



April
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Joseph Butasek, William Dunn, Jonathan Fox,
Charles Freitag, Colleen Horan,
Richard Koprowski, John Mortimer,
Matthew Pecora & Mark Worthington

At approximately 8:30 p.m. on October 20, 2015, Tyrone Howard, a 32-year-old "East Army" gangbanger saw three of his adversaries in front of his girlfriend's apartment building on East 102nd Street, between FDR Drive and First Avenue in the confines of the 23rd Precinct. He pulled his illegal 40-caliber handgun with its 30-round magazine and opened fire. His enemies returned the volley, but no one was hit. Howard fled on foot, running north on the East River Promenade. There he spotted someone with a bicycle. At gunpoint, he hijacked the bike and rode it north along the path.

P.O. Randolph Holder and P.O. Omar Wallace, both of Police Service Area 5, responded to the radio call of shots fired and spotted the perp on the Promenade around the East 120th Street footbridge. Wallace recognized the perp as a trouble-making punk he had summonsed a year earlier for drinking and urinating in public.

Howard got off the stolen bike, turned toward the Officers, pulled his weapon and fired one shot, striking Officer Holder through his temple. Wallace was able to squeeze off a few shots, one of which hit the perp in the thigh, but the wily criminal managed to flee, tossing first the magazine, and then his weapon, into the Harlem River in the process.

Wallace broadcast a detailed description of the incident over the radio while rendering assistance to his fallen partner. The perp didn't get far. Responding Police Officers Sam Houari and Frank Gashi of PSA 5's Instant Response Team had been chasing Howard since the initial shots were fired. About two minutes after he shot Holder, and by the time Howard reached the median strip of the FDR Drive near East 124th Street, he was apprehended by P.O. Kristen Swinkunas and P.O. Jaysen Basnight, responding Officers from the 32 Precinct Anti-Crime team.

In the aftermath of the frantic 10-13, Holder was rushed by ESU van to Harlem Hospital, his partner at his side, but tragically, the 33-year-old Officer expired.

His killer, nicknamed Peanut, was a PCP-using career criminal with more than two dozen priors. He was a

known subject to the area Officers since the age of 13. He was supposed to start a drug treatment program in lieu of a two-year prison term, because in 2014 he had been caught selling crack in the East River Houses in East Harlem. He should have been disqualified from rehab because he was involved in a 2009 gunfight, but he had somehow managed to play the system several times through the years and was out on bail. He had missed many court dates and had four previous drug convictions and a sealed, armed robbery conviction left over from his teenage years, but was somehow still prowling the streets. With a 16-year rap sheet and violent offenses on his resume, the Police Commissioner called him "a poster boy" for a justice system gone awry.

Det. Mark Worthington of Manhattan North Homicide caught the case. With Homicide Detectives Charles Freitag, along with Richard Koprowski, then of the 25 Squad, and William Dunn of the 23 Squad, they launched the investigation to compile the case against Tyrone Howard. Howard was in constant, sociopathic denial about what had transpired in front of witnesses, including police. The Investigators interviewed responders, 9-1-1 callers, and pulled surveillance tape from the river side of the highway and from the Wagner Housing Development, which showed the scenarios before and after he shot Officer Holder. While the bike hijack victim was coincidentally a parolee himself, he was tracked down and his cooperation enjoined.

A fisherman on the wharf at the time of the incident said he saw Howard running, then heard two splashes into the water, and it was surmised the perp threw his weapon into the River. Immediately, Det. Joseph Butasek and members of the Scuba Unit of the Harbor Unit interviewed the witness further to pinpoint the location where the fisherman thought the objects were tossed. With Scuba Det. Matthew Pecora, they mapped out a pattern chart grid to begin dive shifts, and within a few hours the magazine cartridge was located.

In the meantime, Howard was treated and released from the hospital. He created lie after lie to falsify the eve-



Pictured at the April 2017 Delegates' meeting, seated from left, P.O. Sam Houari, Det. Colleen Horan, P.O. Kristen Swinkunas (now a Detective), Manhattan DA's Office Analyst Evelyn Vargas, Manhattan ADAs Linda Ford and Michelle Warren, Manhattan DA's Office Analyst Amanda Epstein, and Police Officers Omar Wallace (now a Detective) and Frank Gashi. Standing from left, Manhattan North Trustee Ervin Urbina (now retired), Trustee John Hourican, Det. Richard Koprowski, P.O. Jaysen Basnight, Detectives Matthew Pecora, John Mortimer, Joseph Butasek, Jonathan Fox, William Dunn, and Mark Worthington, and DEA Borough Director Brian Hunt.

ning's events: he told Detectives he had been running away from a shooting and responding cops shot him instead; He said it was a case of mistaken identity; He blamed the incident on Officer Wallace. Finally, when he could sense his lies were getting him nowhere, he requested an attorney.

For five days, the Scuba teams performed around-the-clock underwater shifts in approximately 67,000 square feet (three-quarters of an acre) of murky, muddy waters. Finally, after 96 dives that lasted from a few minutes to an hour each, during the wee hours of October 25 at about 3:00 a.m., Scuba Det. John Mortimer pulled up what looked like an Uzi, but was a black handgun of the type used in the shooting. It was found 20 feet below the water's surface and approximately 40 feet from the sea wall north of where the magazine was located. The tests on the recovered gun and magazine performed by Det. Jonathan Fox and Colleen Horan of the Ballistics Unit matched the Holder homicide. DNA, although not admissible in court, but none-the-less retrievable, was also recovered from the gun and the magazine, as well as the shell casings found at the crime scene. Although the

actual bullet that killed Holder was never recovered, the ballistics evidence proved that Howard was the shooter.

Randolph Holder had followed his father and his grandfather into policing. The native of Georgetown, Guyana in the Caribbean emigrated to the United States in 2002, after his mother's death, to be closer to his father and his siblings who had moved to New York City. His first job was as a security officer, where he encountered several NYPD retirees who talked glowingly about the force and their impact on the communities they served.

Holder, who believed he could really "make a difference" and "become a role model," fulfilled his life's ambition when he was appointed to the New York Police Department on July 6, 2010. His colleagues at PSA 5 called him by his nickname "Doc." He was the man they came to for advice and opinion. There was nothing he would not do for a friend, but his favorite enjoyment was when he could serve as deejay for his family's social gatherings.

Eight days after being shot and killed, on October 28, 2015, an estimated crowd of 20,000 police colleagues from around the world attended his funeral service at the Greater Allen AME Cathedral in Jamaica, Queens.

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Then-Police Commissioner William J. Bratton posthumously promoted the big-hearted, gentlemanly, and quiet Officer to first grade Detective, the rank Holder was hoping to achieve during his lifetime. He was presented with a gold shield that bore the number his father wore: 9657. Holder's family, including his father Randolph, Sr., his stepmother Princess, and his fiancé Maryiane Muhammad, were among those who spoke to the press and the crowd. Muhammad summed up his profession this way: "To simply wear the uniform of an Officer is an act of courage."

Holder's death made headlines around the world. He was the fourth NYPD Officer shot and killed in ten months, preceded by Rafael Ramos, Wen Jian Liu, and Brian Moore. The day before his funeral, President Obama singled out Holder's sacrifice when he addressed the International Chiefs of Police in Chicago. Commissioner Bratton eulogized the slain Officer with a last directive, "We send you on your new assignment, being a guardian angel at the gates of heaven."

Holder's body, along with representatives of the NYPD Ceremonial Unit and more than 100 fellow Officers, was flown to his native Guyana for burial. His funeral in the capital of Georgetown was attended by the country's President and the City's Mayor. The Commanding Officer of PSA 5, Capt. Reymundo Mundo, gave a eulogy in the 19th century Roman Catholic Cathedral where services were held. Holder's nephews read poems aloud, and a final tribute song to the man who loved all kinds of music was sung by the year's Miss Guyana. It was called "One Last Time."

In the procession to his final resting place, a Guyanese military band serenaded the mourners and spectators who lavished praise and hosannas as the Officer's casket passed through the streets. Holder was buried in an above-ground tomb at the historic Le Repentir Cemetery. For his final farewell, the Guyanese Police Force honored him with a 21-gun salute.

The Howard case was prosecuted in New York County by Senior Trial Counsel, Assistant District Attorney Linda Ford and ADA Michelle Warren, with trial preparation assistance performed by the Manhattan DA's Office Analysts Amanda Epstein and Evelyn Vargas. The perpetrator

Det. Randolph Holder



continued showing his contempt for everyone by missing Court hearing and trial dates. He often refused to leave his cell, gave inconsistent testimony, and offered up a coward's perpetual denial of his reckless, violent actions, despite the number of undeserved lucky breaks he received during his lifetime of drug use and crime.

On March 6, 2017, Tyrone Howard's luck ran out. He was convicted of Aggravated Murder in the First Degree, Murder in the First Degree, Robbery in the First Degree, Criminal Possession of a Weapon, and Reckless Endangerment. Our Detectives traced his illegal firearm to Marion, South Carolina, where it had been suspiciously stolen at least twice from the same owner. Small town Southern authorities were less than cooperative in the investigation, and any case involving the illegal flow of illicit firearms into New York City via the "Iron Pipeline" (as pertains to the firearm used to murder Det. Holder) is still pending. But, all the subjects from the initial shootout on East 102nd Street face prosecution.

On April 3, 2017, Judge Michael Obus sentenced Tyrone Howard to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

For their skill, patience, and persistence in amassing the array of evidence required to put together an airtight case in this high profile cop-killing, we honor our Detectives of the Month: William Dunn of the 23 Squad; Jonathan Fox and Colleen Horan of the Ballistics Unit; Joseph Butasek, John Mortimer, and Matthew Pecora of the Scuba Unit; and Charles Freitag, Richard Koprowski, and Mark Worthington of the Manhattan North Homicide Squad.

And for their fast and fearless pursuit of an armed and dangerous shooter, Certificates of Appreciation go to five Police Officers: Jaysen Basnight, now with the Counterterrorism Response Command; Kristen Swinkunas, now a Detective with Manhattan Special Victims Squad; Frank Gashi and Sam Houari of the PSA 5 Instant Response Team; and Det. Holder's partner, Omar Wallace, now a Detective with the Intelligence Division.

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For their work guaranteeing the citizens of New York that the ruthless, reckless, hot-headed murderer Tyrone Howard will never again be a free man, Certificates of Appreciation go to Senior Trial Counsel Assistant District Attorney Linda Ford and Assistant District Attorney Michelle Warren, Senior Investigative Analyst Amanda Ep-

stein, and Investigative Analyst Evelyn Vargas of the New York County District Attorney's Office. We sincerely thank them for ensuring that the Holder family will never have to suffer the indignity of facing the possibility of parole for the remorseless thug who killed their beloved Det. Randolph Holder.

