

Wayne County rules trooper-involved shooting justified

Over, Clayton . TCA Regional News ; Chicago [Chicago]09 Aug 2018.

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FULL TEXT

Aug. 09--State troopers were justified in shooting a Prompton man after he shot at them during a standoff in the borough in June, Wayne County District Attorney Patrick Robinson said Wednesday.

James Sorrentino, 37, 40 Balsam Swamp Road, died June 25 after a police standoff at his home. After about five hours, Sorrentino fired a rifle at troopers, investigators said. Three troopers fired four shots at Sorrentino, one of them striking him in the neck and killing him.

Troopers responded to Sorrentino's home at about 2:15 a.m. on June 25 on a report of a domestic assault involving weapons.

Sorrentino's brother, Charles, and mother, Patricia, tried to calm him after he started to act strangely and break things in the house. Sorrentino grabbed a steak knife and said the whole family was going to die.

Sorrentino had recently been hospitalized for bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, according to the Wayne County District Attorney's Office.

Sorrentino's family fled from the home, got in a car and drove to the end of their driveway to try and figure out what to do. Sorrentino grabbed a shotgun and fired at the car, peppering it with pellets. Charles and Patricia Sorrentino then drove to a nearby firehouse and called 911.

Troopers arrived and set up a perimeter around the home and, for several hours, tried to negotiate with Sorrentino as he threw items from the house, screamed obscenities and walked around carrying weapons. The standoff ended at about 7:15 a.m. , when Sorrentino walked on the front porch and loaded a magazine for an assault rifle. Troopers commanded him to stop, but Sorrentino ultimately fired the rifle at police. Police returned fire and killed Sorrentino.

No troopers were injured during the incident. Robinson declined to identify the troopers involved in the shooting during an interview Wednesday.

Troopers seized 21 weapons from the home after the standoff.

In a statement, Robinson said he reviewed a report from the state police and an independent one prepared by Wayne County detectives in ruling the shooting justified. He acknowledged Sorrentino suffered from mental health issues, but posed a threat to his family, neighbors and troopers during the standoff. State police acted appropriately and showed restraint throughout the incident, he said.

"I sympathize with the family of James A. Sorrentino," Robinson said, adding that the family was extremely cooperative during the investigation. "This was obviously a terrible, but unavoidable, outcome."

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DETAILS

Subject:	Sieges; Shootings; Domestic violence
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Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130
Publication title:	TCA Regional News; Chicago
Publication year:	2018
Publication date:	Aug 9, 2018
Publisher:	Tribune Content Agency LLC
Place of publication:	Chicago
Country of publication:	United States, Chicago
Publication subject:	Business And Economics
Source type:	Wire Feeds
Language of publication:	English
Document type:	News
ProQuest document ID:	2085569134
Document URL:	https://search.proquest.com/docview/2085569134?accountid=14026
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Last updated:	2018-08-09
Database:	Global Newsstream

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