



State of Tennessee

## Office of the District Attorney General

11th Judicial District

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### **The Facts: Suspect Shoots Chattanooga Police Department Officer, CPD Returns Fire**

On August 11, 2023, Investigators with the Chattanooga Police Department Gun Team, along with other partnering law enforcement agencies, were attempting to locate multiple dangerous offenders for the purpose of warrant service. One of those individuals was Roger Heard Jr.

Heard is a violent felon, a known drug dealer, and a gang member. He has served time in Federal Prison for being a felon in possession of a firearm and has felony convictions out of Hamilton and Bradley Counties. At the time he encountered CPD officers on Friday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, he had outstanding felony warrants out of Knox County.

Investigators with the Chattanooga Police Department had received credible information regarding Heard's whereabouts, the Speedway located at Holtzclaw and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, and that at this location he would be participating in illegal drug transactions. Law enforcement observed Heard, who was parked at a gas pump, for a period of time before attempting contact in order to serve the outstanding warrants and take Heard into custody.

CPD Investigators Batterson and Ayers met Heard's vehicle as it was trying to leave the parking lot of the Speedway.

As Investigator Batterson approached the driver's side door of Heard's vehicle, he and Ayers were loudly and repeatedly announcing themselves as police officers. They were also wearing police badges on their tactical belts, which are readily observable on their waistlines. Before Batterson was able to reach Heard's driver's side door, a marked CPD vehicle with activated blue lights can be seen pulling into the parking lot next to Heard's vehicle. As Batterson approaches, Heard can be seen reaching for an object—what we now know to be a firearm—with his right arm.

Batterson attempted to open the suspect's vehicle door and at that time the suspect made a kicking movement in Batterson's direction, raised his right arm and fired multiple shots at point blank range in Batterson's direction, striking him in the right arm. Batterson instantly retreated before being able to respond with gunfire.

As the video shows, Heard was purposefully traveling in the direction of Batterson, and still armed, when he was met with gunfire from Batterson and other law enforcement officers.

Heard had a large amount of cash on his person, approximately one pound of marijuana in his vehicle, and the firearm he had used to shoot Investigator Batterson was stolen in Chattanooga in 2022. Because he was a convicted and violent felon, it was unlawful for Heard to be in



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possession of any type of firearm. On the night of August 11, 2023, Heard was committing a litany of felony offenses, all of which are overshadowed by his attempt to gun down a law enforcement officer at point blank range.

First and foremost, I want to personally acknowledge the immense sacrifice and bravery of our law enforcement officers. This incident is an example of the danger they often put themselves in only to ensure our safety. When a police officer is shot, it is an attack on the very fabric of our society ... an assault on the principles of justice and order that we hold dear.

The officers involved in this incident, like so many officers are required to do, were forced to make split-second decisions under extreme stress and pressure. Investigator Batterson, Investigator Ayers, and Officer Dyess did the exact job that they were called and trained to do. Our community is fortunate beyond measure that we did not lose a law enforcement officer.

At my direction, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation has worked tirelessly to collect as much information and evidence as possible in a short period of time. It is through crime scene examination and collection, witness interviews, and video footage that we have been able to piece together the details surrounding this incident. The footage being released today is owned by a private company in a different state and was available to TBI only after a subpoena for production was issued. It is not CPD protocol for investigators to be equipped with body worn cameras, therefore, no body worn camera was able to capture the attempted murder of Investigator Batterson. As no investigation can be complete in just over a week's time, the investigation remains ongoing.

It is times such as this that a community gets to decide where its priorities lie. My hope is that we choose truth over rumors and community over division. My hope is that we can acknowledge what is wrong and embrace what is right. As Investigator Batterson recovers, my office stands behind him and we support him. We are most grateful that he is alive.

Coty Wamp