

Video shows Panera gunman's last moments - Trentonian, The (Trenton, NJ) - April 9, 2018

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Surveillance footage released by the state Attorney General's Office shows the Panera gunman in the last moments of his life, raising what appeared to be a black handgun from his waist toward combat-gear clad officers staked out inside the chain eatery.

The nearly five minute soundless clip from inside the store – an annotated version which was released Monday – shows 56-year-old **Scott Mielentz** standing several feet away from the officers near the drink machine as a TEAMS officer has an M4 rifle trained on him from behind a wooden bench inside the restaurant.

Sources had previously told The Trentonian that Mielentz, who had crushing debt and financial problems, was intent on committing suicide by cop when he went to the restaurant with a gun March 20, leading to a five-hour-long standoff with police.

That was backed up by records obtained by The Trentonian that showed Mielentz had texted a friend about wanting to end his life the morning of the standoff.

The AG's office said two officers from the state police's Technical Emergency and Missions Specialists with M4 rifles fired on Mielentz around 2:54 p.m. after he pointed what looked like a gun in his right hand at the officers. Documents obtained by The Trentonian identified the police shooters as troopers William Kerstetter and Joseph Trogani. Kerstetter is a 14-year veteran and Troggani has 15 years with state police, according to pension records.

Mielentz, who was pronounced dead at the scene, was struck in the head and the torso as officers converged on him.

Investigators later determined the gun Mielentz wielded during the tense encounter was a BB pistol, officials said.

The shooting remains under investigation by the AG's Shooting Response Team, but the office released the tape in response to public records requests, including one from The Trentonian.

Mielentz was a former IT worker who went through bouts of unemployment. The feds went after him for fraud after he received disability benefits while they said he was simultaneously working.

Mielentz had also identified himself as a Vietnam War veteran, but he was not old enough to serve in the military at the time the war ended in 1975.

He had spent time in a psychiatric facility in 2013, and the doctor wrote in the admission notes Mielentz didn't have any VA benefits but was working to try to get them. Sources said Mielentz was

only in the armed forces a matter of months.

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