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Standoff ends as man apparently takes own life

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Article Text:

A 13-hour police standoff ended early Saturday after a man who locked himself inside a West 48th Street house in Cleveland shot and killed himself, police said.

Melvin Dennis, 28, of Cleveland, was found on the home's second floor.

The standoff started at 4:45 p.m. Friday when two bail bondsmen from ABC Bail Bond service went to the house after Dennis missed a court appearance. Police had arrested him several weeks ago for having a gun after a felony conviction. He was released from jail on a \$15,000 bond.

Jeff Walling, owner of the bail bond service, said his agents made at least 25 phone calls trying to get Dennis to go to court. When they went to his house, he slammed the door on them and said he had a gun and would kill himself. Police were called, and a SWAT team surrounded the house. Dennis' girlfriend and her three children were kept in the house but were allowed to leave at 10 p.m.

"The police told us that Dennis told them his father had committed suicide and he wanted to go out the same way," Walling said.

In the coming hours, Dennis spoke repeatedly with police. Occasional gunshots were heard from the house. When negotiators could no longer get a response from Dennis, police entered the house and found him dead.

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