

DA: Man fatally shot by Manheim Township officer - LNP (Lancaster, PA) - May 11, 2018

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The man fatally shot by a Manheim Township police officer outside the police station Tuesday posed a threat to officers and civilians nearby, the Lancaster County district attorney's office said Friday.

The statement was the office's first explanation of why the encounter with 65-year-old **John Simson** prompted the use of force that resulted in his death.

Simson shot himself in the face before a Manheim Township police officer returned a fatal, single shot, according to Lancaster County Coroner Dr. Stephen Diamantoni.

Diamantoni ruled Simson's death a homicide caused by a gunshot wound to the body after an autopsy Friday.

"Beyond a reasonable doubt, that wound was fatal," he said, though he declined to specify where the officer's shot hit Simson.

Officials said Simson, armed with a shotgun, drove to the police station off Oregon Pike around 3 p.m. Tuesday and had a confrontation with the unidentified officer.

On Friday, Hambright said the self-inflicted shot was the second shot fired by Simson. He declined to describe the first shot.

The officer made repeated verbal commands and then shot Simson once in the body, according to the district attorney's office.

"While not complete, the investigation thus far clearly indicates Mr. Simson was not fully incapacitated by the self-inflicted wound, and he continued to pose a threat to officers and civilians in the area," Hambright said Friday.

"Any time one individual takes another individual's life, it is properly classified by the coroner as homicide," Hambright said. "However, the coroner's determination does not speak to whether the homicide was justified or not. Such determination will be made by District Attorney Stedman upon review of all circumstances, evidence and information."

A Manheim Township police detective received a report of child abuse at Simson's Geneva Road home March 30, according to charging documents.

Simson was charged May 4 with sexually abusing a 9-year-old girl, according to charging documents. The East Petersburg man admitted to the crime in April, police said.

He was arraigned by District Judge Brian Chudzik the day he was charged and posted \$50,000 bail.

Chudzik declined to comment on Simson's arraignment Thursday.

No one answered the door of Simson's Geneva Street home Thursday morning.

Property records show Simson bought the home with his wife, Terry Simson, in 2009.

A neighbor who didn't want to give his name said the Simsons would go on walks in the neighborhood. This winter Simson let several neighbors use his snow blower, the neighbor said.

"It's unfortunate what happened," the man said. "People need to embrace the family now and lift them up."

A family member reached by phone Thursday said the family did not want to talk to a reporter.

East Petersburg Borough Manager Robin Hemperly said she did not know Simson.

"We didn't have any property complaints or police complaints about him," she said Thursday. "He's not been someone that we dealt with."

Although the borough contracts with Manheim Township Police Department for services, Hemperly said she wasn't privy to details of the investigation.

"We have a stellar police department," she said.

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