

1 ↓
By MARK NICHOLS

The FBI is investigating the death of a motorist who was shot by an Indianapolis traffic patrolman Friday on Monument Circle in a wild fracas over double-parking.

Marion County Prosecutor Stephen Goldsmith said he requested the federal investigation so there could be an impartial examination of the shooting death of James Edward Grimes.

Grimes, 25, 5757 West 44th Street, was shot by Patrolman Dennis A. Cress as the policeman hung from the victim's car while it moved on Monument Circle, police said.

Less than three hours after the killing, Goldsmith telephoned U.S. Attorney Sarah E. Barker and asked for the federal investigation.

"I DON'T KNOW yet what happened, but at 1 p.m. (when he called Mrs. Barker) this had the signs of a controversy, and the U.S. attorney has more distance than I do from the situation," Goldsmith said.

FBI agents began their preliminary investigation Friday, Mrs. Barker said. The FBI's final report will be given to the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department at Washington, D.C., and her office.

If federal authorities decide not to pursue the case, it will be turned over to the Marion County grand jury, Goldsmith said.

Public Safety Director Richard I. Blankenbaker telephoned black community leaders to provide information on the shooting of the black motorist by a white policeman.

"It's time for good communication and cool heads," Blakenbaker said.

FBI AGENTS, as well as Indianapolis Police Department investigators, are reviewing the rapid events that covered 139 feet of the northeast quadrant of Monument Circle.

Indianapolis police officials gave the following description:

Cress, 38, was patrolling Monument Circle in his police Jeep when he saw a older model Dodge Colt double-parked in front of the American Fletcher National Bank.

From the jeep, Cress asked Grimes to move the car. His wife, Sheila, 31, and their 4-month-old son were also in the car, Mrs. Grimes was preparing to

2 ↓
3 ↓
* Continued From Page 1

conduct business in the bank.

When Grimes ignored Cress' request, the 15-year police department veteran parked his Jeep in front of the car and got out.

GRESS STUCK his head through the driver's open window, and the two men had a brief argument. Grimes put the car in reverse and then moved forward around the Jeep. Cress lunged in, hanging halfway through the window.

The patrolman radioed for assistance as he struggled with Grimes for control of the steering wheel and tried to turn off the ignition.

As the car careened over the brick pavement, Grimes pinned one of Cress' arms against the door. Through the windshield, Cress could see the car heading for a concrete post at the base of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument.

Fearing he would strike the post, Cress drew his gun and fired one shot, striking Grimes in the lower abdomen. The patrolman yanked the keys from the ignition, and the car rolled to a stop five feet from the post and across the street from the Columbia Club.

MRS. GRIMES and the baby, who were not hurt, bailed out of the car. The woman sat on the street, sobbing hysterically.

Cress radioed again for police assistance and summoned an ambulance.

Paramedics worked desperately on the unconscious Grimes and rushed him to Wishard Memorial Hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 11:02 a.m.

The death could have been avoided if Grimes obeyed Cress, Deputy Chief Paul A. Annee said.

"My God, if the guy had moved on, this would have never happened in the first place," Annee said.

Grimes and his wife had gone to the bank to apply for a home loan, said Juanita B. Grimes, the victim's mother. The purchase of the house was intended to be a surprise for his parents, the elder Mrs. Grimes said.

HER SON AND daughter-in-law both worked for the U.S. Postal Service. He was a truck driver and she is a clerk. They would have been married one year on Dec. 4, Mrs. Grimes said.

Grimes and his father, James Ernest Grimes, were to participate in a sickle cell anemia motorcycle marathon today, she added.

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One witness interviewed by police offered a slightly different version of the events.

Kara Butler, 19, 5400 block of Marilyn Road, was going to visit the monument when she saw Cress walk toward Grimes' car and unfasten something on his gun-belt, possibly the holster, she said.

As the car lurched toward Cress, he dodged it and pushed himself through the driver's window, she said.

"His legs were dangling and flying everywhere," Miss Butler said. "The car zigzagged all over the road. It looked like it was about to hit one of those poles."

"THEY (POLICE) said the guy had his arms pinned, but I saw the officer with his hands on the wheel. They were both struggling to gain control of the car."

In accordance with department policy, Cress has been suspended with pay until a Board of Captains issues its report on the shooting, Chief Joseph G. McAtee announced at a press conference.

The shooting was not an accident, McAtee said.

"The officer did attempt to free himself until he was a few feet from the concrete," the chief said.

Capt. Edward T. Foley told reporters Mrs. Grimes' version of the incident was "in conflict" with what other witnesses told investigators.

Mrs. Grimes said Cress lunged at her husband in an effort to hurt him and threatened to shoot Grimes, police said.

DEPUTY CHIEF Annee said he recently requested traffic patrolmen to give double-parked motorists on Monument Circle a chance to move their cars before issuing tickets. "That's apparently what he (Cress) did," Annee said.

Annee admitted that during his stint as a traffic patrolman there were several times he tried to pull the keys from the ignition of an uncooperative motorist.

"But I know it is an unsafe practice," Annee added.

Annee said Cress acted properly and shot Grimes to protect his life.

"I know the question will be asked though, 'Do you shoot to kill?'" Annee said. "At that point, I don't think you would think anything like that. You would shoot to get loose."

Cress has been in publicized disputes over parking tickets twice before.

IN 1974, CRESS and a motorist exchanged blows over a ticket the patrolman issued. Cress filed seven charges against the driver and his wife and daughter.

A municipal court jury dismissed the charges against the women and found James V. Stygall, 5500 block of