

**Investigative Synopsis of the Officer Involved Death (OID) of Lucas De Ford**

On Saturday October 28, 2017, the Department of Justice – Division of Criminal Investigation received a request from the Jackson County Sheriff's Office to investigate an officer involved death (OID). The OID occurred on the Ho Chunk Mission located in Black River Falls in Jackson County, Wisconsin.

At approximately 12:20 A.M., The Jackson County Dispatch Center received a call from a female subject reporting that she was the victim of a domestic incident that occurred between her and a male subject by the name of Lucas De Ford. The incident occurred on Hwy 54 and during the incident, Lucas made suicidal comments to victim. She believed Lucas was intoxicated and also provided a vehicle description that Lucas was operating. Lucas and the victim have a child in common and she reported that Lucas had keys to her residence.

Deputy Wathke responded to the location and made contact with the victim in the driveway of her residence. The victim said she and Lucas had an incident on the highway. Lucas made suicidal comments and was telling her that he didn't care about going to jail. After Lucas made the comments, he entered his vehicle and left the location heading toward the mission. The victim reported that Lucas was driving a blue Chevrolet Trailblazer with Minnesota license plates.

At approximately 12:50 A.M. Deputy Wathke spotted the suspect vehicle and activated his emergency lights and siren. The Trailblazer was traveling in the direction of the victim's house.

Deputy Wathke stated the Trailblazer pulled into the victim's driveway and stopped near the corner of the house. Deputy Wathke stated he parked his squad near the driver's side door of the Trailblazer to dissuade the driver from attempting to gain access to the interior of the residence.

The subject quickly exited the Trailblazer, ran around the front of Deputy Wathke's squad and to the driver's side window. Based on Deputy Wathke's statement, he recalled the subject's arm was fully extended with a gun pointed toward Deputy Wathke's head. Deputy Wathke's fired two rounds from his handgun at the subject through the driver's side window of his squad car. Deputy Wathke's reactionary hand remained in a defensive position while he fired his handgun.

Deputy Wathke observed the subject take steps backwards and fall onto his back. The gun the subject had in his hand also fell to the ground. Deputy Wathke radioed to dispatch that shots were fired and then he exited his squad car. Deputy Wathke made sure the subject was no longer a threat and secured the subject's gun in his pants pocket. Deputy Wathke said he believed he secured the gun while performing life saving measures.

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The subject died at the scene. He was later identified as Lucas De Ford, the subject involved in the domestic incident with the victim.

Numerous DCI agents responded to the scene. Special Agent In Charge (SAC) Cindy Giese supervised the OID investigation until SAC Robert Powell's return from out-of-state. S/A Adam L. Frederick was the lead investigator. S/A Michael T. Reimer was the second lead investigator. The Wisconsin State Patrol Traffic Reconstruction Unit (WSP TRU) assisted with the investigation/created a scene diagram. The Office of Crime Victim Services assisted in the investigation (OCVS).

The mother of Lucas De Ford was provided with the death notification by DCI. The Wisconsin Office of Crime Victim Services was in contact with the family of Lucas De Ford.

DCI Agents Adam Frederick and Michael Reimer interviewed Deputy Wathke on October 31, 2017.

An autopsy of Lucas De Ford was conducted at the University of Wisconsin Hospital by Forensic Pathologist Michael Stier on October 28, 2017. The autopsy was attended by the following:

- S/A James Pertzborn, Wisconsin DOJ-DCI
- Nick Stahlke, Wisconsin State Crime Lab/ Crime Scene Response Team Leader
- Trevor Naleid, Wisconsin State Crime Lab/ Crime Scene Response Team
- Lindsay Smith, UW Hospital Morgue / Autopsy Technician

The autopsy revealed:

- Two penetrating gunshot entry wounds. One wound was to the lower right side abdomen and another near the center of the decedent's chest. The gunshot wound to the chest traveled through the decedent's heart causing a likely fatal injury.

A complete investigative file was turned over to the Jackson County District Attorney's Office on December 13, 2017.