



TO: WSHNA

FROM: Washoe County Sheriff's Office

DATE: March 15, 2022

RE: Distinguished Service Award Nomination for the Washoe County Sheriff's Office Hostage Negotiations Team

To Whom It May Concern:

On March 16, 2021, Washoe County Sheriff's Office Patrol Division was requested during a high-speed pursuit. The information received from Nevada Highway Patrol described a subject who was holding a firearm and at one point shot from the moving vehicle with the intent to hit a NHP Trooper. The pursuit moved from the highway throughout Washoe County and crossed over to Carson County, then into Carson City. The suspect vehicle a Dodge Ram was able to flee several times and loose law enforcement. The risk of public safety was apparent as units worked together to deploy stop sticks and successfully get a positive application. However, the suspect continued driving dangerously until he finally lost control and hit a power pole head on.

As resources arrived the contained suspect remained in his vehicle, our Washoe County Sheriff's Office Hostage Negotiations Team was requested immediately. Our primary negotiator and secondary were placed in a patrol vehicle with nothing more then a PA. The suspect sat in his truck with a pistol held to his head and the work began. The full team responded, and the scene unfolded. "Luna" his best friend a medium sized dog was held in the cab with him as the negotiator tried to create a rapport with the man in crisis.

Throughout the negotiations, Detective Brian Atkinson (primary negotiator) and Deputy Burfield (coach) were able to de-escalated the suspect. Topics ranged from his previous volunteer service with the Washoe County Sheriff's Office, the stressors of COVID and current politics. His emotions would fluctuate from screaming, to crying and then somber discussions. The duration of the negotiations over three hours closed a major intersection during rush hour, placed several civilians in harms way, but was concluded successfully with the art of negotiations. Upon conclusion the suspect surrendered and presented factors never presented to the team before.

The regional and specialized units working together for a successful resolution validated the importance of negotiations in the culture of law enforcement.





**Washoe County Sheriff's Office  
Hostage Negotiations Team  
After Action Report**

Reporting Negotiator: Brian Atkinson

W.C.S.O. Case#: **21-1157**

Outside Agency Case#: **CCSO21-1666**

**NHP 210301059**

Location: **N. Carson St. and Silver Oak Dr.**      Date: **March 16, 2021**      Time: **1548 - 2003**

Requesting Supervisor/Commander:      **Lt. Jones / Sgt. Durham**

On scene Hostage Commander:      **Lt. Mosley**

**Tactics and Equipment**

Surround and Call Out	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cell Phone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hostage Negotiation	<input type="checkbox"/>	L-RAD	<input type="checkbox"/>
Warrant Service:# _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Throw Phone Deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threat Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Patrol Vehicle Hail	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: Hail from SWAT Armor	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Associated Documentation**

Suspect Profile	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CDS Paperwork Completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scribe Log	<input type="checkbox"/>	Photo/Video (evidence.com)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Risk Management: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Search Warrant: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Resolution**

Negotiation/Surrender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Escape	<input type="checkbox"/>
Negotiation/Tactical Combination	<input type="checkbox"/>	Police withdrawal/Stand Down	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tactical Intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suicide/Attempted Suicide	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>



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**Roster and Assignments**

Brian Atkinson	<b>X653</b>	Primary			
Janet Hippert	<b>4C40</b>	Secondary and TL			
Courtney Appleton	<b>1J12</b>	Intel/Equip			
William Gibson	<b>4C6</b>	Intel/Equip			
Jackie Burfield	<b>1J16</b>	Secondary/Scribe			

**Coordinating/ Participating Agencies or Officers**

<b>Name – Agency/ Division/ Unit</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
WCSO / Patrol / Detectives	Pursuit / PIT / Scene
NHP / Patrol	Initial TS / Pursuit / Scene
Carson City SO	Pursuit / PIT / Scene
Carson City SO SWAT	Augment and replace WCSO SWAT
Carson City SO HNT	Augment and replace WCSO HNT

**Incident Summary**

At approximately 1549 hours, Washoe County Dispatch advised NHP had a failure to yield; described as a red Dodge pickup truck, last seen north of Bowers Mansion on I580. Washoe County Dispatch also advised the fleeing suspect had attempted to ram his vehicle into the NHP Trooper, while holding a gun to his own head.



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**Mission Details**

On March 16, 2021, after completing WCSO HNT training, a team activation was made to assist with a despondent subject. This subject was involved in a pursuit involving NHP, WCSO Patrol, and ultimately Carson City Sheriff's Office. The subject was in Washoe Valley when he observed a NHP Trooper and began to drive directly at the Trooper with a handgun to his head. The subject then fled from the Trooper. NHP requested an Attempt to Locate (ATL) and WCSO dispatched a couple patrol units to the area to assist in locating the vehicle and subject.

The subject was located by uninvolved parties as he was stopped on the highway, standing outside his vehicle with a handgun to his head. WCSO Deputies attempted to gain a position of advantage watching the suspect while keeping other motorists away. During this period the suspect entered his vehicle and fled the area. A pursuit ensued involving WCSO and NHP throughout the Washoe Valley area. During this pursuit the suspect was speeding throughout a residential neighborhood without regard for the safety of the public or anyone involved in the pursuit.

The suspect was able to gain access to US395 and began traveling southbound towards Carson City. The Carson City Sheriff's Office (CCSO) was notified and they aided by blocking off on / off ramps and attempted to Stop Stick the suspect vehicle, along with WCSO and NHP. Ultimately, three of the four tires were punctured causing the speeds of the pursuit to dramatically decrease.

Once the vehicle entered Carson City, and was approaching Silver Oak Drive, WCSO Deputy Decarli initiated a Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT) maneuver. The PIT successfully disabled the vehicle and pinned it against a power pole, while a WCSO and CCSO marked patrol vehicles blocked the suspect vehicle from fleeing.

WCSO SWAT and HNT were already responding to aid in the rapidly unfolding situation, which had now turned into a armed barricaded subject.

The subject, identified as Eugene Kenneth Griffin, was the sole occupant of the vehicle and had his dog "Luna" in the vehicle with him. Mr. Griffin was emotionally upset, ranging from angry and sad, despondent and depressed, to seeking help and scared. Throughout the negotiation with Mr. Griffin, he was allowed to voice / vent his frustration with law enforcement and ultimately build rapport through conversation. The negotiation was conducted primarily as a "Face to Face" with me sitting in a WCSO patrol vehicle and from time to time using the Public Address (PA) system to communicate. Several times throughout the negotiation Mr. Griffin would bring his hands into the vehicle and after each time of me asking him to place his hands back out the window, he would do so.

Mr. Griffin was animated at times stating that I did not understand what he was going through. Mr. Griffin referenced an on-going dispute with someone identified as Jason Osborne (sp).

Mr. Griffin described a brother who is a firefighter in Orlando, Florida, unknown name.



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He also described his significant other of thirty years as Kelly Osborne and requested to have her brought to the scene so he could speak with her. Ms. Osborne appeared to be a trigger and fearing Mr. Griffin would commit suicide I felt it best to have an attempt be made to locate her for an interview, but not have her on scene, or even possibly make a Third Party Intermediary (TPI).

Mr. Griffin stated several times that he was not going to harm us but wanted to know why we were pointing guns at him. I explained to him that his actions involving the pursuit and that he was armed the SWAT Team was there for the safety of all. It should be noted that many of the weapon systems aimed at or in the direction of Mr. Griffin were classified as Less Lethal munition delivery systems. These systems included, a Police Service Dog (PSD / K9), Pepper Ball launchers, 40MM launchers, and Taser's. There was dedicated lethal cover providing overwatch in the event that Mr. Griffin suddenly began shooting his weapon.

Throughout the negotiation, Mr. Griffin referenced former WCSO Sheriff Vince Swinney and his son, Darren. This was a hook for Mr. Griffin as they were friends when they were younger. Mr. Griffin seemed to have a lot of respect for Darren and when he would start to go off on a tangent, I would bring up Darren and Mr. Griffin would calm down and sometimes cry.

I asked Mr. Griffin several times to attempt to open his door and he did, however, the door was jammed shut due to the crash.

Another "hook" I found was that Mr. Griffin was a past member of the Washoe County Sheriff's Office Jeep Squadron. Mr. Griffin had a passion for his past Land Cruiser and described it in detail.

After approximately 2 hours of negotiations with Mr. Griffin, a transition with the Carson City Sheriff's Office was conducted. I introduced the CCSO negotiator and left the immediate scene. Approximately 10 minutes later, I was told that Mr. Griffin had exited his vehicle peacefully surrendering.

A handgun was located within the cab of the truck and at times Mr. Griffin would mention the weapon was sitting in his lap or between his legs.

**Additional Notes/ Comments**

Equipment – Having a marine boat hailer would have been very beneficial on this call, while WCSO HNT has on and uses it very infrequently, this would have been the most useful tool on this armed barricaded subject call. The hailer would have allowed for a better dialogue between the subject and negotiator.