Police bullet to chest killed
Porterville man

Posted at 12:00 AM on Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2010
By Lewis Griswold / The Fresno Bee

A man shot by Porterville police died from a bullet to the chest, the Tulare County Coroner's Office said Tuesday.

Vincent Steen, 26, of Porterville, was hit by two bullets but only one shot was fatal, the Coroner's Office reported. The office also identified Steen as the victim, confirming the identification provided to reporters by Steen's friends a day earlier.

The Coroner's Office would not reveal where the second bullet hit Steen, but said it did not kill him.

But the details of what caused two officers to open fire Sunday evening remain a mystery.

The Tulare County District Attorney's Office, which is investigating the shooting death, said Tuesday that it could be two weeks or more before blood tests are ready and the final report is written. Only then will the District Attorney's Office rule on whether the shooting was justified and whether additional information will be made public, Assistant District Attorney Don Gallian said.

It's standard procedure for another agency to investigate an officer-involved shooting, Porterville Capt. Chris Dempsie said.

Steen died about 7:50 p.m. Sunday inside the home he shared with his mother, brother and sister in the 600 block of Oakmont Avenue. Friends said Steen has never been in trouble with the law, and a check of Tulare County Superior Court records showed only a couple of traffic tickets.

In a telephone interview Tuesday, Steen's mother, Cathy Connor, said she would not talk about what happened -- friends said she saw police shoot and kill her son -- but expressed gratitude for the deluge of condolences. "I would like to state that the outpouring of support from friends and family and the community and the neighborhood has been so supportive, and that's all I want to say at this point," Connor said.

According to Porterville police, Steen was riding a bicycle after dark when an officer pulled him over about 7:15 p.m. about two blocks from his house. After being asked for his identification, Steen assaulted the officer, police reported. A struggle took place, and then Steen ran for home, a police statement said. Police chased him inside, where another struggle erupted -- and ended when police opened fire, the police statement said.

Two officers were taken to the hospital for treatment of injuries. Both of them and a third officer have been placed on administrative leave.

Friends are still in shock over Steen's death, said Casey Parks of Porterville, who played with him on the Porterville Patriots semi-pro football team. "He really was a gentle giant,"
We all suffer loss of three biologists.

Parks said, noting that Steen was about 6-foot-3 and weighed about 265 pounds. “He’s way stronger than I am. He knew he could hurt someone -- he’d avoid confrontation.”

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JB_Parrothead wrote on January 14, 9:37 AM:
There is a very REAL, huge and continuously growing gang problem that exists in Porterville and both departments, Porterville Police Department and the Tulare County Sheriff's Department are completely impotent and incompetent in dealing with this problem. Which on some level seems to be frustrating to many of the officers on duty on any given night. Adrenaline runs high in these officers after the sun goes down and it seems that they have a tendency to go after the situations that present themselves where the officers know or think they can make an arrest without incident and/or have the upper hand.

Bicycle riders in Porterville are a big target of the PPD. You see them being pulled over and questioned by the police all the time. In the meantime, the gang problems, drug dealing and drive bys continue to grow, but it's as if there is a "hands off" policy in thwarting these incidences or solving them so these officers appear to frequently pursue the "easy" arrests.

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HaremScarem wrote on January 14, 8:46 AM:
JoeFriday, very well said. I agree with you 100%.

Recommend (1) Report abuse

JoeFriday wrote on January 13, 9:27 PM:
I thought I heard in the media that an outside agency is going to investigate the shooting. Did anyone else hear that too? In fact, PPD requested another agency to investigate to have a fair and unbiased finding.

I hope the officers are doing fine and I'm happy they are alive. I pray that Steen's family will have peace.

You don't win anything after a incident like this. You just get to keep what you have.

I'm sure those officers involved did not start their day hoping they would have to shoot someone. I wonder how many of you that shoot off at the mouth have been abused, harmed, illegally stopped

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http://www.fresnobee.com/local/story/1778713.html
and searched, beaten by the police? Anyone? Where does all this come from? All groups of people and professions have the 10%. 10% of the people cause 90% of the problems. The way some of you talk you would think that 90% of police are bad. I know that this is not true.

hikerdude1965 wrote on January 13, 7:49 PM:
jeelprado - I never said you hated the military. Nope, never did, check my posts. I'm not making an assumption about you hating the police either. You say it every time you make a post. I've read nearly all of them, and you can correct me if I'm wrong by reposting a positive one, but I don't recall EVER reading anything positive from you regarding law enforcement. It's always something negative and then you end it with, "If you don't like it quit." Or something to that effect.

HaremScarem wrote on January 13, 3:36 PM:
Lets get all the fact before we judge either of the parties. I respect the police and thank God for them but if misbehavior occurred then those involved should be prosecuted. On the other hand, why scuffle with the police in the first place? Many police officers are killed with their own weapon when it is taken from them and if this guy tried that then he should be shot. If this man was under the influence of some illegal drug then he could have overpowered six police officers. For those who hate the police then please do not call them when you are a victim of a crime. I find in my own life experience that those who hate the police are often people who have problems obeying the law in the first place. Hopefully in the coming weeks an independent investigation will clear this situation up.

rmchangin wrote on January 13, 11:29 AM:
First of all we are talking about Porterville pd, this department has been known for it's rogue cop problems for years. For some reason the community nor the city council really wants to address this issue. In the past the ones who have been shot or beat have been on the fringes of your community, drug addicts and petty criminals. So i guess the community thought it was OK. This time they started beating on the wrong person, Vince would never start fighting with anyone unless he was attacked first. Anyone who had the pleasure of making friends with Vince knows how bashful and reserved he was. Yes he was a large man, yes he was strong, but he was as gentle as a person could be. My heart goes out to his mom and dad and would like to let them both know they raised a wonderful person in Vince, are community WILL MISS VINCE. It's terrible a couple of ROGUE cops had to take him from us so early.

MaryWillis wrote on January 13, 10:43 AM:
The Willis family would like the Steen family to know you are in our thoughts and prayers. We know what you are going through. Our 23 year old son was murdered by Fresno Police March 28, 2009.

Figgig wrote on January 13, 10:34 AM:
"They had no knowledge if he was on meth or some other drug."

The same goes for the cops, are they on drugs too??????

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