

Woman wins \$1.2 million settlement after Dallas police interrogation



Veteran Dallas police homicide detective Dwayne Thompson is on desk duty pending an internal investigation. The Dallas City Council on Wednesday approved a settlement of more than \$1 million to a woman who sued Thompson for a reckless interrogation.

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DALLAS Veteran Dallas police homicide detective Dwayne Thompson is on desk duty pending an internal investigation.

The Dallas City Council on Wednesday approved a settlement of more than \$1 million to Olivia Lord, who sued Thompson for violating her civil rights and maliciously prosecuting her.

The Dallas Police Department is taking steps to make sure it doesn't happen again.

The case goes back to 2010, when police arrested Lord on suspicion that she killed her boyfriend, Michael Burnside, even though evidence pointed to suicide.

Lord sued, and a federal jury found Dwayne Thompson had been 'reckless' and 'malicious' with the arrest and his questioning.

For the first time, we're seeing video of the interrogation that prompted the lawsuit.

'You shot him,' Thompson tells Lord in the May 9, 2010 recording.

She appears distraught.

THOMPSON: 'You know... and I know... that this don't make sense. This don't make sense!'

LORD: 'I know it doesn't make sense!'

THOMPSON: 'Then [EXPLETIVE] you tell me the truth! This doesn't add up! I need you to be truthful with me about what happened!'

The interrogation goes on for more than three hours.

LORD: 'I don't what happened.'

THOMPSON: 'You know what happened.'

LORD: 'I don't know... I do not know what happened!'

THOMPSON: 'You know what happened in there.'

A month after Lord was questioned, Thompson arrested her for murder.

Initially, the M.E. ruled the case a homicide based on information given by Thompson, but later changed Burnside's cause of death to 'undetermined.'

'Additional investigation findings were provided after the case was ruled a homicide,' read an amendment signed by M.E. Reade A. Quinton, Deputy Chief M.E. Joni L. McClain and Chief M.E. Jeffrey J. Barnard. 'In particular, the decedent was witnessed to have his gun out and was 'playing with it' prior to the incident occurring. This action was not reported and thus not initially considered in the determination of manner of death. Gunshot residue analysis of the suspect's hands and clothing shows only trace amounts of residue, which could be transferred from the decedent and doe not necessarily indicate handling or firing the weapon. Initial reports of blood splatter on the suspect's clothing are not confirmed on examination.'

A grand jury cleared Lord of any criminal charges. She later sued Thompson, saying he violated her civil rights and lied to the medical examiner about the case.

Lord also accused Thompson of using a witness that was unreliable.

A jury agreed, saying Thompson recklessly disregarded the truth and maliciously prosecuted her. They awarded Lord \$1.2 million. Her attorney, Don Tittle, issued this statement:

'This is an awful thing that happened to her, and we are hopeful there is positive change so this doesn't happen to someone else.'

Dallas police say they have made changes as a result of this case, including better review of interrogation tapes and additional supervisory oversight.

The department told News 8:

'The reaction to any court judgment is that there is a legal process in place, and whether it is a civil case or criminal case, you have to be respectful of the ruling.'

While Dallas police investigate, Dwayne Thompson is not investigating any homicide cases. He could face disciplinary action if internal affairs finds his actions violated the department's general orders.

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