

## Kidnapping, pursuit leads to suicide

A 41-year-old Wickenburg man who had allegedly kidnapped a former girlfriend committed suicide early Monday morning (July 25) after being pursued through Prescott by Yavapai County law enforcement officers.

Russell Stotz had reportedly pointed a gun at 42-year-old Gina Gutierrez of Wickenburg and forced her to leave with him from her residence.

Around 2 a.m. Monday, Yavapai County sheriff's deputies received a 911 call from Gutierrez. Stotz reportedly forced her to drive a conversion van, which he had stolen, north on Highway 89 toward Prescott. When they arrived in the area of Wilhoit, Stotz wanted to stop and rest. When he fell asleep, Gutierrez was able to flee to a local residence and call for help.

When deputies came to the area, it had been determined that Stotz was the same man who had reportedly pointed a gun at a deputy in the Yarnell area on Friday (July 22) and then fled the area in another stolen vehicle. A felony warrant had been issued for Stotz in relation to that incident.

When deputies arrived in the Wilhoit area, they located the van on a forest road off Highway 89 and ordered Stotz out of the vehicle. Stotz attempted to flee in the van, initially heading deeper into the forest, but then turned around and drove the van toward the deputies.

The deputies fired their weapons to disable the vehicle, attempting to prevent Stotz from fleeing back into a populated area. Although the front tires were flattened, Stotz continued driving and turned onto the highway toward Prescott.

Sheriff's deputies pursued the van north on Highway 89 at speeds of 30 to 45 mph, and Prescott Police Department officers set up "stop sticks" at the city limits. They were able to flatten one of the rear tires, but Stotz continued to drive the vehicle with only one tire remaining.

Stotz drove through Prescott, finally abandoning the vehicle on Iron Springs Road near Vyne Street. Stotz fled on foot, holding a gun to his own head.

Deputies and Prescott police officers were able to corner Stotz in a yard off Adams Street, where he continued to hold the gun to his head. Prescott police officers attempted to use a Taser on Stotz, but one of the probes missed.

Deputies were trying to talk Stotz into surrendering when he shot himself in the head. Stotz was pronounced dead at the scene.

He had made statements to Gutierrez, and to deputies, that he "would not go back to jail."



Stolen van - with flat tires - was abandoned in Prescott