

BUSINESS

BREAD CLUB KEEPS DOUGH ROLLING IN FOR LOCAL BAKERIES

»1K

SPORTS

BRONCOS HOLD DESTINY IN THEIR OWN HANDS »1CC

COUPONS

TOTAL COUPON SAVINGS IN TODAY'S PAPER: \$127

»denverpost.com/coupons

Voice of the Rocky Mountain Empire

THE SUNDAY DENVER POST



MOSTLY SUNNY, WARMER ▲65° ▼41° »9B • NOVEMBER 28, 2021 • DENVERPOST.COM • © THE DENVER POST • \$3 PRICE MAY VARY OUTSIDE METRO DENVER

COVID-19

Omicron spreads to more countries

Anthony Fauci says he would not be surprised if the variant is already in the United States, as well.

By Pan Pylas The Associated Press

LONDON» The new potentially more contagious omicron variant of the coronavirus popped up in more European countries Saturday, just days after being identified in South Africa, leaving governments around the world scrambling to stop the spread.

The U.K. on Saturday tightened its rules on wearing masks and on the testing of international arrivals after finding two cases. New cases were confirmed Saturday in Germany and Italy, with Belgium, Israel and Hong Kong also reporting the variant has been found in travelers.

In the U.S., Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious-diseases expert, said he would not be surprised if the omicron variant was already in the United States, too.

"We have not detected it yet, but when you have a virus that is showing this degree of transmissibility ... it almost invariably is ultimately going to go essentially all over," Fauci said on NBC television.

Because of fears that the new variant has the potential to be more resistant to the protection offered by vaccines, there are growing concerns around the world that the pandemic and

OUTBREAK » 6A

INSIDE

WHAT TO DO WITH PLUNDERED ART?

The Denver Museum of Art has had a rare "Benin Bronze" since 1955. Now pressure is growing on institutions to give the relics back to their rightful owners. »1B

TAKING A BREAK AT A CABIN IN WOODS

Need a winter escape? These six cabins could be just the ticket. A few are more rustic, while others are downright extravagant. »1E

Two minutes, 20 gunshots, three dead



How the Arvada shootings unfolded when a gunman killed Officer Gordon Beesley, left, and Johnny Hurley, right, stopped him



Flowers and American flags sit near a sign in Olde Town Arvada on June 25, four days after a shooting that left a longtime police officer, a good Samaritan and a gunman with a hatred of police dead. RJ Sangosti, The Denver Post

By Elise Schmelzer The Denver Post

Twenty gunshots exploded in Olde Town Arvada one Monday afternoon in June, shattering windows, killing three and undermining the sense of safety previously held by those who live and work nearby.

In less than two minutes, the scene turned from a pleasant summer day in suburbia to a cacophony of screams and sirens. Diners sitting outside restaurants in the Colorado sunshine heard shotgun pellets whiz by their ears. People in the busy commercial district hid behind dumpsters and in restaurant attics.

In the end, three men lay bleeding outside the library: a beloved police officer, a gunman intent on killing as many law enforcement officers as possible, and a nearby shopper with a legally concealed handgun who stepped in and prevented further bloodshed.

In the five months since the June 21 shootings, police and prosecutors have re-

ARVADA » 17A

PREP PLAYOFFS



CHERRY CREEK HANDILY BEATS LEGEND

Cherry Creek High School running back Carlson Tann (17) celebrates his second half touchdown with teammate Kyair Johnston (3). The Bruins beat Legend, 48-14, and will play Valor Christian in the Class 5A title game. »10C

INSIDE Books »8-9E | Crosswords »12E | Lottery »2B | Obituaries »6-8B | Perspective »1-4D | TV listings »13E A MediaNews Group NEWSPAPER



Natural Grocers Meal Deals advertisement featuring organic girl baby spinach, pork breakfast sausage, field roast, and pasture-raised eggs. Text: FEED YOUR FAMILY OF 6 A FRITTATA MEAL FOR UNDER \$12 THROUGH NOVEMBER 30. Text 'ORGANIC' to 72345+ and follow the link to join {N}POWER and start saving!



# ARVADA

◀FROM 1A

leased information in fits and starts. But records obtained by The Denver Post after 1st Judicial District Attorney Alexis King announced Nov. 8 that she would not prosecute the Arvada police officer who shot and killed “good Samaritan” Johnny Hurley offer the most complete picture of the chaos that day and how law enforcement responded.

The 1,090-page report includes interviews and accounts from dozens of law enforcement officers who responded to the scene as well as descriptions of radio traffic and witness interviews. Although Arvada police officers did not wear body cameras at the time of the shooting, The Post used the documents, surveillance videos and body camera footage from other responding agencies to piece together the following account of the chaotic scene.

“It was the absolute scariest thing I’ve been a part of in 15 years at this police department,” said one of the first officers on scene, whose name was redacted from the report. “I thought that I was going to have to either have to use lethal force or I was going to be murdered.”

One witness, a guitar teacher, told investigators he heard gunshots and saw Arvada police Officer Gordon Beesley fall. He fled as the sound of more gunfire echoed in the square.

“I was visualizing that Olde Town Square was a bloodbath,” the witness, whose name also was redacted, told police. “I was freaking out.”

## Ambush in Olde Town

Ronald Troyke’s brother called 911 at 12:45 p.m. June 21 to request a welfare check on the Arvada resident, a solitary 59-year-old who that morning had made suicidal comments to family members.

Beesley, a 19-year veteran of the department who spent much of the year working as a school resource officer, arrived at Troyke’s apartment complex shortly afterward with another officer, but they couldn’t find Troyke.

While there, Beesley was dispatched to investigate a report of a suspicious person in Olde Town Square, about a mile away.

Surveillance camera footage shows Beesley strolled casually through the square at 1:35 p.m. as a man police later would identify as Troyke — the very person Beesley had just been trying to find — ran up behind him and ambushed him with a shotgun, firing nine shotgun shells at the officer.

The shots shattered glass windows of nearby businesses, causing patrons and passers-by to flee. A few of the pellets blasted inside of the businesses, leaving marks on the walls. Troyke, wearing a black shirt and tactical vest, then fired twice more to blast out the windows of nearby Arvada police cars.

After Troyke’s shots, 911 calls immediately flooded into the Jefferson County emergency call center.

In one call, a man near the So Radish restaurant reported an officer down. During the call, the dispatcher heard gunshots in the background and screaming, according to a summary of the call. She asked the caller if he was in a safe place.

“No,” he answered, with a quiver in his voice.

After the first gunshots, three



A police officer comforts a woman July 21 during an investigation into the shooting in Olde Town Arvada.

Helen H. Richardson, *The Denver Post*



Austin Welch, 11, rode his scooter from his home in Arvada to place flowers on a memorial for Arvada police Officer Gordon Beesley on June 22. Flowers, flags and notes covered a patrol car and bike outside City Hall after Beesley was killed during the Olde Town shooting.

RJ Sangosti, *The Denver Post*

members of the Arvada Police Department’s Community Outreach Resource and Enforcement team huddled around the window in the door of their unmarked office building, about 100 feet away from where Beesley lay.

They saw a man dressed in black wearing “an old-style ski mask” and a floppy hat walk through the parking lot carrying a rifle.

The three officers thought about shooting the man in black, later identified as Troyke, but feared they would be vulnerable if they missed, the officers told investigators. The man outpowered them because he had a rifle and they had handguns. The officers also feared neither their vests nor the walls of the building would protect them or the others who shared the office building from rifle rounds.

“Basically from the door where

we were to where he was is probably 40 yards wide open, no cover, so, you know, I started opening the door because I wanted to confront them but I was like, ‘If I miss we’re (expletive),’” one of the officers, Sterling Boom, told investigators. “So I kind of hesitated there.”

As Troyke walked out of view, another of the three officers, Michael Hall, ran to an upstairs office for a better angle, barging into a woman’s Zoom call and ordering her to lie on the ground. He feared the gunman would start firing on people in the busy town square and hoped to stop the shooter before he entered the square.

But Troyke never reappeared in his field of vision. After shooting the police cars, Troyke returned to his truck and swapped his shotgun for another firearm, which authorities would later describe as an

“AR-15 black carbine-style rifle.”

However, he never fired that rifle. A shopper at the nearby Army Navy Surplus, Johnny Hurley, heard the gunfire from inside the store. Surveillance cameras captured Hurley, 40, rush out of the store, draw a gun from his waistband and run steadily across the town square toward the noise.

As Troyke walked back toward the town square, Hurley peeked around a brick retaining wall. At 1:36 p.m., Hurley fired six rounds from the handgun he carried with a concealed-carry permit and killed Troyke.

Video from surveillance cameras at the CORE team’s office shows Hurley paused for a few seconds before moving in the direction of his fire, picking something up from the ground and manipulating it. A tree blocks the camera’s view of

Troyke’s body and the lower half of Hurley.

Peering through the door window at the CORE office building, Arvada police Officer Kraig Brownlow heard more gunshots and, a few moments later, saw a man dressed in red, later identified as Hurley, step into view holding a rifle — later ID’d by police as Troyke’s AR-15 — and a handgun.

Brownlow told investigators in the days after the shootings that he thought the man was reloading the rifle. He considered yelling commands at the man in red but worried it would ruin his advantage.

“I realize if I yell at him, he’s going to run either to the square area or he’s going to shoot at me with this rifle, and a handgun vs. a rifle is not a fair fight,” Brownlow told investigators, according to a transcript of the interview.

Forty seconds after Hurley shot Troyke, Brownlow fired three rounds at Hurley and struck him once.

Hurley dropped to the ground about 1 minute and 44 seconds after Troyke fired the first rounds that afternoon.

It wasn’t until after Brownlow shot Hurley and the CORE officers stepped out of their building about a minute later that they saw the bodies of Troyke and Beesley, whose bent and damaged badge lay next to him.

Brownlow later recalled to investigators that when that original call about the suspicious person came over the radio, he told the other members of the CORE team that they should take it, but that Beesley said he was already there.

“I think there’s some universes in which I was killed today,” Hall said in his interview with investigators.

## A flood of officers

With the first panicked 911 calls about an active shooter, dozens of officers from Arvada and nearby jurisdictions raced to the scene. Information changed by the min-

ARVADA » 18A



A board of photos of Johnny Hurley with family and friends was set up so guests could write a message or a memory for Hurley on July 20 at Robby Ferruffino Park in Arvada. Kathryn Scott, *Special to The Denver Post*



Hurley’s sister, Erin, right, is greeted by family and friends at his celebration of life on July 20. Kathryn Scott, *Special to The Denver Post*



# ARVADA

◀ FROM 17A

ute.

Several officers wrote in their accounts that initial reports on the radio indicated there might have been another armed person in addition to Hurley and Troyke.

“At the time of my arrival, there was mass confusion on the radio, and it was still uncertain if any suspects were at large,” one Arvada police officer wrote in their report.

Less than two minutes after Brownlow shot Hurley, the first arriving officers formed a group to approach Hurley and Troyke, both lying on the ground.

The officers yelled at the men, telling them to show their hands, body camera footage shows. Neither man responded, according to officers’ reports, and they quickly determined Troyke was dead.

Hurley, though, still breathed, although he barely moved.

Body camera footage shows a group of officers first approach Hurley about 1:41 p.m. — four minutes after he was shot. The video shows an officer removing a rifle from his vicinity.

Officers checked Hurley for more weapons and were placing him in handcuffs when a medic with the Jefferson County SWAT unit arrived. Officers moved Hurley to the medic’s SUV at 1:44 p.m., and the medic started rendering aid. He put a bandage on the bloodless bullet wound in Hurley’s lower back and started to use an oxygen bag on him before officers carried him on a stretcher to an ambulance staged at Olde Wadsworth Boulevard and West 57th Avenue.

The medic told investigators that Hurley gave him at least one breath while in his care, but that it could’ve been an agonia breath — a reflexive gasp that occurs when the brain is not getting enough oxygen.

“What this guy needed was a trauma surgeon, to find out where he was bleeding,” the medic, whose name was redacted from the report, told investigators.

The medic, a deputy with the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office, said his body camera is supposed to turn on automatically when he leaves his vehicle, but it did not switch on the day he tended to Hurley.

Responding officers, unsure how many shooters were involved, also held an uninvolved witness at gunpoint near the shooting scene. The man walked past Troyke seconds before Troyke killed Beesley and hid behind cars parked in the alley after gunfire erupted.

Once the scene was cleared, officers began checking on nearby businesses. They walked quickly through the streets of Olde Town, empty except for police and their cars.

By 1:48 p.m. — 12 minutes after the first gunfire — law enforcement had completely saturated the area. Dispatch aired over the radio: no further units needed.

A second wave of fear began after a bomb-sniffing dog from the Denver Police Department alerted to the possibility of explosives or ammunition in Troyke’s truck. All officers pulled back from the area until a bomb squad could respond. No explosives were found in the vehicle, although investigators did find more than 100 rounds of ammunition.

Troyke’s family called dispatch again at 3:18 p.m. for an update on their earlier welfare check call. Officers then responded again to Troyke’s apartment, although they didn’t yet realize it belonged to the gunman who just had killed Beesley. Once there, they ran into two of Troyke’s neighbors.

The officers asked the neighbors if they knew the man who lived in apartment 306. They said they didn’t know him well, but they had just seen his truck on the news in connection to the Olde Town shooting.

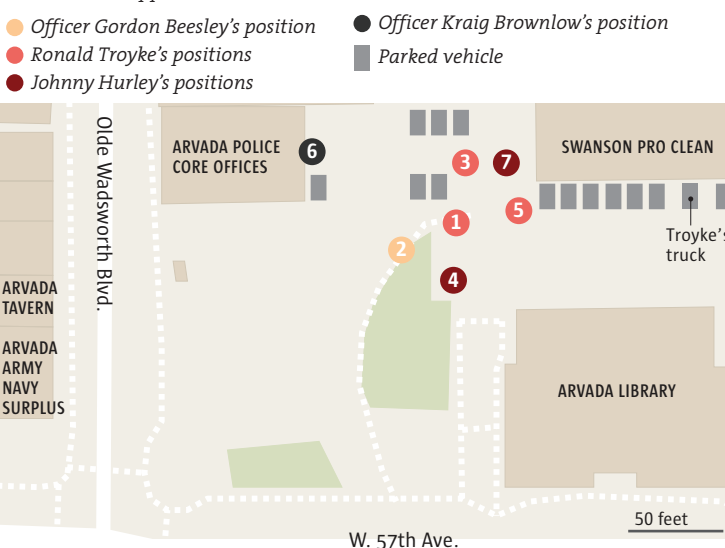
The Jefferson County SWAT team was called out to evacuate the building so police could enter Troyke’s apartment. A team breached the front door with explosives and investigators found a sparse dwelling furnished with a cot, a recliner, a folding table and a television. Officers found few

## A series of shootings

For two minutes on the afternoon of June 21, the sound of gunshots echoed through Olde Town Arvada. The chaos began at 1:35 p.m. when Ronald Troyke ambushed Arvada police officer Gordon Beesley near the square. A man shopping at a nearby store, Johnny Hurley, then ran toward the gunfire and at 1:36 p.m. shot and killed Troyke with his concealed handgun. At 1:37 p.m., Arvada police officer Kraig Brownlow shot and killed Hurley, mistaking him for a threat.

### OLDE TOWN ARVADA SHOOTING SEQUENCE

Locations are approximate



- 1 Ronald Troyke’s position when he shot Officer Gordon Beesley
- 2 Beesley’s position when he was shot by Troyke
- 3 Troyke’s position when shooting at Arvada police cars
- 4 Johnny Hurley’s position when he shot Troyke
- 5 Troyke’s position when he was shot by Hurley
- 6 Officer Kraig Brownlow’s position when he shot Hurley
- 7 Hurley’s position when he was shot by Brownlow

Source: First Judicial District Attorney’s Office Kevin Hamm, The Denver Post

personal belongings, besides greeting cards sent by Troyke’s family members who were concerned about his mental health.

A handwritten note taped to the wall written by Troyke espoused hatred of police officers and a desire to kill as many as possible. Troyke’s brother later told law enforcement that Troyke had no friends, no job and had been “warped” by watching countless hours of YouTube videos about police misconduct.

Investigators later learned Troyke had screamed at members of the CORE team June 7 as they arrested a man on warrants.

“If I could of rigged this place to

explode I would of,” Troyke’s note stated.

### The fallout

In the days that followed, police leaders held news conferences and family and friends mourned Hurley and Beesley. Police leaders praised Hurley as a hero, calling him a “good Samaritan.”

Dozens of witnesses sat in police interview rooms and explained what they saw. A woman who had been eating lunch at one of the restaurants told police that she now checks for the nearest exit at every place she visits and develops an escape plan.

But even five months later,

community members still have questions about June 21.

During a recent town hall meeting about the shootings, King, the district attorney, fielded questions about Hurley’s medical treatment and Arvada police training.

King did not investigate Hurley’s medical treatment on scene as her duty was to determine whether Brownlow was legally justified in shooting Hurley. An autopsy by the Jefferson County coroner’s office shows Brownlow’s bullet fractured Hurley’s pelvis, punctured his intestine and colon, and perforated the large arteries in his pelvis, causing internal bleeding.

King said her office is not aware of any video that shows Hurley being shot aside from the surveillance footage from the CORE office.

“We looked high and low for a video that would show a different angle than the surveillance that was released,” she said. “We didn’t find one.”

Brownlow remained on leave Tuesday, although he is cleared to return to work any time he chooses, Arvada police spokesman Dave Snelling said. Arvada police continue to conduct an internal review of the events of June 21.

During his interview with investigators on June 24, Brownlow said in the immediate aftermath of the shooting he felt like he had successfully ended the threat and that he had done what he was trained to do.

Brownlow said he hadn’t watched any news reports or heard anything about the shooting in the days afterward so he could give an uninfluenced account of events in his interview. He still didn’t know for sure who the man in red was.

But while on scene, Brownlow heard someone mention the man in red might have been a man with a concealed-carry weapon.

“At which point my heart just sank,” he said.

Elise Schmelzer: [eschmelzer@denverpost.com](mailto:eschmelzer@denverpost.com) or [@EliseSchmelzer](https://twitter.com/EliseSchmelzer)

# More than diet & exercise are needed to lower cholesterol



You may be eligible for an AstraZeneca study



See if you qualify

**866-794-0463**  
[heartcarestudy.com/denver](https://heartcarestudy.com/denver)

