

State of Connecticut  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



Report Concerning  
Use of Deadly Force by the Meriden Police Department on February 12, 2021

Robert J. Devlin, Jr.  
Inspector General

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## *Acknowledgments*

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*The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of State Police, Western District Major Crime Squad;*

*The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Scientific Services;*

*The West Hartford Police Department;*

*The Meriden Police Department; and*

*New London Judicial District State's Attorney Paul J. Narducci.*

## INTRODUCTION

On February 12, 2021, shortly after 10:00 a.m., at or near 1672 North Broad Street, Meriden, Officer Erik Simonson<sup>1</sup> fired one round from his department-issued Glock .45 caliber handgun striking Kenneth Strothers<sup>2</sup> in the lower abdomen. Strothers was transported by ambulance to Harford Hospital where he was successfully treated. He was discharged from the hospital on February 18, 2021.

Chief State's Attorney Richard J. Colangelo, Jr., named New London Judicial District State's Attorney Paul J. Narducci to lead the investigation into the officer involved shooting (OIS). State's Attorney Narducci requested the assistance of the Connecticut State Police Western District Major Crime Squad (WDMCS). On November 3, 2021, pursuant to General Statutes §51-277a(a)(1)<sup>3</sup>, the Office of Inspector General assumed responsibility for the investigation. The details of the investigation are contained in this report.<sup>4</sup>

Briefly stated, the investigation establishes that at the time that he fired his weapon, Officer Simonson reasonably believed that Strothers possessed a handgun and had racked a round into the chamber in anticipation of shooting Simonson or another officer. Accordingly, I find that Simonson's use of deadly force was objectively reasonable and justified.

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<sup>1</sup> On February 12, 2021, Officer Erik Simonson was a 40 year-old white male. He had been a member of the Meriden Police Department for 13 years. He had no disciplinary history.

<sup>2</sup> On February 12, 2021, Kenneth Strothers was a 24 year-old African-American male.

<sup>3</sup> As relevant here, General Statutes §51-277a(a) provides: "Whenever a peace officer, in the course of such officer's duties uses ... deadly force ... upon another person, the Division of Criminal Justice shall cause an investigation to be made and the Inspector General shall have the responsibility of determining whether the use of force was justified under section 53a-22."

<sup>4</sup> The timeline for this investigation is as follows:

- February 12, 2021 – Date of incident;
- February 12, 2021 – Chief State's Attorney Richard J. Colangelo, Jr names New London Judicial District State's Attorney Paul J. Narducci to lead investigation;
- February 12, 2021 – Narducci requests assistance from the Connecticut State Police WDMCS;
- October 8, 2021 – Robert J. Devlin, Jr. is sworn in as Inspector General;
- November 3, 2021 – Office of Inspector General assumes responsibility for the investigation;
- May 2, 2021 – WDMCS submits its completed investigation to the Office of Inspector General.

## SUMMARY

On February 12, 2021, the West Hartford Police Department held an active arrest warrant for Kenneth Strothers for the charge of robbery in the first degree arising out of a January 30, 2021, armed robbery of a Shell gas station in West Hartford. The police suspected that Strothers might be at a motel on the Berlin Turnpike and went to that area to investigate. At 8:45 a.m., the clerk at the Flamingo Inn (1601 North Broad Street, Meriden) informed West Hartford Officers that Strothers was staying in Room 102. Several unmarked police vehicles then entered the parking lot of the Flamingo Inn. West Hartford Officers earlier had notified the Meriden Police Department of their plan to arrest Strothers and requested their assistance. Meriden Police Officer Erik Simonson and Detective Angelo Stavrides parked their unmarked police vehicle on North Broad Street in front of the Flamingo Inn. Adjacent to the Flamingo Inn's parking lot was a steep slope leading down to North Broad Street.

Strothers saw the police assembling in the Flamingo Inn parking lot and fled on foot. He ran down the steep slope to North Broad Street and across four lanes of traffic and into the driveway of Access Self Storage (1672 North Broad Street). Simonson saw Strothers and gave chase following him into the Access Self Storage driveway. In the rear area of the storage facility, a red Chevrolet sports utility vehicle (SUV) was running. Strothers approached this vehicle and opened the driver's door. Simonson took a position on the passenger side of the SUV. During the foot chase, Strothers ignored Simonson's commands to stop.

At the SUV, Strothers yelled to Simonson, "I got a gun." He then produced an item wrapped in a white tee shirt. After a second or two, Strothers appeared to pull the slide back on the gun that was still wrapped in the tee shirt. When Simonson observed Strothers pointing the firearm at him, he fired his department-issued handgun at Strothers one time. The bullet passed through the passenger side window of the SUV and struck Strothers in the lower left abdomen area.

Within seconds, West Hartford Officers, who had chased Strothers from the Flamingo Inn, arrived. Upon determining that Strothers sustained a gunshot wound (GSW), they rendered aid and called for an ambulance. Strothers remained awake and alert until the ambulance arrived and medics took over his care. The ambulance transported Strothers to Hartford Hospital. There, he underwent surgery to repair his bowel. The doctors located the bullet in Strothers' body, but they made the medical judgment not to remove it. Strothers remained in the hospital for six days until February 18, 2021. While he was there, hospital staff learned that he suffered from schizoaffective disorder bipolar type and was noncompliant with his medications. They further learned that ten days prior, on February 2, 2021, Strothers presented at MidState Medical Center with suicide ideation in the context of drug use. Strothers told the staff at Hartford Hospital that he was trying to get the cops to help him to commit suicide.

After the shooting, police removed a gun from Strothers wrapped in a tee shirt. The gun was not loaded. Police secured the scene until the arrival of the WDMCS detectives.

## INVESTIGATION

### West Hartford Police

Multiple West Hartford Police Officers were involved in the attempt to arrest Strothers on the West Hartford robbery warrant. Their police reports may be summarized as follows:

On February 12, 2021, the West Hartford Police Department was in possession of an arrest warrant for Kenneth Strothers. The warrant was for Strothers' alleged participation in an armed robbery at a Shell gas station that took place on January 30, 2021. The warrant was for the charge of Robbery in the First Degree and had a court-set bond of \$500,000. West Hartford Officers knew that the New Britain Police Department also had a Robbery in the First Degree warrant for Strothers and that he was suspected of other robberies in Southington, Wethersfield, Meriden, and Newington.

Because Strothers had family in Meriden and many of the robberies had occurred in the area of the Berlin Turnpike and Route 9, the West Hartford Officers decided to check to see if Strothers might be at one of the motels on the Berlin Turnpike. The officers knew that suspects, to elude law enforcement, sometimes used these low-cost motels. The West Hartford Officers split into two groups with one starting at the north end of the Berlin Turnpike and the other group at the south end.

The officers checking from the south started at the Flamingo Inn arriving at approximately 8:45 a.m. The Flamingo Inn is located on a steep hill thirty to forty feet above the Berlin Turnpike (also known as North Broad Street). It is one long building, with a long driveway, that is the only means of entry and exit. All of the rooms face west toward North Broad Street. Because it had snowed over the past weeks, the hill was snow-covered and snowbanks lined the driveway and parking lot.

After checking for any stolen vehicles that were involved in the robberies, the police went to the office and spoke to the Inn's clerk, Daksha Patel. She recognized a photo of Strothers as the person staying in Room 102. Patel reported that a person named Victor Colon had rented the room for Strothers. Upon learning this information, the other West Hartford Officers proceeded to the Flamingo Inn and set up surveillance of Room 102. They observed a gray Subaru come up the driveway. The vehicle was registered to Rushford Medical that was known to provide mental health and substance abuse services. The police spoke to the

operator who confirmed that she was at the motel to pick up Strothers. While she was speaking with the officers, Strothers called her numerous times.

Police observed a black male, fitting Strothers' description, come in and out of Room 102. At approximately 10:08 a.m., Strothers emerged from the room and walked south. West Hartford Officers exited their vehicles and approached Strothers intending to take him into custody. Strothers stepped over a guardrail and ran down the steep snow-covered slope. West Hartford Officers pursued. They saw Strothers run west crossing four lanes of traffic and toward some storage units. They also saw a Meriden officer chasing Strothers.

Strothers and the Meriden officer ran behind a building and out of sight of the West Hartford officers. The West Hartford officers heard one gunshot. When they came around the building, they saw Strothers on the ground next to a red SUV. The West Hartford officers put Strothers in handcuffs and searched him. From the area of his waistband, they recovered a silver handgun. The slide on the gun would not lock and the gun was unloaded.

While on the ground, Strothers asked, "Did I get shot?" He complained of pain in his stomach. West Hartford Officers located a GSW to his left lower abdomen. They could not locate an exit wound. The officers applied pressure and a chest seal to the GSW. Strothers was conscious and alert. When asked, he said that his name was "Kenny Strothers." Medics arrived and took Strothers to Hartford Hospital by ambulance. West Hartford Officers accompanied Strothers in the ambulance.

At Hartford Hospital, the West Hartford Officers took custody of Strothers' clothes and a glass crack pipe that hospital personnel found when removing his clothes. Hospital personnel brought Strothers for a CT scan and then immediately brought him to surgery. Following surgery, the surgeon informed police that she was unable to remove the projectile. Strothers, however, was in stable condition. Ultimately, WDMCS detectives arrived at the hospital and took custody of Strothers' belongings.

The West Hartford Police Department provided WDMCS detectives with a copy of the recording from the body worn camera (BWC) assigned to Officer Michael Boughton. The recording is four hours and forty-nine minutes long. The portion of the recording relevant to this investigation (approximately six minutes) may be summarized as follows.

Although the video appears to be recording, there is initially no visual image. A clear visual picture comes into view at time 10:03:43. Boughton exits a vehicle and the recording shows officers jumping over a metal guardrail that runs along the perimeter of the parking lot in front of the Flamingo Inn. Officers are seen going down the embankment in the snow to the roadway below.

At 10:04:38, someone states, "Sounds like we have shots fired." Boughton runs across the roadway and behind the storage units. Two figures are seen standing near a red SUV. At 10:05:09, Boughton is at the rear of the vehicle. Strothers is prone on the ground and two officers are handcuffing him. An officer asks Strothers if he has a weapon and he says, "No." One of the officers crouched in front of Strothers unwraps an item that appears to be covered by a tee shirt. An officer responds, "Yep, he has a gun," and steps away from Strothers holding a gun.

At 10:06:12, one of the officers asks Strothers if he is hurt and he responds that he has pain in his stomach. Officers then check Strothers for injuries and observe a GSW to his abdomen. Officers then roll Strothers to see if there is an exit wound on his torso. The video ends at 10:09:10 with officers applying a chest seal to Strothers' injury.

To review a portion of Boughton's BWC recording, click [here](#).

## **Meriden Police**

The Meriden Police Department provided WDMCS detectives with a copy of the recording from the BWC assigned to Corporal Brian Malgano. The content of this video may be summarized as follows.

Malgano is seated in the driver seat of a Meriden Police Department vehicle. He drives the vehicle to the scene on the property of Access Self Storage. The audio portion of the recording starts at the 0029 mark. After exiting the vehicle, Malgano approaches a red SUV. Strothers is laying on the ground and West Hartford Officers are putting handcuffs on him.

At the 1:49 mark, Malgano speaks to Simonson who is standing nearby. Malgano asks, "What'd he do Erik?" Simonson responds that Strothers mocked like he was cocking a weapon, then he said he had a gun and cocked something under a white shirt and pointed it at Simonson.

The officers asked Strothers if he had a weapon and he said, "No." Upon patting him down, they discovered a gun wrapped in a tee shirt. West Hartford Officer Aaron Thomas carries the gun to the hood of the red SUV. Someone is heard asking Strothers if he is hurt as the video ends at the 2:34 mark.

To review Malgano's BWC recording, click [here](#).



## Statements

### Denise Benitez

WDMCS detectives interviewed Denise Benitez. Benitez worked at Access Self Storage, 1672 North Broad Street, Meriden. On the morning of February 12, 2021, she was at work at her office. Her office windows faced North Broad Street and, on the opposite side of North Broad Street up the hill, the Flamingo Inn.

Benitez stated that she saw a black male running down the snow-covered hill with two men running after him. Benitez believed that the men running behind the black male were police officers because they had the word "POLICE" on their clothes. The black male ran towards Access Self Storage and crossed North Broad Street. Benitez feared that the men might run into her office, so she locked the door. The black male and police ran past her office and into the back lot of the property. Within minutes, numerous police vehicles pulled into the back of Access Self Storage.

Benitez did not hear any gunshots.

### Michael Braley

Michael Braley provided WDMCS detectives with the following statement.

"At about 9:30 a.m. or 10 a.m. on 2/12/2021, I was in my house at 1672 North Broad Street, Meriden in apartment B, in my bathroom doing laundry. My bathroom window faces where [the] commotion was happening, I heard a male voice say, "Stop running, put your hands up." Afterward, I heard a male voice repeatedly ask to, "Put your hands up." I went to the window, and saw an officer standing behind a red Chevy or similar vehicle, he was giving commands to someone on the other side of the car. I could not see who. Then I heard multiple gunshots. Maybe 2 or 3, I knew it was more than 1. I couldn't make out or see where or who the shots came from."

### Richard Pray

Richard Pray gave a statement to WDMCS detectives that is summarized as follows.

Pray arrived at Access Self Storage at approximately 8:30 a.m. on February 12, 2021. While driving into the facility, he noted three police cars in the parking lot of the Flamingo Inn. He drove into the lot and exited his vehicle, a red Chevy Equinox, which was a loaner. He began to shovel out his box truck that he kept at Access Self Storage for work. He could not see the Flamingo Inn from the location of the box truck. Pray's statement continues:

“I left my loaner vehicle running with the doors unlocked. I opened the back of my box truck to retrieve some stuff from the inside. As I was closing the back, I heard yelling, and the yelling was getting closer. I could hear, “get down” at which point I heard a shot or 2 or maybe more. After waiting a few seconds, I made myself visible to the police I saw were on scene, and I was instructed to stand by and wait ...

“Whatever was happening, happened on the other side of my loaner vehicle and my view was blocked, but I did see that the driver side door was open. I don’t believe that I left it open, I do know that I left it unlocked, running, and barely closed the driver side door. After a while, I saw them load a man onto a stretcher from the driver side of my vehicle.”

### **Kenneth Strothers**

On February 14, 2021, WDMCS detectives interviewed Kenneth Strothers at Hartford Hospital where Strothers was a patient. Detectives explained that the focus of their investigation was the use of force by the Meriden officer and not the robbery charge. Strothers signed a Notice and Waiver of Rights form and agreed to speak to the detectives.

The interview was video recorded. It is, at times, rambling, disorganized, confused, and repetitive, as detectives frequently had to focus Strothers’ attention on the question posed. That may have been due in part to the medication Strothers was receiving, his underlying mental illness, and his somewhat guarded attitude toward the detectives. The interview is summarized as follows:

Strothers stated that his mother told him that an article about the incident related that Strothers had struggled with the officer. Strothers denied this. He further stated that he did not brandish the gun that he had which was in a white tee shirt, not visible to the officer.

Strothers stated that he did not think that the officer was justified in shooting him. He acknowledged, however, that he did not remember what occurred “piece by piece.”

During the interview, Strothers asked if he could call his mother, Valerie Shaw. He was able to reach her and he remained on the telephone with her during much of the interview. Detectives asked Strothers how it was that he came out of the motel room. He said that he had been at the motel for two days and he peeked his head out of the room because he was going to check out. Around 10:30 in the morning, he looked out and saw a lot of cops and they were not all in marked cars. He stated that the officer who shot him might have had a baseball cap on. He described the officer as Caucasian but with brown skin, like a tan. Strothers stated that he “ran through some car lot” and in the back looked like a little barn and there was a red car. He said he thought he could not get the vehicle door open. Strothers stated that he had a gun

but it was in the “papers” and he did not have it out and the officer said Strothers “click-clacked” it and the officer just shot him.

Strothers described that when he was at the motel, he looked out the door and saw his therapist’s vehicle surrounded by police and believed that the police were trying to put her under arrest. When Strothers was asked if he exited the motel and ran down the embankment, he stated that he knew that the driveway was fully blocked so he ran down the hill. He initially did not think that anyone saw him leave.

Strothers told detectives that he had heard that someone claimed that he got hit by a car, but there was no truth to that. He stated that he ran across a busy street and had two cops chasing him. When asked why only one ended up with him at the time of the shooting, Strothers said that he felt that the one closest to him was not the one who shot him but rather the second officer who was farther back. Strothers then stated that his mother told him that the officers knew that he was on meds and that they did not want to use deadly force or kill him. Strothers, however, disagreed and felt that Meriden cops shot at him on purpose because he had a criminal record with them.

Strothers stated that when he was about to go hop into the running car he came across, he turned around and there was only one cop there. Strothers confirmed that the vehicle was running when he came upon it. He stated that he had the gun in his hand the whole time but that it was wrapped in a white tee shirt. Strothers claimed that at no point could the gun be seen, only the white tee shirt wrapped around something in his hand.

Strothers stated that he ran across the street diagonal to what looked like a car lot. He described that, while running through the lot, on the left was a house and on the right, there was a storage looking thing with a red car in the middle. Strothers stated that it was only “me and him” presumably referring to himself and the officer. He stated that the officer had his gun out, so he told the officer that if he was going to shoot him, to go ahead and do it. Strothers stated that he was standing on the driver’s side of the vehicle and did not recall any verbal commands given to him at all by the officer. Strothers recalled hearing the gunshot but did not feel the bullet strike him. Strothers denied any physical altercation with the officer stating that the officer did not touch him and he did not touch the officer.

Strothers denied pointing the gun he had in his hand at anyone. He explained that he was going to open the car door but when he saw the officer’s gun out he thought to himself that he did not want to go back to jail and said to himself, “it is what it is,” but reported getting distracted and then the officer shot him. After being shot, he immediately dropped to the ground. Strothers stated that the officer did not shoot him through the car but rather shot him over the car. Strothers then described the manner in which the other police officers handcuffed him.

Strothers admitted telling the officer that he had a gun when the two of them were at the car. He claimed to have said this repeatedly to see if the officer would back up. Detectives asked Strothers if he racked the gun or did anything that might have led the officer to believe that he planned to use it. Strothers stated that he did not “think” he did. He claimed that the officer never told him to drop the weapon or verify verbally that he really had a gun.

Strothers reiterated that he told the officer that he did have a gun, and that it “was on him” for having told the officer that, but he did not point it at the officer, yet the officer still shot him. Strothers stated that he was not innocent, but he felt that it was a use of deadly force, or felt the officer had never been in that predicament before. Strothers acknowledged that the gun was real and that he had pulled the trigger in the past to see if it worked.

Strothers told detectives that he was diagnosed with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder and had been “for a long time.” He reported frequent episodes of mania and depression and periods of paranoia. While he was supposed to be taking medication for these conditions, he had not taken medication for a few weeks.

To review the audio recording of Strothers' interview, click [here](#).<sup>5</sup>

### **Erik Simonson**

Officer Erik Simonson, through Attorney Elliott Spector, provided a written statement to WDMCS detectives. The statement is summarized as follows.

On February 12, 2021, at approximately 8:53 a.m., Simonson learned that the West Hartford Police Department believed that Kenneth Strothers was at the Flamingo Inn (1601 North Broad Street). West Hartford held an arrest warrant for Strothers for armed robbery. Simonson had been informed that Strothers was suspected in eleven robberies during which he displayed a firearm and, in some, pistol-whipped the victims.

At approximately 9:50 a.m., Detective Sergeant Cardona requested Simonson and Detective Stavrides to respond to the area on 1601 North Broad Street to assist the West Hartford Police Department and the other Meriden Police Officers who had already responded.

The Flamingo Inn is a single story motel located atop a long driveway. The doors to the rooms face west and open directly into a narrow driveway/parking lot. Adjacent to the parking lot, is a steep decline that leads down to North Broad Street also known as the Berlin Turnpike.

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<sup>5</sup> Although the hospital interview was audio and video recorded, only the audio portion is included in this report. This is to ensure that the report does not inadvertently disclose any HIPAA protected information.

Simonson drove Stavrides in an unmarked police vehicle equipped with emergency lights to the point where North Broad Street and the Berlin Turnpike connect. Approximately five minutes after parking the vehicle, Simonson received a police radio broadcast that Strothers had exited the motel room and was running down the steep decline. Simonson exited his car and began to walk north. He saw Strothers running down the hill approximately fifty yards in front of him. Strothers ran across two northbound lanes in a westerly direction. Simonson pursued yelling commands for him to stop and that he was the police. Simonson was in plain clothes but wore a vest that identified him as a police officer. Despite Simonson giving commands to stop, Strothers ran west into the driveway of 1672 North Broad Street, Access Self Storage. Simonson gave his location via the police radio as Strothers continued to run west behind the residences at 1672 and 1680 North Broad Street.

Simonson's statement continues:

"As the foot pursuit continued, I followed Strothers through the yards of the two residences where he was able to get behind (the driver's side) a running but unoccupied small SUV. As soon as Strothers reached the driver's door of the small SUV, he yelled to me, I got a gun!"

"I radioed to responding units that Strothers had just claimed to have a firearm. At that time, Strothers began reaching around the area of his waist and produced an item covered by a white cloth and pointed it at me. At this moment, I believed that Strothers was attempting suicide by cop and did not believe that he actually had a firearm underneath the white cloth so I did not discharge my service weapon at him.

"Approximately one to two seconds after Strothers produced the gun under the cloth, he racked his gun (pulling the slide of a semi-automatic pistol) which was still underneath the white cloth. As Strothers was racking the gun, I heard the distinct sound of metal on metal and knew he was in fact pointing a firearm at me. At that point, I feared that Strothers would shoot and kill me since I was in the open with no cover or concealment, I was forced to discharge my department issued firearm at Strothers one time.

"Almost immediately, officers from West Hartford and Meriden arrived and detained Strothers while providing medical attention."

To review Officer Erik Simonson's complete statement, click [here](#).

## Scene

On February 12, 2021, starting at approximately 2:00 p.m., the WDMCS processed the scene at 1672 North Broad Street, Meriden, CT (Access Self Storage) and 1601 North Broad Street, Meriden, CT (Flamingo Inn). The weather at the start of the investigation was overcast and the temperature was approximately 30 degrees Fahrenheit. The ground was covered with snow but the pavement had been cleared.

### Access Self Storage

Access Self Storage was a self-storage business consisting of a series of paved driveways located between several one-story storage buildings, each with several exterior roll-up garage doors.







Preece's Auto, an auto repair business, was immediately north of the entrance to Access Self Storage and a pair of houses were set behind the repair shop.







The shooting took place west of these houses in front of one of the storage buildings and on one of the paved driveways.

#### 2012 Chevrolet Equinox

The scene centered on a 2012 Chevrolet Equinox, color red, that was found parked on one of paved roadways on the north side of the property. Detectives examined the vehicle on scene, and later processed it at Connecticut State Police Troop L pursuant to the written consent of the operator, Richard Pray.





The vehicle was unlocked and both doors were open. The left front window was open approximately five inches and the right front window was closed but contained a bullet hole.<sup>6</sup> The back doors and rear windows were closed. A stack of cardboard boxes was on the right front seat. One of the boxes had sustained gunshot damage.



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<sup>6</sup> All references to the vehicle's left or right are from the perspective of a seated driver.

The vehicle faced north on the driveway between the first storage building and the two houses. A grass lawn sloped downward from the houses to the driveway and a snow bank bordered the east side of the driveway pavement. Six to twelve inches of snow covered the lawn and the snow bank was twelve to twenty-four inches high.



On the pavement adjacent to the left side of the vehicle, detectives found gauze and other evidence of emergency medical treatment. A Bic disposable lighter and red colored plastic straw were on the pavement near the gauze.





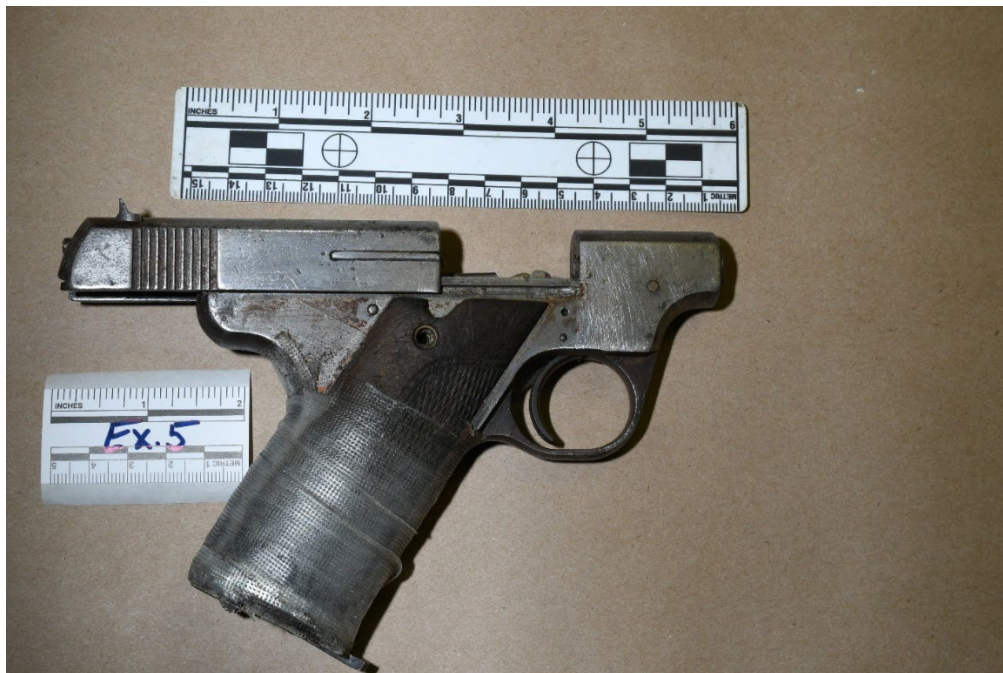




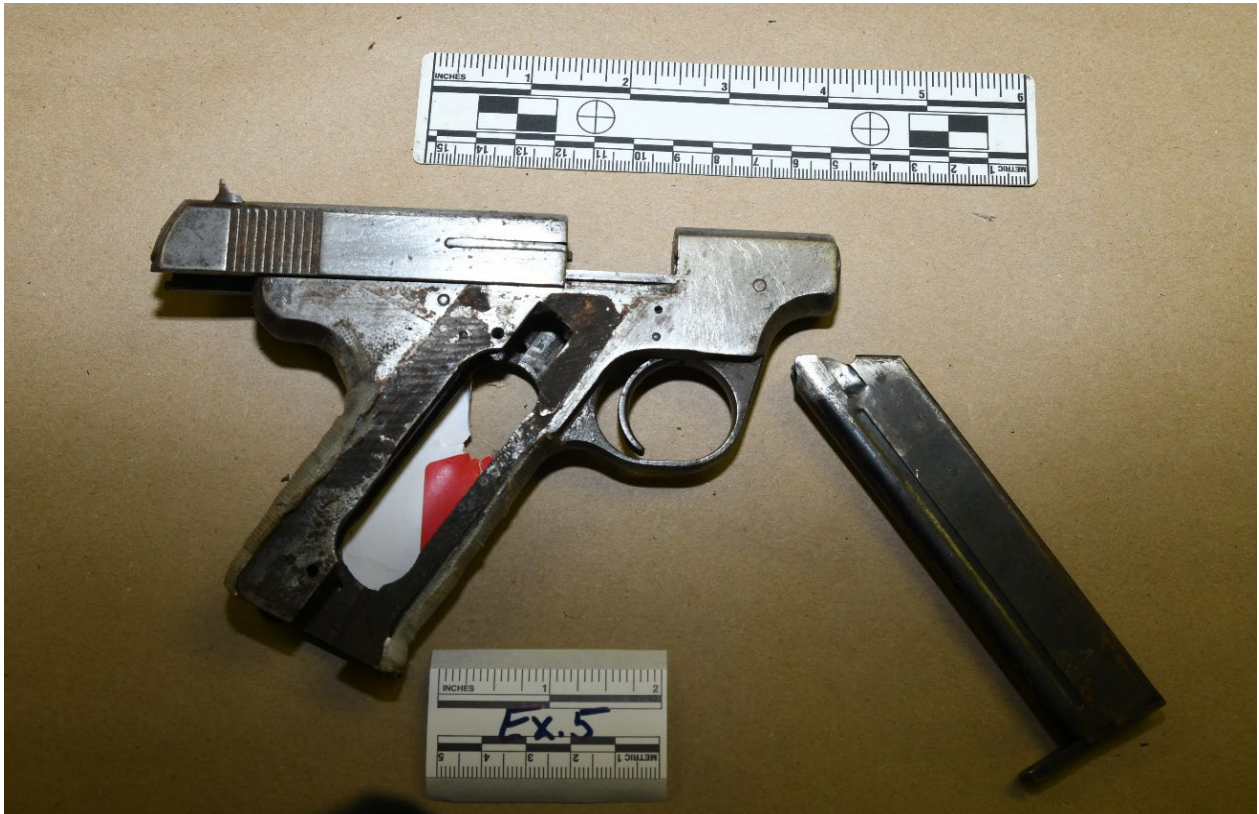
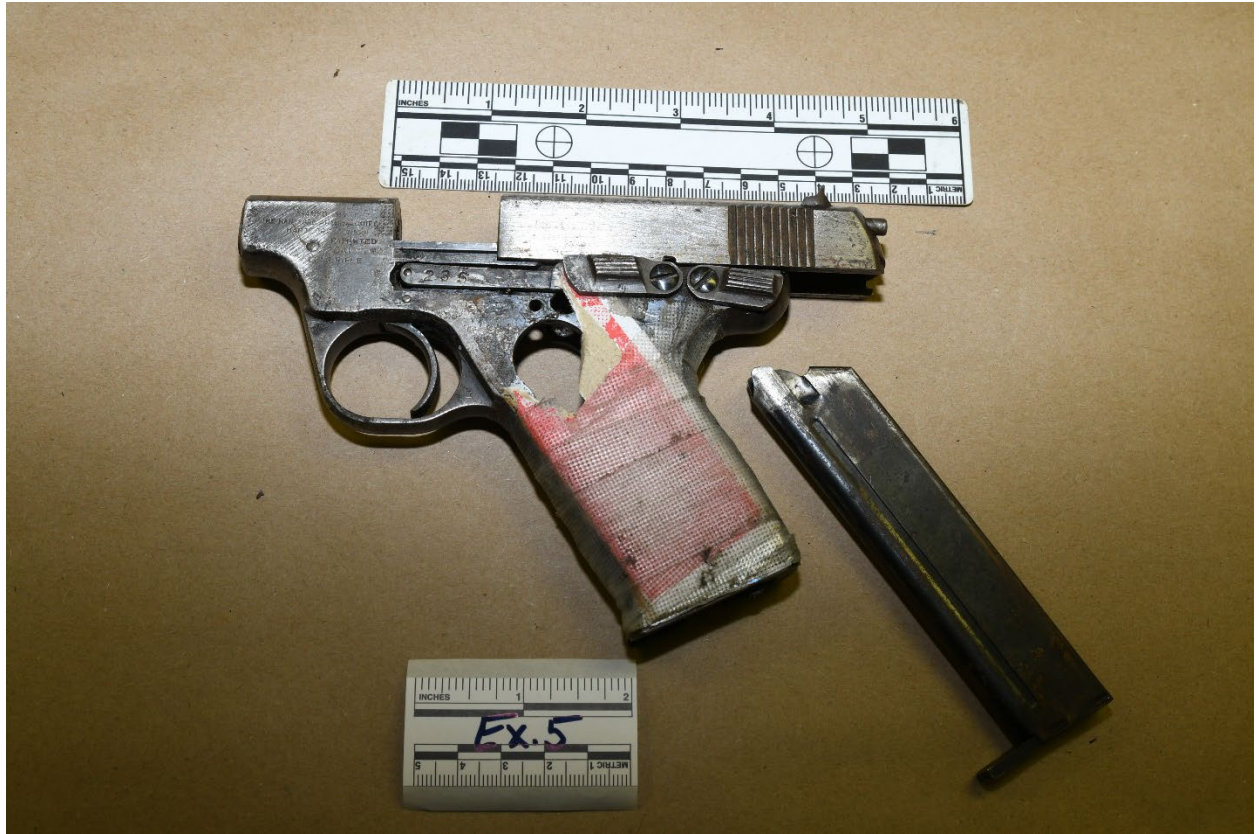
First responding officers put the following items on the left side of the vehicle's hood: (1) an electronic hotel/motel door key marked "102", (2) a handgun, (3) another disposable lighter.



The handgun was a Hartford Arms .22 long rifle semi-automatic pistol. Detectives found the pistol on the vehicle with the slide locked to the rear and the magazine in place. The pistol was unloaded and magazine was empty. The barrel of the pistol appeared to have been shortened and the right grip was held in place with tape. The left grip was missing and red colored cardstock had been taped onto the frame in its place.



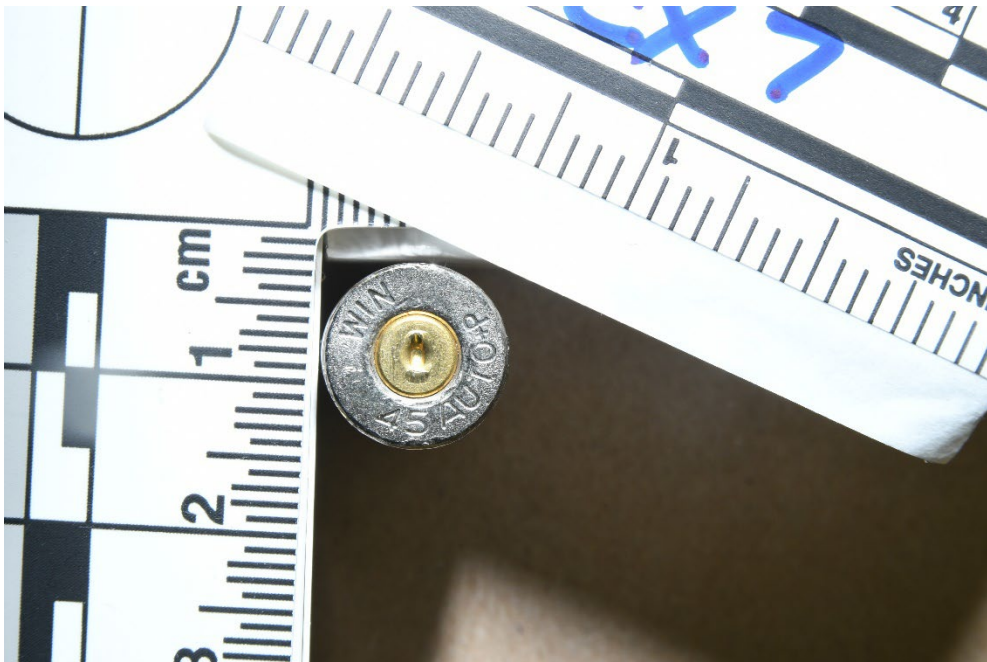






Detectives searched the area on the right side of the vehicle with rakes and shovels. They recovered one .45 Auto casing that bore the head stamp WIN .45AUTO+P.





The hole in the right front window of the Chevy was circular and approximately 12 millimeters in diameter. It had a pattern of concentric and radial cracks indicative of a high-speed projectile. The cone of the hole was on the inside of the window indicating a path of travel from outside to inside. The right side of the damaged box on the passenger seat contained two ragged entrance holes. Detectives found one exit hole on the left side of the box. Powdered glass found around the larger defects apparently were caused by glass spall from the window.









Since the hole on the box aligned with the hole in the window, a projection rod was placed to visualize the approximate trajectory of the bullet. The trajectory was extended backward utilizing a string towards the snow bank parallel to the right side of the vehicle.



Using this method, detectives determined that the bullet most likely was fired from the east side of the snow bank at an approximate distance of 20 to 25 feet from the car window. This distance was corroborated by the location of the single expended shell casing which was north of the string line and 22 feet east of the vehicle.



The bullet struck almost perpendicular to the window and traversed the front passenger compartment from right to left passing through the box on the right front passenger seat. The projectile exited the open door at the approximate height of the steering wheel. Detectives found no ballistic damage or bloody impact spatter on the driver side of the vehicle.



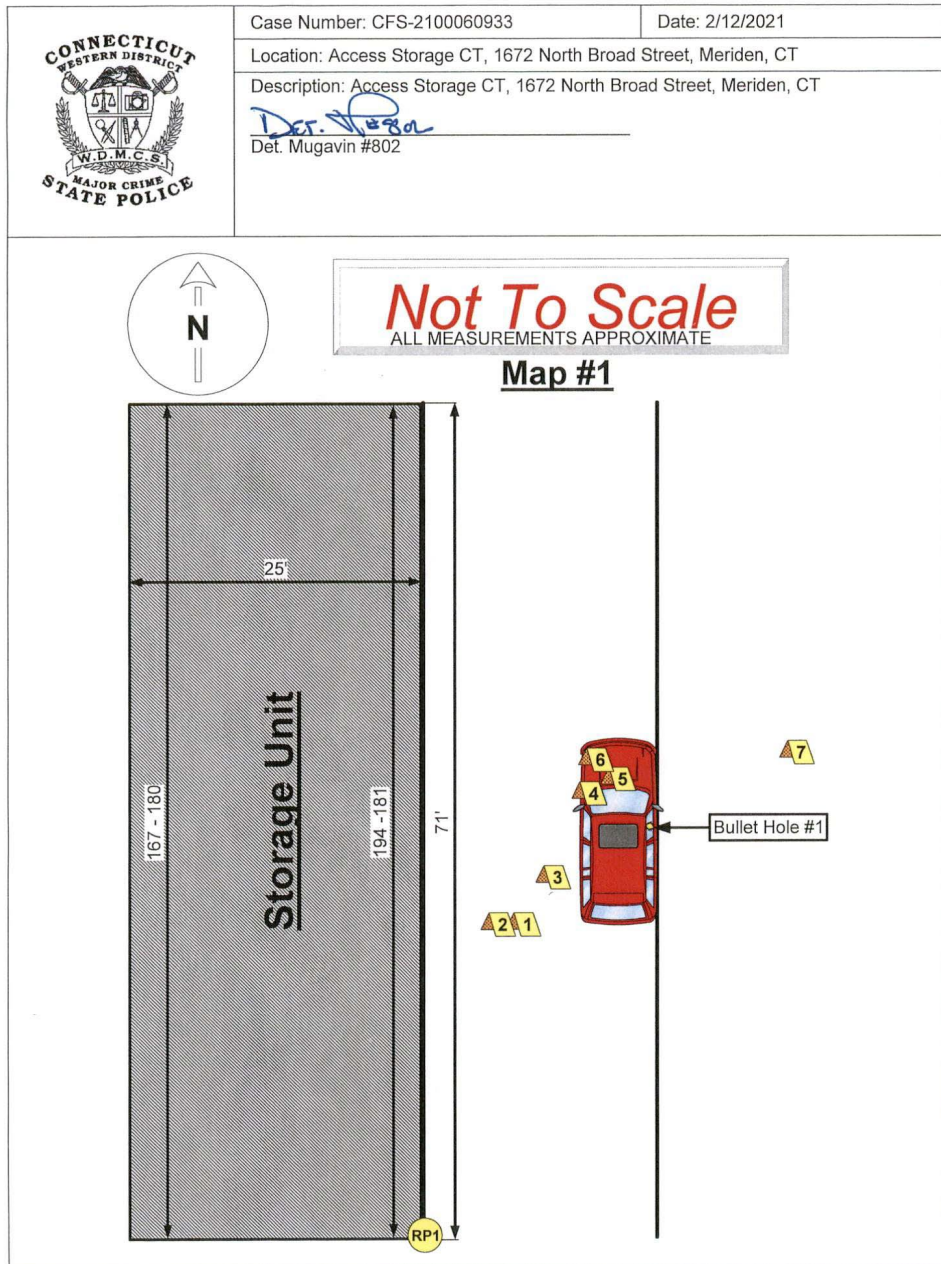
### Flamingo Inn

After processing the scene behind Access Self Storage, WDMCS detectives processed Room 102 of the Flamingo Inn. The search was pursuant to a search warrant. Detectives found no items of evidentiary value to the officer-involved shooting investigation.





WDMCS detectives prepared a sketch map of the scene of the shooting and a Google map of the area showing the path of travel from the Flamingo Inn to the scene of the officer involved shooting.

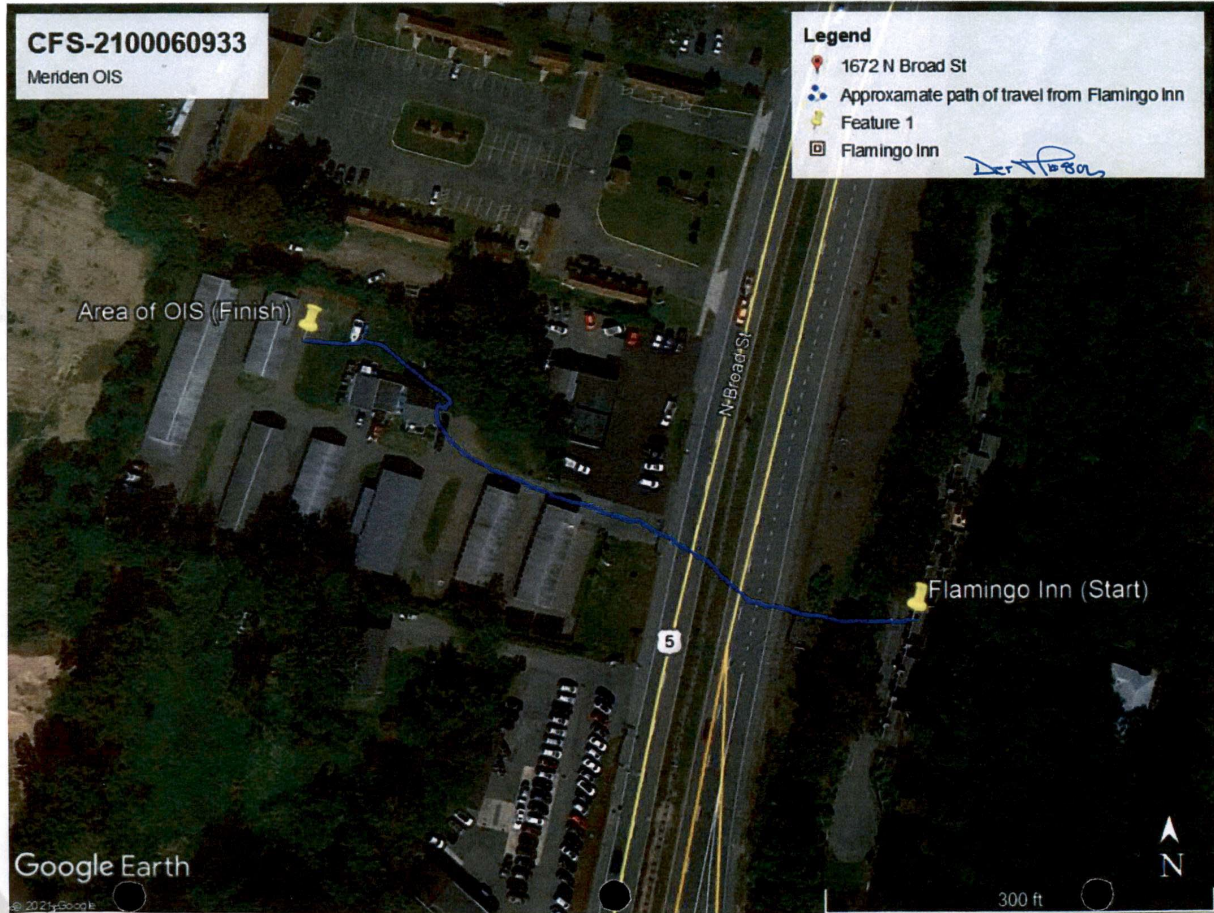


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### Evidence Seized

In total, detectives seized seven pieces of evidence:

- Exh. 1 One Bic lighter, color blue
- Exh. 2 One piece of tubular plastic, color maroon
- Exh. 3 Quickclot gauze with blood-like stain
- Exh. 4 VingCard Motel key with "102" written on side
- Exh. 5 Hartford Arms .22 caliber handgun
- Exh. 6 One Bic lighter, color blue
- Exh. 7 One WIN 45AUTO+P casing

### Surveillance Video

Access Self Storage had a security camera mounted on a telephone pole near the entrance to the business. WDMCS detectives obtained the recording from that camera for

February 12, 2021. Although the recording is many hours long, only approximately thirty-two seconds are relevant to this investigation; that portion of the recording shows the following.

3:05:17 mark – Strothers runs into Access Self Storage

3:05:24 mark – Simonson follows

3:05:42 mark – West Hartford Officer enters

3:05:49 mark – Marked police car enters

To review this portion of the Access Self Storage surveillance recording, click [here](#).

### **Radio Broadcasts**

WDMCS detectives obtained a recording of the radio broadcasts among Meriden Police Officers on February 12, 2021. Meriden Officers had set up near the Flamingo Inn in order to assist West Hartford in executing the arrest warrant on Strothers. At the time of these broadcasts, the police believed that two persons were likely in the motel room. The broadcasts relevant to this investigation were recorded on Channel 3 between the 19:00 mark and the 21:05 mark – about two minutes. An approximate transcript of these broadcasts is as follows.

19:05 – I think that the most likely thing is that they're gonna just run out and run down the bank. Do we have people down at the base of this thing to contain them?

19:15 – Yeah. We should have patrol units down there.

19:20 – That's the most likely, cause they have ... they have a car at the ... toward the end of the building. They're not gonna make it down to the end of the building and they're not gonna make it this way, if anything, they're gonna jump the guard rail and go down the hill.

19:32 – Yeah, That's what I figure. That's why they should be shutting down the whole right lane ... um ... that way they'll see them coming down.

19:42 – Nice. Thanks.

19:50 – He's coming out now. He's going to the car ... green hoodie ... Actually, he's jumping the bank, he's coming down ... he's coming down the bank.

20:10 – He's crossing route 15 north heading toward Preece's Auto.

20:20 – He's going behind Access Storage.

20:32 (Officer Simonson) – Clear the air, clear the air ... he’s going behind the two houses ... going back to the storage

20:32 (Officer Simonson) – Show me your hands ...Police!

20:43 (Officer Simonson) – He’s claiming to have a gun.

20:49 (Officer Simonson) – Police. Shots fired, shots fired.

20:52 – (unintelligible)

21:00 (Officer Simonson) – H ... start a 10-3. Shots fired

21:05 (Dispatch) – 10-4.

To review this portion of the Meriden police radio broadcasts, click [here](#).

## **Firearms Report**

WDMCS detectives submitted the Hartford Arms pistol recovered from Strothers, the shell casing recovered at the scene, and Officer Simonson’s Glock pistol to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Scientific Services, Firearms Unit. Upon examining these items, the Firearms Unit reported the following.

### **Hartford Arms Pistol**

The Firearms Unit identified the pistol recovered from Strothers as a Hartford Arms and Equipment, model 1925, .22LR caliber, semi-automatic pistol. The firearm did not have a serial number. The Unit test fired the pistol and determined it to be operational.

### **Glock Pistol**

The Firearms Unit identified Officer Simonson’s department-issued firearm to be a Glock, model 21Gen4, .45 caliber, semi-automatic pistol. They test fired the Glock and it was operational.

### **Casing**

The Firearms Unit microscopically compared the casing recovered at the scene with a test-fired casing from Officer Simonson’s Glock pistol. They determined that the recovered casing was fired from the Glock.

## **Hartford Hospital Records**

Strothers arrived at Hartford Hospital via ambulance on February 12, 2021, at 10:51 a.m. The doctors diagnosed him with a GSW with injury to his transverse colon, sigmoid colon, jejunum, and retroperitoneum. After a CT scan, he was immediately brought to surgery. The surgeon performed a number of procedures to repair his bowel. Imaging determined that the bullet was lodged posteriorly within the soft tissues adjacent to Strothers' sacrum, which was fractured. The surgeon did not remove the bullet.

On February 13, 2021, Strothers spoke to a psychiatrist at the hospital. The doctor noted the following in the chart: "the patient has expressed a desire to die, at one point saying, 'they should have shot me in the head' to a nurse. There was a question of his wanting to suicide by cop."

Strothers was discharged from the hospital on February 18, 2021, at 11:58 a.m. to the custody of the police.

## **FINDINGS**

Based on the credible evidence developed during this investigation, I make the following factual findings.

1. On February 12, 2021, the West Hartford Police Department held an arrest warrant for Kenneth Strothers for the charge of robbery in the first degree. The warrant had a court-set bond of \$500,000.
2. West Hartford Officers had reason to believe that Strothers might be staying in a motel on the Berlin Turnpike. They requested the assistance of the Meriden Police Department in serving the warrant.
3. On the morning of February 12, 2021, officers spoke with the office clerk at the Flamingo Inn, 1601 North Broad Street, Meriden and learned that Strothers was staying in room #102.
4. West Hartford and Meriden Officers went to the Flamingo Inn, staging their unmarked police vehicles in the Inn's parking lot.
5. Officer Erik Simonson parked his unmarked police vehicle on North Broad Street near the base of steep incline leading up to the Flamingo Inn.

6. Strothers stepped out of room #102 and saw police activity in the parking lot. He also saw the police speaking with his caseworker from Rushford Medical who had come to the Flamingo Inn to pick up Strothers.

7. A few minutes after 10:00 a.m., Strothers left room #102, stepped over the parking lot guardrail, and proceeded to run down the steep slope to North Broad Street.

8. Simonson saw Strothers moving down the incline and pursued him on foot into the driveway of Access Self Storage, 1672 North Broad Street. Strothers ran west between two houses on the property toward a one-story building containing storage units. Simonson followed.

9. Parked on the paved driveway in front of the storage building was a 2010 Chevrolet Equinox SUV. The car was unlocked and running.

10. Strothers stopped at the driver's side of the SUV and opened the door. Simonson stopped approximately twenty to twenty-five feet away from the SUV on the passenger side. Simonson, who wore a police tactical vest, said, "Show me your hands. Police."

11. Strothers told Simonson, "I have a gun." He displayed an item wrapped in a white tee shirt.

12. After a couple of seconds, Simonson saw and heard Strothers "rack" the gun suggesting that he was preparing to fire a shot. When Strothers pointed the gun at Simonson, Simonson fired one round from his department-issued Glock .45 handgun. The bullet traveled through the passenger door window of the SUV, through the open driver side door striking Strothers in the abdomen.

13. Strothers went to Hartford Hospital where doctors treated him for the gunshot wound. During a psychiatric consult, he made remarks suggesting that his aim was to suicide by cop.

14. I reject Strothers' assertions that (1) he did not point the gun at Simonson, and (2) he did not rack the gun in Simonson's presence, for several reasons.<sup>7</sup> First, there is reason to question Strothers general state of mind. By his own admission, he suffered from diagnosed mental illness for which he had not taken prescribed medication for several weeks. Second, there is reason to question Strothers' memory of the incident. He admitted to detectives that

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<sup>7</sup> I accept Strothers' statement that the gun remained covered by a white tee shirt during the encounter with Simonson.

he did not recall the incident “piece by piece.” Strothers did not recall any verbal commands by Simonson. The radio broadcasts, however, record Simonson stating, “Show me your hands ... Police!” In addition, Michael Braley heard a male voice state, “Stop running, put your hands up,” and afterward heard a male voice repeatedly ask, “Put your hands up.” From his bathroom window, Braley saw an officer on one side of the red Chevy giving commands to someone on the other side of the car. Strothers further claimed that the officer shot him over the car rather than through the window. The bullet holes through the window and boxes clearly establish a bullet track through the SUV. Third, there is reason to question Strothers’ candor. Immediately after the shooting while he was being restrained, the police asked Strothers if he had a gun. He said, “No.” Moments later, police found a gun right next to him. Finally, Strothers equivocated when asked directly if he racked the gun or did anything that might have led the officer to believe that he planned to use it. Strothers stated that he did not “think” he did.

In addition, Simonson’s report of what happened is entirely credible. Within minutes of the shooting, he tells Malgano, “... he cocked something under a white tee shirt and pointed it at me.” Moreover, Strothers admits telling Simonson that he had a gun and there are references in the medical records that he was trying to suicide by cop. Racking and pointing a gun at a police officer are exactly the sorts of provocations that can cause such a result.

## **LEGAL STANDARD**

The use of force by a police officer is governed by General Statutes §53a-22. The version of that statute in effect on February 12, 2021, in relevant part, provides:

“(a)(1) For purposes of this section, a reasonable belief that a person has committed an offense means a reasonable belief in facts or circumstances which if true would in law constitute an offense. If the believed facts or circumstances would not in law constitute an offense, an erroneous though not unreasonable belief that the law is otherwise does not render justifiable the use of force to make an arrest or prevent an escape from custody.

(2) A peace officer ... who is effecting an arrest pursuant to a warrant or preventing an escape from custody is justified in using the physical force prescribed in subsections (b) and (c) of this section unless such warrant is invalid and known by such officer to be invalid.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (a) ... of this section, a peace officer ... is justified in using physical force upon another person when and to the extent that he or she reasonably believes such use to be necessary to: (1) Effect an arrest or prevent the escape from custody of a person whom he or she reasonably believes to have committed an offense unless he or she knows that the arrest or custody is unauthorized; or (2) defend himself or herself or a third person from the use or imminent use of physical force while effecting or attempting to effect an arrest or while preventing or attempting to prevent an escape.

(c) (1) ... a peace officer ... is justified in using *deadly force* upon another person for the purposes specified in subsection (b) of this section only when his or her actions are objectively reasonable under the circumstances, and:

(A) He or she reasonably believes such to be necessary to defend himself or herself or a third person from the use or imminent use of deadly physical force ..." (Emphasis added).

Accordingly, a police officer is justified in using deadly physical force upon another person when the officer reasonably believes such force to be necessary to defend the officer or a third person from the use or imminent use of deadly physical force. "Deadly physical force" means "physical force that can be reasonably expected to cause death or serious physical injury." General Statutes §53a-3(5). "Serious physical injury" means "physical injury which creates a substantial risk of death, or which causes serious disfigurement, serious impairment of health or serious loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ." General Statutes §53a-3(4).

The reasonableness of a police officer's belief under §53a-22 is evaluated pursuant to a subjective-objective formulation. *State v. Smith*, 73 Conn. App. 173, 185, 807 A.2d 500, cert. denied 262 Conn. 923, 812 A.2d 865 (2002). Under this test, the first question is whether, on the basis of all of the evidence, the police officer in fact honestly believed that deadly force was necessary to defend himself/herself or a third person. *Id.* If it is determined that the police officer honestly believed that deadly force was necessary, the second part of the test asks whether the police officer's honest belief was reasonable from the perspective of a reasonable police officer in the officer's circumstances. *Id.*, 198.

The United States Supreme Court has explained this test in a civil rights case: "The 'reasonableness' of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on scene rather than with the 20/20 vision of hindsight. . . .The calculus of reasonableness must embody allowance of the fact that police officers are often forced to make split-second decisions—in circumstances that are tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving—about the amount of force that is necessary in a particular situation." *Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386, 396–97, 109 S. Ct. 1865, 104 L. Ed. 2d 443 (1989).

## **ANALYSIS**

Under Connecticut law as applicable here, a determination as to whether a police officer's use of deadly force was objectively reasonable requires consideration of four questions:

1. Did the officer, as a matter of fact, actually – that is honestly and sincerely – believe that he/she or a third person was facing either the actual or imminent use of deadly force when the officer used deadly force?

2. Was that actual belief reasonable in the sense that a reasonable police officer in the officer's circumstances at the time of the officer's actions, viewing those circumstances from the officer's point of view, would have shared that belief?

3. Did the officer, as a matter of fact, actually – that is honestly and sincerely – believe that the use of deadly force was necessary to defend himself/herself or a third person from such threat?

4. Was that actual belief reasonable, in the sense that a reasonable police officer in the officer's circumstances at the time of the officer's actions, viewing those circumstances from the officer's point of view, would share the belief that deadly force was necessary?

Officer Simonson heard Strothers say that he had a gun and saw and heard actions suggesting that Strothers was racking a handgun. When Strothers pointed the object wrapped in a white tee shirt at him, he actually believed that Strothers was about to shoot him. Such actual belief was not exaggerated or unfounded and a reasonable police officer, viewing the circumstances from Simonson's point of view, would have shared that belief.

Officer Simonson also actually believed that discharging his department-issued firearm was necessary to prevent Strothers' imminent use of deadly force. Strothers faced serious charges and appeared desperate to escape arrest. Strothers ignored Simonson's verbal commands to Strothers to stop and to show his hands. Simonson's belief that the use of deadly force was necessary was reasonable because a reasonable police officer in the same circumstances at the time would have shared that belief.



## CONCLUSION

The investigation establishes that Officer Erik Simonson used deadly force against Kenneth Strothers to prevent Strothers from what Simonson reasonably believed was Strothers' imminent intent to shoot him. I therefore conclude that such use of force was justified under Connecticut law. The Office of Inspector General will take no further action on this matter.

Submitted this 9th day of September 2022.



ROBERT J. DEVLIN, JR.  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

## ADDENDUM

### Recommendations

#### Suicide by Cop

In the field of psychology, there is a recognized phenomenon known as "suicide by cop." It applies in situations where a person engages in behavior that poses a risk of death or serious injury to others with the intent to precipitate the use of force by law enforcement against the person. Strothers' conduct arguably falls into that category. Although estimates on the frequency of suicide by cop vary, the most recent data suggests that it is present in about one-third of officer-involved shootings.

In the Strothers' situation, Officer Simonson, who was alone and lacked cover, confronted an armed subject who was pointing what appeared to be a loaded gun at him. Simonson reasonably perceived Strothers as highly dangerous and, as detailed in this report, his use of force was justified.

There are, however, situations (unlike Strothers) where the subject is contained to a degree that it may be possible to attempt a dialogue with the person without jeopardizing officer safety or public safety. The FBI and other law enforcement agencies have done substantial research into this area. Their publications present a number of practical suggestions for handling these situations with the ultimate goal being preservation of life.

A representative sampling of these publications is set forth below.

While not applicable in Strothers-type situations, this area deserves more study and training. As the studies make clear, the most effective weapon in some suicide by cop situations is communication.

Suggested reading:

[Crisis \(hostage\) Negotiation: Current Strategies and Issues in High-Risk Conflict Resolution](#)

[Suicide by Cop - Protocol and Training Guide](#)

[The Phenomenon of SbC](#)

[Suicide by Cop](#)

### **Body Worn Cameras – Detectives**

Officer Simonson was not wearing a body worn camera (BWC) at the time of his encounter with Kenneth Strothers. This is regrettable since, had he been equipped with a BWC, it would have provided irrefutable proof of what occurred at the time of the OIS. At the time of this incident, Simonson was a plain-clothes detective with the Meriden Police Department. Meriden detectives did not have BWCs.

At the time of the writing of this report, whether detectives, in the normal course of their duties, should wear BWCs is a subject of continued discussion. My recommendation is that, even if not normally worn, detectives should wear BWCs while assisting in a serious felony arrest given the potential for police use of deadly force in such a situation.

### **Appendix**

[Officer Erik Simonson -- Statement](#)

## References

Vecchi, Gregory A., Van Hessel, Vincent B., Romano, Stephen B. (2004). Crisis (hostage) Negotiation: current strategies and issues in high-risk conflict resolution. [https://inns.insofcourt.org/media/191940/crisis\\_\\_hostage\\_\\_negotiation\\_current\\_strategies.pdf](https://inns.insofcourt.org/media/191940/crisis__hostage__negotiation_current_strategies.pdf)

Police Executive Research Forum. (2020). [Webinar]. <https://context-cdn.washingtonpost.com/notes/prod/default/documents/cea6fb65-7c26-4fa5-bc4e-ad30a5755349/note/eea6bd96-20c0-4955-ab34-82fed412f6e6.pdf>

Barr, Keith. (2005). The Phenomenon of Suicide by Cop. [Research Paper]. [https://www.cji.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/sbc\\_paper.pdf](https://www.cji.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/sbc_paper.pdf)

Kukor, Ph.D., Terry, Porter, Shannon. (2013). Suicide by Cop. [PowerPoint Presentation]. [https://www.neomed.edu/wp-content/uploads/CJCCOE\\_CIT\\_SuicideByCop.pdf](https://www.neomed.edu/wp-content/uploads/CJCCOE_CIT_SuicideByCop.pdf)



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY-  
INVESTIGATION REPORT (DPS-302-E) (REVISED 2/3/06)**

Report Type: Report #: 2100060933 - 00120762

Initial Report:  Prosecutors Report:  Supplement:  Re-open:  Assist:  Closing:

Attachments:

Statements:  Teletype:  Photos:  Sketchmap:  Evidence:  Other:

|  |                             |                  |   |      |                                     |                  |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------|---|------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| CFS NO<br>2100060933                               | INCIDENT DATE<br>02/12/2021 | TIME<br>11:50    | INCIDENT DATE<br>02/12/2021                     | TIME | PRIMARY OFFICER<br>VANNESS, RACHAEL | BADGE NO<br>1431 |
| INVESTIGATING OFFICER<br>VANNESS, RACHAEL          |                             | BADGE NO<br>1431 | TYPE OF EXCEPTIONAL CLEARANCE<br>Not Applicable |      | CASE STATUS<br>Active               |                  |
| INCIDENT ADDRESS<br>01601 N Broad St Meriden 06450 |                             |                  |   |      | APARTMENT NO                        | TOWN CD<br>T080  |

Action Taken: On 3/30/22, this Detective responded to 628 Hebron Avenue, Suite 212, Glastonbury, CT, for a prearranged meeting Attorney Elliot Spector and Erik Simonson of the Meriden Police Department. The purpose of the meeting was to allow Officer Simonson to review his written statement and to sign and swear to the accuracy and honesty of it in the presence of Attorney Spector and an impartial witness.

At 1338 hours, Officer Simonson was presented with a copy of the sworn written statement that he had previously prepared and forwarded to this Detective through Attorney Spector. Following a review of the document, Officer Simonson signed and swore to the statement at 1346 hours.

See attached sworn written statement.

The status of the case remains actively under investigation.

|   |                             |                                     |  |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| THE UNDERSIGNED, AN INVESTIGATOR HAVING BEEN DULY SWORN DEPOSES AND SAYS THAT: I AM THE WRITER OF THE ATTACHED POLICE REPORT PERTAINING TO THIS INCIDENT NUMBER. THAT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN WAS SECURED AS A RESULT OF (1)MY PERSONAL OBSERVATION AND KNOWLEDGE; OR (2)INFORMATION RELAYED TO ME BY OTHER MEMBERS OF A POLICE DEPARTMENT OR OF ANOTHER POLICE DEPARTMENT;OR (3)INFORMATION SECURED BY MYSELF OR ANOTHER MEMBER OF A POLICE DEPARTMENT FROM THE PERSON OR PERSONS OR IDENTIFIED THEREIN, AS INDICATED IN THE ATTACHED REPORT. THAT THE REPORT IS AN ACCURATE STATEMENT OF THE INFORMATION SO RECEIVED BY ME. |                             |                                     |  |
| INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE:<br><b>/DET RACHAEL VANNESS/</b>   | INVESTIGATOR I.D.#:<br>1431 | REPORT DATE:<br>03/31/2022 10:31 am |  |
| SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE:<br><b>/SGT EDMUND G VAYAN/</b>  | SUPERVISOR I.D.#:<br>0112   |                                     |  |

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
DIVISION OF STATE POLICE

Case Number: 2100060933  
Date: 3/30/22  
Time Started: 1330  
Time Ended: 1346

WITNESS STATEMENT OF Officer Erik Simonson #441

I, Erik Simonson date of birth, 9/29/80  
of the Meriden Police Department town/city of Meriden, CT 06451

I make the following statement without fear, threat, or promise. I have been advised that any statement(s) made herein which I do not believe to be true, and which statement is intended to mislead a public servant in the performance of his/her official function, is a crime under C.G.S. section 53a-157.

On February 12, 2021, at approximately 0853 hours I learned that West Hartford Police Department believed that they had located Kenneth Strothers (07/16/96) at 1601 N Broad Street, the Flamingo Inn. West Hartford Police Department was looking for Strothers because they held a valid arrest warrant for him for an armed robbery that was committed on January 30, 2021 at 905 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford.

We were informed that as of February 12, 2021, Strothers was suspected of committing approximately eleven (11) armed robberies. During the commission of these armed robberies, Strothers had displayed a firearm and during some, he pistol-whipped the victims. These eleven (11) armed robberies occurred between January 27, 2021 and February 10, 2021. The eleven (11) armed robberies happened in several different towns (Meriden, New Britain, West Hartford, Southington and Newington).

... approximately 0950 hours, D/Sgt. Cardona requested that Det. Stavrides and I respond to the area of 1601 N Broad Street to assist West Hartford Police Department and other members of the Meriden Police Department that had already responded.

The Flamingo Inn is located atop a long driveway and is a single story motel that runs north to south. The doors to the rooms face west and open directly into a narrow driveway/parking lot. Immediately adjacent to the parking lot on the west is a steep decline that is lightly wooded and is abreast of the two north bound lanes of the North Broad Street also known as the Berlin Turnpike.

I drove Det. Stavrides and myself and parked our unmarked vehicle that was equipped with emergency lights at the point of which North Broad Street and the Berlin Turnpike connect in the north bound lane.

By affixing my signature to this statement, I acknowledge that I have read it or have had it read to me and it is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Witness: Jenny A. [Signature] Signature: [Signature]

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Personally appeared the signer of the foregoing statement and made oath before me to the truth of the matters contained herein.

I notarized, endorse here: Det Pm #1431

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
DIVISION OF STATE POLICE

Case Number: 2100060933

WITNESS STATEMENT OF *Officer Erik Simonson #441*

Approximately five minutes later I heard Det. Dorais state on the police radio that Strothers had exited the motel room and was running down the steep decline. Believing that Strothers would reach North Broad Street in front of my location I exited my car and began to walk north bound.

I observed Strothers running down the decline approximately 50 yards in front of me and I began to run towards him. Strothers ran across the two northbound lanes, over the metal guardrails then across the two south bound lanes in a westerly direction. As I pursued Strothers I was yelling commands for him to stop and that I was the police. It should be noted that I was working in a plain clothes capacity but I was wearing an exterior vest with my badge, name and rank all clearly marked on the front of the vest as well as POLICE in large letter on the back of the vest.

Despite clear commands to stop "Police! Stop Police!" Strothers continued to run west entering the driveway of 1672 North Broad Street, Access Self Storage. I provided our current location via the radio as Strothers continued to run west bound going between two residences located behind 1672 and 1680 North Broad Street.

As the foot pursuit continued I followed Strothers through the yards of the two residences where he was able to get behind (the driver's side) a running but unoccupied small SUV. As soon as Strothers reached the driver's door of the small SUV he yelled to me "I got a gun!"

I radioed to responding units that Strothers had just claimed to have a firearm. At that time Strothers began reaching around the area of his waist and produced an item covered by a white cloth and pointed it at me. At this moment, I believed that Strothers was attempting suicide by cop and did not believe that he actually had a firearm underneath the white cloth so I did not discharge my service weapon at him.

Approximately one to two seconds after Strothers produced the gun under the cloth he racked his gun (pulling the slide of a semi-automatic pistol) which was still underneath the white cloth. As Strothers was racking his gun, I heard the distinct sound of metal on metal and knew that he was in fact pointing a firearm at me. At that point, I feared that Strothers would shoot and kill me and since I was in the open with no cover or concealment, I was forced to discharge my department issued firearm at Strothers one time.

By affixing my signature to this statement, I acknowledge that I have read it or have had it read to me and it is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Witness: *[Signature]* Signature: *[Signature]*

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Personally appeared the signer of the foregoing statement and made oath before me to the truth of the matters contained herein.

I notarized, endorse here: *[Signature]* #1431

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
DIVISION OF STATE POLICE

Case Number: 2100060933

WITNESS STATEMENT OF *Officer Erik Simonson #441*

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Almost immediately, officers from West Hartford and Meriden arrived and detained Strothers while providing medical attention.

-----Nothing Follows-----

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By affixing my signature to this statement, I acknowledge that I have read it or have had it read to me and it is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Witness: *Jessica A. [Signature]* Signature: *Erik Simonson*

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Personally appeared the signer of the foregoing statement and made oath before me to the truth of the matters contained herein.

I notarized, endorse here: *Det [Signature] #1431*