

Suspected car thief dies in police chase

BY MATT JACHMAN AND RICHARD PEARL STAFF WRITERS

Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer said Thursday both Hills and Livonia police officers followed departmental pursuit policy "to a T" in an incident Wednesday night that ended in the death of a 16-year-old car-theft suspect.

Griffin of Detroit, was killed after losing control of a 1993 Ford Thunderbird and crashing it into a light pole at Six Mile and Middlebelt in Livonia while being pursued by officers from both departments. The car's passenger cabin was split in two by the impact.

Griffin was pronounced dead at Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills, according to Dwyer. A loaded .38-caliber revolver

and a holster, believed to have been in the youth's possession, were found at the scene, Dwyer said. "It certainly is a tragedy," Dwyer said. "However, after reviewing the in-car (Hills police) video and the 911 audio and the report by Hills Officer Gary Brandemihl, it's clear that the department policies and pursuit driving order was followed to a T."

Based on the report and the tapes, both departments acted in accordance with pursuit-driving regulation (and departmental policy), he said. The Hills and Livonia policies parallel each other, he added.

"I would not characterize this as a high-speed chase," Dwyer said. Based on both the Hills officer's report and the in-car video and audio tapes, speeds of

both the one Hills and two Livonia patrol cars involved were in the low 60-miles-per-hour range.

The fleeing vehicle's speed was reported as high as 75 mph. Dwyer said once the overhead emergency lights of the police vehicles were activated, "that's when the subject's car sped off at a high rate of speed."

Dwyer said the "highest speed was in the low 50s in a 40-mile-per-hour zone."

He said Brandemihl, a 21-year Hills veteran, "followed the (driving) order and attempted to stop the vehicle" in concert with Livonia officers "in a safe manner just before he got to Seven Mile and Middlebelt."

Dwyer said the vehicle's West Bloomfield owner had left the keys in the Thunderbird when he entered the S&S Video Store

at 4572 Orchard Lake, near 13 Mile Road, where the incident began.

Within five minutes of the theft report, Brandemihl, going northbound on Middlebelt north of Grand River, spotted the Thunderbird heading south and turned to follow it into Livonia, according to both Dwyer and Livonia Police Lt. Kevin Dawley. According to Hills Officer Dawley, three patrol cars, two from Livonia and one from Farmington Hills, were roughly a quarter-mile behind the Thunderbird when it crashed about 10:30 p.m. There were no other passengers in the fleeing vehicle and no other injuries.

With the two Livonia patrol cars providing backup, police began chasing the Thunderbird as it neared Seven Mile, Dawley

said. The driver ran a red light at Seven Mile, but police were forced to stop for traffic, he said.

The Thunderbird's speeds were initially around 50 mph, Dawley said, but estimated at 75 mph in the later stages of the chase. Griffin lost control when he tried to make a left turn onto eastbound Six Mile.

The impact split the car into two large pieces at the firewall behind the dashboard, Dawley said.

A 1998 Ford Expedition, stopped for a red light on westbound Six Mile, was hit by debris from the crash and slightly damaged.

Griffin had no prior criminal record, Dwyer said. Dawley said the pursuit, like all police chases, is being reviewed internally.

Arthritis Today

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NIGHT PAIN AND ITS CAUSES

To you night pain is a distraction, to your physician the same provides clues to its cause. You have pain in your leg and it comes at night, but doesn't bother you during the day, your doctor can surmise that the cause is not arthritis. The reason is that arthritis comes on with activity and is relieved by rest. Most individuals with arthritis of the hip, knee or ankle will tell you that as long as they can move they feel fine.

Your doctor also can say with confidence that the night pain is not the result of poor circulation. Again, pain resulting from a poor blood supply diminishes at rest and increases with activity. The reason is that at rest your muscles need little blood flow, but during working demands are likely to tax a compromised vessel.

The usual cause of pain in your leg, occurring at night, is nerve damage. The common ones are the median nerve in the wrist in which compression results in carpal tunnel syndrome, and nerve impingement in the lower back bringing on sciatica.

Your description of the nature of your pain and where it radiates, helps the physician determine which nerve you have constricted, and where that problem has occurred.

Keep in mind that all pain is worse at night. During the day light and activity distract the mind, and pain competes for attention with numerous mental inputs. At night, this competition ceases and pain has no rivals.

Hills sting nabs 3 for liquor violations

BY RICHARD PEARL STAFF WRITER
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It all looks pretty ordinary: A couple in their 40s drives the family-type sedan into a restaurant lot in Farmington Hills and lets the younger couple in the back seat out at the door. The college-age couple goes inside while the older couple parks and waits.

Mom and dad sending the kids in to see how long a wait for a table?

So it seems. But appearances can be deceiving.

Once inside, the younger couple is seated and orders drinks - the alcoholic kind. When the server brings the drinks and never checks the couple's ages, all bets are off.

Within a couple of minutes, one of the young "customers" has made a cell-phone call and the older couple have come inside, identifying themselves as Farmington Hills police detectives and letting the server and manager know they've broken the law by serving alcohol to minors.

The two young civilian "customers" are college students, all right - but in this case they are 19-year-old decoys working for Hills police. The legal drinking age in Michigan is 21.

This scene was played out at 42 restaurants and bars last

week by Hills detectives Dave Stauch and Pam Rathgeb and the decoys as the department ran its semi-annual liquor-compliance sting operation - using decoys who carry no money and no identification to see who is and isn't following the law.

Three establishments' employees weren't: One each, at the Bone Yard Barbecue No. 2, 31006 Orchard Lake Road; Shalimar Restaurant, 29200 Orchard Lake Road and Cafe Venezia, 25498 Middlebelt.

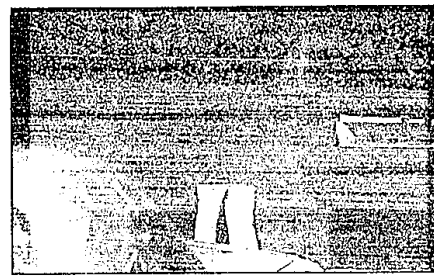
The three businesses will face hearings before the state Liquor Control Commission. The three adults who made the sales were issued tickets to appear before the 47th District Court in Farmington Hills on misdemeanor charges of selling alcohol to minors.

Liquor law violations carry sanctions ranging from fine to loss of license. And employees can find themselves out of a job.

Dwyer 'pleased'

Hills Police Chief William Dwyer said he was "pleased" with the 39 who passed the test but "disappointed" with the other three.

He also is happy violations are nowhere near what they were when he became police chief in 1985 and initiated the compliance operation.



Sting: A young-looking sting operation couple enter one local establishment to see if they will get served.

Back then, there not only had been a tremendous increase in underage drinking, but also other problems such as disorderly parties attended by undergrads and malicious destruction of property.

Under-agers also were being increasingly involved in traffic accidents, including one fatality that involved underage drinking.

"At the time, two-thirds of the establishments the department checked 'sold to the decoy,'" Dwyer said.

The department's compliance and education efforts, he said, have made the rate drop "tremendously. I think it (the Liquor Compliance Operation) has had a positive effect."

Assistant Chief Chuck Nebus of the Hills detective bureau said the violations curve has "come

down to where the recent average has been about four or five percent" in violation out of the total checked.

Twice a year "We do these operations a couple times a year," Nebus said. "The Chief tries to have them coincide with the graduations (from high school) and the Christmas holidays, which is when we have the majority of alcohol-related incidences."

"But we also do periodically check licenses at other times during the year," Nebus said, particularly when the department gets complaints from parents or tips from the state LCC. "We will send out spot checks," he said.

Sweep of party stores and

Please see STING, A5

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