

## **Pennington County Sheriff's Office Shooting Summary Detailing Events That Took Place on November 30, 2018**

On 11-30-18, the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) was contacted by the Pennington County Sheriff's Office to investigate an officer involved shooting that occurred at Exit 78 on Interstate 90 near New Underwood in Pennington County, South Dakota. The shooting resulted in the suspect, Matthew Lorenzen, being shot one time. Lorenzen died as a result of his injuries. Pennington County Sheriff's Deputy Christopher Plawman was involved in the shooting. The following information is a synopsis of the events that occurred on 11-30-18, and the investigation that was conducted by the South Dakota DCI.

### **Synopsis**

On 11-30-18 at approximately 11:30 AM, while on patrol, a Pennington County Sheriff's Deputy attempted to pull over a silver Chrysler Voyager minivan. The driver of the minivan was traveling 80 miles per hour in a 65 mile per hour speed zone near the intersection of South Highway 79 and Old Folsom Road. The driver of the vehicle failed to pull over and instead crossed the median on Highway 79 and headed east on Elk Vale Road. The deputy tried to catch up to the driver on Elk Vale Road but was unsuccessful.

While trying to locate the minivan, dispatch advised that the registered owner of the vehicle was Matthew Lorenzen, and that there was a recent Attempt to Locate bulletin on Lorenzen for making suicidal threats. On 11-15-18, an individual contacted the Pennington County/Rapid City Emergency Services Communications Center. This individual called to report that Matthew Lorenzen had made suicidal threats and wanted to get a gun and kill himself. Law enforcement officers' attempts to locate Lorenzen were unsuccessful.

On 11-30-18, another Pennington County Sheriff's Deputy located the minivan at the residence belonging to Lorenzen. This deputy saw Lorenzen exit the minivan and enter the residence. Before other deputies could arrive to assist, Lorenzen exited the residence and got back in the minivan.

Lorenzen led law enforcement on a high-speed pursuit. Law enforcement officers from the Pennington County Sheriff's Office, Box Elder Police Department, Rapid City Police Department, and South Dakota Highway Patrol engaged in efforts to get Lorenzen stopped.

During the pursuit, officers saw Lorenzen with a scoped rifle. Law enforcement reported that Lorenzen fired the rifle near the intersection of Plateau Lane and Albert Lane. Deputies also reported seeing Lorenzen wave a rifle and point the rifle in their direction. As the pursuit continued, deputies reported another shot fired by Lorenzen. Spike strips were deployed in an attempt to stop the vehicle at various locations. As Lorenzen traveled past law enforcement near the intersection of west Sunnydale Road and Radar Hill Road, Lorenzen swerved into the ditch to avoid the spike strips. A Box Elder Police Officer fired one round from his duty issued handgun but did not strike Lorenzen.

The pursuit continued at speeds reaching more than 90 mph. Lorenzen traveled in the oncoming lanes of traffic on Highway 44 and Interstate 90. Oncoming traffic was forced to swerve in order to avoid colliding with Lorenzen.

While traveling eastbound in the westbound lane of traffic on Interstate 90, Lorenzen crossed the median and began traveling eastbound in the eastbound lane. Lorenzen eventually took the Exit 78 off ramp near New Underwood. While traveling on the Exit 78 off ramp, a Pennington County Sheriff's Deputy executed a Tactical Vehicle Intervention.

Lorenzen's vehicle rolled down an embankment. As multiple law enforcement officers converged on the scene, Lorenzen exited the vehicle momentarily. Deputies gave Lorenzen verbal commands to get on the ground and show them his hands. Lorenzen did not comply. Lorenzen, from his knees, reached back into the minivan and emerged with a scoped rifle in his hands. As Lorenzen stood up with the rifle in his hands, Deputy Christopher Plawman engaged Lorenzen, firing one round and striking him in the upper torso.

Law enforcement approached Lorenzen and saw that he had been shot one time. Life saving measures were performed on Lorenzen by law enforcement until medical personnel arrived. Medical personnel arrived and pronounced Lorenzen dead at the scene.

DCI Agents contacted Deputy Plawman. A DCI Agent documented that Deputy Plawman was wearing his Pennington County Sheriff's Office issued uniform. His duty weapons and magazines were secured, documented, and inventoried. The inventory showed the following:

- Deputy Plawman's Glock 9mm handgun contained one round in the chamber and 17 rounds in the magazine.
- Two spare magazines associated with Deputy Plawman's handgun contained 17 rounds each.
- Deputy Plawman's patrol rifle contained 27 rounds in the magazine and none in the chamber.

### **Shooting Scene Investigation**

The shooting scene investigation conducted by DCI produced items of evidence that confirmed statements given by Deputy Plawman and witnesses present at the time of the shooting. Specifically, there was one spent .223 caliber shell casing found on scene consistent with the area where Deputy Plawman fired his patrol rifle.

A Savage Model .17 HMR rifle with scope was found near the body of Lorenzen. The rifle had one live round jammed in the chamber. The rifle contained a magazine with 7 live rounds. A picture of the rifle is attached to this report.

A small bag of marijuana was found outside the vehicle after the rollover. A box of live ammunition was found inside the vehicle.

A crime scene drawing was prepared and is also attached to this report.

## Interview of Deputy Christopher Plawman

Deputy Plawman said that he was on duty for the Pennington County Sheriff's Office on 11-30-18. Deputy Plawman was on patrol when he heard the radio traffic of another deputy attempting to make a traffic stop and the suspect vehicle had jumped the median and eluded law enforcement.

Deputy Plawman said that he heard radio traffic that the vehicle law enforcement attempted to pull over arrived at a residence in Rapid Valley. The suspect entered the residence and then returned to the vehicle. Deputy Plawman said that law enforcement communicated that the suspect fled the area and officers were in pursuit.

Deputy Plawman said that later, he heard as other deputies involved in the pursuit communicated, that the suspect had fired rounds from the suspect's vehicle. Deputy Plawman said radio traffic indicated attempts to spike strip the fleeing vehicle were unsuccessful. He also heard radio traffic where law enforcement reported the suspect had fired more rounds from the vehicle.

Deputy Plawman traveled from his location to the area where law enforcement officers were in pursuit of the suspect. He was able to join the pursuit eastbound on Interstate 90 past milepost 65. Deputy Plawman said the suspect vehicle slowed down as it turned southbound on Exit 78 at New Underwood. Deputy Plawman saw that the suspect vehicle, a silver minivan, was upside down in the east ditch.

Deputy Plawman said that he exited his patrol car and took cover behind another patrol vehicle. He heard law enforcement giving Lorenzen commands. Deputy Plawman said he saw Lorenzen rummaging around inside the minivan.

Deputy Plawman observed Lorenzen emerge from the vehicle. Law enforcement was still giving Lorenzen commands. Other law enforcement was yelling, "Gun. Gun. Gun."

Deputy Plawman saw Lorenzen, with what appeared to be a rifle. Lorenzen was looking up at law enforcement. Deputy Plawman said that he fired one round from his duty-issued patrol rifle.

Deputy Plawman said he felt he and other law enforcement officers were in danger. He had heard radio traffic from law enforcement articulating that Lorenzen had fired rounds from the vehicle during the pursuit. He believed his fellow deputies on scene were in jeopardy of being injured. He believed Lorenzen was looking for a target or a deputy to shoot.

The information obtained from Deputy Plawman was consistent with the witness statements, video recordings of the incident, and the shooting scene investigation.

## **Witness Interviews**

A Pennington County Sheriff's Deputy said that he attempted to make a traffic stop on a silver minivan near the intersection of south Highway 79 and Old Folsom Road. The deputy said the driver of the minivan was traveling 80 miles per hour in a 65 mile per hour zone. The deputy said the driver of the minivan drove over the median and headed east on Elk Vale Road. The deputy said dispatch relayed that an Attempt to Locate bulletin had been issued earlier for the registered owner of the minivan. Dispatch identified the registered owner as Matthew Lorenzen. Dispatch advised that the Attempt to Locate bulletin was in reference to a welfare check on Lorenzen for making suicidal threats.

The deputy said he was unable to catch back up to Lorenzen's vehicle. Meanwhile, another deputy traveled toward the residence where Lorenzen was reported to have lived. When the deputy arrived, he observed the minivan pull up to the house and Lorenzen exit the vehicle. Lorenzen entered the residence. The deputy said that because Lorenzen was reported to possibly possess a gun, he waited for backup to arrive. A few moments later, Lorenzen exited the residence, re-entered the minivan and led law enforcement on a pursuit.

During the pursuit, a Pennington County Sheriff's Deputy, directly behind Lorenzen, said he saw Lorenzen with a scoped rifle inside the van. The deputy said Lorenzen then fired one round from his vehicle near the intersection of Plateau Lane and Albert Lane. The deputy said he could see where Lorenzen fired through the windshield. Glass appeared to fly over the vehicle.

Another deputy involved in the pursuit said speeds reached nearly 100 miles per hour. Deputies reported that Lorenzen traveled eastbound in the westbound lane of traffic on Highway 44. Vehicles were forced to swerve out of the way. Deputies reported seeing Lorenzen with a rifle inside the minivan. One deputy reported that it appeared Lorenzen pointed the rifle in his direction.

A Box Elder Police Officer tried to deploy spike strips at the intersection of west Sunnydale Road and Radar Hill Road. The officer said that Lorenzen avoided the spike strips by swerving into the eastbound ditch. The officer said that based on the information he had received that Lorenzen possessed a gun and had fired rounds, he felt it was safe to fire his weapon at Lorenzen. The officer said that he fired his duty issued handgun one time. The officer said the driver's side window shattered because of the shot he fired. The officer said Lorenzen did not stop and kept traveling.

As the pursuit continued, a deputy directly behind Lorenzen said Lorenzen fired another round from inside the minivan. As a result, more glass from the minivan shattered.

Deputies reported that the pursuit continued onto Interstate 90. Lorenzen attempted to elude law enforcement by traveling eastbound in the westbound lane. Lorenzen eventually got back in the eastbound lane, traveling at a high rate of speed. Deputies said Lorenzen exited Interstate 90 at Exit 78. A Pennington County Sheriff's Deputy said he executed a Tactical Vehicle Intervention as Lorenzen began traveling south toward New Underwood. The deputy said that after the Tactical Vehicle Intervention, Lorenzen's vehicle spun into the east ditch.

Multiple law enforcement officers had converged on the scene and reported seeing Lorenzen exit the minivan, which was upside down in the ditch. Deputies gave Lorenzen verbal

commands to get on the ground and to show them his hands. Lorenzen did not comply. Deputies said they heard Lorenzen say, "Shoot me."

Deputies said that Lorenzen reached back into the vehicle. Lorenzen came out of the vehicle with an object in his hand. Deputies said that something had covered up the object in Lorenzen's hand. One deputy reported that he saw Lorenzen peel off what appeared to be a sweatshirt and a rubber floor mat from the object in his hand. The deputy said that once the items were removed from the object, he noticed Lorenzen had a rifle in his hand. Other law enforcement officers reported seeing Lorenzen with a rifle in his hand. A deputy said he yelled, "Gun. Gun. Gun."

Law enforcement officers on scene said they heard one gunshot. They then saw Lorenzen fall to the ground.

Law enforcement officers said they safely approached Lorenzen. A deputy noticed a rifle near Lorenzen's body and moved it away from Lorenzen. Deputies noticed that Lorenzen did not have a pulse. Life saving measures were performed until medical personnel arrived.

### **Video Evidence**

Video/audio recordings from patrol car cameras and law enforcement officers' body-worn cameras captured the incident. Patrol car camera video captured the pursuit of the silver minivan driven by Lorenzen. The video also captured audio from a Pennington County Sheriff's Deputy who was directly behind Lorenzen in the pursuit. The deputy transmitted over his radio seeing Lorenzen with a gun. The deputy transmitted that Lorenzen had a rifle. Immediately after that transmission, the video depicted what appeared to be a gunshot from Lorenzen's vehicle. Broken glass shattered from Lorenzen's vehicle. After the gunshot, the deputy transmitted shots had been fired.

Video from Pennington County Sheriff's Deputies involved in the pursuit captured Lorenzen as he tried to elude law enforcement at a high rate of speed. Law enforcement transmitted that speeds reached more than 90 miles per hour.

Lorenzen traveled eastbound in the westbound lane of traffic on Highway 44, forcing oncoming traffic to move to avoid colliding with Lorenzen. Another deputy involved in the pursuit transmitted over his radio that he could see Lorenzen with a rifle.

As the pursuit continued, video captured more shattered glass coming from Lorenzen's vehicle. The deputy directly behind Lorenzen transmitted that more shots were fired.

Lorenzen eventually led law enforcement in a pursuit onto Interstate 90. Lorenzen traveled eastbound in the westbound lane of traffic for a period of time before crossing back over into the eastbound lane of traffic. Lorenzen eventually exited Interstate 90 at Exit 78. There, a Pennington County Sheriff's Deputy executed a Tactical Vehicle Intervention.

Video depicted Lorenzen's vehicle upside down in the ditch. Lorenzen exited his vehicle momentarily. Lorenzen is then seen kneeling on the ground and reaching back into the vehicle. Lorenzen pulled out an object that was covered in some type of fabric material. Lorenzen peeled off all the material covering the object, revealing a rifle. Audio captured law enforcement officers loudly giving Lorenzen verbal commands to get on the ground and to show them his

hands. Law enforcement officers are heard calling out that Lorenzen had a rifle. As Lorenzen stood up with the rifle clearly displayed, the video captured Deputy Plawman fire one round. Lorenzen fell to the ground immediately.

### **South Dakota Forensic Lab Testing**

The South Dakota Forensic Lab conducted testing on Deputy Plawman's patrol rifle. The South Dakota Forensics Lab concluded the shell casing found on scene matched Deputy Plawman's patrol rifle.

### **Medical Reports and Criminal History**

A drug screen and blood alcohol test were conducted on Deputy Plawman with negative results. Drug screens and blood alcohol tests were also conducted on the Box Elder Police Officer with negative results.

During the autopsy of Matthew Lorenzen, DCI Agents documented that Lorenzen had been shot one time. Toxicology results showed that Lorenzen had marijuana in his system. Lorenzen's blood alcohol content (BAC) was .054.

DCI conducted a criminal history check on Matthew Lorenzen. Lorenzen was arrested for DUI and Possession of Marijuana (less than 2 ounces) in 2017.

### **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. Matthew Lorenzen was non-compliant with officers when law enforcement attempted to pull him over in traffic. Lorenzen led officers on a high-speed pursuit, traveling at speeds in excess of 90 miles per hour. Lorenzen traveled at a high rate of speed into oncoming traffic in the opposite lanes of travel. Lorenzen also displayed a rifle and fired rounds from his vehicle during the pursuit.

After a Tactical Vehicle Intervention stopped Lorenzen from continuing the pursuit, he still engaged law enforcement with a scoped rifle. Deputy Plawman observed what he knew was a deadly weapon directed at him and other law enforcement officers on scene. Lorenzen had the means and opportunity to use deadly force and was a clear and present danger to Deputy Plawman and other law enforcement at the time.

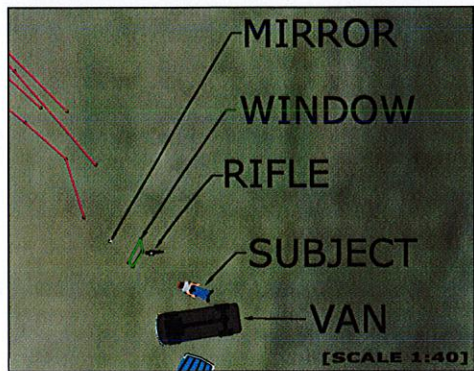
It is the conclusion of this report and the Attorney General that Pennington County Sheriff's Deputy Christopher Plawman was justified in firing his weapon and using lethal force.

The DCI crime scene investigation and review of the video are consistent with statements received from Deputy Plawman and other witnesses describing the event that occurred on 11-30-18 in Pennington County, SD.









 LEICA IMS Incident Mapping Suite	<b>Date of Occurrence:</b> November 30th, 2018	
	<b>Name:</b> Pennington County OIS	
	<b>Location:</b> New Underwood Road and I 90	
	<b>City or Area:</b> New Underwood	
	<b>Investigating Agency:</b> Division of Criminal Investigation	
	<b>Agency Director:</b> Interim DCI Director: Brian Zeeb	
	<b>Lead Investigator:</b> DCI Agent Brett Garland	<b>Date of Sketch:</b> December 6th, 2018
	<b>Drawn By:</b> Trooper Josh Siferd	<b>File Number:</b> HP18007202CR