

Investigative Synopsis of the Officer Involved Death (OID) of Roger B. Helgerson

On Friday, September 1, 2017, the Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) received a request from the Grant County Sheriff's Office (GCSO) to respond to the scene of an officer involved death/shooting at 14403 Millville Hollow Road, Mount Hope, Grant County, Wisconsin.

Shortly after 5:00 a.m. on Friday, September 1, 2017, GCSO Deputy Andrew Smith and GCSO Mason Nemitz drove by Roger B. Helgerson's residence, located at 14403 Millville Hollow Road, Mount Hope, Grant County, Wisconsin. Helgerson's gray Pontiac Grand Prix was parked in front of his residence, at the end of his driveway. Deputy Smith and Deputy Nemitz formulated plans to take Helgerson into custody on outstanding warrants that Helgerson had for his arrest. Deputy Smith parked his squad north of the residence and Deputy Nemitz parked his squad south of the residence.

At approximately 7:10 a.m., Helgerson departed his residence in his Pontiac Grand Prix, southbound on Millville Hollow Road, towards Deputy Nemitz location. Helgerson saw Deputy Nemitz's squad and stopped his Pontiac Grand Prix. Deputy Nemitz advised Deputy Smith that Deputy Nemitz had Helgerson in sight. Deputy Smith advised he was on his way to Deputy Nemitz's location. Helgerson exited his vehicle, re-entered it and drove away, northbound on Millville Hollow Road. Deputy Smith passed Helgerson on Millville Hollow Road while Deputy Smith was driving southbound and Helgerson was driving northbound. Deputy Smith turned around to follow Helgerson. Helgerson parked in front of his house, at the end of his driveway.

Deputy Smith parked his squad on Millville Hollow Road, and exited his squad with his rifle. Deputy Nemitz drove up and parked behind Deputy Smith. Helgerson exited his Pontiac Grand Prix, carrying a rifle. Helgerson raised the rifle, pointing it towards Deputy Smith. Deputy Smith fired three times at Helgerson. Helgerson went down to the ground. Deputy Nemitz was out of his squad and attempting to take a position on the passenger side of Deputy Smith's squad when Deputy Smith fired his rifle at Helgerson.

Deputy Smith told Deputy Nemitz to get back several times. Deputy Smith could not see Helgerson after Helgerson went down to the ground due to tall weeds. Deputy Smith was unsure if he shot Helgerson and that was the reason Helgerson went down or if Helgerson went down to the ground, attempting to hide from Deputy Smith and was planning to attack Deputy Smith and Deputy Nemitz. Deputy Smith and Deputy Nemitz retreated back, south of the shooting location. Deputy Smith wanted to be in a safer position since he didn't know the area and believed that Helgerson knew it well.

Law Enforcement officers that arrived on scene took positions at a distance of Helgerson's residence while waiting for GCSO's armored vehicle to arrive. Once the armored vehicle

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arrived, a safe approach was made to the location that Helgerson was seen going down to the ground. Helgerson was found deceased.

DCI responded to the scene with 11 Special Agents (SA): SA De La Rosa, SA Holmes, SA Fernandez, SA Klavekoske, SA Lenzner, SA Mansavage, SA Dilley, SA Todd, SA Marshal, SA Jurci and SA Pertzborn and 4 Special Agents in Charge (SAC): SAC Crowe, SAC Poller, SAC Wilson and SAC DeRemer. SA De La Rosa was assigned as the lead investigator and SA Holmes was assigned as the secondary investigator. The Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory (WSCL) collected evidence from the scene and the Wisconsin State Patrol Traffic Reconstruction Unit (TRU) assisted with the investigation/created a scene diagram.

Family members of Roger B. Helgerson were identified and a death notification was made by DCI agents. Wisconsin Crime Victim Services forms were also provided to the family.

DCI SA De La Rosa and DCI SA Holmes interviewed involved officer Deputy Andrew Smith on September 3, 2017. An additional two GCSO deputies were interviewed by DCI agents.

A neighborhood canvass was conducted by DCI and GCSO. The canvass produced no critical witnesses.

Squad camera video was collected from GCSO Deputy Smith's squad, GCSO Deputy Nemitz squad, Fennimore Police Chief French's squad and Fennimore Police Officer Fecht's squad. Body camera video was collected from Fennimore Police Officer Fecht and video recording taken while the GCSO armored vehicle approached Helgerson was collected. Only the squad camera video from GCSO Deputy Smith's squad captured the incident.

Evidence from this investigation including firearms and spent bullets was submitted to the WSCL for forensic examination.

An autopsy of Roger B. Helgerson was conducted at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Pathology department on Saturday, September 2, 2017 by Forensic Pathologist, Dr. Robert Corliss and was attended by DCI SA Pertzborn. The autopsy revealed the following; Helgerson suffered two indeterminate range gunshot wounds (GSW). One GSW entered Helgerson's chest at a sharp left to right, front to back trajectory and exited under Helgerson's right arm. The other GSW entered the left side of Helgerson's neck area at a left to right, front to back trajectory. The wound path revealed that the bullet entered the left neck area and lodged in Helgerson's right shoulder. The wound path revealed that the bullet caused devastating damage to Helgerson's C5 vertebrae.

On Friday, September 29, 2017, the completed investigative file as of that date was turned over to Grant County District Attorney Lisa Riniker by DCI SA Holmes for her review.

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