

**ATTORNEY GENERAL'S REPORT ON THE DEATHS OF LESTER SNIDE AND
CLIFFORD PURSELL-SPRINGFIELD, N.H.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Office of the Attorney General, New Hampshire State Police and the Springfield Police Department conducted an investigation into the discovery of the bodies of Clifford "Tom" Pursell (age 19) and Lester Snide (age 23), who were located in Springfield, New Hampshire on April 19, 2012.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the Attorney General's findings and conclusions with regard to the incident. The findings and conclusions contained in this report are based on information gathered during the investigation.

II. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

On April 19, 2012, Sergeant Michael Beaulieu of the Springfield Police Department was called by J. B., a juvenile male from Springfield, New Hampshire. J.B. stated that he had been walking down a trail on the property of 272 Four Corners Road in Springfield. While walking down the trail, which he had not been down before, he noticed a lot of flies around a shed. He also smelled a foul odor. When he went to explore what the smell was coming from, he entered the shed and from his vantage point, he was only able to see boots on the ground. He immediately tried to call Sergeant Beaulieu, but the call did not go through. J.B. walked to the main road where he ran into his step-father. His step-father was accompanied by his friend. J.B. told his step-father what he had found. J.B.'s step-father's friend went to the shed to confirm what J.B. had seen. Sergeant Beaulieu was called and notified of what was found. He called the Grantham Police Department for backup.

Sergeant Beaulieu reported that J.B. told him he was walking with a family friend on the trail by the shed and while approaching the shed, they noticed swarms of flies. After opening the door to the shed, J.B. saw a dead body. Sergeant Beaulieu and Officer Smith, from Grantham Police Department, entered the shed and found two deceased individuals in the shed. Sergeant Beaulieu also noticed there appeared to be two notes lying on the stove top in the shed.

In a later interview, J.B. acknowledged that he knew Lester Snide. Further, he stated that the clothes that one of the deceased was wearing were consistent with Snide's clothing. J.B. was also aware of comments that Snide had made about committing suicide in the past. He stated that Snide had talked Pursell out of committing suicide in the past. After this interaction, Snide and Pursell became good friends. Snide and Pursell planned to drive to Montana together. J.B. stated that Snide had made the comment that if he was ever to have to go back to jail, he would kill himself. J.B. was also aware that Snide used drugs and drank alcohol. Finally, J.B. stated that he did not see another body in the cabin, but had been told by Sergeant Beaulieu that there was one.

Information was sought about Snide's probation and parole status from the New Hampshire Department of Corrections. Snide was placed on parole on October 31, 2011, resulting from a theft by unauthorized taking conviction. Records indicate that Snide's probation parole officer spoke with Snide's mother on December 19, 2011 and requested that Snide report for an office visit on December 21, 2011. Snide's mother stated she had not seen her son since December 13, 2011 and was unsure of his whereabouts.

A missing person report was filed with the Springfield Police Department on February 5, 2012 for Clifford Pursell. The report was filed by Pursell's mother Sandra. Sandra stated in the missing person report that she had not heard from her son since early December of 2011. The Springfield Police Department confirmed that Pursell was living with his friend, Kameron Marshall in Springfield at the time of his disappearance.

On February 5, 2012, Denise Mason, Kameron Marshall's mother, was contacted in regards to the missing person's investigation. Mason stated they had not heard from either of the men. Mason indicated that Pursell had met a girl online and was planning on moving to Montana to be with her. She told the police that she believed that Pursell and his friend, Lester Snide, had taken the bus a few days before Christmas. She also stated that the woman from Montana had not seen them either. ¹

In an interview on February 16, 2012, Mason stated she thought that Snide and Pursell might be dead in the woods. She knew that Pursell was depressed about not getting into the army and that Snide was probably going back to jail. She thought it was odd that Pursell had given all of his Airsoft equipment to her son.

On March 23, 2012, Mason reported to the Springfield Police Department that a black .22 long rifle was missing from their home.² In an interview with the New Hampshire State Police, Mason stated that Pursell and Snide both knew of the firearm and where it was located. The last time Mason saw either of the men was at her home in mid-December. She

¹ Clifford Pursell's friend in Montana was later identified as Kelley Bradshaw of Bozeman, Montana.

² A Mossberg Model 702 .22 caliber rifle was located in the shed.

stated by the time she got home from work that day, they were both gone. Kameron later told her that Pursell had called and stated he was going to stay with Snide for a few days.

Kameron Marshall was interviewed as part of this investigation. He indicated that he had lived with both Pursell and Snide at his mother's home in Springfield, New Hampshire. He was also able to confirm that both Snide and Pursell had discussed suicide at different points in the past. Even though these suggestions had been previously made, he was shocked to find out that they had been found dead. Marshall suspected that when Pursell did not return to his mother's home, he had followed through with his plan to move to Montana.

Kelley Bradshaw was interviewed as part of the missing person investigation. On February 13, 2012, she stated that she wanted to send Pursell money and a bus ticket to visit her, but he got very upset when she suggested this. During a follow up interview on February 16, 2012, she stated that the last time she spoke with Pursell, he said he was going to spend time with Snide. Ms. Bradshaw also indicated that Pursell had discussed suicide in the past.

Jeanie Abair was interviewed as part of the investigation. Ms. Abair indicated that she was Snide's most recent girlfriend. She stated that he had made reference that if he had to go back to prison, he would kill himself. The last time that Ms. Abair saw or spoke to Snide was on December 8th. She stated that on December 8th, Snide was with Pursell. She also indicated that Snide may have been a little depressed the last time she saw him.

Lester Snide's foster parents, Steve and Daphne Klein, were interviewed during the course of this investigation. Snide's foster parents indicated that the last time that they had seen Snide was on December 13, 2011. On that day, he was at their home with Clifford

Pursell. The Klein's also gave some insight into Snide's mental health history, which included a past suicide attempt.

Clifford Pursell's mother, Sandra Pursell, was interviewed during the course of the investigation. She stated that Clifford had been depressed because he was not going to be able to join the army due to medical reasons. Joining the army had been a dream of Pursell's for some time.

Documentation was obtained from Facebook. Snide's Facebook page showed that his last activity was on December 16, 2011.

As referenced above, two notes were found in the shed. In Pursell's suicide note, he indicated, "Lester didn't murder me I asked him to do it." In Snide's suicide note, he indicated, "It's too hard and I'm F***ked in the head." Snide's note was titled, "This is my final goodbye".

III. AUTOPSY:

Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Thomas A. Andrew conducted autopsies on both Clifford Pursell and Lester Snide. He determined that Clifford Pursell's cause of death was a gunshot wound to the head. His manner of death was undetermined. Dr. Andrew determined that Lester Snide died from a gunshot wound to the head. His manner of death was ruled a suicide. Toxicology showed the presence of alcohol in both men.

IV. CONCLUSION

Lester Snide and Clifford Pursell were friends at the time of their deaths. Both had struggled with the thoughts of suicide in the past. Snide was having difficulties while on parole and had stated many times that he would kill himself before he ever went back to prison. Pursell had recently learned discouraging news about life plans and was taking it hard. Due to the circumstances at the time in their lives, these two individuals choose to enter into a suicide pact and prematurely end their lives. Based on the evidence, it is possible that Lester Snide killed Clifford Pursell and then took his own life. Regardless, since both involved are dead, no criminal charges will be forthcoming in connection with the deaths of Clifford Pursell and Lester Snide and this case will be closed.