Some 911s very risky

Police say calls over domestic violence tense

By John Hinton

For police officers, domestic-violence calls are some of the most dangerous situations they will encounter, Police Chief Scott Cunningham said last week.

"Domestic-violence situations are so emotional," Cunningham said. "Physical force is sometimes there, and sometimes that leads to an arrest."

Officers must protect themselves and others but cannot overreact, Cunningham said at a news conference Friday, where he talked about the two police officers who were wounded Wednesday during a shootout behind the Bojangles' restaurant on Peters Creek Parkway.

The gunman, Monte Evans, was killed, and Sgt. Mickey Hutchens and Officer Daniel Clark were seriously injured.

Clark, 29, who was hit twice, was released from the hospital Friday. However, Hutchens, who was shot in the head, the bullet penetrating his skull, was fighting for his life last night after his condition got worse over the weekend, city officials said.

Hutches, a patrol supervisor, is a 27-year veteran of the police department.
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Hutchens, a patrol supervisor, is a 27-year veteran of the police department.

In a news conference Friday, Cunningham said that a neurosurgeon described Hutchens' injuries as "critical and grave."

Evans had gone to the restaurant to confront his ex-wife. When Evans saw the officers, he ran. The shootout occurred nearby in a ravine next to Salem Creek.

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"Domestic violence calls can be very, very dangerous. It is a volatile situation. Oftentimes, those emotions can be directed toward the officers."

Capt. David Clayton, Winston-Salem Police Department

Domestic

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In a domestic-violence situation, officers must wait for a "definitive and overt sign of escalation" before they take action, Cunningham said. Most incidents "don't end up with this level of frustration and violence."

Capt. David Clayton, commander of the department's criminal investigation unit, said that officers have responded to more than 3,800 domestic-violence calls this year, and about 5,200 calls in 2008.

One domestic-violence-related killing has occurred in Winston-Salem this year, and seven domestic-violence homicides occurred last year, Clayton said.

"Domestic-violence calls can be very, very dangerous," Clayton said. "It is a volatile situation. Oftentimes, those emotions can be directed toward the officers."

Wednesday's shooting coincides with October being National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

According to the 2007 National Crime Victimization Survey of the United States, about 623,000 violent crimes were committed by an intimate partner. Eighty-nine percent of the victims were females.

Research has shown that nearly 20 percent of women in North Carolina have reported experiencing physical violence by an intimate partner at some point during their lives.

Valene Franco of Winston-Salem, the family-law managing attorney for Legal Aid of North Carolina, said she helps hundreds of clients each year who are victims of domestic violence.

Most domestic violence occurs in homes, but often abusers, mostly men, will go to their spouses or girlfriends' workplaces to confront them, Franco said.

In Wednesday's incident, police officers went to the restaurant to protect people, and they were seriously injured.

"It was tragic," Franco said. "That's why it's dangerous when domestic violence happens at work. Innocent people can be hurt."

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Loss ‘not in vain’

Officer dies; mayor declares mourning

By John Hinton

Sgt. Mickey Hutchens, the Winston-Salem police officer who was shot last Wednesday answering a call about a domestic disturbance at a fast-food restaurant, died last night at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center.

Hutchens died at 6:56 p.m., Police Chief Scott Cunningham said at a news conference. Hutchens, 50, a patrol supervisor, was a 27-year veteran of the force.

"Mickey sacrificed his life pro-

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Hutchens
Continued From Page A1

tecting the citizens of Win-
ston-Salem,” Cunningham
said. “His sacrifice was not
in vain. He believed in what
he was doing. He spent his
life helping others.”

Hutchens was the sec-
ond local police officer
who died this year. Officer
Robert Staley died in an
off-duty motorcycle crash
in Davie County in April.

Hutchens was the 17th
police officer killed in the
line of duty since 1895, and
the first since Sgt. Howard
Plouff died
in February
2007 while
respond-
ing to a call
about fighting
outside a
nightclub on
Jonestown
Road. Cun-
ningham said that Hutchens was
an organ donor, and that
as the news conference
was taking place a team
of surgeons was removing
Hutchens’ organs “so that
others can live.”

Cunningham said that
the funeral arrangements
had not been made final.

The city will hold a pe-
riod of mourning from
today through Friday.
Mayor Allen Joines has
ordered city flags to be

City officials said early
Saturday evening that
Hutchens’ condition had
worsened.

Officer Daniel Clark, 29,
who was shot twice, was
released from the hospital
Friday. One bullet lodged
in Clark’s skull, the second
struck his body armor.

Dan Besse, a member
of the Winston-Salem City
Council, said in an e-mail
that Clark is doing well
physically.

“I know that the loss of a
colleague in this fashion is
a blow to him and all their
fellow officers and other
members of the city fam-
ily,” Besse said.

Fallen officers
Here are the other Winston-Salem police officers who
died in the line of duty:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sgt. Howard Plouff</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer Stephen Levi Amos II</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer Robert Butrago</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Officer Bobby Farrel Beane</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer Michael Ray Jennings</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt. Aaron Gerome Tise</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer Donald W. Allred</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrolman Al Charles Kinard</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrolman John Franklin Wimbish</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrolman Grover Cleveland Hailey Jr.</td>
<td>1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrolman Gurley L. Royall</td>
<td>1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrolman John Marsden Sampson</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detective W.G. Willard</td>
<td>1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sgt. Leland Glenn Teague</td>
<td>1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrolman Thomas Garland Anderson</td>
<td>1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrolman Michael Mordecai Vickers</td>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Winston-Salem Police Department

His pastor, the Rev.
Mitchell Ray Davis, said
that Hutchens was an avid
bow hunter and liked to
barbecue deer meat.

Cunningham said that
police officers are strug-
gling with Hutchens’
death.

“It is an extremely dif-
icult time for the police
department,” he said.
“Men and women have
worked with him for years
and seen his family grow
up. He exemplifies what a
leader is.”

Hutchens’ family and
the police department are
extremely grateful for all
the thoughts, prayers and
City officials said early Saturday evening that Hutchens' condition had worsened.

Officer Daniel Clark, 28, who was shot twice, was released from the hospital Friday. One bullet lodged in Clark's skull, the second struck his body armor.

Dan Besse, a member of the Winston-Salem City Council, said in an e-mail that Clark is doing well physically.

"I know that the loss of a colleague in this fashion is a blow to him and all their fellow officers and other members of the city family," Besse said.

The officers had chased suspect Monte Denard Evans, 35, of Winston-Salem, after Evans showed up at the Bojangles' restaurant on Peters Creek Parkway to confront his former wife.

After police arrived, Evans ran before opening fire on Hutchens and Clark. Evans was then killed in a shootout.

The State Bureau of Investigation and the police department are investigating.

Hutchens was a lifelong member of Forbush Baptist Church in Yadkin County where he served as a deacon and taught Sunday school.

His pastor, the Rev. Mitchell Ray Davis, said that Hutchens was an avid bow hunter and liked to barbecue deer meat.

Cunningham said that police officers are struggling with Hutchens' death.

"It is an extremely difficult time for the police department," he said. "Men and women have worked with him for years and seen his family grow up. He exemplifies what a leader is."

Hutchens' family and the police department "are extremely grateful for all the thoughts, prayers and support provided by the community," Cunningham said.

"His family wants to thank Baptist Hospital and the doctors, nurses and hospital staff, not only for their tireless efforts to save Mickey's life, but for the compassion they have shown during this sorrowful time," Cunningham said. "Please continue to pray for strength for Mickey's family as they struggle through this terrible tragedy."

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Journal reporter Paul Garber contributed to this story.
Hutchens: He wanted to protect and to serve

Everything anybody wanted to know about Sgt. Mickey Hutchens of the Winston-Salem Police Department could be heard toward the end of a simple answering machine greeting at his Yadkin County church.

In case of an emergency, call Mickey Hutchens, a woman's voice said.

A deputy at Forbush Baptist Church, Hutchens was also a protector of his flock. If he wasn’t on duty patrolling the streets of Winston-Salem, odds were good that he was tending to something at his church.

“I was on a mission,” Hutchens said.

If something had gone awry, obviously Hutchens wanted to be among the first to know and first to react. He wanted to protect and to serve.

Mickey Hutchens died just before 7 p.m. last night at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center. The result of a bullet wound he suffered six days ago in a ravine behind a fast-food restaurant on Peters Creek Parkway.

“Mickey sacrificed his life protecting the citizens of Winston-Salem,” Chief Scott Cunningham said last night at a news conference. “His sacrifice was not in vain. He believed in what he was doing.

“He spent his life helping others.”

Prayer for the best

Certainly Hutchens’ death was not unexpected. Over the weekend, police officials solemnly passed word that his condition had taken a turn for the worse and asked the community to remember their fallen comrade in its prayers.

“Sgt. Hutchens died in the presence of his loving family and police friends,” Cunningham said last night.

For that, we should be grateful.

As heartbreaking as it is to lose a man who died from a wound suffered while serving his community, it should be a small measure of comfort that those closest to him were able to say their goodbyes and be with him to the end.

See Sexton, Page A7
Throughout a long weekend, Hutchens was never far from the thoughts of colleagues — men and women who know the same fate is possible for them and yet answer calls for help every single day.

Cunningham, who deserves congratulations for his strong public show of leadership during a crisis, said as much while taking a turn working a police department booth at the Dixie Classic Fair. He had spent a good part of his Sunday by Hutchens’ bedside, and so he likely knew what lay ahead.

Prepare for the worst. Pray for the best.

When the news that police all feared came to pass, Cunningham wanted his officers to hear it first from him — not via an Internet posting or a scroll across the bottom of a television screen.

Man of Integrity

A veteran with more than 25 years in the department, Lt. Billy Riggs spoke highly of his friend when asked in conversation Sunday afternoon how Hutchens was faring.

"Mickey and I grew up in the department together," Riggs said. "If it then that’s what Mickey would do. I’ve done some stupid things in my time, but Mickey never did anything stupid."

Hutchens was known around the department to be methodical, highly organized and efficient. If a question arose about a police procedure or general order, Riggs said, Hutchens likely knew the answer.

"I might know what it was, but I’d have to look it up," Riggs said. "Mickey, he knew. He didn’t make mistakes."

Criminal-defense lawyers who had occasion to cross-examine Hutchens also praised his character even before they learned of his death.

Nils Gerber, a defense attorney from Winston-Salem, remembered a case years ago involving social workers and witnesses whose testimony might not have been a strength for the prosecution’s case. Hutchens was called to testify against Gerber’s client during the trial.

"I knew when Mickey testified that he was going to be thorough and extremely honest," Gerber said. "That’s the type of person he was and jurors could see that in him.

"His integrity was unassailable and everybody knew it."

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