

Chief John Drake's Remarks—December 30, 2020

I believe it was Sunday evening when I became aware of a report from August 2019 concerning Anthony Warner. The Matter of Record report in and of itself presented a number of questions to which we needed answers, knowing that we would be discussing it publicly. Research on the August 2019 call and police action began on Sunday and continued through this morning. Yesterday, enough was known that we were able to respond to inquiries we had received.

Here is what we know.

On Wednesday morning, August 21st, 2019, South Precinct patrol officers went to a home on Syfert Lane on a report from an attorney that the woman who lived there had made suicidal threats and was sitting on her front porch with firearms. Upon arrival, officers saw that the woman did have two pistols on the front porch next to her, but they were not in her possession and were not loaded. The woman said the guns belonged to Tony Warner and that she did not want them in her house any longer.

During the officers' conversation with the woman, she said that her boyfriend, Warner, was building bombs in the RV trailer at his residence. The attorney said that Warner frequently talked about the military and bomb making, and that he believed Warner knew what he was doing and is capable of making a bomb.

Out of concern for the woman's emotional state, officers called Mobile Crisis. They spoke with the woman over the phone and determined she was in need of care. She voluntarily was transported by ambulance to a medical facility.

Based on what they had heard, South Precinct officers responded to Warner's home on Bakertown Road. They knocked on the door, but received no answer. They saw the RV in the back yard, which was fenced off, and they could not see inside the RV. Officers tried several times to get a response at the door, but never made contact with Warner.

One of the responding officers called the Hazardous Devices Unit and relayed the substance of the call. The following day, Hazardous Devices Unit Officer Kevin Pollard began the follow up.

We know from Officer Pollard that on August 22nd, the narrative from the report and Warner's identifying information were sent to the Nashville FBI office to check FBI databases and also to determine whether Warner had any prior military connections.

Later in the day on August 22nd, the FBI reported back that they checked their holdings and found no records whatsoever on Warner. On August 28th, the FBI reported that Department of Defense checks on Warner were all negative.

During this time, Officer Pollard reports that he drove by Warner's home for several days looking to see if his vehicle, other than the motor home was there. Each time, Officer Pollard would have another officer on stand-by so that they could attempt to speak to Warner. Officer Pollard did not see Warner's minivan on any of those occasions. Officer Pollard also attempted to make contact with Warner through his land-line telephone number, to no avail.

Also during this time, Warner's girlfriend, who prompted the initial call, was receiving care and was not available.

On August 29th, 2019, Officer Pollard phoned the attorney who was on the scene during the suicidal call. During that conversation, Officer Pollard said that he was attempting to locate Warner, and was told that he was known to go on camping trips for weeks at a time. Officer Pollard recalls asking whether he could just take a look inside the RV parked behind Warner's home. Officer Pollard recalls the attorney telling him that Warner did not care for the police and--

--I am not going to be able to let him let you all do that.

Officer Pollard recalls the attorney saying that Warner is capable of making a bomb, but didn't believe he was doing so. Also during late August, our Specialized Investigations Division looked for any open source information on Warner. They found none.

At no time was there any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a crime was being committed, and our officers had no legal basis to go into Warner's fenced-in yard or home during August 2019.

No additional action was taken after late August, and, to the best of my knowledge, no other reports or information about Warner came into the police department. We had no legal basis for search warrants or subpoenas based on what we knew at the time.

Officer Pollard, as a member of our Hazardous Devices Team, has been working at the blast site with our federal partners and met with me as late as this morning to help provide you with all of the information we have concerning August 2019.