incident better?

What was the suspect yelling as he ran away?

Was he pulling out a gun in the moments prior to being shot, as the officers claimed?

Could NCAVF analyze and clarify the evidence to help determine what led the suspect to be shot in the back?

The mayor of Minneapolis wanted to release the raw body camera video as soon as possible in order to show full transparency to the citizens, to contain rumors and speculation and help quell protests and violence. Other officials from law enforcement agencies wanted more time to interview witnesses and conduct an investigation before outside information contaminated witness memories.

**“Thurman Pointed a Gun at Officers”**

**FALSE**



Photo session with a model of the same height and weight as Thurman. The photographs are from multiple angles around the model. The model was posed with a replica gun of the same size and type that Mr. Blevins had. However, Mr. Blevins was not actually holding a gun. The photos indicate that with the position of his right elbow, **it would have been impossible for his arm to reach far enough across his body for a gun to be visible on his left side.**



**“Thurman Shot at the Officers”**

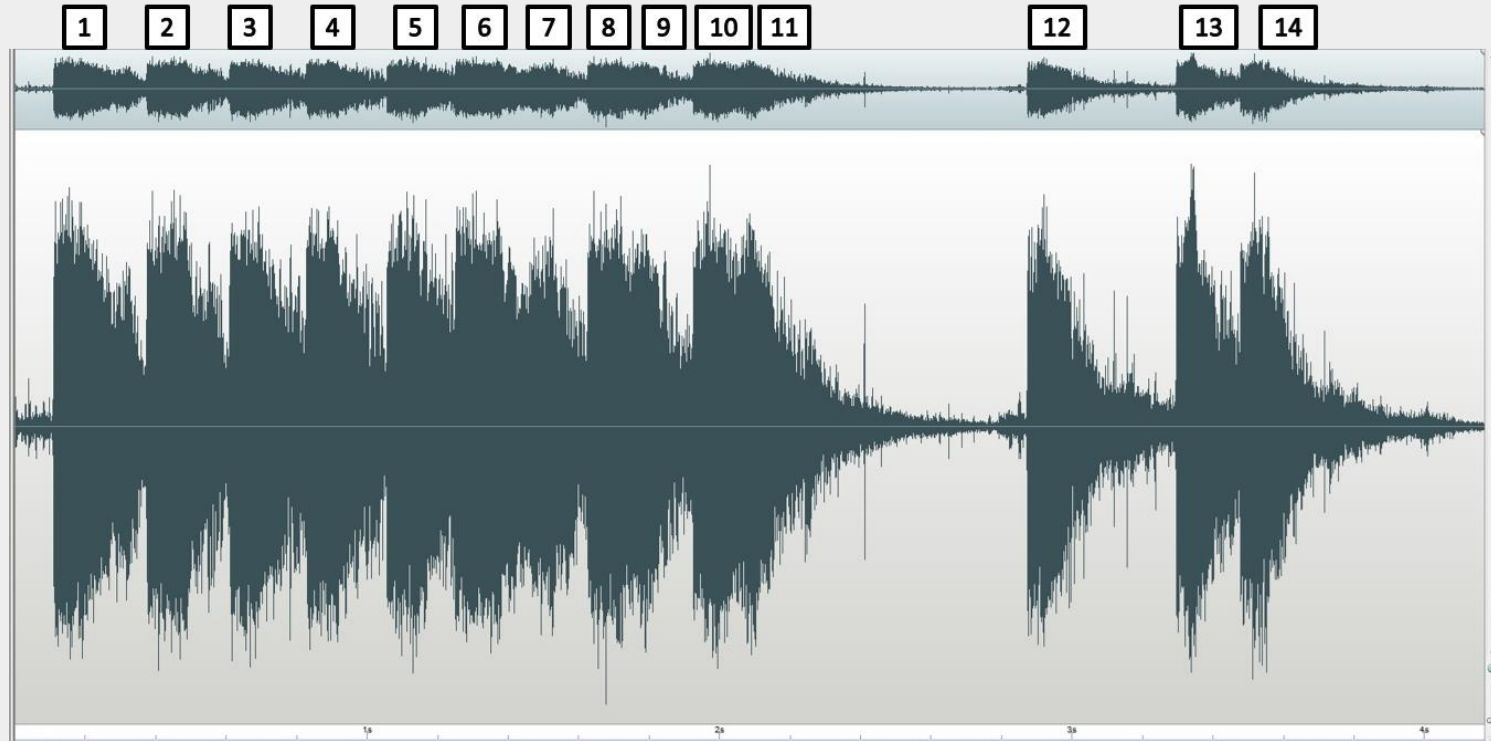


**FALSE**

A large, red, rectangular stamp with a distressed, ink-like texture. The word "FALSE" is written in bold, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center. The stamp is tilted slightly clockwise and has a double-line border.

## Appendix C

### Blevins Incident Graphical Representation of Gunshots



This is a graphic of the sound waves during the shooting portion of Schmidt's body-worn camera footage, which clearly shows 14 shots by the officers and no other shots.

## Other Evidence that Thurman Never Shot at Officers

- Although the medical examiner covered Thurman's hands with paper bags so they could be tested for gunshot residue, **they were never tested.**
- BCA's own DNA testing of Thurman's gun showed: **Blevins' DNA appears on the grip, magazine and bullets, but not on the trigger.** (BCA Lab Number 518-08754 Report Number 10.)
- A bystander in the alley, Chris Case watched the incident standing beside his car, which was struck by a police bullet that lodged in his headrest. Mr. Case said, **"The suspect, I never seen him shoot once."** (p. 572, BCA case #2018-457)
- **The last word goes to County Attorney, Mike Freeman: "I cannot tell you that here is sufficient proof that he, in fact, lined it up and shot at the officers."**

# Public Safety, Officer Safety, or Public Harm?

Kelly and Schmidt fired fourteen shots, four of which hit Blevins (BCA p. 185).

- Three bullets ended up in the Ben Franklin Plumbing truck behind 47XX Bryant Ave (BCA p. 336.)
- **One of Schmidt's bullets passed through Chris Case's headrest.** (BCA p.577).
- One bullet lodged in the wheel of a garbage bin behind 47XX Bryant (BCA p 1245).
- One bullet hit above the garage door at 47XX Aldrich (BCA p 1245)
- One bullet hit the garage overhang at 47XX Aldrich (BCA p 1245)
- No one knows where the other three police bullets ended up.



# Kelly: Poster Child for Reckless Shooting

- Officer Kelly is the poster child for reckless firearm use, firing 6 shots in 3 seconds at a target forty yards away
- For reference, the FBI handgun qualification course shoots at a maximum of 25 yards and agents fire 5 rounds in 15 seconds.
- **The contrast between officer safety and public safety ended in that alley. When the officers engaged Blevins at gunpoint with “Put your f\*cking hands up!” their concern was not for Blevins’ safety, nor for the safety of bystanders, including the two-year old child in the stroller or the neighbors in the surrounding houses.**

- The MPD **LIED**
- The BCA **LIED**
- County Attorney Mike Freeman **LIED**

**We demand:**

- This case be reopened and the Attorney General appoint a special prosecutor
- The BCA immediately cease investigating all incidents of police deadly force
- Those responsible for manufacturing evidence in this case be held criminally liable
- The state legislature create an independent agency for the investigation and potential prosecution of all incidents of police deadly force, separate and outside of all law enforcement and county prosecutor's offices

**The full report is available at:**

- **[www.cuapb.org](http://www.cuapb.org)**
  - **Publications**
    - **Documents and Reports**