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Police monitor vows thorough investigation

Chris Miller Reporting

Relatives and friends of Justin Sipp, the man killed in a shootout with New Orleans Police early Thursday, are demanding answers about the incident. New Orleans Independent Police Monitor Susan Hutson says the matter will get a thorough and full investigation.

"We roll out to the scene of every discharge of a firearm we can get to," Hutson told WWL First News. "We look at them all exactly the same."

Independent Police Monitor Susan Hutson:



Friends of Sipp and his brother Earl Sipp, who was wounded in the gunfire, have expressed major distrust in the New Orleans Police Department. Hutson says that's why her office exists: to investigate matters like this independent of the police or other city agencies.

"I'm not a part of the police department, but I get to monitor how they investigate," said Hutson. "I get to publicly report what I see. So if I see something that's not going right, we're going to be telling the public that."

As for this investigation, Hutson said her office won't be discussing what they find until the investigation is complete. But she did share some of the details about how her office was gathering evidence.

"I spoke to (a) grandmother, I believe, uncle and maybe an aunt yesterday, and just assured them that we've been there from the start," Hutson said.

"There was an issue about did the young man even have a gun? Well, we know that officers are injured, so that shouldn't be too much of an issue," said Hutson. "But, the ATF was there from start to finish to look for the casings, to process the gun, so it's not the New Orleans Police Department doing all that."

Hutson said she'd like help from other federal law enforcement, too.

"I'd like to see some of the FBI agents that work at (NOPD Public Integrity Bureau) to be involved here as well, especially with respect to recreating the scene," said Hutson.

Hutson said she also had one of her officials with police when they questioned Earl Sipp after he was released from the hospital.

"The deputy police monitor was there at the station watching the interview" via a video feed, said Hutson.

"One thing we don't want to do is we don't want to release information that could taint possible witnesses," said Hutson. "Anything that we let out prematurely, that could taint someone's recollection of the events."

"When folks see our report about this, they're going to it's very unbiased and very fair," she said.

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