

News

Murder- suicide details filter in *Friend, pastor speak out about Swayzee case*

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Police are still collecting details from Friday morning's incident in Swayzee, during which police say two people were murdered before their shooter turned the gun on himself.

Grant County sheriff's Sgt. Mike Moore said detectives have arranged more interviews on the incident for Monday and more details should begin to emerge then. Police were called to a Swayzee home Friday morning after they believe William McKinney shot his wife, Heidi McKinney, and her friend, Shannon Michael Lowe. A witness said she then saw William McKinney shoot himself.

Details of the relationship between Heidi McKinney and Lowe also became clear Saturday.

"Right now, we're looking at just a friend relationship," Moore said. "There's nothing confirmed that there was any other type of relationship involved."

Lowe's pastor, Mark Atkinson, Eastview Wesleyan Church, said he spent a lot of time with Lowe in recent weeks, after Lowe began connecting more deeply with his spiritual views about a month ago.

"Shannon had shared with me that Heidi was having a hard time with her husband and she had called him about it," Atkinson said.

Atkinson explained Lowe felt he had to tread carefully with the situation. Lowe was trying to mend his relationship with his wife, Melanie. Atkinson said Lowe told him he thought Heidi McKinney wanted more out of their relationship than friendship, but he just wanted to help a friend through a difficult time.

"He has several times asked me, 'What do you think I should do?'" Atkinson said. "Each time I told him, 'Do the right thing, be wise.'"

Chris Haley, Lowe's friend for about 15 years, said he was with Lowe on Thursday night, before Lowe left to meet Heidi McKinney at a friend's home in Swayzee.

"We were just hanging out, went out to McDonald's ... normal just messing around for us," Haley said.

Haley said Heidi McKinney began repeatedly calling Lowe. He said McKinney wanted more out of the friendship than Lowe was offering.

Lowe left Haley's home about 1 a.m. Friday, Haley said. Atkinson said he has no way of knowing what happened between 1 and 7 a.m., when the shooting happened.

"I do know that Shannon had — for the (past) couple weeks — had nothing but honorable intentions and was trying to be a help to someone who was dealing with violence in her home," Atkinson said.

The pastor said Lowe was seeking neutral territory when he agreed to meet Heidi McKinney at their friends' home in Swayzee. Atkinson said Lowe worried if he met her at her home, it would appear inappropriate.

Atkinson said Lowe was acting heroically in trying to help Heidi McKinney.

Haley said Lowe frequently considered others' needs before his own.

"He was a great guy that was willing to help anyone that needed help," Haley said, adding his kids "were his life."

Police were still unsure Saturday whether Lowe and Heidi McKinney knew William McKinney was outside when they left the home in Swayzee, Moore said.

Grant County Coroner Stephen Dorsey said toxicology results would take a couple weeks, but anything discovered would be secondary to what he already knows. He said the gunshot wounds were fatal.

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