



**Investigation into the death of Mr Anthony Ward in
January 2015, following Garda contact**

A Garda Ombudsman report
(under section 103 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005)

Introduction

Just after midnight on 27 January 2015, Mr Anthony Ward, aged 32, was fatally injured at Templeogue Road, Dublin 6W. He died from his injuries at the Adelaide and Meath Hospital, Tallaght, the following afternoon. The incident in which he was fatally injured was referred to the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC) by a Garda superintendent, in line with section 102 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005. An investigation was undertaken by GSOC to establish the circumstances of his death, in line with section 98 of the Act. This report outlines the investigation undertaken, its findings and recommendations.

Sequence of events

The Garda Ombudsman investigation has established the following sequence of events:

On the evening of 26 January 2015, Anthony Ward arrived at the home address of a girlfriend with whom he had been in a relationship for a number of months and took her from her apartment, forcing her to drive across the city. At an address in another part of the city, the car stopped and Anthony Ward left the car. The woman stated that she attempted to escape at this point but was dragged back into the car, by which time Anthony Ward produced a revolver.

A call entered with the Garda Dublin Metropolitan Region (DMR) Command and Control at 23:55 which gives the

location where they were and states – “there is a female screaming on the road, looks like a male is trying to push her into this car...”.

Anthony Ward then drove towards the M50 motorway. He stopped at a service station and told the woman to go in and buy a cigarette lighter, threatening to kill her if she did not return. A marked Garda car was on patrol in the vicinity and the gardaí in it saw a woman run towards the shop, then saw a car exit the forecourt at speed. They pursued the car and gave out its direction of travel over their radio to DMR Command and Control. Another Garda patrol car had been parked at the service station. The gardaí in it also saw a woman run towards the shop and then the car take off at speed, being pursued by the first Garda patrol car. They joined the pursuit.

The car turned left and went around a roundabout over the M50, failing to stop at red traffic lights, and exited back onto the Tallaght Road, inbound towards Templeogue. As the car approached the Spawell Roundabout, a third Garda patrol car stopped on the meridian markings of the Spawell roundabout and activated its blue lights. The car being driven by Anthony Ward passed this patrol car at the roundabout, then lost control and the front of the car hit a kerb, causing it to spin 180 degrees before stopping against the hedgerow of the central reservation of the Templeogue Road. There was no physical contact between the car being driven by Anthony Ward and any of the Garda vehicles during the brief pursuit.

Accounts of gardaí present and independent witnesses have established that Mr Ward stepped out of the car with a revolver in his hand, which he pointed in the direction of the gardaí approaching him. They moved back on seeing the revolver. Mr Ward then walked over to a grass verge close to the car, where he pointed the revolver towards his head, but it failed to fire. He lowered the gun and fired a single shot into the ground. He then pointed the revolver under his chin and fired a second shot, then fell to the ground. Medical attention was provided to Mr Ward at the scene, until he was transferred by ambulance to the Adelaide and Meath Hospital.

The woman was taken to the local Garda Station where she was examined by a doctor, but did not require medical treatment. She was in a distressed state and, whilst she was able to provide a verbal account of what had occurred, was not in a position to provide a witness statement to the Garda Síochána.

The incident was referred to GSOC.

On 28 January 2015, Mr Ward died in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) from his injuries. A post mortem examination conducted later that day confirmed his injuries were as a result of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. Urine and toxicology analysis indicated the presence of controlled drugs.

The GSOC Investigation

At 01:17 on 27 January 2015, the Garda Síochána referred the incident to GSOC. At 02:00, GSOC investigators attended the scene, which had been preserved for forensic examination. A meeting was held at the roadside between the GSOC investigators and senior Garda officers, where the GSOC investigators were updated on the circumstances of the incident. The GSOC investigators were brought into the scene, where they saw the car in the City Centre bound carriageway, with some damage and facing towards Tallaght, therefore in the opposite direction of travel for the carriageway. A Scenes of Crime Officer pointed out a small firearm on a grass verge across from the car and described it, including its serial number. The Scenes of Crime Officer then took control of the firearm as an exhibit.

GSOC investigators then attended the local Garda Station, where they spoke with Anthony Ward's girlfriend, who was very distressed and tearful and told the GSOC investigators what had occurred, which was as per the account provided in the earlier briefing to the GSOC investigators. She had no complaint against the Garda Síochána.

On the following day, an investigation strategy was agreed between the GSOC senior investigating officer (SIO) and the Garda superintendent, namely that the Garda Síochána would have primacy in the criminal investigation into any offences committed by Anthony Ward or others involved with Anthony Ward on 26/27 January 2015, that culminated in the unlawful discharge of a firearm. GSOC would investigate the circumstances of

the Garda involvement in the incident and how Anthony Ward was seriously harmed by the discharge of a firearm.

Anthony Ward died at 12:41 the following day. The GSOC Senior Investigation Officer (SIO) and Family Liaison Officer (FLO) met with his family at the ICU. A State post mortem examination was performed that day. The Scenes of Crime Officer was present at the post mortem examination and received a number of items, including swabs, toxicology samples and a bullet from the deceased.

The post mortem report recorded the cause of death as “gunshot wound to the head”.

Some other superficial wounds, including on his arm and abdomen, were detailed in the report. It was stated that they did not cause or contribute to his death. Urine and toxicology analysis indicated the presence of controlled drugs.

Statements were made by all the garda members involved in the incident and submitted via the superintendent to GSOC. The garda members who were initially involved in the incident were from three different Garda Stations.

On 3 and 5 February 2015, door to door enquiries were carried out by GSOC investigators in the area of the incident. Five residents provided witness statements, having heard or seen some aspect of the incident. The most significant witness stated, ‘I got out of bed and looked out the window ... About 30 or 35 feet away, I saw a man standing on the street with his back to me. He was standing by himself, there was no one else near him. I heard two noises, sounds like gunshots and saw the man fall to the

ground. The gunshots were close together, there wasn’t a long pause’.

There was no CCTV of the moment when Anthony Ward crashed or when he shot himself. CCTV from the service station was gathered by the Garda Síochána and made available to GSOC. It shows, at 00:07 (time on the CCTV recording), a car fitting the description of the one Anthony Ward was driving, drive onto the garage forecourt and park in front of the shop door. A blonde haired female gets out of the passenger seat door and runs into the shop. A marked Garda car is seen entering the forecourt and the first car drives away. The female inside the store appears very distraught. She is visibly shaking and crying and speaking to two male staff members. A second Garda car arrives at the garage at 00:12 (time on the CCTV recording) and the female sits in the back and speaks to a female garda. A number of other gardaí arrive on the scene over the next few minutes.

CCTV from the location where Anthony Ward was said to have gone to get his ex-girlfriend earlier that evening was also provided to GSOC, after being gathered by the Garda Síochána. In it, a male can be seen walking around the estate a number of times before approaching a residence. At 23:25, two figures exit that residence. They are walking a good distance apart and get into a car of the same colour and make as the one crashed by Anthony Ward later and drive away. The quality of the footage is low and the image is too blurry to identify individuals. House to house enquiries conducted by the Garda Síochána at that location identified no witnesses.

Other video evidence was received and reviewed by GSOC, but contained nothing of relevance.

A witness statement provided by a relative of Anthony Ward stated that he had called to her house on the evening of 26 January 2015 and had left around 22:00, but returned just after midnight. She said that he came into the kitchen and asked for a cigarette, but didn't smoke it. He left after about a minute. After closing the front door, she said that she heard shouting and the car doors banging closed. She looked out the window and saw him drive away.

Mr Ward's girlfriend provided a witness statement to the Garda Síochána. She stated that she had been in a relationship with Anthony Ward for a number of months, during which time he had behaved violently towards her on two other recent occasions.

She states that, at 21:30 on 26 January 2015, Mr Ward arrived at her home and began to behave violently again, threatening her with a knife, then threatening to cut himself with it. He then demanded to be driven to a relative's house in her car. He continued to be violent and punched her in the mouth during the car journey, which caused one of her teeth to fall out.

Her statement describes how Anthony Ward went into the house briefly and she tried to escape. She describes how he dragged her back into the car and, as he drove away from the house, she saw that he had a gun in his hand. She reports that he was talking about driving up the mountains and maybe shooting both of them, or maybe just himself. She states

that he told her to get out at the service station to get a lighter, threatening to kill her if she did not come back. At the garage, she ran into the shop and asked the staff to press the panic alarm and call the Gardaí.

She sustained injuries to various parts of her body during the incident.

On 27 January 2015, a detective at the Ballistics Section of the Garda Technical Bureau received the revolver, a round of ammunition and three discharged cartridge cases. On 30 January 2015, a discharged bullet which had been recovered from the body of Anthony Ward during the post mortem was also received by the detective for examination. The discharged ammunition were microscopically compared with test fired discharged cartridge cases from the revolver and the detective was satisfied that the cartridge cases were discharged from the revolver which had been recovered, and no other. The detective was also satisfied that the bullet recovered from the body of Anthony Ward was discharged from that revolver, and no other.

The Garda Síochána investigation into the firearm used by Anthony Ward to end his life was unable to establish how and where he obtained the revolver and its previous use.

There have been no complaints from the family of the deceased or anyone else regarding this incident.

Conclusion

Strong co-operation between GSOC and the Garda Síochána throughout the investigation, and detailed accounts provided to GSOC by those members of the Garda Síochána directly involved in the incident, assisted in an expeditious investigation into the circumstances surrounding this tragic incident. The investigation concluded in May 2015.

The investigation established that Anthony Ward ended his own life by shooting himself with an illegally held revolver, after walking from a car which he had lost control of and pointing a gun at gardaí who approached him. The post mortem examination revealed that the death was due to a gunshot wound to the

head and that this was consistent with being self-inflicted.

The investigation found no evidence of Garda misconduct or wrong doing at any stage of their involvement with Mr Ward during this incident.

Having regard to the obligations arising from Article 2 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights, when the investigation was completed, GSOC sent a file to the Director of Public Prosecutions. There was no prosecution of any person in relation to this incident.

The coroner's inquest into the death of Anthony Ward took place on 6 October 2016. The jury returned the verdict that the deceased took his own life.