



Kansas Bureau of Investigation

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Officer-involved shooting during hostage incident

CHEROKEE COUNTY – The Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) is investigating an officer-involved shooting that occurred during a barricade and hostage incident in Baxter Springs.

On Saturday, March 26, at approximately 7:15 p.m., officers from the Baxter Springs Police Department responded after a woman called 911 requesting help at 340 Wyandotte Ave. in Baxter Springs due to an ongoing domestic disturbance.

When responding officers arrived, they knocked on the door of the residence, which was a pull behind camping trailer. Eli Crawford, 37, of Baxter Springs, answered the door but after seeing it was police, slammed it back shut. The subjects' daughter, 2-year-old Clesslynn J. Crawford, then reopened the door and Taylor D. Shutte, 27, of Webb City, Missouri, ran outside. Crawford then stepped out and shot and killed Shutte. He also began shooting at the four responding officers.

The officers retreated to a safe distance without returning fire. Gunfire from Crawford continued. Additional law enforcement support arrived from the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office, and the Joplin Police Department's S.W.A.T. Team. The KBI and the Kansas Highway Patrol also responded.

During the incident Crawford is believed to have used several guns to fire over 90 rounds from the trailer at responding law enforcement officers. At approximately 9:25 p.m., a law enforcement officer fired one round into the camping trailer.

Officers approached the residence and located Eli Crawford deceased inside from a gunshot wound. Shutte and Clesslynn Crawford were also discovered deceased from fatal gunshot wounds. No law enforcement officers were injured during the incident.

The KBI will conduct a thorough and independent investigation into this shooting. Once completed the findings will be turned over to the Cherokee County Attorney for review.

Autopsies are scheduled. The investigation is ongoing.

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