

Officers Involved in Fatal Interstate 89 Shooting Won't Face Charges

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FULL TEXT

Two police officers were justified in shooting a suicidal man in February along Interstate 89 in Richmond, according to the Vermont Attorney General's Office and the Chittenden County state's attorney.

Attorney General T.J. Donovan announced last Friday that Vermont State Police Trooper Christopher Brown and Richmond Police Officer Richard Greenough will not face charges for fatally shooting 42-year-old Benjamin Gregware of Sheldon.

On the afternoon of February 11, Gregware, who had been laid off from his job and lost custody of his children, called his ex-wife and threatened to commit suicide. She notified police, who called Gregware. He sounded "slurred and confused but lucid regarding his intention to 'end it,'" according to a description of the incident by Bram Kranichfeld, criminal division chief for the Vermont Attorney General's Office.

Brown pulled an armed Gregware over in Richmond; Greenough arrived on scene shortly after. Brown ordered Gregware out of the vehicle and commanded him more than 10 times to drop his gun, according to Kranichfeld. Gregware pointed what the Attorney General's Office referred to as a "MAC-10-style assault pistol" at his own head and walked toward the officers. Gregware, who had no criminal record, never pointed the gun at the officers. Brown, who was standing about 25 feet away, fired seven shots from a semiautomatic rifle; Greenough fired five shots from a .40-caliber pistol. Four bullets struck Gregware, in the head, arms and torso, according to Kranichfeld. An ambulance arrived about 15 minutes after the shooting and took Gregware to the University of Vermont Medical Center, where he died about an hour later.

The pistol Gregware held was loaded with 15 live rounds, according to Kranichfeld.

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