Nationwide Manhunt Progresses For Surgeon

Carolyn Thompson, AP

The search for a trauma surgeon and former military weapons expert who disappeared after the shooting death of his ex-girlfriend in a Buffalo hospital has escalated into a nationwide manhunt, with authorities warning law enforcers and the public he could be armed and dangerous. A pick-up order for Timothy Jorden, 49, has been transmitted to every local, state and federal law enforcement office in the nation, Buffalo Police Commissioner Daniel Derenda said. The search for Jorden, now in its second day, includes officials with the FBI, Customs and Border Protection and the U.S. Marshals Service.

Police were confident Jorden hadn't crossed the border into Canada, but Derenda said they do not know where he is or might be headed. "He's out there somewhere," Derenda said at a news conference. The search for Jorden began Wednesday morning when 33-year-old Jacqueline Wisniewski was found shot to death in a stairwell at the Erie County Medical Center, where she and Jorden both worked.

All four vehicles registered to Jorden have been accounted for, Derenda said. Earlier Thursday, police dogs searched a ravine near Jorden's luxury lakeshore home. Neighbor Tom Wrzosek told The Associated Press he was home around 9:30 Wednesday morning when he heard a shot. "I heard a shot, a single shot, and I dismissed it," he said. "You don't often hear it, but you do hear it." He told police Thursday morning after thinking more about the timing.

"My girlfriend mentioned if he committed suicide, someone would have heard it," he said. Jorden, who has been licensed to practice medicine in New York for a decade, has served as a role model for black youths in Buffalo, people who know him told the *Buffalo News*. Betty Jean Grant, chairwoman of the Erie County Legislature, told the newspaper she watched Jorden grow up and never knew him to get into any trouble. "It's tragic that a doctor who saved countless lives might be accused of taking someone else's life," she said. "It puts a dark cloud over the mission of a hospital that's dedicated to saving lives."

Police say Wisniewski was shot four times. Derenda said the shooting wasn't a random act, and media reports say Wisniewski was Jorden's ex-girlfriend. Heather Shipley, a friend of Wisniewski, told WIVB-TV that Wisniewski feared Jorden. Wisniewski used to live with Jorden but left him because she believed he was having affairs with other women, Shipley said. When they broke up, he wouldn't let go, Shipley said. She said Wisniewski told her the doctor had put a GPS tracking device in her car and once held her captive in her home for a day and a half, wielding a knife.

"She told me if anything happened to her, that it was him," Shipley told the station.

Those who know Jorden noted changes in recent months. Colleagues told the Buffalo News he had been acting strangely recently, avoiding eye contact and basic communication. A neighbor, June Dupree, told the AP she and her husband had the couple over two summers ago for a cookout. She said Wisniewski was "quiet and kept to herself" and described Jorden as "an awful nice person." When she saw him recently, though, she was startled by his appearance.

"He was very thin," she said. "He had lost a lot of weight. He said, 'Yeah, I lost a little bit.' But it was more than a little bit. It was a lot. He wasn't too friendly that time I saw him. He just didn't want to talk." Jorden's colleagues also noted weight loss. He may have shed as much as 75 pounds, Michael Carr, who works in the surgical recovery room, told the *Buffalo News*. Jorden has a medical degree from the University at Buffalo and trained at the Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, WA. He received his certification from the American Board of Surgery in 2004.

Jorden joined the National Guard in high school, went into the Army after graduation and served with the Army's Special Forces, first as a weapons expert, then as a medic, the *News* reported. In those roles, he served in the Caribbean, Japan and Korea. Jorden is certified in advanced-trauma life support and has received awards recognizing his relationships with patients, his teaching skills and his involvement in the community, the newspaper said. Calls to two listings in Washington state for Jorden's ex-wife, Frances, were not returned.

A bomb threat forced the temporary evacuation at part of the hospital Thursday morning. No bomb was found, and authorities were investigating the source of the threat. After the shooting, police unsuccessfully searched the hospital for the gunman for more than four hours and locked parts of it down. Officials said as many as 400 patients and about half of the hospital's 2,000 employees were on the grounds at the time of the shooting. Authorities also blocked a road leading to his home. SWAT team members in camouflage and protective equipment arrived in unmarked SUVs. A helicopter flew overhead, and police later said the house was empty.

Calls to several family members of Wisniewski were either to outdated phone numbers or were not immediately returned.

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