



Lower Township Police Department

405 Breakwater Road
Erma, NJ 08204
609-886-1619

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DOMESTIC LEADS TO OFFICER INVOLVED IN SHOOTING IN LOWER TOWNSHIP

On July 26th at approximately 1:30 a.m., the Lower Township Police Department received a 9-11 call from a resident in the 100 Block of West Bates Avenue in the Villas Section of Lower Township reporting a disturbance at her neighbor's residence with a possible domestic or fight in progress with the sound of glass breaking.

Patrol Officer Ryan Hansberry and Special Officer Michael James responded to the call.

Upon arriving at the residence, the Officers were met by two men running from the side yard of the residence yelling, "**Watch out I think he has a gun.**"

The two men were being chased by a subject later identified as Steven Casper, age 40 of Deptford, New Jersey. Casper was carrying a large four by four wooden post.

Officer Hansberry immediately drew his service weapon while S/O James withdrew his pepper mace. The Officers then identified themselves as Police Officers and repeatedly yelled in a loud voice for Casper to drop the 4 X 4.

Casper then cursed at the Officers stating that it would take more than two of them to stop him.

At that point, Casper swung the four by four at the Officers two times, causing them to back up.

Casper then turned his attention to his 36 year old girlfriend who had also come out of the house and attempted to strike her in the head with the four by four.

At this time, Officer Hansberry discharged one round from his 45 caliber semi-automatic service weapon at Casper while S/O James simultaneously discharged pepper mace at Casper. Casper then immediately dropped to the ground dropping the 4 X 4.

Casper's face was bloody and bruised and the Officers believed he had been struck by gunfire from Officer Hansberry.

The Officers then radioed in to the Police Communications Center, "Shots fired, suspect down" and requested an immediate response from the Lower Township Rescue Squad and Para-medics.



Lower Township Police Department

405 Breakwater Road
Erma, NJ 08204
609-886-1619

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

When the Lower Township Rescue Squad was able to clean the blood from Casper's face, they determined that he was bleeding from the previous altercation with the two males he had been struggling with prior to the arrival of Police Officers. He was also suffering from the effects of pepper mace, however Casper had not been shot.

Sergeant Thomas Beeby was the first supervisor to arrive on scene. Sergeant Beeby notified Lower Township Police Department Command Staff Personnel, who immediately notified the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office of the incident.

The crime scene was then secured and processed by the Lower Township Detective Division. Lower Township Police Chief Edward Donohue requested a light truck from the Villas Fire Department to illuminate the crime scene while the investigation was being conducted.

Chief Donohue also placed both Officers on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation and also arranged for the Officers to receive Crisis Counseling back at the police department.

The two male subjects who were seen fleeing the residence, were identified as Matthew Bland, 23 years old and David Williams, 19 years old, both of the Villas.

Officers determined that Bland and Williams gave Casper's girlfriend a ride home from a party at approximately 1:30 a.m. and dropped her off at her grandparents' residence on Bates Avenue. While returning to their vehicle, the men heard the female begin to scream. They then ran back to the house and stated that they observed Casper assaulting his girlfriend inside of the residence. Bland and Williams then began to yell at Casper to leave his girlfriend alone, however Casper continued to assault her. After breaking a window in an attempt to gain entrance to the residence, the men entered the residence through a rear door and became involved in a heated, physical altercation with Casper, with all parties throwing numerous punches at each other.

Casper was then able to grab the 4 X 4 post that he had in the residence and chased Bland and Williams outside where he was met by the Police Officers.

Investigation on scene determined that the projectile from Officer Hansberry's service weapon narrowly missed Casper and passed through the kitchen window of the residence, traveled across the kitchen where it passed through an interior window leading into a rear porch area before it impacted into a stereo.

Lower Township Detectives requested and received a search warrant to enter the premises to retrieve the spent round or any other evidence related to the incident.



Lower Township Police Department

405 Breakwater Road
Erma, NJ 08204
609-886-1619

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chief Edward Donohue stated that the Lower Township Police Department will conduct an Internal Affairs investigation into the facts surrounding the Officer involved shooting along with the assistance of the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office.

Donohue stated the use of deadly force is justified to prevent serious bodily injury or death to Police Officers while acting in the performance of their duties or to prevent serious bodily injury or death of an innocent third party.

"All information available to us at this time indicates that Officer Hansberry was following those guidelines when he discharged his firearm in order to prevent Casper from continuing his attack on the Police Officers and his girlfriend with the 4 X 4 post", Donohue said.

Steven Casper was transported by Lower Township Rescue Squad to Cape Regional Medical Center for treatment of injuries sustained while involved with the altercation with Bland and Williams after which, he was logged in the Cape May County Jail. All the following charges from the Lower Township Police Department with bail set at \$50,000 Cash by Lower Township Municipal Court Judge David DeWeese.

- **One count of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon during the course of a domestic violence incident.**
- **One count of possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose.**
- **One count of aggravated assault on a police officer with a deadly weapon.**

The investigation is ongoing and is being conducted by the Lower Township Detective Division and the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office Major Crimes Unit.