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Standoff ends in suicide

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Article Text:
An overnight hostage situation near Altavista turned into a Tuesday morning standoff with law enforcement and ended with a fatality.
Maj. Steve Hutcherson of the Campbell County Sheriff's Office said 43-year-old Steven Edward Conklin died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound a little before noon Tuesday.
Standing near the scene on Gibson Road, Hutcherson said a friend came to talk to Conklin Monday night. He said Conklin got a rifle and wouldn't let the person leave.
Hutcherson said Conklin's wife reported her husband had been depressed.
Tuesday morning, while Conklin was sleeping, Hutcherson said the person got away from the house. He said the sheriff's office was notified of the situation at 8:40 a.m.
County deputies, tactical team members and others from the sheriff's department responded to the scene at 65 Gibson Road, a cul-de-sac with about a dozen houses. Gibson Road is off of Oliver Road, which turns off of Tardy Mountain Road.
Hutcherson said officers tried negotiating with Conklin on the telephone, but he'd hang up. Several times, Conklin came out of the small, white house as officers continued to try to bring a peaceful resolution to the situation. He'd then go back inside.
For a while Tuesday morning, Oliver Road was blocked off to all traffic, except emergency vehicles. Hutcherson said the department set up a perimeter around the house.
Hutcherson said a deputy saw smoke and reported Conklin had set fire to the house. At least six fire trucks and firefighters from Altavista and Evington responded to the scene. Hutcherson said the fire started in the bedrooms, melted plastic items in the house and caused smoke damage, but didn't do any structural damage.
The major said Conklin again came outside, this time sitting on the porch with a rifle at his chin. Again, he went inside and came back out.
Hutcherson said a deputy hit Conklin with an impact round, which is meant to stun a subject, giving officers an opportunity to grab him. Hutcherson said it's like a big rubber ball. It didn't phase him.
Hutcherson said Conklin asked officers if that was the best they had.
He then walked over and sat on the porch and shot himself. Hutcherson said he died from a single .30-30-caliber rifle shot to the head.
Finch & Finch Funeral and Cremation Service picked up the body about 1 p.m.
Hutcherson said nobody else was hurt in the incident.
The sheriff's department is continuing the investigation.
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