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Local

Woman cleans up house after Vallejo police standoff

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Article Text:

Brenda Lee Williams had been in her living room Wednesday watching television when all hell broke loose.

"The next thing I know, I heard the P.A., 'Occupants of 1330 Sutter (St.), come out with your hands up,'" Williams said Friday as she surveyed the damage to her home of nearly 50 years. Much to William's horror, the pink house with the white latticework at Sutter and Illinois streets became the site of a nearly four-hour standoff Wednesday between police and William "Billy" Heinze, 42.

Hours after it began, Heinze was found dead inside the house, and police have not yet said whether he died of self-inflicted wounds or from those received during a fire fight with police. Heinze was a friend of Williams and her live-in boyfriend, Jesse Cain, who Heinze called "pops," Williams said.

"He'd come over here and help out and work on the car and cut the yard," Cain said.

On Wednesday, Heinze called Cain and asked if he could come over. He had gotten into a fight with his girlfriend and was upset, Williams said. Cain readily agreed and met the man outside while Williams continued to watch TV.

That's when she heard screaming.

It is unclear who was shouting at the time, but witnesses called 911 to describe a man pointing a rifle or shotgun at people in the street, police said.

When officers arrived, Heinze retreated into Williams' house.

"When I came out, Billy ran in," Williams said, noting that she wasn't wearing any shoes at the time.

She and Cain were taken to the police station, while Heinze barricaded himself inside the house, Williams said.

What followed was the tense standoff between police and Heinze. Officers repeatedly tried to coax Heinze out of the house on his phone and through a loudspeaker.

Police said Heinze began making demands and threatened to shoot and kill people if his demands were not met. About an hour into the standoff, Heinze jammed his shotgun through the front window pane and pointed it at officers, police said.

That's when officers opened fire.

It's unclear if Heinze shot at officers, or if the officers' rounds struck Heinze. With help from other agencies, including the Solano Sheriff SWAT Team, police later fired tear gas into the home.

To prepare for officers to enter, the SWAT team used an armored vehicle to plow through Williams' fence, crushing her rose bush and destroying the wooden steps to her front porch. The officers also tore down the latticework surrounding the wraparound porch.

Before they could enter, SWAT team members looking through the window noticed Heinze down inside the house, with a shotgun next to him.

He was dead, apparently of gunshot wounds.

"He wasn't a bad person. He had his issues, just like everybody else," said Williams, who along with Cain spent much of the incident at the Vallejo Police Department with the police chaplain. Three officers who were involved in the shooting have been placed on paid administrative leave pending a departmental review, police said.

Police released Williams' house to her early Thursday morning. As officers continue to investigate the incident, Williams said she was angry at the damage done to her home.

"Why did they tear my house up on the side? I ain't got no steps," Williams said, noting that before Wednesday she had sealed all the entrances to her house for safety reasons except for the front door.

Since Thursday, Williams has been using an ice chest to climb up and down her porch. Her concrete walkway is also cracked from the weight of the armored vehicle, and her house is riddled with bullets -- with some going through her Easter dress.

Vallejo police said Friday afternoon that Williams can file a claim with the city manager's office, and the city will respond right away.

"They're going to make me whole," Williams said.

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Caption:

Photo:

Brenda Lee Williams talks about the damage done to her house during a police shootout on Wednesday. Williams was concerned because she was unable to find blood, a chalk outline or any evidence that William Heinze had been killed in her home.(Chris Riley/Times-Herald)

Photo:

Brenda Lee Williams talks about a bullet hole in her brand new Easter dress which was damaged in the police shootout on Sutter Street, Wednesday.(Chris Riley/Times-Herald)

Photo:

Jesse Cain looks at the path of destruction made by armored vehicles as the Vallejo Police Department and other agency made their way into the Sutter Street home on Wednesday after fatally shooting suspect William Heinze. (Chris Riley/Times-Herald)

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