



USE OF FORCE INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

DATE OF INCIDENT: 11/13/24

INVOLVED PERSON: Gabriel Pope

INVOLVED BPD OFFICER: Cpl. Steve Martinez

OIA: 24-0072

DATE OF REPORT: 11/07/25

CASE SYNOPSIS

On November 13, 2024, Boise Police Department (BPD) Officer Sigler stopped a car for displaying a fictitious license plate. A person sitting in the backseat, later identified as Gabriel Pope (age 22), engaged in suspicious behavior, raising concerns he might have a warrant and/or a weapon. When ordered to exit the vehicle, he refused, pulled out a pocketknife, and held it to his throat. Officers directed the other occupants to exit, and Mr. Pope fled.

Officers briefly pursued Mr. Pope on foot, but lost sight of him after a few seconds. Additional officers responded to the area to assist in locating Mr. Pope.

Approximately 35 minutes later, Cpl. Martinez saw Mr. Pope exiting a residential backyard. Mr. Pope was bloody and holding a knife. Cpl. Martinez gave commands for Mr. Pope to stop and to get on the ground. Mr. Pope ignored the commands and rapidly moved towards Cpl. Martinez while pointing the knife at him. When Mr. Pope was approximately 12-14 feet away and still advancing, Cpl. Martinez fired 3 rounds from his department issued pistol, striking Mr. Pope. Mr. Pope fell to the ground, was taken into custody, and provided medical care at the scene. Mr. Pope survived his wounds.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

On November 13, 2024, at approximately 3:05 pm, BPD Officer Sigler stopped a car near Division and Howe Streets for displaying a fictitious license plate. The car was occupied by three people, including a passenger in the backseat who was not wearing his seatbelt. The officer noticed the backseat passenger, later identified as Gabriel Pope, had pulled his hoodie over his face and initially pretended to be asleep. Mr. Pope would not provide an ID or verbally identify himself so the officer could give him a citation. Later in the interaction he provided a false name. When Ofc. Sigler asked him to step outside the car, Mr. Pope began reaching under his jacket on his right side. Ofc. Sigler ordered him to stop reaching and to roll down his window. Mr. Pope stated, "aren't taking me out of the car homie." In response to Mr. Pope

continuing to reach into his right side, Ofc. Sigler drew his pistol and asked Mr. Pope what he was doing. Mr. Pope responded multiple times, "shoot me." Ofc. Sigler used his radio to call for immediate assistance from other officers. The traffic stop had been ongoing for approximately 10 minutes at this point.

While still seated in the backseat, Mr. Pope produced a large folding knife and stabbed himself in the neck. Officer Sigler and another officer removed the other occupants from the car and moved back to create distance from Mr. Pope. As they did so Mr. Pope got out the car and ran down the street. Officers engaged in a brief foot pursuit, but lost Mr. Pope after he entered a large fenced industrial yard containing assorted vehicles, equipment, and outbuildings.

Responding officers began establishing a perimeter around the industrial yard. Other officers began forming an arrest team and gathering additional resources. They launched a drone to search for the suspect and called for a K9 to assist. Because officers were unable to locate him in the industrial yard, they determined that Mr. Pope may have left the area before the perimeter was fully in place.

Officers interviewed the other occupants of the car. They reported that Mr. Pope was possibly suicidal and attempting "suicide by cop." Ofc. Sigler reported this over the radio at approximately 3:22 pm.

At 3:37 pm, a person called 911 and reported a man with a bloody wound to his neck approached him and asked to use their phone. The man asked them not to call the police. The 911 caller was in the 2000 block of Division Street, approximately ½ mile from the traffic stop location. Approaching officers saw Mr. Pope running away. Another civilian pointed officers towards a residential fence that Mr. Pope climbed over as he fled.

At approximately 3:40 pm, Cpl. Martinez saw Mr. Pope exit through a backyard gate into the front yard of a residence. Cpl. Martinez got out of his patrol car and stepped past a parked car and onto the sidewalk in front of the residence. Mr. Pope was approximately 60-80 feet away. Cpl. Martinez could see that Mr. Pope had a bloody knife in his right hand. He was pointing the knife at Cpl. Martinez as he rapidly walked towards the officer with an aggressive gait. Cpl. Martinez gave several loud commands including, "Boise Police," "Stop right there," and "Do not move." Mr. Pope responded, "Fuck you," as he continued to advance towards Cpl. Martinez with the knife extended in front of him towards the officer. When Mr. Pope was approximately 12-14 feet away and continuing to advance, Cpl. Martinez fired 3 shots, striking Mr. Pope in the chest and groin. Mr. Pope fell to the ground but continued to hold the knife. Other officers

arrived within seconds and took Mr. Pope into custody. Officers provided on-scene medical care while waiting for emergency medical personnel to arrive.

Mr. Pope survived his wounds. He was later convicted of felony Aggravated Assault on Certain Personnel (law enforcement) and Use of a Deadly Weapon in the Commission of a Felony. The ensuing Critical Incident Task Force (CITF) investigation determined that Mr. Pope had an outstanding felony warrant for his arrest at the time of this incident. The arrest warrant was issued in Twin Falls County, Idaho charging him with Grand Theft by Possession of Stolen Property (firearms).

SCOPE OF REVIEW

Boise City Code Title 2, Chapter 10 defines the authority and duties of the Office of Police Accountability (OPA). As the City's police oversight entity, the OPA is authorized to investigate and evaluate the conduct of Boise City police officers involved in critical incidents. Critical incidents include the use of force or any other police or law enforcement action that results in the death of one or more persons, or serious bodily injury requiring hospital admission. OPA is also authorized to make BPD policy, procedure, practice, and training recommendations to the Mayor, the City Council, and the Chief of Police.

BOISE POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY

A. 300- Use of Force

INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS

A. CRITICAL INCIDENT TASK FORCE FINDINGS:

After the officer involved shooting incident, the Ada County Critical Incident Task Force (CITF) was activated, led by the Garden City Police Department. The CITF conducted a forensic investigation of the scene, interviewed witnesses, interviewed the involved officer, collected dispatch records and audio/video evidence, and produced numerous reports. The investigation was detailed and thorough.

The Gem County Prosecuting Attorney reviewed the CITF investigation and determined that Cpl. Martinez's use of deadly force against Mr. Pope was reasonable and justified under Idaho law.

B. BOISE POLICE DEPARTMENT FINDINGS:

BPD conducted a thorough administrative review of this critical incident, which included reviewing the CITF investigation in its entirety and administrative interviews with the involved officer. BPD's administrative review found the following:

Use of Deadly Force by Cpl. Martinez

Cpl. Martinez's use of deadly force against Mr. Pope was objectively reasonable, within policy, and consistent with BPD training. BPD noted that Cpl. Martinez clearly perceived an imminent deadly threat from the suspect.

Traffic Stop

The officer's handling of the traffic stop was well done. When the stop escalated into an armed confrontation inside the vehicle, the officers intervened to remove the innocent occupants, thereby preventing injury or a possible hostage situation.

Supervisory Considerations

Several responding officers were either supervisors or acting supervisors during this incident. Some of the supervisors took an active role in organizing BPD's response and others did not.

BPD noted that an acting sergeant promptly took command of the incident, coordinated responding officers, gathered key information, and initiated a public safety alert, while a corporal provided critical supervisory support by managing resources, communicating updates, and directing units to the suspect's location.

BPD noted deficiencies in supervisory actions including:

- Not ensuring the perimeter was completely contained.
- Not communicating vital information to incoming officers.
- Not delegating tasks to other supervisors or officers.
- Not proactively assisting the incident commander with certain tasks including establishing the perimeter, information gathering and dissemination, and resource allocation.

Communication

Vital information was not communicated by supervisors to incoming officers:

- One of the initial officers at the traffic stop interviewed occupants of the car and learned that the suspect was "likely to commit suicide by cop and will kill himself if we approach him." The officer correctly reported this information over the radio. However, supervisors did not repeat these specific details to inform officers responding throughout the remainder of the event.
- The crimes committed by the suspect were not clearly identified and communicated to incoming officers: resisting and obstructing officers (by providing false information) and fleeing the traffic stop, both misdemeanors. If it had been communicated that the offenses involved were not serious felonies,

the tempo could have been slowed down to allow for a more coordinated approach, minimizing the likelihood of a single officer encountering a suicidal suspect. A slower, more coordinated response more closely aligns with BPD Policy 300.14 – Use of Force Decision Making Model.

- It should have been communicated that the suspect had not threatened anyone in the public other than himself. The 911 caller did not report that the suspect had threatened them. The citizen reported that the suspect had been stabbed in the throat and asked that the police not be called. Not communicating these facts likely led to a sense of urgency to locate the suspect because of a perceived threat to the community.

Cover

The lapse in communications noted above likely contributed to Cpl. Martinez's decision to bypass a position of cover (parked car) when confronting the suspect. Cpl. Martinez believed the suspect would likely run and he wanted to be in a better position to give chase because of the threat to the community he perceived. Had he utilized the car as a barrier, it may have provided additional time and options. Likewise, Cpl. Martinez was an acting Sergeant that day. He missed an opportunity to act in a supervisory role (rather than actively searching for the suspect himself), likely due to the sense of urgency caused by communication issues noted above.

C. OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY FINDINGS:

BPD's findings regarding this incident were detailed and thorough. OPA concurs with BPD's findings regarding the actions of BPD personnel, deficiencies in communications, and supervisory concerns.

In addition to the detailed description of the incident and BPD findings above, OPA makes the following findings:

Communications and Supervisory Concerns

When Mr. Pope fled the traffic stop, BPD supervisors immediately began forming a perimeter to contain him inside the fenced industrial yard. BPD launched a drone to look for him and called for a K9 to assist in locating him. BPD began forming an arrest team, including designated less-lethal capability. These actions demonstrate BPD's effort to contain, slow down, and de-escalate the initial situation. Rather than hiding inside the industrial yard, Mr. Pope evidently continued to flee and made it out before the perimeter was fully established.

A communication gap followed during the next 22 minutes wherein communications occurred, but some vital information was missing. OPA noted early communications

wherein supervisors sought to identify the nature of the threat and what crimes had been committed. However, this information was not then placed into context and succinctly repeated to officers joining later in the incident.

As BPD's findings noted, this communication gap contributed to a sense of urgency to immediately locate Mr. Pope because of a perceived threat to the community at large. The reality was that Mr. Pope was a threat to himself but there was no evidence of a threat to the community generally. By providing a false name and fleeing the traffic stop, he had committed misdemeanor crimes, not serious felonies. Lacking this context, officers had a sense of urgency to locate Mr. Pope based on their belief that he presented an immediate threat to the community.

Supervisors missed an opportunity to gather, contextualize, and disseminate important facts. Given accurate context, supervisors could have organized a slower, more methodical approach to locate Mr. Pope. Such an approach would not guarantee a different outcome but could enhance officer safety and maximize opportunities for a safe resolution.

Shooting Incident

When Cpl. Martinez encountered Mr. Pope, they were approximately 60-80 feet apart. Cpl. Martinez was in police uniform and operating a marked police vehicle. He gave clear commands ordering Mr. Pope to stop and get on the ground. Despite this, Mr. Pope rapidly aggressed while ignoring additional commands and pointing a large knife at the officer. Cpl. Martinez fired when Mr. Pope was only 12-14 feet away and closing. Given these facts, Cpl. Martinez was in imminent danger of death or serious injury when he fired. His use of deadly force was reasonable and compliant with law and policy.

Deploying a taser was not a viable option given the nature of the threat and the fact that Cpl. Martinez was alone. A taser would likely have been ineffective anyway, due to the heavy clothing Mr. Pope was wearing.

POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTING FACTORS AND MITIGATION EFFORTS

Prior to this incident, Mr. Pope had a history of substance use and criminal conduct. Those known to him also indicated that he was living with mental health issues, including suicidality.

In an interview with CITF investigators, Mr. Pope said he was high on methamphetamine during this incident, having ingested approximately 3.5 grams in the prior few hours. Medical evidence confirms that Mr. Pope had methamphetamine and ketamine in his blood stream at the time.

Mr. Pope was recently sentenced to a 10-year prison sentence in this case. During the sentencing hearing, his attorney identified challenges to Mr. Pope's mental health and severe substance abuse as factors that influenced Mr. Pope's behavior. Undoubtedly, substance abuse and mental health problems were contributing factors in this case.

BPD's response to the incident was rapid and appropriate. The officers who conducted the traffic stop quickly and decisively moved the driver and front seat passenger to safety when Mr. Pope produced a knife. Supervisors requested relevant information and coordinated the actions of incoming units. They set up a perimeter, requested additional resources, launched a drone, deployed a K9, and utilized other de-escalation protocols consistent with BPD's training and policy.

While OPA noted opportunities for improvement in communications and supervisory engagement, these factors did not contribute to the ultimate outcome. Mr. Pope's decision to ignore commands and aggressively advance on the officer with a knife created the necessity to use force in this incident.

RECOMMENDATIONS

OPA concurs with BPD's recommendation to reinforce to supervisors and acting supervisors that they should continually evaluate their roles at incidents and seek opportunities to step back from operational roles and into command-and-control duties.

OPA further recommends that BPD continue to prioritize and emphasize de-escalation methodologies and critical thinking in its response to active incidents in training and briefings.

Finally, OPA recommends that training continue to prioritize effective communication, designation of roles, planning for contingencies, utilizing all available resources, and actively seeking resolutions that ensure public and officer safety while minimizing the need to use force whenever feasible.

OPA commends BPD for its thorough review, critical analysis, and ongoing efforts to enhance supervisory development and engagement at all levels.

LINK TO DOCUMENTS

The Critical Incident Task Force report, the officer body-worn camera video, and BPD news releases of this critical incident may be viewed at:

<https://www.cityofboise.org/departments/police/critical-incidents/> under "2024Critical Incidents" and "November 13, 2024."

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