

Hills officer says victim yelled, 'Kill me'

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On Thursday, he checked into the Star Motel, 1430 Michigan, Detroit, under the name Lawrence Reed.

At 7 p.m. Saturday, a Livonia officer spotted Wilson's car, a 1989 Pontiac Grand Am, at Eight Mile and Merriman and tried to stop it for a traffic signal violation.

The officer soon determined the

car and driver matched the descriptions of the getaway car and robber involved in six armed robberies since Jan. 29, including a situp at 2:03 a.m. Saturday at a Total gas station at Plymouth and Farmington Road in Livonia.

WHEN THE Livonia officer tried to stop the Grand Am at Meadowlark and Farmington Road in Farmington, the driver sped off. The officer lost sight of the car at

Freedom and Farmington Road in Farmington, but broadcast a description of both the car and driver.

At 7:35 p.m., a Farmington Hills officer spotted the car eastbound on Grand River. He followed the car as it turned south onto Albion, a dead-end dirt road two blocks west of Middlebelt.

The man turned his car around at the dead-end and the uniformed Farmington Hills patrolman, sliding

on the icy road, regained control of his semimarked car. The officer then got out, leaving his car's red and blue grille lights flashing.

When it became apparent the man would not surrender, the officer retreated, walking backwards.

Before the officer, illuminated by the approaching car's headlights, got to his back bumper, the driver edged forward. The officer could not see the man's hands but saw him reaching with his right hand toward the

passenger seat.

WITH SHOTGUN raised, the officer ordered the man, still edging toward the officer, to surrender for a second time.

The man then yelled through the open driver's window, "Kill me, I want to die!" As he pointed his car almost directly at the officer, the officer again ordered the man to surrender.

When the car continued toward him, the officer — fearing the man was going to pull alongside and shoot him or try to pin him between the Grand Am and the patrol car — fired once. The officer was about five feet from his target. The car came to a stop alongside the patrol car.

The shot grazed the driver's door frame of the Grand Am and struck the driver in the chest.

OFFICERS ARRIVING at the scene broke out the passenger window and moved the gun away from Wilson's hand before entering the Grand Am, still in gear.

"Even responding officers thought the gun was real until they picked it up," said Farmington Hills police Sgt. Charles Nebus. He and Inspector Thomas Godwin are heading the department investigation into the shooting.

"These type of guns and those that resemble the long-rifles automatics are becoming more of a problem every day," Dwyer added.

The recovered pellet gun is the one believed used in the six armed robberies. No gun was ever fired during the holdups and no one was hurt.

"The majority of those armed robberies coincide with the suspect's travel and work schedule, according to his wife," Dwyer said. Wilson's wife told police he had a severe crack cocaine habit.

NO MONEY was found on Wilson. A license plate was found on the front seat and a knife in a sheath was found on the front floor. It was not known if the plate was stolen.

"We assume he was getting ready to make a switch and put that plate on his car," Godwin said.

Police believe the car may belong to Orson Coe Pontiac in Grand Rapids. Wilson had a Michigan driver's license with a Grand Rapids address.

The officer involved in the shooting was reassigned to administrative duty, pending "the outcome of a thorough, complete investigation," Dwyer said.

"Obviously, the officer is distraught over the entire incident," Nebus said. "He's regretful he was forced into using fatal force."

"NO POLICE officer cherishes taking a life," Dwyer said. "It's something very traumatic."

As in all such cases, the officer will be offered some sort of psychological treatment, Dwyer said. The last time a Farmington Hills officer was involved in a fatal shooting was in March 1985. An officer who was part of a stakeout killed one of three suspects shortly after an armed robbery at Taco Bell, Grand River and Eight Mile. The officer fired when the robber leveled a handgun at him in a nearby field, Nebus said.

Police theorize crack habit drove victim

By Bob Sklar
staff writer

The life of a desperate car dealership dispatcher — who police said had no known criminal record but a severe crack cocaine habit — came to a bloody end Saturday on a dead-end street in southeast Farmington Hills.

"We feel he was so addicted, and because he was separated from his wife, he, in our opinion, had nothing to live for," said Farmington Hills police Chief William Dwyer. Cecil Shelby Wilson, 42, who apparently returned to Michigan Feb. 5 from Missouri to work in the service department at Orson Coe Pontiac in Grand Rapids, was shot to death by a Farmington Hills patrolman, police said.

The officer, standing outside his patrol car with shotgun in hand, three times ordered the man to surrender but fired when he feared Wilson would drive alongside and either shoot him or pin him against his patrol car, police said.

Shortly before the shooting, Wilson had yelled to the officer that he wanted to die, police said.

Johnny Ayers, 66, an Albion Street resident for 33 years, said he and wife, Dorothy, "heard the cars come down real fast." But by the time they walked outside, other officers were there and told them to go back inside.

A RETIRED manufacturing inspector's helper, Ayers said the excitement Saturday night was uncharacteristic of this residential road. A chain divides the five-house dirt road from the Cedaridge Apartments parking lot. "I was kind of shook up," Ayers said. "I'm a nervous fella anyway."

A neighbor across the street said he, his roommate and his parents were just sitting down to dinner when they "heard a boom that shook everything, even the window glass."

When he looked outside, he said he saw "a police officer standing outside his car with his gun pointed at another car."

"It was scary," he said. "I got everyone back away from the window because I wasn't sure shots wouldn't come our way."

Wilson, distinctive at 6-5 and 450 pounds, and his car, a 1989 Pontiac Grand Am, matched the descriptions of the robber and getaway car involved in six armed robberies in



staff photo by BOB SKLAR

Resident Johnny Ayers points to where the shooting took place at the end of Albion, southwest of Grand River and Middlebelt.

Wayne and Oakland counties since Jan. 29.

Police theorize Wilson pulled robberies to acquire money for his drug habit. "We feel this is another victim of the crack cocaine problem facing this country. No question about it," Dwyer said.

POLICE BELIEVE Wilson may be responsible for the following armed robberies:

- Jan. 29, Little Caesar's Pizza, 25555 Joy, Dearborn Heights.
- Feb. 6, Amoco gas station, 8008 Middlebelt, Westland.
- Feb. 8, Amoco gas station, 13 Mile-Southfield Road, Beverly Hills.
- Feb. 9, 7-Eleven, Warren-Middlebelt, Garden City.
- Feb. 9, Super America gas station, Ford-Harrison, Garden City.
- Feb. 11, Total gas station, Plymouth-Farmington Road, Livonia.

WILSON WAS separated from his wife, Lois, of Marshall, Mo., for about a year. They had been married 10 years and had no children.

His wife told police Wilson left for Grand Rapids about a week ago to

resume work at the Pontiac dealership, where he last worked in September and October.

"According to his wife, he had a very severe crack cocaine habit," Dwyer said. "She said he had been under treatment for the past year."

Dwyer theorizes that Wilson returned to Michigan because he had "a source for his habit" either in Detroit or Grand Rapids.

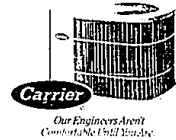
In both Wilson's room at the Star Motel in Detroit, where he checked in Thursday under an assumed name, and in the Grand Am, police found crack cocaine pipes and residue.

"I can't stress enough that a person addicted to crack — and we've seen it with doctors and attorneys — turns to crime," Dwyer said.

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