

Sioux Falls Police Department Officer Shooting Summary Detailing Events From June 22, 2022

On June 22, 2022, the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) was requested by the Sioux Falls Police Department (SFPD) to investigate an officer involved shooting that occurred in Sioux Falls, S.D., near 4208 West 41st Street. The suspect, Asa Wooden Knife, was contacted after he was found to be the driver of a stolen vehicle. During the encounter, Wooden Knife pointed a pistol at law enforcement. Law Enforcement shot at Wooden Knife, but he was not struck. The following is a synopsis of the events that occurred on June 22, 2022, and the investigation that was conducted by the DCI.

Synopsis

On June 22, 2022, a Sioux Falls Police Department Detective located a stolen vehicle occupied by a male driver and a female passenger. At approximately 6:52 P.M., the stolen vehicle stopped near the northeast side of the Red Rock Inn (4208 W 41st Street). The driver exited and was standing outside near the open driver's door. As the detective began to exit their unmarked patrol vehicle wearing a clearly marked police vest, the driver began to run southbound along the east side of the building. The Sioux Falls Police Detective chased after the driver. The male then pointed a gun at the detective. The detective shot two times at the suspect, missing him. The suspect, Wooden Knife, was apprehended in the roadway of 41st Street after resisting arrest and struggling with law enforcement. Wooden Knife was uninjured during the shooting or subsequent arrest.

Shooting Scene Investigation

The shooting scene investigation was conducted by the DCI and Sioux Falls Crime Lab personnel. Items of evidence were collected and confirmed officer statements and video that captured the event.

A black Hi-Point pistol was recovered during the scene processing. Camera footage in the area showed Wooden Knife with a pistol in his possession. Additionally, camera footage showed Wooden Knife throwing the firearm onto the ground while he was fleeing from law enforcement. The pistol was found to have one 9mm round in the magazine.

Interview with SFPD Detective

On June 23, 2022, a DCI Special Agent conducted an interview with the SFPD Detective at the Sioux Falls Law Enforcement Center.

On June 22, 2022, the SFPD Detective was working with another SFPD Detective. Both were assigned to an unmarked police vehicle that is equipped with a dashboard camera, lights and siren. Prior to this incident, the SFPD Detective was assisting the Sioux Falls Area Drug Task Force (SFADTF) members by conducting a traffic stop of a vehicle on a separate investigation.

After the traffic stop, which was near Madison and Interstate 29, the SFPD Detective observed a blue Kia Rio with no hub caps. The vehicle stood out and matched the description of a previously reported stolen vehicle. The SFPD Detective also knew the vehicle had previously eluded law enforcement while attempting to stop it. The license plate number to the blue Kia Rio was run and a confirmation came back indicating the plate/registration was stolen and matched the same description.

The SFPD Detective then requested assistance of other law enforcement, which included members of the SFADTF to follow the stolen vehicle. The SFPD Detective wanted to follow the vehicle until it stopped in an effort to avoid a police pursuit of the stolen vehicle. The stolen vehicle was followed to the area of the Red Rock Inn motel (4208 W 41st St.). After the stolen vehicle arrived at the Red Rock Inn, other members of the SFADTF advised it was located along the east side of the motel facing south.

With this information, the SFPD Detective drove around to the north side of the property to make contact with the vehicle and occupants. The same male driver, identified later as Asa Wooden Knife, was seen standing outside of the vehicle and leaning in toward the driver's side door area. At that time, Wooden Knife looked up as the SFPD Detective stopped to exit the patrol vehicle. No patrol vehicle lights, or siren were activated. Wooden Knife then took off running southbound along the motel toward the front entrance area.

The SFPD Detective exited the patrol vehicle and began to run after the driver saying, "Get on the ground." Wooden Knife had dropped a baseball hat, a large, fixed blade knife and knife sheath while running. At that time, another officer pulled up on the front, east side of the motel parking lot and stopped. This was in the same direction that Wooden Knife was running. As Wooden Knife continued running, he turned west under the motel overhang. This is when the SFPD Detective observed Wooden Knife holding a black handgun in his right hand. Wooden Knife was seen reaching his right arm backwards toward the principal officer, pointing the gun at a 45-degree angle. Loud verbal commands were given to the suspect to "drop the gun" but Wooden Knife did not comply.

While the SFPD Detective was running under the motel overhang, they drew their duty pistol from their holster. Verbal commands continued, telling Wooden Knife to drop the gun, but he did not comply. While Wooden Knife was running, he raised the gun with his right arm and pointed it back over his left shoulder toward the SFPD Detective.

The SFPD Detective felt Wooden Knife was going to shoot them, other detectives or officers working in the area. The SFPD Detective then fired two rounds from their duty pistol at Wooden Knife. After firing at Wooden Knife, Wooden Knife ducked and appeared to recognize he was being shot at. When Wooden Knife's hands could be seen again, he no longer had the black pistol.

Wooden Knife continued running south into traffic on 41st Street before being apprehended and brought to the ground. While attempting to handcuff Wooden Knife, he resisted and would not put his hands behind his back. Wooden Knife was physically noncompliant and tried to get up on his hands and knees. At that time, a SFPD Detective deployed a taser on Wooden Knife to gain control. Wooden Knife was then placed in handcuffs and physically checked for any injuries. He was then escorted out of traffic on 41st Street and onto the sidewalk.

During the events leading up to the arrest, the SFPD Detective felt Wooden Knife was going to shoot them.

Video Evidence

Patrol vehicle video, officer worn body cameras and Red Rock Inn motel video surveillance were all reviewed during this investigation. The following was clearly observed through audio and video recordings.

When the SFPD Detective exited the patrol vehicle to make contact with Wooden Knife, Wooden Knife began to flee from officers. The SFPD Detective gave chase telling Wooden Knife to stop. Several seconds into the foot chase, a black pistol was clearly observed in Wooden Knife's right hand. The SFPD Detective gave loud verbal commands to drop the gun, but Wooden Knife did not comply. As the foot chase continued, Wooden Knife could be seen pointing the black pistol back toward the SFPD Detective. Two total gunshots could be heard coming from the SFPD Detective. Wooden Knife then threw the gun onto the ground and was then arrested on 41st Street.

The SFPD Detective was wearing a duty issued police vest with "POLICE" patches on the front and back.



LEFT: A still image from the body worn camera of the Detective shows Asa Wooden Knife running from law enforcement with a black firearm in his right hand.

Firearm Examinations

The SFPD Detective fired their duty issued Glock 45 9mm caliber handgun two times. The magazine was originally loaded with 17 rounds in the magazine with an additional round in the chamber. Sixteen rounds remained after the shooting.

The South Dakota Forensic Lab conducted testing on the SFPD Detective's firearm. They concluded that the two spent casings found at the scene matched the duty weapon used during the shooting. They also concluded that the SFPD Detective and Wooden Knife's firearms were found to be functional.

Medical Reports and Criminal History

Drug and alcohol tests were conducted on the SFPD Detective, which were negative.

A criminal history check on Wooden Knife was also conducted. He was previously arrested and convicted for various crimes to include simple assault and aggravated assault.

Investigation Results

Based on the totality of the circumstances, a reasonable officer present at the scene utilized deadly force in a situation that was tense, uncertain, and building. The SFPD Detective attempted to make contact with Wooden Knife who had been observed driving a stolen vehicle. Wooden Knife was in possession of a firearm when he fled law enforcement. While fleeing from law enforcement, Wooden Knife pointed the firearm at the SFPD Detective in a populated area near 41st Street. The actions of Wooden Knife placed the public and law enforcement in jeopardy. Wooden Knife had the means and opportunity to use deadly force and was a clear and present danger to law enforcement and the public. The SFPD Detective believed they were in a situation in which Wooden Knife could inflict serious injury or death and responded with deadly force.

It is the conclusion of this report and the South Dakota Attorney General that the Sioux Falls Police Detective involved was justified in firing their duty weapon and using lethal force.