

Fayetteville police officer in murder-suicide called 911 days before deaths



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The Fayetteville Observer

Two days before it was discovered that a Fayetteville police officer fatally shot his wife and himself, two 911 calls from their home were made — one from a woman who hangs up after giving the address, and the other from presumably the officer who suggests the couple was at odds after drinking at dinner.

Other newly released records also reveal that just before police supervisors found the bodies, they feared the officer was a danger to himself and his wife.

Officer Domingo Tavaréz-Rodríguez, 53, and his wife, Yenitza Arroyo-Tavarez, 44, were found dead in their Vandenberg Drive home about 6 p.m. on April 28, Chief Kemberle Braden said. The State Bureau of Investigation announced May 3 that preliminary autopsy results indicated Tavaréz-Rodríguez shot his wife multiple times before turning the gun on himself.

Arroyo-Tavarez's daughter, Doris Rivera, said earlier this month that her stepfather was abusive to her mother in the months leading up to their deaths.

“He was very, very, very, obsessed with my mother,” Rivera said.

She said her stepfather tracked her mother's car, looked through her phone and gradually isolated her from her friends.

Newly released records

In 911 recordings released by the Fayetteville Police Department on Thursday, a woman called 911 at 10:11 p.m. April 26, two days before the husband and wife would be found dead by police supervisors. In that call, a quickly gave the couple's Vandenberg Drive address before hanging up. Repeated attempts by a dispatcher to call the number back went unanswered.

Then, at 10:14 p.m., a man, presumed to be Tavaréz-Rodríguez, called 911 requesting an officer come to the home.

“This is not an emergency. This is a call for service,” he said. “I was having dinner with my wife and she had too much to drink at the Mi Casita. And then we went to the gas station and now we are out in our house.”

Throughout the call, the man spoke calmly, sometimes pausing briefly or sighing before responding.

He told the dispatcher there had been no physical altercation, rejecting her use of the term “disturbance.”

“I wouldn't call it a disturbance,” Tavaréz-Rodríguez said. “I'm just trying to cover myself.”

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Both he and his wife were intoxicated, Tavaréz-Rodríguez told the dispatcher.

When the dispatcher inquired if his wife was with him, he said she was “right next” to him and appeared to ask someone if they wanted to talk to the dispatcher.

“You didn’t tell her you hit me in the ear?” a woman's voice can be heard saying in Spanish.

When the dispatcher asked if anyone was in danger, Tavarez-Rodriguez said no.

“She’s super, super nice to me,” he said of his wife.

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Tavarez-Rodriguez explained he made the call “just trying to protect my, my person,” according to the recording.

“I understand,” the dispatcher said. “We’ll definitely have someone come out and make contact with you, OK?”

It was not clear if an officer responded to the scene. A search for the incident in publicly available Fayetteville Police Department records generated no results, and a request to the Police Department for any reports tied to the incident hadn't been filled as of Friday.

The discovery

Two days later, Tavarez-Rodriguez’s supervisors would be en route to his Vandenberg Drive home, trying multiple methods to get in touch with the officer after he failed to show up for his 6 p.m. shift.

A dispatch recording at 6:07 p.m. on April 28 captured a police officer calling the 911 Center to inform dispatchers of the check on Tavarez-Rodriguez.

“I don’t want to put it over the radio because this is one of our officers,” the caller said, adding that he would be on the scene with at least one other officer. Names and other identifying information for the caller were redacted from the recording.

Also at 6:07 p.m., in a separate recording, a dispatcher contacted Verizon to request an "emergency" ping on a phone number. According to a search warrant in the wake of the deaths, supervisors traced Tavarez-Rodriguez’s location to his home by pinging his phone number.

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When the Verizon employee asked if the ping was related to “an emergency involving death or serious physical injury,” the dispatcher told him it was.

“It is in regards to a subject who we believe may be attempting to harm himself or his wife,” she said.

The dispatch log from when supervisors made the discovery provided further insight into how the event unfurled. According to the log, police first contacted dispatchers at 6:09 p.m., with officers arriving at the Vandenberg Drive home at 6:21 p.m.

Paramedics were called to the scene at 7:32 p.m. and reported someone was dead at 8:35 p.m. It appears from the log that the couple's bodies weren't removed from the home until after a request for transport was

made at 4:34 a.m. Saturday.

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