

Huron Police Department and Beadle County Sheriff's Office Officer Involved Shooting Summary Detailing Events That Took Place on September 7, 2023

On September 7, 2023, the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation was requested by the Huron Police Department to investigate an officer involved shooting that occurred at 375 Mellette Avenue SW in Huron, SD. The shooting resulted in the suspect, Brian Geeson, being shot once by law enforcement. Geeson survived his injuries, and no law enforcement officers were injured. The following is a synopsis of the events that happened, and the results of the investigation conducted by the DCI.

SYNOPSIS

On Thursday, September 7, 2023, Brian Geeson called members of his family to say goodbye because he was going to shoot himself with a shotgun. One of the family members called the Huron Police Department reporting Geeson was threatening to shoot himself with a shotgun. While officers were being dispatched to Geeson's residence at 375 Mellette Avenue SW in Huron, SD, Geeson again called family members saying goodbye because he was going to shoot himself.

Officers from the Huron Police Department arrived at 375 Mellette Avenue SW at approximately 1:47 pm and heard what they interpreted as a gunshot coming from inside of Geeson's residence. The Huron Police Department requested more officers and established a perimeter for safety. Beadle County Sheriff's Deputies arrived to assist the Huron Police Department. Huron Police contacted Geeson by phone, and he told them he had a gun pointed at the door. Geeson told police he would "shoot your head off," "kill me, kill me, kill me," and he would "shoot your ass."

At approximately 2:16 pm, Geeson exited his house through the north door armed with a shotgun. He was holding the butt of the gun to his shoulder and the barrel parallel to the ground, away from law enforcement but in a direction where other officers had previously been. Law enforcement ordered Geeson to drop the gun as he was facing away from them. Geeson turned toward Officer #1, Officer #2, and Officer #3 who were ordering him to drop his gun. Officer #1, Officer #2, and Officer #3 ordered Geeson to drop the gun for approximately 16 seconds, before he leveled the shotgun toward them. Officer #1, Officer #2, and Officer #3 fired their service weapons multiple times striking Geeson once on the left side of his abdomen. Geeson fell to the ground with the shotgun near him. Officers placed Geeson in handcuffs and moved the shotgun away from him. EMS arrived and rendered aid to Geeson who was transported to the Huron Regional Medical Center. Geeson was then airlifted to a hospital in Sioux Falls, SD.

DCI Agents determined Officer #1, Officer #2, and Officer #3 fired their service weapons during the incident. Officer #1 fired their Bushmaster M4 (.223) rifle, Officer #2 fired their SIG Sauer P320 .40 caliber pistol, and Officer #3 fired their SIG Sauer P320 9mm pistol. The M4 rifle remained on-scene and the .40 caliber and 9mm were collected at the Huron Police Department by DCI Agents.

The Huron Police Department secured the scene until DCI arrived.

DCI Agents contacted the three officers involved with the incident and conducted interviews with them.

SCENE INVESTIGATION

The South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation processed the scene of the incident at 375 Mellette Avenue SW in Huron, SD. The South Dakota Highway Patrol provided a 3D map of the scene and DCI Agents collected evidence.

The shotgun (20-gauge Hatfield SGL shotgun) possessed by Brian Geeson was collected and later found to be unloaded. The hammer on the shotgun was in the firing position. Collected at the scene were cartridge casings and spent shotgun shells fired in the incident. In total, eight cartridge casings: (two) 9mm, (two) .40 caliber, and (four) .223 caliber were fired by law enforcement and recovered near the tree and by the garage. Officer #1 was standing on the north side of a tree and Officer #2 was standing to the right of Officer #3 who was standing by the garage. Four 20-gauge (spent) shotgun shells were found inside of the residence and collected as evidence.

Brian Geeson's clothing was removed on scene by law enforcement and EMS, and subsequently retrieved by a DCI Agent at the Huron Regional Medical Center. Prior to transportation to a hospital in Sioux Falls, Geeson's condition did not allow the opportunity for him to be interviewed. On September 18th a known DNA sample was obtained from Brian Geeson.

INTERVIEW: BRIAN GEESON

Brian Geeson was interviewed by the DCI on October 5, 2023. Brian confirmed he called his sister, brother, and dad to say goodbye because he was going to commit suicide. He also remembered being on the phone with his sister and he shot off a round from his 20-gauge shotgun into a corner of his house. He admitted to shooting two rounds in the house. The ammo was birdshot, and the shell was yellow in color.

Brian relayed he was upset and drinking fireball, although doesn't remember what upset him or how much he had to drink.

Brian described walking outside the north door of the house. He walked along the fence and trampoline with the shotgun and was going to put the gun in the shed to get it away from himself.

He remembered there were a lot of cops outside but doesn't remember them saying anything to him. He remembers one cop by the fence (Officer #1) and one by the blue garage (Officer #3). He didn't remember raising the shotgun toward the officers.

Brian recalled being shot and feeling pain, although he didn't remember anything after that for the following three days.

He confirmed the shotgun found on scene is his and the one he had in his possession. Brian indicated that he was possibly thinking suicide by a cop but couldn't clearly remember. He did not remember talking with law enforcement on the phone or saying that he wanted them to kill him.

INTERVIEW: OFFICER #1

Officer #1 was interviewed by DCI Agents on September 7, 2023. Officer #1 stated they were in the office and heard the "shots fired" call on the radio. They grabbed their vest and equipment and traveled to 375 Mellette Avenue SW.

When Officer #1 arrived on scene, they met with Officer #3 and began to set a perimeter. Officer #1 took position by a tree to the northeast of 375 Mellette Avenue SW and Officer #3 took position by a nearby garage that was also northeast of 375 Mellette Avenue SW. They remained in their positions as other officers maintained the perimeter and contacted Geeson.

Officer #1 said they were covering the upper windows of the house when they saw a male (later identified as Geeson) exit the house with a shotgun. Officer #1 said Geeson had his back toward them, and they ordered him to drop the gun. Geeson didn't say anything and started turning toward them as they continued ordering him to drop the gun. Geeson then raised the shotgun toward Officer #1 and Officer #3. Officer #1 said they fired their gun approximately two times and they saw Geeson fall to the ground. Officer #1 said they heard other gunshots beside their own but didn't know who fired them.

After Geeson fell to the ground, Officer #1 went to Geeson and placed him in handcuffs. EMS arrived on scene and took over the care of Geeson.

Officer #1 said they did not know what the initial call was and only heard the call, "shots fired." Officer #1 responded to the scene with other officers, including Officer #2. DCI Agents asked Officer #1 why Geeson raised his gun and Officer #1 said they knew Geeson was going to shoot at them. Officer #1 stated, "If I didn't take action, he could have taken my life."

INTERVIEW: OFFICER #2

Officer #2 was interviewed by DCI Agents on September 7, 2023. Officer #2 stated they were at the Huron Police Department and overheard radio traffic about officers responding to 375 Mellette Avenue SW in Huron, SD for a suicidal male with a gun. Officer #2 then heard radio traffic saying a shot was fired. Officer #2 responded to 375 Mellette Avenue SW with other officers.

Officer #2 arrived on scene and took position by the garage. Officer #2 noticed a window was open on the second floor of the residence. Officer #2 could hear yelling from inside of the house but was unable to hear what the person was saying. When another officer arrived, Officer #2 had that officer cover the area they were watching, and they stayed with command staff. Another officer was attempting to negotiate with Geeson to peacefully exit the house without his weapon. Officer #2 heard Geeson say he had a gun pointed at the door, and they believed Geeson was intoxicated.

Officer #2 requested Officer #1 take position by the tree nearest to the north side of the garage so they could have a good view of the back door of the residence, in the event Geeson exited out that door. Officer #2 said Officer #3 was positioned on the corner of the garage watching the back door.

Officer #2 stated Geeson's yard had a chain link fence around it, and they were standing outside of the fence. Officer #2 said they were standing by the fence close to Officer #3. When Officer #2 turned to walk back behind cover, they heard Officer #1 and Officer #3 start to yell

“gun” and then “drop the gun”. Officer #2 turned around and saw Geeson exit the door holding a shotgun. The gun was pointed toward the ground as Geeson walked to the northwest. Officer #2 knew there were officers in that area previously but was not sure if they were still there. Geeson then raised the shotgun in the area where Officer #2 believed other officers were positioned.

Officer #2 ordered Geeson to drop the gun. Geeson lowered the shotgun and turned toward them but more facing Officer #3. Geeson then raised the gun toward Officer #1, and Officer #2 said, “That’s when we fired.”

Officer #2 said they weren’t sure if Officer #1 fired their weapon, but Officer #2 knew that they and Officer #3 fired theirs. Officer #2 wasn’t sure how many rounds were fired, but knew they shot twice. After Officer #2 fired their second shot, they saw Geeson “spin” to his left and the shotgun “flew” out of his hands.

Officer #2 told DCI Agents when Geeson turned toward them and raised the gun, “I thought for sure he was going to shoot at us.” After Officer #2 fired their weapon they moved away from the scene and waited to be contacted by DCI Agents.

INTERVIEW: OFFICER #3

Officer #3 was interviewed by DCI Agents on September 7, 2023. Officer #3 said they were driving their patrol vehicle when they heard the call come over the radio of a suicidal male with a shotgun at 375 Mellette Avenue SW in Huron, SD. Officer #3 responded to the area in the event other responding officers would need assistance. While on their way, Officer #3 heard radio traffic about “shots fired”.

After arriving on scene, Officer #3 stated they moved to the corner of the garage to the northeast of 375 Mellette Avenue SW to cover the back door of the residence. Officer #3 could hear an officer talking on the phone with Geeson, but he could not hear what Geeson was saying. Officer #3 was aware that Geeson was telling the officer that he had a gun pointed at the door, and the officer was trying to de-escalate the situation.

Officer #3 stated that “all of a sudden” Geeson came out of the door with a shotgun. Officer #3 said they yelled, “Gun” and Geeson turned away from them and pointed the shotgun toward the west side of his house. Officer #3 thought Geeson was looking to see if anyone was on that side of the house. Officers were yelling at Geeson to drop the gun, then he lowered the shotgun and turned toward them. Officer #3 said Geeson raised the shotgun and pointed it at himself and Officer #1. That is when Officer #3 said they fired their weapon two to three times.

Officer #3 said when Geeson first came out and looked on the west side of the house, they thought there were other officers in that direction and thought, “Should I fire now.” But when Geeson raised the shotgun at them, Officer #3 thought Geeson was going to shoot himself and Officer #1.

After Geeson fell to the ground, Officer #3 jumped the fence, went to Geeson, kicked the shotgun away from him and assisted Officer #1 with handcuffing Geeson. Officer #3 then moved away from the scene to wait for DCI Agents to contact them.

VIDEO EVIDENCE

Officer #1, Officer #2, and Officer #3 were not wearing body worn cameras. However other officers nearby were and one of the responding patrol cars did capture the west side of 375 Mellette Avenue SW for most of the incident. All video evidence was reviewed. One video does not have audio but shows a figure (consistent with Brian Geeson) exited the north side of the house. The figure walks to the west near a trampoline. At this point in the video, the figure is mostly obstructed by a boat covered with a tarp. It appeared Geeson looked around and walked back to the house. When he reached the back door, it appeared he made a movement on the right side of his body, then fell to the ground.

On other officers' body worn cameras, the phone call with Geeson was mostly audible. Some of the comments made by Geeson were heard where he stated, "Kill me, kill me, kill, me." Also, the officers' body cameras showed where Officer #1, Officer #2, and Officer #3 were standing along with the audio of them telling Geeson to drop the gun. The video does not show the area where the shots are fired, or where Geeson was standing. However, moments after Officer #1, Officer #2, and Officer #3 fired their weapons, body camera footage showed Officer #1 and Officer #3 jump the fence and go to Geeson. The video also showed them placing handcuffs on Geeson and EMS arriving to render aid.

FORENSIC FIREARM EXAMINATIONS

The South Dakota Forensic Laboratory examined all firearms fired in this incident. The Hatfield model SGL shotgun possessed by Geeson, was processed for DNA, fingerprints, and ballistics. The SDFL concluded the shotgun was in proper working order and confirmed the four spent shotgun shells found in Geeson's residence were fired by the gun he was holding.

No latent prints suitable for comparison or identification were found on the shotgun.

Officer #1's Bushmaster M4 rifle was examined and found to be in working order. The SDFL confirmed Officer #1 did fire all four .223 cartridge casings during this incident.

Officer #2's SIG Sauer .40 caliber P320 pistol was examined by the SDFL and found to be in working order. The SDFL confirmed Officer #2 did fire the two .40 caliber cartridge casings collected at the scene.

Officer #3's SIG Sauer 9mm P320 pistol was examined by the SDFL and found to be in working order. The SDFL confirmed Officer #3 did fire the two 9mm cartridge casings collected at the scene.

MEDICAL REPORTS AND CRIMINAL HISTORY

Drug and alcohol tests were conducted on Officer #1, #2, and #3. All tests were negative for any drugs or alcohol.

While in Huron Regional Medical Center, drug and alcohol tests were conducted on Geeson. The tests showed Geeson had a blood alcohol level of .418%, and the drug test showed he did have THC (the psychoactive cannabinoid extracted from marijuana) in his blood and urine, but no levels were given.

Medical records showed Geeson was shot once on the left side of his abdomen. The projectile entered and struck his vertebrae. Multiple internal organs were also injured.

Geeson's criminal history showed he had a history of criminal offenses to include multiple driving under the influences of alcohol, thefts, harassment, multiple possessions of marijuana, a liquor violation, and reckless driving.

INVESTIGATION RESULTS

Based on the totality of the circumstances, reasonable officers at the scene utilized deadly force in a situation that was tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving. Geeson had means and opportunity to use deadly force and was a clear and present danger to law enforcement on scene. The investigation revealed that Geeson made suicidal comments prompting law enforcement to respond to his residence. Once law enforcement arrived, Geeson made homicidal comments to law enforcement telling them he was going to shoot them, and he wanted them to kill him. Geeson then exited his residence armed with a shotgun that was functional even though it was not loaded. Geeson pointed the gun in the direction where law enforcement officers previously were present. Officers gave commands to Geeson to drop the gun. Geeson did not drop the gun, turned toward the Officers giving him commands, and then leveled the gun pointing it at them. This caused Officer #1 to fire their weapon four times, Officer #2 to fire their weapon two times, and Officer #3 to fire their weapon two times.

It is the conclusion of this report and the South Dakota Attorney General that Officers #1, #2 and #3 were justified in firing their weapons and using lethal force.

The DCI crime scene investigation, evidence collected, forensic examinations, witness statements, and review of available video are consistent with statements received from law enforcement present at the time of the incident.



Brian Geeson's shotgun.



Spent shotgun shells inside Brian Geeson's residence.