

Courthouse assault suspect in custody

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After a 25-hour manhunt, police arrested Steven Daniel Kravetz Saturday afternoon in connection with shooting a Grays Harbor Sheriff's deputy with her own gun and stabbing a judge Friday at the historic county Courthouse in Montesano.

Thurston County officers and SWAT team members surrounded Kravetz's home in west Olympia for more than an hour before he surrendered to police. The deputy's gun was found inside the home. Detectives also found a knife but aren't yet sure if it's the one he used in his attacks.

Deputy Polly Davin and Superior Court Judge David Edwards were both treated and released from Grays Harbor Community Hospital on Friday. Edwards suffered lacerations on his hand, arm and neck area. He had already removed a cast from his arm on Saturday and hopes to be back in court next week. Davin was stabbed on her body as well as shot in the upper area of her shoulder, avoiding any major arteries. She'll recover just fine, said Undersheriff Rick Scott.

Kravetz, 34, is being housed in the Mason County Jail as Grays Harbor officials try to figure out the logistics of charging the man. Since the incident involved a judge and a deputy, a visiting judge from another county could be brought here or the whole case moved to a neighboring county. Scott said prosecutors from Lewis and Thurston counties have already agreed to help in any way they can.

Kravetz's first appearance before a judge could be Monday or Tuesday, Scott said.

Scott said the U.S. Marshals Service has offered to provide security in the Courthouse for at least Monday and, perhaps, Tuesday.

"In the event there is a copycat issue and, if nothing else, to provide a sense of security among the staff, we're going to take them up on that offer and we'll supplement that with our corrections staff as best we can, as well," Scott said.

With no security cameras in the Courthouse and no security presence, Scott said it took longer than he would have wanted to find the suspect.

Scott says detectives have been able to piece together what happened on Friday but they are still stumped for a motive because Kravetz didn't have a known reason to be in the Courthouse. Kravetz did have a misdemeanor warrant out for his arrest from Grays Harbor District Court dating back to 2005 relating to a domestic violence incident.

Kravetz took a bus from the Olympia area and arrived in Montesano Friday at about 10:40 a.m. Shortly thereafter, he went into the county Courthouse. He was dressed nicely and carried a briefcase. He loitered in the Courthouse lobby and staircase areas for about an hour. During that time, he drew the attention of several Courthouse staff members because he looked out of place, Scott said.

"He had certain mannerisms, the way he walked and stood and acted that caused people to notice him," Scott said.

At about noon, Deputy Davin responded to a call asking to check on the man. Davin approached the man, asked him his name. The man replied, "Michael Thomas," which turned out not to be his real name.

The deputy asked what he was doing in the Courthouse when he suddenly started stabbing her with a sharp object, Scott said. Several witnesses heard the commotion, including Judge Edwards, who raced down the stairs and tried to stop the man from harming Davin any more. In the process, the man started stabbing Edwards, who used his arm to block the attacks.

Davin drew her weapon on Kravetz, but he was able to knock it out of her hands, recover the gun himself and then fire the gun twice, hitting her once in the shoulder. There's conflicting witness statements on whether he aimed the gun at anyone else at the time.

The entire incident just took a few minutes, Scott said, before Kravetz bolted from the Courthouse carrying the gun.

He headed a couple blocks to Marcey Ave., where he found the office of an attorney he had used a few years back. Inside, he asked the attorney if he could use the phone to have his mom pick him up. Scott said the man then stayed in the office for some time waiting for his mother. Once, he left the office for a few minutes, but then came back to wait in the office some more. The mother was driving from Olympia and those in the attorneys office saw Kravetz enter the car.

While this was happening, Scott said police were combing Montesano and they had just received a tip about a home in east Montesano where a man had apparently been seen running. A SWAT team surrounded that home for a couple of hours Friday until they fired tear gas inside and found no sign of anyone. Scott said the home had no link to the man.

Asked if the incident may have diverted resources from finding Kravetz in downtown Montesano, Scott said he didn't think so. Scott said it was their job to look into every tip possible.

"At one point we had tips — be it hitchhikers or joggers — and we even sent an officer in the middle of the night to Lake Sylvia after a person thought they saw someone running in the brush. We had to devote resources to put those to rest and, if for no other reason, to give the community a sense of security."

Scott said that while the SWAT team was in action, other detectives were in the Courthouse interviewing witnesses.

As witnesses described his quirky mannerisms, some of the deputies recalled a similar man from a few years back who had been arrested on a domestic violence charge and appeared in Grays Harbor District Court.

"It was those mannerisms that caused some of us who were dealing with him so many years ago to say 'this reminds us of that guy we had dealt with before'" Scott said.

Scott said they were able to track down a photo of Kravetz and lay out a photo montage before witnesses who identified the man.

Then, a call came in a couple of hours later from the attorney where Kravetz had been waiting.

"The attorney said that his old client had no reason to be in town at that time, that he could tell, and fit the general description," Scott said. "When he told us the guy's name, we knew we had him."

The trouble was finding him. By 10 p.m. Friday, they had photos of him, his mother and knew the car they were driving. But they had no current address.

While detectives worked the case overnight, Scott said the decision was made to release the photos at 9 a.m. Saturday. In just a couple of hours, the mother, Roberta Dougherty, heard her name on the radio and called the police. She and Kravetz shared a home together.

Thurston County law enforcement surrounded the home for more than an hour Saturday. By about 1:30 p.m., he gave himself up without incident, Scott said.

Scott said officers were interviewing the mother on Saturday and would attempt to talk to Kravetz.

On Saturday, dozens of police officers and search experts combed Montesano looking for any

evidence related to the crime. Bloodhounds were used to track any clothes he may have thrown out. A Montesano fire ladder truck was used in the downtown area to look on roof tops, particularly on the buildings on Marcey Avenue near the attorney's office where Kravetz had stayed for some time before being picked up by his mother.

"Because he spent time there, we wanted that area searched," Scott said. "We looked on roof tops, in garbage cans, through bushes.

Kravetz doesn't have much of a court record, but his few incidents have been memorable to law enforcement, Scott said.

In 2005, Kravetz was arrested on a domestic violence incident involving his mother. Scott said during the course of the arrest, Kravetz attempted to escape, but he was caught. The Grays Harbor District Court case remains unresolved today, Scott said, and a couple of years after the incident, a judge issued a misdemeanor arrest warrant for him.

In July of 2008, Kravetz was in the Centralia Library when he apparently caused a disturbance in the library. Police were called and he got into a "violent altercation" with the police, Scott said.

A Washington State Patrol criminal background check shows that Kravetz was found guilty of third degree assault in Lewis County Superior Court. He was sentenced to 102 days in jail with credit for time served and 12 months community custody. He was also found guilty for making false/misleading statements to a public servant and fined \$2,000.

A check of Washington State Court files shows he appealed the Lewis County case to the state Court of Appeals Division II. By August of 2009, there was a voluntary motion to dismiss and the case was disposed of by the court.

The State Patrol background check doesn't list any other arrests for Kravetz.

"While his contacts have been limited, his behavior has been volatile at the time of those contacts," Scott said. "Yesterday, when he shows up at the Courthouse with no legitimate reason that we (can) determine and he's contacted by our deputy, all she asks is for his name and what he's doing and his response is to violently attack her and stab her with a knife."