

# Pierce County

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 15, 2011

### **PROSECUTOR FINDS OFFICER'S USE OF DEADLY FORCE LAWFUL**

Independent and concurrent investigations by the Pierce County Medical Examiner's Office, the Pierce County Prosecutor's Office, and the Pierce County Sheriff's Department regarding the shooting death of Brooks Lawrence Papineau have been completed. Papineau, 54, died from gunshot wounds to the body inflicted by Tacoma Police Officer Hannah Heilman. The incident occurred on June 15, 2011, in the 9700 block of State Route 302 in the Gig Harbor peninsula area of unincorporated Pierce County.

Pierce County Prosecutor Mark Lindquist concluded the death was justifiable homicide under state law. "Officer Heilman, while on her way home from work, stopped the deceased because she suspected he was driving under the influence. In the course of the traffic stop, the deceased brandished a gun and Officer Heilman acted lawfully to protect herself and others," Prosecutor Lindquist said.

At approximately 2:00 a.m. on June 15, Officer Heilman was on the way home after work. She was in uniform and driving her assigned take-home patrol vehicle which was equipped with emergency lights. While traveling on SR 16, she observed a white Ford Ranger truck weaving erratically in the roadway. Heilman trailed the vehicle which continued to be driven in a dangerous manner.

Suspecting that the driver may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, Heilman activated her emergency lights and conducted a traffic stop in the 9700 block of SR 302. She contacted the driver and identified him as Papineau. Heilman could smell the odor of intoxicants coming from the cab of the truck. After obtaining his identification information, Heilman instructed Papineau to remain in the truck and returned to her patrol vehicle, which was parked a short distance behind his truck.

While seated in her vehicle to conduct a records check, Heilman observed Papineau reach toward the passenger side of the truck. She could see Papineau, through the back window of his truck, holding a handgun in his right hand. A moment later Papineau stepped out of his vehicle and turned towards Heilman. Fearing he was going to shoot her, Heilman exited her patrol car and fired her duty weapon at Papineau. She retreated to the back of her vehicle for protection and commanded Papineau to drop the gun and get on the ground. Wounded by gunfire, Papineau fell to the ground near the driver's side of his vehicle. Heilman requested medical aid and Papineau was transported to a local hospital, where he was declared dead.

Upon examination of the truck, investigators found a fully loaded semi-automatic handgun owned by Papineau on the driver's seat of his vehicle. There was also an open gun case with several fully loaded ammunition magazines. Investigators identified and interviewed a witness who was driving by the scene at the time the shooting started. The witness's observations were consistent with Heilman's account of the incident.

According to the Medical Examiner Dr. Thomas Clark, Papineau died from a gunshot wound to the abdomen.

For more information, contact Rebecca Stover at (253) 798-4910 or [rstover@co.pierce.wa.us](mailto:rstover@co.pierce.wa.us).

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