

Statements, investigations follow Lewis shooting

Editor's note: The following history of the investigation surrounding the shooting of Arvid Sherdell Lewis covers about three weeks, from the time of the shooting until Tuesday's march by protesters.

Wednesday, Sept. 24— Deputy Sheriff Rodney Loos at 10 p.m. shot Arvid Sherdell Lewis, a 26-year-old black man. Loos and 11 other law enforcement officers were at Lewis's home to serve a search warrant for drugs.

Thursday, Sept. 25 — Lewis died at Lincoln General Hospital at 12:32 a.m.

—Loos was placed on "inactive status" by the Lancaster County Sheriff's Dept. —County Attorney Ronald Lahners at a press conference told reporters and about 40 blacks present that it was not unusual for the police, sheriff's deputies and state officers to cooperate in serving warrants. The press conference ended in a shouting match. —The Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Justice Department began an investigation of the case.

—A group of about 50 persons, mostly black, marched in the vicinity of 13th and O streets carrying signs to protest Lewis's death and collecting signatures for a petition demanding a full investigation.

Friday, Sept. 26 — FBI agents interviewed people in the neighborhood of 2284 Potter.

—State Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha announced he would conduct an investigation of the death because he was "skeptical of any investigation by the FBI."

Monday, Sept. 29 — 500 attended Lewis's funeral.

—The County Board and City Council unanimously approved a three-month review of recruitment, training, weapons policies, arrest and warrant procedures, personal evaluation and discipline of the Lincoln Police Dept. and county sheriff's officers.

Tuesday, Sept. 30 — U.S. Atty. Dan Wherry of Omaha said the FBI report would not be complete for at least 10 days.

—Thirty persons protesting the shooting at a meeting of the County Board were assured by Commissioner Bruce Hamilton that there would be no whitewash.

Thursday, Oct. 2 — Chambers said he possessed information justifying a grand jury investigation into LPD and the Lancaster County Sheriff's office. He said he would not release the information until Mayor Boosalis, Lahners and State Atty. Gen. Paul Douglas had a chance to act on it.

Saturday, Oct. 4 — Chambers said he would ask the Legislative Judiciary Committee to investigate the Nebraska State Patrol unless he received "satisfactory answers" on its role in the shooting.

Monday, Oct. 6 — During a meeting of City Council members and County Commissioners, the following statements were brought out: Lahners asked that the City-County investigation be dropped, and proposed an alternative investigation, on behalf of himself and Boosalis, by a committee of three persons exper-

enced in law enforcement, three minority group members and three other community representatives.

—Boosalis said she would not make police reports public until all investigations were completed.

—Wherry said the FBI report would not be finished until the end of the week.

—In a five-page report, Chambers charged criminal misconduct during the Lewis incident.

Thursday, Oct. 7 — Lancaster County Sheriff Merle Karnopp, who was vacationing in Oregon since Sept. 16, said he welcomed an investigation into the Sheriff's Dept.

Wednesday, Oct. 8 — Boosalis met with a delegation of four blacks to discuss the shooting incident and other concerns. The four were Donna Polk; Barbara Kelley, Lewis's mother; Jesse Payne, director of Lincoln Action Program; and the Rev. Mr. G.L. Collins of Mount Zion Baptist Church. They asked Boosalis to establish a community relations office to act as a liaison between minority groups and city government.

—At a press conference, Boosalis announced she would ask that the proposed citizens committee be abandoned in favor of bringing in a U.S. Justice Dept. community relations division from Kansas City to bring government officials and members of the black community together to work out their problems. John Perez, special office director, said the mediation process would deal primarily with police/community relations, police procedures and affirmative

action programs, but would not investigate the Lewis death.

—Hansen suggested that an LPD representative be temporarily stationed in the community, possibly at the Malone Center, to act as a liaison between the department and citizens.

Friday, Oct. 10 — A 12-member Justice for Lewis Committee, headed by Jesse Payne, in a meeting with Boosalis, asked for a grand jury investigation of the shooting if additional information was not released or a decision made by Monday on whether to file criminal charges against Loos. Boosalis said she would not hesitate to ask for a grand jury investigation "if the results of the investigation or the facts warrant" it.

—Boosalis announced that mediators from the U.S. Justice Dept. community relations division would arrive in Lincoln early the next week to begin their effort to relieve tensions and solve community racial problems.

Monday, Oct. 13 — Karnopp put Loos on temporary active duty because, he said, the department was shorthanded.

—Wherry said a copy of a 500-page FBI report on the shooting had been mailed to the civil rights division of the U.S. Justice Dept. He said officials in the Washington, D.C., office will study the report before a decision is made whether to prosecute Loos under the federal Civil Rights Act. Wherry said federal and state authorities both could legally file charges but that federal officials usually defer to local authorities if local charges are filed.

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