

Man shot, killed by police during standoff in Wayne County

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FULL TEXT

June 26--HONESDALE -- Three state troopers are on administrative leave after a standoff Monday morning in Prompton ended with authorities shooting and killing a 36-year-old man.

James A. Sorrentino, 40 Balsam Swamp Road, died at his home after shooting at state troopers who responded to a report he fired a shotgun at his brother, Charles Sorrentino, and his mother, Patricia Sorrentino, about 2:15 a.m., state police and Wayne County District Attorney Patrick Robinson said.

Robinson's office will determine if the shooting was justified after a joint investigation by his office and the state police.

Both Robinson and Capt. Sherman Shadle, commander of the Dunmore-based Troop R, characterized the state police as showing "great restraint" initially, as James Sorrentino pointed "multiple weapons" at the state troopers several times.

"There's no reason at this point to believe this was not justified," Robinson said. "I'm not saying it was, but I have no reason to believe that it wasn't."

State troopers opened fire about 7:15 a.m. once Sorrentino walked outside, pointed a gun at them and fired, Robinson said.

Wayne County Coroner Edward Howell pronounced Sorrentino dead at the scene at 9:54 a.m. An autopsy is scheduled for today. No troopers were hurt.

Shadle declined to identify the troopers involved. Investigators will follow policy and wait 72 hours after the shooting before they question the troopers involved.

Authorities declined to say how many shots Sorrentino fired or how many times he had been shot. Robinson said a full report on the shooting would be forthcoming after the investigation concludes.

"We're in the beginning stages," Shadle said. "There's a lot of work that needs to be done."

In an affidavit filed early Monday, state police wrote that Sorrentino had schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. He had recently been hospitalized. The affidavit had been attached to a criminal complaint charging Sorrentino with two counts each of attempted first-degree murder, terroristic threats, aggravated assault and simple assault. That complaint was withdrawn after Sorrentino died.

Charles Sorrentino told Cpl. Brian Rickard that James Sorrentino had been acting strangely since his release last week from the hospital, according to the affidavit.

Robinson said James Sorrentino refused to take his medication.

James Sorrentino paced nervously through the home Sunday night, according to the affidavit. As his brother and mother tried to calm him, he became aggressive, grabbed a steak knife and threatened to kill them.

Charles and Patricia Sorrentino got into a car and drove to the end of the driveway to try and figure out their next move. James Sorrentino appeared on the porch and shot at the car with a shotgun. Several of the pellets hit the car so they sped off to a nearby firehouse and called 911.

Numerous state troopers set up a perimeter around the house and tried to get Sorrentino to surrender. Charles Sorrentino told investigators he had multiple rifles, including semiautomatic AR-15s, in the house with him.

Mary Thomas, 70, who lives next to the Sorrentino property, said a state trooper tried to hail Sorrentino from her

property with a megaphone.

"Come out of the house," the trooper yelled. "We do not want to hurt you."

Her voice quieted, almost quivered.

"I guess, apparently, he wasn't listening to them," Thomas said.

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