

Officers recount CdA police shooting, manhunt for suspect

Scott Maben/SR

Police officers testified Wednesday about the stressful and emotional moments after they found Coeur d'Alene Police Sgt. Greg Moore sprawled on a street, bleeding and unresponsive, and how they tried to save his life.

Others described the manhunt for Moore's shooter and how they apprehended the suspect hiding under a semi-truck trailer, with a police dog latched onto one arm and a stolen gun handgun within the man's reach.



First District Senior Magistrate Barry Watson listened to the witnesses during the first day of Jonathan Daniel Renfro's preliminary hearing in the May 5 shooting death of Moore. Watson will determine if prosecutors have sufficient evidence for Renfro, 27, to proceed to trial on first-degree murder and other felony charges.

Moore, 43, was on patrol alone when he stopped in a quiet neighborhood a mile northwest of Lake City High School to check on a suspicious person about 1:20 a.m. He spoke with the man and ran his identification through police dispatch.

(In photo, above right, Officer Pleger receives a hug at the funeral of Sgt. Greg Moore. Kathy Plonka/The Spokesman-Review)

The judge accepted into evidence – and then viewed – a 23-minute video that shows Renfro allegedly shooting Moore in the face and stealing the officer’s gun before fleeing in Moore’s patrol car. That video, recorded by Moore’s body camera, also shows the first officers arriving minutes later and performing CPR after finding Moore had no pulse.



The video, like almost all evidence collected and exhibits produced in the investigation, is under seal by court order and not available for public review. The judge also isn’t allowing use of cameras, audio recorders or phones during the hearing, which resumes Thursday morning in a courtroom at the Kootenai County Jail.

Renfro’s court-appointed public defense team objected to the video’s introduction as evidence, questioning its relevance as well as the foundation for its authenticity. But Watson overruled the objection and took a break to watch the video in his chambers.

Coeur d’Alene Police Officer Jacob Pleger was the first to arrive on the scene of the shooting on West Wilbur Avenue around 1:35 a.m. Pleger said he saw Moore “laying on his back with his face toward me.” The injured officer had no pulse, and blood appeared to be coming out of his mouth, nose and eyes, he said.

Pleger, who described Moore as a friend, said he resorted to his medical training. “I was looking for wounds because I knew we had to stop the bleeding and start the breathing,” he said in court.

He then assisted fellow Officer Hank Dunham with chest compressions as other first responders raced to the scene.

Dunham testified he was home on a meal break when he heard Moore on his police radio calling in the name “Renfro” to dispatch. Minutes later, when a dispatcher was unable to get Moore to respond, Dunham said he raced to the scene and saw Moore in the street bleeding from his head.

“It’s pretty well etched in my memory,” he said of the details of that night.

Moore died later that day at Kootenai Health.

Coeur d’Alene Police Sgt. William Tilson Jr. explained how he took possession of Moore’s body camera at the police station in the hours after the shooting, downloaded the recorded videos to a laptop computer, and then watched the video that included the shooting.

Tilson testified that the cameras worn by all the city’s officers automatically place a digital date and time stamp on each video recording when the officers activate the cameras.

Post Falls Police Officer Christopher Thompson, also on patrol that morning, said he saw a Coeur d’Alene police car race past him on Seltice Way at 90 mph, twice the speed limit. Thompson already knew a patrol car was missing and turned around and gave chase, accelerating to 100 mph to keep up, he said.

Thompson found the car on Beck Avenue near Sysco Spokane Inc. He and other officers approached the car in an armored vehicle and found it abandoned. They then began to search for a suspect in the West Point Parkway area, which includes Wal-Mart and Cabela’s stores.

Police using a K-9 unit found Renfro hiding under a semi-trailer near the Wal-Mart. Kootenai County Sheriff’s Deputy Jason Shaw, who works with a Dutch shepherd named Bari, described how the dog detected and latched onto the suspect, who was concealed up inside the trailer’s undercarriage.

“I heard a male’s voice say ‘ouch’ or ‘ow’ or ‘ow, ow, ow,’ ” Shaw said.

Other officers retrieved and cuffed the suspect, who Shaw identified as Renfro.

The suspect was found with 9 mm bullets in his pocket, and a search for a weapon ended with Bari sniffing out a 9 mm Glock stashed near where the suspect had been hiding, Shaw said.

Police searching nearby fields later found a second Glock, still in its holster.

Renfro is being held on \$2 million bond. He has not entered a plea to any charges, which also include grand theft, concealment of evidence, removing a firearm from a law enforcement officer, robbery and eluding a peace officer.

He previously was sentenced to prison for grand theft in Kootenai County, and for grand theft and battery upon a jailer in Latah County. He was on felony parole at the time of the shooting and told investigators he feared Moore would find the stolen handgun he was carrying in his pocket – an offense that would have sent him back to prison, according to court documents.

Moore is the first Coeur d'Alene police officer killed in the line of duty.