

## **South Dakota Highway Patrol Officer Involved Shooting Summary Detailing Events That Took Place on July 14, 2022**

On July 14, 2022, the South Dakota Highway Patrol (SDHP) requested that the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) investigate an officer involved shooting that occurred in Madison, S.D. James Lanpher shot at SDHP troopers multiple times during a vehicle pursuit. At the conclusion of a two county (Moody County and Lake County) pursuit, Lanpher pointed a rifle and fired it at troopers which resulted in the troopers returning fire at Lanpher. Lanpher was not struck by the troopers' shots. The following is a synopsis of the events that occurred on July 14, 2022, and the subsequent investigation that was conducted by the DCI.

### **SYNOPSIS**

On July 14, 2022, members of the Sioux Falls Area Drug Task Force (SFADTF) requested assistance from the South Dakota Highway Patrol for a traffic stop of a suspected drug trafficker coming back from the Pipestone, Minnesota, area. SFADTF told the SDHP the suspect vehicle would be coming into South Dakota somewhere near Flandreau, S.D. The SFADTF provided the license plate and vehicle description. The SFADTF advised the troopers they were looking for a Chrysler 300 being driven by James Lanpher. The troopers were advised that Lanpher would most likely run from the cops and was going to be armed.

The suspect vehicle is registered as a black Chrysler 300 bearing S.D. license plate of JIM JON. (It should be noted that law enforcement later learned the black Chrysler 300 had been painted a matte gray color.)

At about 1:50 P.M., a SDHP Trooper (Trooper #1) observed a gray Chrysler drive past their location at S.D. Highway 34 and Egan, S.D. Trooper #1 pulled out and got behind the vehicle, which was traveling west on Highway 34 west of Egan, S.D. Trooper #1 verified the license plate was correct. Trooper #1 identified two people as being in the Chrysler 300. Trooper #1 activated their emergency lights and attempted to conduct a traffic stop on the Chrysler 300. The suspect vehicle did not stop, and a pursuit was initiated by Trooper #1. Other SDHP units joined the pursuit as the vehicle traveled through Moody County. Speeds during this portion of the pursuit reached approximately 60 to 90 mph throughout multiple speed zones.

During the pursuit, Lanpher shot multiple rounds at Trooper #1 and others at a total of four (4) locations in Moody County. Lanpher was driving the vehicle while shooting at the SDHP Troopers. The four shooting events in Moody County took place south of Colman, S.D.

The pursuit continued and Lanpher entered the interstate from the Trent Exit and drove the wrong way until the Madison Exit. After exiting the interstate at the Madison Exit, Trooper #2 and Trooper #3 became the two lead patrol units in the pursuit. Lanpher continued driving west until he turned north through Colman, S.D., west on 234<sup>th</sup> Street to 469<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and then south to Highway 34. Lanpher drove west on Highway 34 and into Madison, S.D., in Lake County. The suspect vehicle was driving erratically and at high rates of speeds between 60 to 100 mph.

Lanpher approached the four-way stop at S.D. Hwy 34 and Washington Avenue and turned north onto Washington Avenue. Lanpher drove on the wrong side of the road before he turned west onto 1<sup>st</sup> Street Southeast. Lanpher continued west on 1<sup>st</sup> Street Southeast at a high rate of speed. Approximately one-half block from Main Street, Lanpher pointed a black rifle out the driver's side window backwards at Trooper #2, Trooper #3, and other SDHP units and shot numerous rounds.

Trooper #2 and Trooper #3 continued to pursue Lanpher to the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> Street Southwest and Ramm Heights. Lanpher turned north on Ramm Heights, and his vehicle came to a stop in the middle of the road just to the north of the intersection. As Trooper #2 and Trooper #3 turned north at the intersection, Lanpher was standing outside of his vehicle in the middle of the roadway pointing a black rifle at the troopers.

Lanpher fired four rounds from his rifle at Trooper #2 and Trooper #3. Trooper #2 returned fire and fired 11 rounds from their duty issued rifle. Trooper #2 fired through their windshield at Lanpher. Trooper #3 fired four rounds from their duty issued handgun while standing outside of their patrol vehicle. Lanpher dropped the rifle in the roadway and fled from the scene.

Lanpher fled to the west and was apprehended near a local business on the west side of Madison. Lanpher was arrested and taken to the Lake County Detention Center.

Bonner Juel was identified as the passenger in the vehicle. Juel was arrested and taken to the Lake County Detention Center.

## **SCENE INVESTIGATION**

The shooting scene investigation conducted by the DCI produced items of evidence that confirmed statements given by SDHP Troopers and video from in-car cameras.

Upon DCI Agents' arrival, the Chrysler 300 was parked up against the east curb. The driver's side passenger window was broken, and bullet holes were observed in the door frame.

DCI Agents documented that Trooper# 2 was wearing their South Dakota Highway Patrol issued uniform. Trooper #2's issued rifle was documented and inventoried as follows:

- Colt AR-15 Rifle containing 9 unspent rounds of .223 caliber ammunition (11 rounds short of full capacity).

DCI Agents documented Trooper #3 was wearing their South Dakota Highway Patrol issued uniform. Trooper #3's issued handgun was documented and inventoried as follows:

- Sig Sauer P226 40mm handgun containing 9 unspent rounds of ammunition (4 rounds short of full capacity).
- Two spare magazines containing 12 rounds each (full capacity).

A total of four spent .223 caliber casings were found, consistent with the area where Lanpher fired the rifle at Trooper #2 and Trooper #3.

A total of 11 spent .223 caliber casings were found, consistent with the area where Trooper #2 fired from their duty issued firearm. These casings were located inside Trooper #2's vehicle.

A total of four spent 40mm casings were found, consistent with the area where Trooper #3 fired from their duty issued firearm.

Madison Police Department officers conducted a neighborhood canvas of Ramm Heights. A house located on Ramm Heights was found to have been struck by bullets. One bullet was recovered from inside the home.

The Madison Police Department also processed and collected evidence on 1<sup>st</sup> Street Southeast approximately half a block from Main Street. A total of thirteen .223 casings fired by Lanpher were recovered.

During the interview with Juel, he admitted to throwing an "AK style gun" out of the vehicle along with a blue box. DCI and local law enforcement drove the pursuit route and were able to find the "AK style gun" and blue box. Both items were collected as evidence.

### **INTERVIEW: TROOPER #1**

On July 28, 2022, DCI agents conducted an interview with Trooper #1. Trooper #1 told us they were requested to assist in stopping a vehicle coming from Minnesota with a possible load of drugs. Trooper #1 said they observed the Chrysler 300 pass their location and they attempted to stop the vehicle, but the Chrysler 300 did not stop.

Trooper #1 remained the lead trooper for the majority of the time the pursuit was in Moody County. Trooper #1 was being shot at multiple times by Lanpher during this time. Trooper #1 feared for their life in that they would be struck by the gunfire.

### **INTERVIEW: TROOPER #2**

On July 19, 2022, DCI agents conducted an interview with Trooper #2. Trooper #2 said they became the lead trooper when the Chrysler 300 came out of Colman and traveled west on S.D. Highway 34. Trooper #2 stayed in the lead position throughout the pursuit until it terminated on Ramm Heights in Madison.

Trooper #2 confirmed they fired at Lanpher from their duty issued rifle. Trooper #2 said they shot from inside of their vehicle out through the windshield, as they feared for their life, the life of other troopers, and the lives of the public.

### **INTERVIEW: TROOPER #3**

On July 19, 2022, DCI agents conducted an interview with Trooper #3. Trooper #3 said they were the second trooper in line when the Chrysler 300 came out of Colman and traveled west on S.D. Highway 34. Trooper #3 stayed in the second position throughout the pursuit until it terminated on Ramm Heights in Madison.

Trooper #3 confirmed they fired at Lanpher from their duty issued handgun. Trooper #3 said they fired because they feared for their life, the life of other troopers, and the lives of the public.

### **INTERVIEW: JAMES LANPHER**

On June 14, 2022, DCI Agents attempted to conduct an interview with James Lanpher at the Lake County Detention Center. Lanpher was advised of his Miranda Rights. Lanpher did not provide any information to the Agents.

On June 15, 2022, Lanpher had requested to speak with law enforcement. DCI Agents attempted to conduct an interview with Lanpher at the Lake County Detention Center. Again, Lanpher did not provide any information to the Agents. Lanpher requested a deal before he would provide any information.

### **INTERVIEW: BONNER JUEL**

DCI agents conducted an interview with Bonner Juel at the Lake County Detention Center in Madison. Juel was advised of his Miranda Rights and talked with the agents. Juel told Agents he is a long-time friend of Lanpher but has not seen him in a few years. Juel admitted to being the passenger in the Chrysler 300 for the duration of the pursuit.

Juel admitted to smoking marijuana and methamphetamine with Lanpher leading up to the attempted traffic stop, pursuit, and shots being fired at the police.

Juel confirmed the Minnesota trip but denied meeting with anyone while there. Juel confirmed that Lanpher knew the SDHP was attempting to stop them. Juel indicated that Lanpher asked him to retrieve a gun from the floorboard by Lanpher's feet. Juel described the gun as a black "shorter AK style gun" that he thought was a 9mm. Juel indicated that Lanpher told him to throw this gun out of the window, along with a blue box. Juel was unsure where he did this.

After throwing the “AK style gun” out of the window, Juel indicated that Lanpher asked him to retrieve a second rifle from the back seat. Juel indicated that he did and said that this rifle was longer and was a bigger caliber rifle. Juel described the rifle as black with a drum magazine. Juel confirmed that the second rifle was the rifle that was found at the end of the pursuit. Juel admitted to providing Lanpher with the second rifle, knowing that Lanpher had already shot at law enforcement.

Juel indicated that during the pursuit, Lanpher asked him to shoot at law enforcement. Juel said that Lanpher stated, “Start capping rounds.” Juel denied shooting either gun or reloading rounds but did admit that his DNA/fingerprints would probably be on both guns as he gave them to Lanpher.

Juel indicated that he did not know how to get out of the vehicle during the pursuit. Juel said that Lanpher stated multiple times, “do or die” and Juel mentioned that he thought Lanpher was going to purposefully run into other cars during the pursuit.

Juel indicated that at the conclusion of the pursuit, Lanpher left the vehicle with the rifle, but that Juel did not see what happened. Juel indicated that he heard more shots being fired. Juel indicated that he gave himself up and was taken into custody.

### **VIDEO EVIDENCE**

Audio/video recordings from Trooper #1, Trooper #2, and Trooper #3 in-car cameras captured the incident. The video was reviewed and found to be consistent with the statements provided by the SDHP Troopers.

The video depicts multiple SDHP Troopers pursuing the Chrysler 300 in Moody and Lake Counties. Lanpher’s vehicle came to a stop in the middle of the road after he turned onto Ramm Heights from 1<sup>st</sup> Street Southwest. Lanpher is observed getting out of the driver’s side and pointing a black rifle at Trooper #2 and Trooper #3 who were parked at the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> Street Southwest and Ramm Heights. Lanpher is seen on video firing rounds at Trooper #2 and Trooper #3. Four shots are heard coming from Lanpher.

Trooper #2 fired 11 rounds from their duty issued rifle through their windshield at Lanpher. Trooper #3 fired four rounds from their duty issued handgun while standing outside their patrol vehicle. Lanpher is observed dropping the black rifle as he fled.

Lanpher is observed running to the west and goes out of view behind the row of houses.



**A still image from dashboard camera video from Trooper #2. In the video, Lanpher is seen exiting his vehicle and firing at Troopers #2 and #3.**



**Lanpher's black rifle lays on the road at Ramm Heights. DCI photo.**

### **FORENSIC EXAMINATION**

The South Dakota Forensic Laboratory (SDFL) tested the .223 caliber spent shell casings located on 1<sup>st</sup> Street Southeast in Madison. They also tested the spent casings located near the suspect's black rifle lying on the road at Ramm Heights. All spent casings were found to have been fired from Lanpher's .223 semi-automatic rifle.

The South Dakota Forensic Laboratory (SDFL) tested the 9mm spent shell casings located inside the Chrysler 300. All spent 9mm casings were found to have been fired from Lanpher's 9mm semi-automatic handgun style rifle that DCI and local law enforcement were able to find with a blue box along the pursuit route.

The South Dakota Forensic Laboratory (SDFL) tested the 11 rounds fired by Trooper #2. All 11 recovered casings were found to have been fired from Trooper #2's issued rifle.

The South Dakota Forensic Laboratory (SDFL) tested the four rounds fired by Trooper #3. All four recovered casings were found to have been fired from Trooper #3's issued handgun.

### **MEDICAL REPORTS AND CRIMINAL HISTORY**

A drug screen and blood alcohol test were conducted on Trooper #2 with negative results.

A drug screen and blood alcohol test were conducted on Trooper #3 with negative results.

A drug screen and blood alcohol test were conducted on Lanpher. The drug screen results showed positive for Methamphetamine and Cannabinoid. There was a negative result on the blood alcohol test.

A drug screen and blood alcohol test were conducted on Juel. The drug screen results showed positive for Methamphetamine and Cannabinoid. There was a negative result on the blood alcohol test.

A criminal background check of Lanpher showed a history of criminal offenses to include petty theft, possession of controlled substances, family domestic violence simple assault, obstructing a police officer, pimping (prostitution), DUI, aggravated eluding, aggravated assault on law enforcement, and aggravated assault. Lanpher is currently on parole.

A criminal background check of Juel showed a history of criminal offenses to include, burglary, petty theft, possession of marijuana, possession and distribution of controlled substance, and bond violation from domestic simple assault. Juel is currently on probation.

### **INVESTIGATION RESULTS**

Based on the totality of the circumstances, a reasonable officer present at the scene utilized deadly force in a situation that was tense, uncertain, and building. Trooper #2 and Trooper #3 responded to assist other SDHP Troopers with a vehicle pursuit where the suspect was firing at Troopers during and at the conclusion of the pursuit. Actions taken by Lanpher placed the public and law enforcement in jeopardy. Lanpher was a clear and present danger to the Troopers, other law enforcement, and the public. Trooper #2 and Trooper #3 believed they were in a situation in which Lanpher could inflict serious injury or death and responded with deadly force.

This information is based on the investigation conducted by the DCI, crime scene processing, law enforcement officers' statements and lab results. All the information is consistent with the described events that occurred on July 14, 2022, in Madison, S.D.

It is the conclusion of this report and the South Dakota Attorney General that Trooper #2 and Trooper #3 were justified in firing their duty weapons and using lethal force.