



Sheriff Gary Simpson

Joint News Release:

Kitsap County Sheriff's Office

Bremerton Police Department



Chief Jim Burchett

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Officer involved shooting

Kitsap County Prosecutor's review and findings

PORT ORCHARD, Wash. -- Kitsap County Sheriff Gary Simpson and Bremerton Police Chief Jim Burchett are releasing information pertinent to the findings of the Kitsap County Prosecuting Attorney's review of an officer involved shooting critical incident that occurred May 15 in South Kitsap.

The law enforcement officers involved in the shooting were Bremerton Police Officer Christopher Faidley and Kitsap County Deputy Sheriff Paul Woodrum.

Kitsap County Prosecuting Attorney Tina Robinson issued her findings Nov. 19, following a review of the completed investigation. In summary, the findings report that "The officers' actions were lawful, justifiable and necessary."

The shooting stemmed from a domestic violence assault investigation, police pursuit and a felony assault situation that occurred that afternoon in the City of Port Orchard and in surrounding areas of unincorporated South Kitsap.

The police vehicle pursuit culminated with the officer involved shooting. The suspect driver, Fred Eugene Sowell, 72, stopped his SUV, exited the vehicle and pointed a handgun at Officer Chris Faidley and Deputy Paul Woodrum who both had tactically positioned their patrol vehicles.

The officers fired their weapons at Mr. Sowell in response to the suspect's deadly force actions. Following the shooting Mr. Sowell was transported by medic unit to St. Joseph Medical Center, Tacoma, for emergency medical treatment for his gunshot injuries.

Mr. Sowell, now age 73, was released from the medical center on Aug. 28 and booked into the Kitsap County Jail. He remains incarcerated in jail awaiting trial on charges of:

- Two counts of assault, 1st degree (deadly weapon)
- One count of assault, 4th degree (domestic violence)

His bail was set by the court at \$250,000.

The investigation was conducted by the Kitsap Critical Incident Response Team (KCIRT), a multi-agency investigative team with detectives from Kitsap County law enforcement agencies. The Washington State Patrol was the lead agency in this case.

Prosecuting Attorney Tina Robinson stated in her findings, “The use of force upon another is not unlawful whenever used by a party about to be injured or by another lawfully aiding him or her. RCW 9A.16.02(3). Additionally, the use of deadly force is justifiable when necessarily used by a peace officer to arrest or apprehend a person who has committed a felony, if the officer has probable cause to believe that if not apprehended, the suspect poses a threat of serious physical harm to the officer, or a threat of serious physical harm to others. RCW 9A.16.040(1)&(2).”

Bremerton Police Chief Jim Burchett remarked, “This case reinforces that fact that our society is blessed with men and women law enforcement officers who have a strong sense of duty and service to others and who are willing to place themselves in harm’s way to protect others.”

Sheriff Gary Simpson noted his thoughts as well. “Once finally stopped, the actions of this individual caused the pursuing officers to fire their weapons. Although seriously injured, the suspect survived. He was given several opportunities to comply and chose not to. Had he done so, the result would have been different.

“This is yet another event in our country where law enforcement officers are willing to step up to do a tough job, putting their lives on the line to defend the communities they serve. Unlike what has been occurring across our nation in recent months, these officers were not killed or injured. Because of these personal commitments, I am deeply humbled and appreciative of each deputy, officer and trooper who face these dangers every day. I am grateful for their courage and willingness to do this difficult job. I hope our citizens and communities are, too.”

Click here to read the Kitsap County Prosecuting Attorney’s memorandum on the case file review of the officer involved shooting: [OIS South Kitsap](#)

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