Funeral services for Timothy Russell will be held Saturday at The Sanctuary of Praise, 8788 Hadden Rd.
in Twinsburg.

By JAMES W. WADE III
Staff Reporter

Why 137 bullets? Why a 20 minute chase involving 13 Cleveland police? These are some of the many questions being asked this week after the deadly police chase that began in downtown Cleveland and ended in an East Cleveland school yard.

The incident has been likened to the movie death of Bonnie and Clyde.

Shot and killed by Cleveland police were Malissa Williams, 30, and Timothy Russell, 43. The Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office said Williams suffered multiple 24 gunshot wounds to the head, neck, trunk (chest area), and left arm with multiple visceral, vascular, and

skeletal injuries. They declared it a homicide. Russell was shot 23 times.

What is unclear to the community is how the pursuit supposedly started. It all began when a second district officer said shots were fired near police headquarters in downtownClevelandand allegedly came from the car Russell and Williams were in.

The family of Timothy Russell held a press conference to speak about the incident for the first time on Monday. Russell's sister, Michelle Russell, read a statement.

"Our family is deeply grieving the loss of Tim. Tim was a man of faith. He was not a violent man and he didn't own a gun," she said.

The family would like questions answered about the night their family member died. "One hundred thirty seven rounds can't be justified. This must be fully investigated by federal authorities," said Michelle Russell.

"We want to see Chief McGrath follow through with getting civil rights and the FBI involved," said Paul Cristallo, the family's attorney.

When asked if they felt that race played a part in the shooting, since 12 officers are White and 1 is Hispanic, Cristallo said, “We don’t know if race played a part in this at all. Again, it is all the more reason why the FBI should be doing an investigation. When you have people executed in this fashion, you need outside sources to come in. East Cleveland is underfunded and has a history of problems and troubles and has no business taking the lead on the case.”

The family stated they still have faith in the police and admitted there are some good police out there. At this point, the lawyer stated that the family has not filed any civil action or has not made a judgment about it being a race problem.

“We’re encouraged that the chief has indicated willingness to bring a federal agency in to determine what happened,” said Cristallo.

The NAACP released a statement, saying, “The recent high-speed chase that started in downtown Cleveland and ended in a deadly hail of gun-fire in East Cleveland is unfortunate, unacceptable, and appears to have been avoidable. Conflicting accounts of exactly what transpired have circulated and, as such, it is far too early to render an accurate account of exactly who was at fault and, more importantly, what precipitated the chase, the shooting, and

subsequent deaths.

We believe that an independent, professional and thorough investigation is essential to either assess blame or exonerate the persons and entities involved. Police Chief Michael McGrath captured the spirit of the community's sentiments when he called the situation a 'tragedy.'

Therefore, the immediate challenge is to carefully examine cities' policies involving "high speed" chases, use of "deadly force," and interdepartmental participation by law-enforcement agencies. Unless immediate action is undertaken to address these concerns, we will be destined to continue to suffer unfortunate and avoidable police shootings. The Greater Cleveland community and the NAACP deserve to have a thorough explanation of the policies of the involvement of the police departments pertaining to "high speed" pursuits and use of "deadly force." What we now know is that high speed chases by law enforcement officers is generally unnecessary and has the potential to endanger the lives of police as well as innocent pedestrians."

On Monday, the tapes of the chase were released by the Cleveland police along with the names of the officers involved. The 13 officers have returned to work and have been placed on desk duty pending the outcome of the investigation.

Here are the names provided by Cleveland police:

1. Patrol Officer Wilfredo Diaz #350 Appointment Date: 11-03-08
2. Patrol Officer Michael Brelo #416 Appointment Date: 10-15-07
3. Patrol Officer Cynthia Moore #1277 Appointment Date: 10-15-07
4. Patrol Officer Michael Farley #409 Appointment Date: 04-08-96
5. Patrol Officer Brian Sabolik #1021 Appointment Date: 01-10-11
6. Patrol Officer Paul Box #2526 Appointment Date: 08-19-96
7. Patrol Officer Randy Patrick #1580 Appointment Date: 08-04-97
8. Patrol Officer Scott Sistek #1395 Appointment Date: 02-25-08
9. Detective Michael Demchak #1621 Appointment Date: 10-23-82
10. Detective Erin O'Donnell #1027 Appointment Date: 09-28-98
11. Detective Christopher Ereg #767 Appointment Date: 08-30-99
12. Detective Michael Rinkus #2182 Appointment Date: 01-06-92
13. Detective William Salupo #1969 Appointment Date: 02-17-98

Normal protocol states a department can release the names of officers involved in a deadly shooting 48 hours after the incident and Cleveland police said they will not be releasing photos of the officers.

Mayor Frank Jackson held a press conference Monday as well and expects the use of deadly force and high-speed chase investigation will take months, while noting that if protocol was followed, he will fully support the officers. But, if they violated the rules, there will be consequences, he said. Jacksonalso explained why few police cars have dash cams.

“It would serve us well to have dash cams in all vehicles, but it hasn’t happened due to budgetary issues,” he said.

No gun was found inside the suspect’s car Thursday night, East Cleveland Police Chief Ralph Spotts said. Hearing this caused more of an uproar from the community.

The Ohio Attorney General’s Office Bureau of Criminal Investigation will be the lead on the investigation, Cuyahoga County Sheriff Bob Reid said.East Clevelandpolice and the Cuyahoga County Sheriff’s Department will also assign investigators to the case.

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