

Wisconsin Division of Criminal Investigation Case Report
Case/Report Number: 17-9096/1 Summary Report

On Saturday, December 30, 2017 at 2:55am, Wisconsin Department of Justice-Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) Special Agent in Charge (SAC) Klabunde received a request for an OID investigation from the Town of Brookfield PD. The scene was at the Quality Inn located at 20150 W. Bluemound Rd in Brookfield Wisconsin. Members of the Waukesha County Sheriff Office (WKSJ) and City of Brookfield Police Department (COBPD) contained the scene and conducted a canvass at the Motel. Town of Brookfield Officers were secured at the Town of Brookfield Police Department (TOBPD) by City of Brookfield Police supervisors.

The WKSJ declined the investigation due to a previous OIS with the same suspect in 2009. The City of Brookfield PD also declined the investigation and deferred to DCI.

The suspect, identified as Steven P. Lettenberger, was traffic stopped at approximately 12:22am in the parking lot of the Quality Inn, and a wanted check of his plate and name revealed a felony warrant. TOBPD Officers attempted to take him into custody and he went back into his vehicle, obtained a firearm and shot himself in the head. Lettenberger was deceased on the scene.

DCI responded with 10 Special Agents, 2 SACs, and also coordinated the response of the Wisconsin State Crime Lab (WSCL), and the Wisconsin State Patrol Traffic Reconstruction Unit (WSP TRU). SA Gibbs was assigned as the lead investigator and SA Lourdes Fernandez was assigned as the secondary investigator. The scene investigation was conducted, officer interviews and weapon/uniform inspections were conducted, and squad camera and body camera was obtained. The following is a summary of the investigation.

Scene Investigation

The scene of this incident was the west parking lot of the Quality Inn. The decedent was seated in the driver's seat of his silver 2007 Toyota Camry. Recovered from the decedent's right hand was an Interarms Firestar 9mm pistol. Also recovered in the vehicle was a fired 9mm casing (driver's side dash board), a fired bullet (back seat), and Anti Felon Identification tags from a fired taser cartridge (lower edge of driver's door and surface of parking lot.)

Recovered in the parking lot was a taser X-26 without cartridge, and a pair of eyeglasses.

Decedent

The decedent was removed from the driver's seat of the vehicle and conveyed to the Waukesha County Medical Examiner's Office where an autopsy was conducted. Two taser prongs and the attached wires were observed affixed to the decedent's coat. Decedent suffered an apparent gunshot wound to the right side of his head, with an exit wound on the left side of his head. Bullet fragments were recovered from the decedent's head. The final autopsy report was not completed at the time of this report.

Canvass

COBPD Detectives conducted a canvass of all occupants at the Quality Inn on the night of this incident. No witnesses observed the incident, and only two heard gunfire.

Officer Statements

Both TOBPD Officers gave statements to DCI Personnel. Officer Socolick stated he observed the decedent operating the Toyota on Bluemound Rd. and performed a routine license plate check, which revealed the vehicle owner to be wanted for a felony warrant. Socolick stopped the vehicle, eventually removed the driver (decedent), and attempted to arrest the decedent for the felony warrant. The decedent, on learning he was wanted for a warrant, re-entered his vehicle, produced a handgun and shot himself one time to the right side of his head.

TOBPD Officer Hottinger stated he responded to Socolick's location after he stopped the decedent in the Quality Inn parking lot. He was present with Socolick when the decedent exited his vehicle, then quickly re-entered the vehicle. Hottinger deployed his taser as the decedent re-entered the car, and observed the decedent produce a handgun and shoot himself one time in the head.

Video

COBPD checked all area businesses for any surveillance video that recorded this incident, and found none. A check of Quality Inn surveillance video by SA Gibbs revealed the video system did not record the incident.

Video was recovered from TOBPD squad cameras and recorded the incident. Neither TOBPD Officer fired their weapon during this incident.

Video was also recovered from COBPD responding officers, and showed COBPD and TOBPD Officers approach the decedent's vehicle and look into the passenger compartment.

Ballistic Testing

An examination was conducted by the WSCL of the Interarms 9mm pistol, the fired 9mm cartridge, the fired bullet recovered inside of the decedent's car, and the bullet fragments from the decedent's head. Testing was still being done by WSCL at the time of this report.

DA Review

On Wednesday, January 31, 2018 a DVD was created containing all reports for this investigation as of that date to include the Initiating case report and reports # 1 - # 53. The disc will be delivered to Waukesha County DA Sue Opper on Friday, February 2, 2018 by SA Ray Gibbs.