

Milledgeville Police Department

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NEWS RELEASE

Date: Wednesday, Aug. 29, 2018

Division: Criminal Investigations

Due to the intricate details of this investigation, the following news release is broken up into separate sections for clarification.

Police investigate death of Eddie Oscar Dennis

The Synopsis:

Friday, Aug. 24, around 6:21 p.m., officers with the Milledgeville Police Department responded to the area of Evans Avenue and Oconee Street in reference to a fight call. While responding to the call, officers were also informed of a person being struck by a vehicle. When officers arrived to the scene, they observed a large crowd of people and a male laying on his back next to the driver's side of a red 2013 Nissan Sentra. The man was later identified as Eddie Oscar Dennis III, 47, from Milledgeville. Because he was unresponsive, MPD Officer James Spisak began performing CPR until EMS arrived. Once at the scene, EMS attempted to render aid but was unsuccessful. The scene was then secured by the Baldwin County Coroner's Office. MPD detectives and additional officers were contacted and reported to the scene. Officers already in the location were able to identify the vehicle that allegedly struck Dennis as a black 2010 Mazda 6. The driver was identified as Gar'trell Bernard Ford, 28. While processing the crime scene, responding officers found a handgun in plain view on the driver's side floorboard of the Nissan Sentra. It was secured for evidentiary purposes. After coroner Ken Garland pronounced the victim deceased, the body was removed from the location and taken to the coroner's office. Both vehicles involved in the incident were taken to the police department to be processed. Ford was detained by authorities and witnesses of the incident were told to go to the police department for further questioning.

The Investigation:

The case was assigned to MPD Detective Everett January. He began his investigation by interviewing witnesses. Through his interviews, he was able to gain the consensus from witnesses that the red vehicle (Nissan Sentra) was at the stop sign at the area of Evans and Oconee; the black vehicle (Mazda 6) stopped behind the red vehicle; Dennis exited his vehicle and approached Ford's vehicle where a verbal altercation ensued; and at some point Dennis ended up in front of the black vehicle.

Based on the information gathered through January's investigation thus far, the following evidence has been determined:

- The handgun recovered in Dennis' vehicle was moved from the roadway to his vehicle by an individual prior to officers arriving to the scene;
- Paint transfer between the two vehicles indicate the passenger side of the black car scrubbed the rear tire area of the red vehicle;
- Preliminary autopsy results indicate that Dennis died from a single blunt force trauma to the back of the head as a result of striking the pavement. No other significant injuries or broken bones were found to indicate the weight of the vehicle ever covered the victim's body.

The Background:

Police discovered that the incident derived from an ongoing feud between the two families involved. Prior to the incident on Friday, authorities were in possession of a video taken during a previous date, showing a large crowd of people gathered in the area of Evans Street. Within the group of people in the video, police could see Ford and Dennis in a fighting stance.

The Ongoing Investigation:

At this time this is still an open and active investigation.

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