

Statement from Chief Dabadie on Plank Rd Case

Over the past several days our department has been the target of some criticism and frustration by people who questioned our handling of a brutal attack on a family in our city last weekend. I take those concerns seriously, and wanted to be certain that the decisions made by our officers and investigators in this case were the correct ones. The detectives have worked diligently and tirelessly at reviewing this case in an attempt to make sure it's handled without prejudice.

So at my direction our detectives have extensively re-interviewed the victims and several witnesses and reviewed all available evidence. We have worked closely with the District Attorney's Office so that the prosecutors who will ultimately have to take these cases to court had the opportunity to evaluate all of the evidence as well, and offer us their guidance.

We also reached out to our federal partners at the FBI to see if federal hate crime charges might be applicable in this case. FBI agents have accompanied our detectives and actively participated in interviews of the victims and witnesses. I will leave it to them to decide when or whether to publicly release further information on their part of the investigation.

I do regret that two of the suspects were issued misdemeanor summonses at the scene instead of being booked. That was a mistake and an error of judgment. We have counseled the officers involved and I have re-emphasized to all my commanders that I expect offenders who commit misdemeanor crimes of violence will be booked into the prison, not summonsed.

Again, this was a brutal attack on an innocent family and I want to commend our officers who quickly responded to the scene and were able to identify, locate and arrest the suspects. I also want to thank the many witnesses that night who put themselves at risk by physically attempting to intervene, and who have since cooperated fully by telling us what they saw.

Our active investigation has concluded for now, although if any new evidence or information comes to light we will of course investigate further and the charges could still be amended later if there is justification to do so. In the meantime we will forward all our reports to the District Attorney's Office and work closely with them to make sure the suspects are prosecuted to the fullest possible extent of the law. We will make no further public statements regarding the details of this case or the evidence until it goes to court."