

Police shoots party guest

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The police shooting of a Halloween party guest who was brandishing a fake gun has left the troubled Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in an unwanted spotlight and the victim's friends blaming racial profiling.

Actor Anthony Dwain Lee, 39, died at the Hollywood Hills mansion after he was shot several times by an officer who fired at him through a glass door about 1 a.m. Saturday.

Police say Lee had pointed what looked like a gun at Officer Tarriel Hopper, and Hopper, who had been called to the mansion to respond to a noise complaint, fired in self defense.

"He had no way of knowing it was fake even though people were in costume," LAPD spokeswoman Charlotte Broughton said Sunday. "If you feel your life is threatened, you react in the way you were trained."

But Lee's friends said Sunday that the shooting was more than a mistake. Some planned to hold vigil Monday night in front of the police station where Hopper is stationed to protest the shooting.

"His biggest fear was getting killed by cops, because he's a tall black man," Mary Lin, a friend of the Lee's, told the *Los Angeles Times*.

It was not clear whether Lee knew that Hopper, who is also black, was a real policeman and not just another party guest. Some at the party said other guests were wearing LAPD uniforms.

The police department and district attorney's office are both investigating the shooting.

"This is so incredibly shocking that a person would be taken down like this," said Kirsten Blackburn, a friend of Lee's.

The shooting comes as the LAPD is already struggling to recover from a widespread corruption scandal and accusations of civil rights abuses and police brutality.

Two other officers have faced criminal charges this year for shootings, district attorney spokeswoman Sandi Gibbons said. Meanwhile, four police officers are currently on trial for allegedly framing gang members.

Broughton said she believes the

public will realize the Lee shooting was not intentional or a case of police brutality.

"I think most people can understand where we're coming from as far as what we have to do," she said. "We're risking our lives every day."

Police said several hundred people were at the mansion early Saturday when Hopper and his partner arrived and began searching for the owner.

Broughton refused to say whether Hopper, a three-year veteran, shouted a warning before firing. She said she did not know whether Lee's toy gun had any brightly colored marks that would distinguish it from a real weapon.

One partygoer, Rick Hull, told KTLA-TV in Los Angeles that he didn't hear the officers identify themselves before shooting.

Lee was an actor who had appeared in supporting TV and film roles, including on the programs "ER" and "NYPD Blue," and as the character Fred in the 1997 Jim Carrey comedy, "Liar Liar."

BONFIRE

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verify every aspect of the group's plan, Clark said. KTFB board members declined to accept a policy that was offered to the group last week. Group members reasoned that plans for the off-campus bonfire would, at this point, be "rushed."

The group's decision not to proceed was in part due to not having enough time to complete a safe project, Clark said.

"People would be rushing around and tend to overlook safety procedures to try and get [the bonfire's building] done in time," he said.

The safety of A&M's students is paramount, said Director of University Relations Cynthia Lawson as reported in Saturday's *Bryan-College Station Eagle*.

The University's administration believed members of KTFB would "ultimately do the right thing — not build an off-campus bonfire," Lawson said. "Regardless of the reasons, they have done just that. We hope they will now join us in our efforts to remember the young people who were injured and the lives that were lost Nov. 18."

Clark estimated that several hundred students and alumni supported the off-campus bonfire. People continually contacted the group with inquiries of where and

when they could help with the bonfire's construction, Clark said.

KTFB will continue to be active, he said. Board members will be replaced in March, so a decision to build an off-campus bonfire in 2001 will be made by the new leaders.

The only influence that current board members will have is as voting members of the organization, said board member Joe Dyson, a junior geology major, in an earlier interview.

Dyson said he had hoped that the new leaders would plan for an off-campus bonfire next year, and that — given enough time to ensure that everything was safe — they would build it larger than board members had planned for this year.

However, Clark said board members now express doubt that plans from KTFB will surface next year.

"We know we could have done it, and I'm not saying that somebody won't in the future," he said. "[But] it probably won't be us."

The off-campus bonfire was not about having a bonfire KTFB's way, Clark said, but rather about trying to change the future of Aggie Bonfire.

"If anything comes — any kind of changes — from what we've done, I feel like we've accomplished pretty much most of our goal," Clark said.

GIFT

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values and traditions that are important to this class," said A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen. "I think [the Class of '95] couldn't have done a more significant act than give a sculpture for Muster."

Bowen's sentiment was echoed by members of the Class of '95.

"The most powerful tradition to us as former students would have to be Muster," Blackmon said.

"Muster is a very dignified cere-

mony," Hill said, reflecting on the statue's simplicity. "I wanted the sculpture to be just as understated and dignified."

Some students found the simplicity of the sculpture difficult to describe.

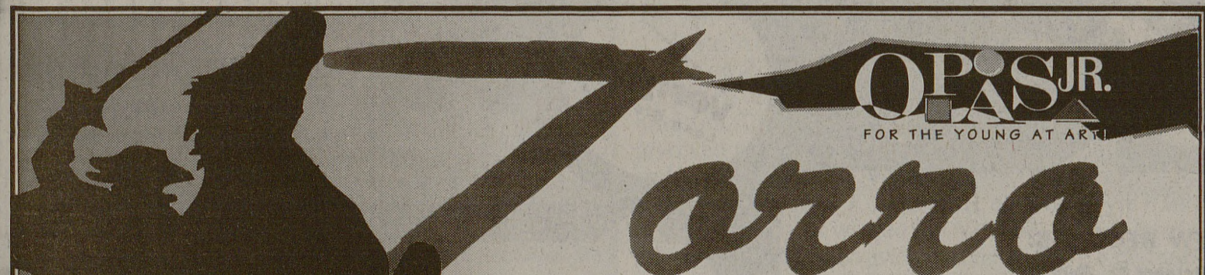
"It's hard to explain in words," said Patrick Freshwater, a junior industrial distribution major. "But we don't have Muster to bring attention to ourselves. We do it to pay respect to the dead."

Muster does not have to be a formal event, said Katherine Kohler, Muster Committee chair.

"It shows that you don't have to have details," Kohler said. "A Muster ceremony can just be two people getting together for dinner or a group coming together for barbecue. It's not always the big ceremony we have here at A&M."

Upton reflected on the spirit of the Aggie family, citing the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse.

"Last year we saw how the Aggie family came together," Upton said. "It was much more than just students and former students. That's what the Aggie family is all about."



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