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UPDATE: Man kills himself with police at the door

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Article Text:

A Bassett man killed himself as police knocked on the door to search for him shortly after 8 a.m. Tuesday, according to the resident of the duplex where the incident occurred.

Steve Bishop, 40, was sleeping on the couch in the home of Ellen Ward in the 1100 block of Drewry Road in Martinsville Tuesday morning when police knocked on the door, Ward said. She said he ran into a bedroom and she heard a shot.

"I knew he killed himself," Ward said Tuesday morning as she stood outside her home that, by that time, was surrounded by yellow crime scene tape.

Ward said the police did not realize he was dead. They put microphones in the windows and attempted to talk to Bishop on a megaphone, she said. After 45 minutes, they fired tear gas into the room and when there was no response, they determined he was dead, she added.

Ward was in the house for a time after the incident began, and then police removed her from the scene. She was not hurt in the incident.

Ward said Bishop, whom she had known for 16 years, had suffered from depression and had attempted suicide last fall.

The U.S. Marshals, who are in charge of the case, said no information would be released until later Tuesday.

Federal, state, county and city agencies were at the scene.

Following is the news release issued by the U.S. Marshals service in Roanoke at mid-day Tuesday:

On Tuesday, Nov. 15, U.S. Marshals from Roanoke, assisted by units of the Henry County Sheriff's Office and the Virginia State Police Tactical Team, executed a search warrant at a mobile home in rural Henry County attempting to locate fugitive Steven Ray Bishop, 40, of Bassett. Bishop was wanted by the Virginia State Police for allegedly failing to register as a sex offender and by the Patrick County Sheriff's Office for allegedly failing to appear on drug distribution charges. Bishop has a lengthy criminal history, including multiple sex offense convictions of taking indecent liberties with children in 1991 and 1992.

Bishop was not located at the residence, but an active meth lab was located in the mobile home. After further investigation, it was determined that Bishop might be staying at an associate's residence in Martinsville.

Investigators responded to a home in the 1100 block of Drewry Road in Martinsville to look for Bishop. Upon receiving permission to search the residence, officers heard a single gunshot from inside a bedroom and retreated a safe distance to await the arrival of the tactical team. The Virginia State Police Tactical Team made entry to the residence and discovered Bishop deceased from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Hazmat teams are in the process of cleaning up the meth lab and the suicide investigation of

Bishop is being conducted by the Martinsville Police Department. No law enforcement officers were injured during this joint law enforcement operation.

For more on this story, see Wednesday's Bulletin and this site.

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