

This time, fatal hail of gunfire ends chase - New Hampshire Union Leader / New Hampshire Sunday News (Manchester, NH) - August 22, 2018 - page 1

August 22, 2018 | New Hampshire Union Leader / New Hampshire Sunday News (Manchester, NH) | TODD FEATHERS New Hampshire Union Leader | Page 1

A long criminal history: Before Monday night's pursuit, **Douglas Heath** had eluded Maine State Police on June 11.

ROCHESTER -- Before he was killed in a gunfight with police Monday night, **Douglas Heath** had been on the run for nearly four months.

After Rochester police arrested him for possession of heroin, Suboxone, and cocaine on April 13, Heath appeared for a bail hearing at Strafford County Superior Court. He spoke with the clerk and signed documents, including a voluntary agreement to waive extradition from Maine, where he lived,

But then Heath, a 38-year-old father of three who had addresses listed in New Hampshire and Maine, left the courthouse before his hearing and didn't return, according to court records.

The court issued a warrant for his arrest, and on June 11 police in Sanford, Maine, spotted Heath driving a car and attempted to stop him, according to Maine State Police spokesman Stephen McCausland. Heath fled on Route 202 toward Lebanon, Maine, and after several miles officers gave up the chase.

They tracked his car to a home on Second Street in Lebanon and learned that Heath had fled the home on foot and likely been picked up by another person, McCausland said.

On Monday in Rochester, Heath again tried to evade police when they attempted to stop him. After a 20-minute car chase, his escape ended in a crash at Oak Street and Route 125.

Heath got out of the vehicle through the passenger side and exchanged gunfire with Rochester officers and state police troopers, Attorney General Gordon MacDonald said. No police were injured, but Heath was killed.

An autopsy is scheduled for Thursday. Senior Assistant Attorney General Peter Hinckley said the incident remains under investigation.

Heath had a previous criminal history in Strafford County which included drug, firearm, and domestic violence charges. At times, it appeared Heath was on a path to recovery, according to court records, but he struggled with drug use.

In 2006, while on probation for an earlier drug conviction, police caught Heath with cocaine, crack

cocaine, and two revolvers. He was sentenced to 38 months in prison and three years supervised release.

His probation was terminated early, though, after his probation officer determined that he had maintained sobriety and “made a favorable transition to the community and appears to be maintaining a law-abiding lifestyle.”

In 2016, Rochester police arrested Heath for choking a woman in a domestic dispute but the case did not go to trial because the victim never appeared.

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