

## **Beresford Police Department Shooting Summary Report of the Officer Involved Shooting that occurred on January 15, 2015**

On January 15, 2015, the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) conducted an investigation regarding an Officer Involved Shooting that resulted in the shooting of Christopher Heuer (DOB: 1-29-92) after a 911 call had been made stating Heuer had a firearm and was suicidal. This shooting incident occurred outside of the residence at 101 NW 13<sup>th</sup> St. in Beresford (Union County), SD. The following information is a synopsis of the events that occurred on January 15, 2015, and the subsequent investigation conducted by the DCI.

### **Synopsis**

On January 15, 2015, at approx. 12:01pm, Union County dispatch received a 911 call from Heuer's mother who reported that she had seen her son, Christopher Heuer, in the garage of the residence at 101 NW 13<sup>th</sup> St. in Beresford, SD. Heuer was armed with a gun and suicidal. This was at the intersection of Northwest 13<sup>th</sup> St. and West Main St.

Beresford Police Department Sergeant Dave Steckelberg was dispatched to the residence following the 911 call. Upon arrival in the area Sgt. Steckelberg observed Heuer's mother north of the residence and learned from her that Heuer was in the garage with a gun. Sgt. Steckelberg parked his marked Beresford PD vehicle near the driveway of the residence on Main Street, facing west.

Sgt. Steckelberg took a position of cover on the south side of his police vehicle exterior, away from the residence. Via the patrol vehicle's public address system he began to issue commands to Heuer to exit with nothing in his hands. Heuer exited once and went back into the garage.

Sgt. Steckelberg was able to identify a rifle in Heuer's possession and called for emergency backup.

At one point Heuer's mother came back into the yard to the east of Sgt. Steckelberg and Heuer. She was instructed by Sgt. Steckelberg to come to the area of cover behind the police vehicle.

A vehicle was parked in the driveway of the residence between Heuer and Sgt. Steckelberg's position. Heuer moved around on the far side of the car eventually working his way to the east just into the yard. During this time Sgt. Steckelberg continued to speak to Heuer and offered to help him and instructing him to put the gun down. Heuer indicated to Sgt. Steckelberg that he didn't want help.

Heuer then moved into the open front yard area of this residence in front of Sgt. Steckelberg, still holding the rifle. Without setting the rifle down Heuer removed his jacket and then his shirt.

Heuer held the rifle in a position similar to a "ready" position and began to slowly raise the rifle up. The rifle in Heuer's possession was a 22 long rifle, Iver Johnson semiautomatic with a magazine, later recovered on scene unloaded. Sgt. Steckelberg explained if Heuer would have fired it would have struck him in the lower extremities.

Sgt. Steckelberg was in fear for his life and the life of Heuer's mother. Sgt. Steckelberg fired his Glock .40 caliber duty weapon a total of 3 times at Heuer, striking Heuer at least one time in the right arm. Heuer was apprehended by Sgt. Steckelberg and received medical attention.

Sgt. Steckelberg was contacted by DCI Agents at the scene. Agents documented that Sgt. Steckelberg was wearing his issued Beresford Police uniform. His duty weapon and magazines were secured, documented, and inventoried. The inventory showed the following:

- Sgt. Steckelberg's handgun contained 12 rounds in the magazine and one round in the chamber.
- Sgt. Steckelberg had two spare magazines with one magazine containing 15 rounds and the other magazine containing 14 rounds.
- Sgt. Steckelberg did not reload or change magazines during the incident.

## **Shooting Scene Investigation and Interviews**

Heuer's mother stated she was in fear for her life and the life of Heuer. Heuer's mother witnessed Heuer in possession of a rifle and was threatening to kill himself, prompting a 911 call for help.

Numerous non-law enforcement witness statements were consistent with seeing Heuer raise the rifle and point it in the direction of the sergeant. One witness described Heuer as 'dodging' around in the yard working his way towards the street, raising the gun at times, and noted that after the first shot the male was still 'aggressing' at that point. Another witness described Heuer as 'waving' the gun around at the officer. A third witness reported that after the incident Heuer made a statement that he had exited the garage with his hands behind his back, 'faking it.' Heuer's statement to this same witness continued with Heuer saying he re-entered the garage, got a gun and exited a second time.

When interviewed by a DCI Agent, Heuer stated he pointed his gun at the officer, wanting the officer to shoot and kill him. Heuer also stated this was not the officer's fault.

A crime scene investigation was conducted by the DCI. Based on the DCI's investigation, including an interview with Sgt. Steckelberg and the shooting scene investigation, approximate positioning of Sgt. Steckelberg and Heuer was established.

Distances between Sgt. Steckelberg's position, calculated from the rear driver's tire of the police vehicle, and Heuer were established at the approximate place blood and foot prints were observed in the yard. This distance was approximately 46 feet.

Three fired casings were located near where Sgt. Steckelberg was located when he fired his duty weapon.

The South Dakota Forensic Lab conducted testing on Sgt. Steckelberg's firearm. They concluded that all 3 of the shell casings found on scene matched Sgt. Steckelberg's handgun.

One fired round went through the southeast corner of a room in the garage and lodged in an inner wall. This round was recovered. This bullet was examined and found to be consistent with the caliber and characteristics of the officer's handgun.

Bullet fragments, bullet jacket, and bullet core were medically recovered from Heuer. Some of the bullet fragments, the bullet jacket, and bullet core was examined and found to be consistent with the caliber and characteristics of the officer's handgun and ammunition. There were also smaller bullet fragments that were not suitable for comparison and identification.

A drug screen and blood alcohol test was conducted on Sgt. Steckelberg with negative results.

A blood alcohol test was conducted on Heuer with negative results.

## **Investigation Results**

It is the conclusion of this report and the Attorney General that the sergeant was justified in firing his weapon and using lethal force.

The crime scene investigation conducted by the DCI is consistent with statements made by Sgt. Steckelberg, Heuer's mother, Heuer, and witness statements.

Heuer was charged with Aggravated Assault Against a Law Enforcement Officer and Aggravated Assault (Domestic) in Union County.





Division of Criminal Investigation

PO Box 723  
Brookings, SD

Date: 01/15/2015

Location: 101 North 13th Street Beresford, SD

CC# DCI #1500277

Drawn By: SA Kollars

Scale: NA



- Legend
- 1) Shell casing
  - 2) Shell casing
  - 3) Shell casing
  - 4) Officer position
  - 5) Subject location
  - 6) Bullet hole
- indicated by blood and foot prints in the snow.

