

# Law Enforcement and School Response to the Hostage Situation at Marinette High School



## Presenters:

- Jeffrey Skorik, Police Chief, Marinette Police Department
- Amy Hansen, Police-School Liaison Officer, Marinette Police/School District
- Corry Lambie, High School Principal, Marinette School District

# Overview



- This event occurred at Marinette High School, Marinette, Wisconsin on November 29, 2010.
- This was an *Active Shooter* inside Marinette High School in which the gunman took his own life bringing closure to the incident.

# Suspect

- Samuel Oscar Hengel
- Porterfield, Wisconsin
- 15 Years old
- Marinette High School  
Sophomore
- Lived with both biological  
parents
- Two brothers -- ages 11  
and 13 years old
- No law enforcement  
contact or school  
disciplinary action
- Regular attendance, “A”  
student in advanced  
standing courses
- Active in Boy Scouts
- Participated with his  
brothers in martial arts
- Enjoyed the outdoors and  
was a hunter
- Had access to weapons  
and ammunition in the  
home
- No indication that his  
actions were precipitated  
by social, political or  
psychological anomalies.

# Event Timeline

Near the end of 6th period, the suspect, Sam Hengel, requests to go to the restroom and later returns with a duffel bag containing weapons. He holds classmates and the teacher hostage.

2:10 pm Transition to 7th period classes. Students reporting to Mrs. Burd's classroom see a note on the door instructing them to report to the library, as previously planned.

3:12 pm The school day ends.

3:30 pm The Police School Liaison Officer, Amy Hansen, leaves Marinette High School and arrives at the Marinette Police Department to complete daily reports. The police department and Marinette High School are approximately 1 mile apart.

3:40 pm A parent, who has been trying to reach his daughter to pick her up, arrives at the high school office. Principal Lambie reviewed student daily attendance records to determine that the student was present in 6th period, but not 7th.

3:45 pm Principal Lambie went to Room A111 and found the room dimly lit with the door locked. He unlocked the door and entered the room. Sam Hengel pointed a weapon at him and told him to leave. The student whose father had come to the school left the room shortly thereafter.

3:48 pm Principal Lambie called 9-1-1 to report the incident. The building was evacuated and Room A111 was isolated.

3:51 pm First law enforcement officer arrives on scene. Additional law enforcement and emergency medical personnel continue to arrive.

7:40 pm Five (5) students are allowed to leave the classroom requesting to use the restroom.

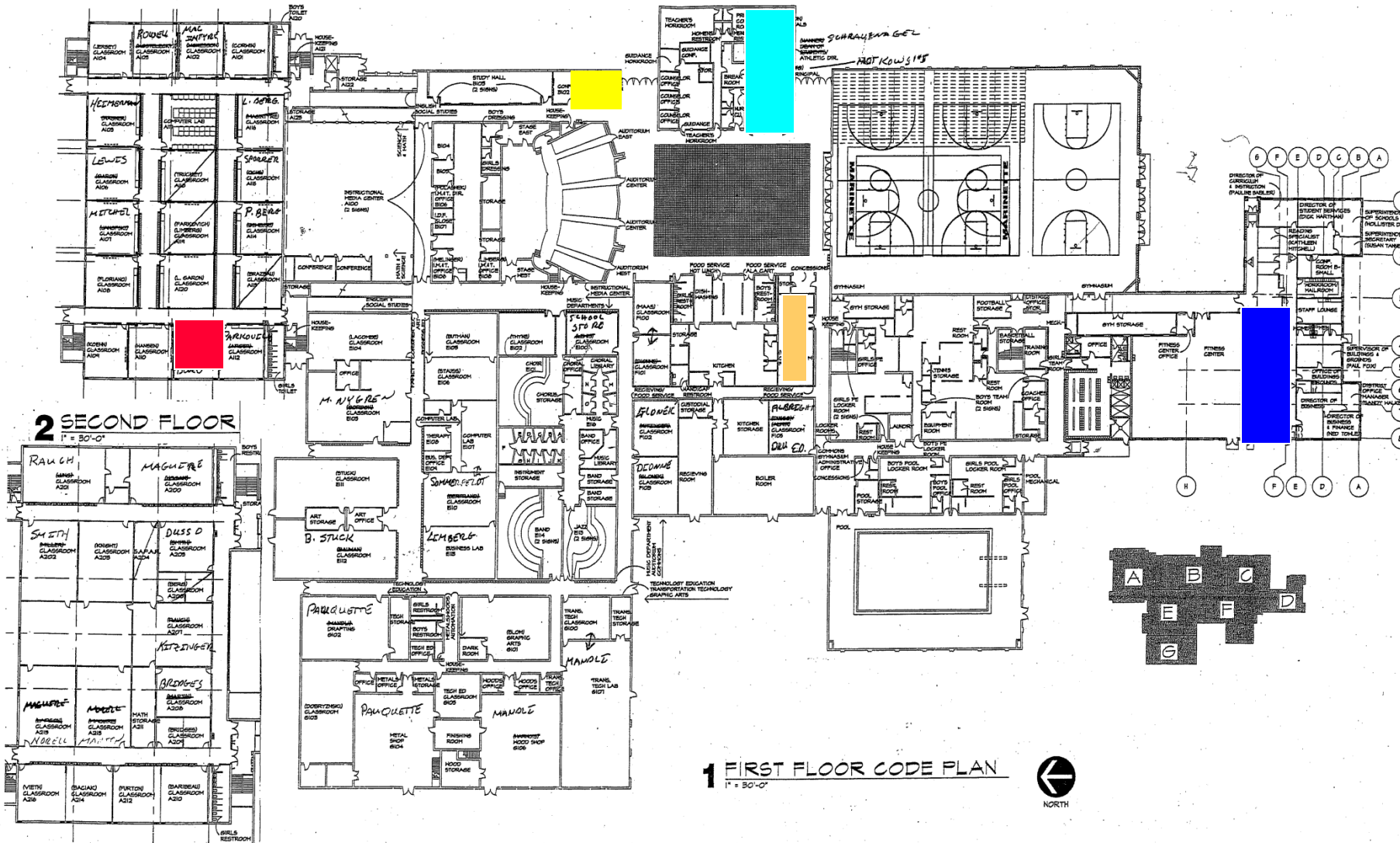
8:03 pm Gunshots were heard in the classroom and law enforcement personnel breached the door. The suspect shot himself as authorities approached. The remaining students and the teacher were safely evacuated.

# Law Enforcement/Emergency Response

- Incident command is established by the first officers on the scene and continues, utilizing a mobile command post
- Officers on the scene initiate telephone contact with Ms. Val Burd
- Additional tactical resources are requested via mutual aid
- The County EOC is activated



# Marinette High School



- Class A111
- PSL0 Office
- School Office
- Student's safe room
- Initial Evacuation Area



# PSLO: Initial Response

- School layout (initial response, map)
- Sam Hengel's yearbook picture, information
- Gather witness information and relay to Officers
- Answer Officers questions (other agencies) about school
- Go between school Administrators, Command center, Officers when needed

# School: Initial Response

- Students and staff are evacuated to UW Field House. Parents are notified to pick-up children at the Field House.
- Mrs. Burd's 6<sup>th</sup> hour class list is provided to Law Enforcement
- Maintenance personnel return to school, maps and utility information are obtained
- An off-site location for parents of hostages is established and staffed with LE, Mental Health Personnel and a school administrator
- Superintendent responds to EOC

# School's Perspective

- Excellent, simple maps for law enforcement
- PD's high comfort level with our building – Active Shooter Scenario; August, 2009
- Frequent review of Critical Incident Guide
- Outside Resources & School Support

# School's Perspective

- Communication of Accurate Information
- AlertNow and Personal Calls
- Joint Press Releases – defined objectives
- Press Conferences – defined objectives
- Utilized PIO (joint training in past)

# Media

- Agency representatives meet at the EOC for a briefing.
- Media requests are overwhelming telephone lines.
- The Marinette County Emergency Management PIO is activated.
- The first media release occurs 1 ½ hours after the incident was reported, and hourly for the next 4 hours. Single POC for information was created away from the scene.

# Media

- Media requests were received from England, Japan, Australia and dozens of US news outlets.
- On November 30, 2010, syndicated television morning shows and radio media outlets arranged for interviews
- The final media briefing occurred on November 30, 2010, at 11:30 am after Hengel's death.



# Media Considerations

Social Networking Challenges



# Agencies Assisting

Marinette Police Department

Marinette County Sheriff's Dept

Menominee (MI) Police Department

Menominee County (MI) Sheriff Dept

WI Department of Natural Resources

WI State Patrol

Brown County Sheriff's Department

Green Bay Police Department

Crivitz Police Department

Laona Police Department

Marinette County Health & Human Services Department

American Red Cross

WI Department of Criminal Investigation

Marinette Fire Department

Marinette County District Attorney

Marinette Co Emergency Management

WI Emergency Management NE Region

Emergency Rescue Squad

Bay Area Medical Center/Paramedics

Peshtigo Police Department

Forest County Sheriff's Department

Federal Bureau of Investigation

# Conclusions Reached

- November 30, 2010, 15-year-old Sam Hengel died of his self-inflicted gunshot injury.
- Two handguns were recovered at the scene. Both weapons came from the suspect's home:
  - 9mm Luger High Point
  - 22-caliber Ruger semi-automatic
  - two knives recovered from the duffel bag: a folding knife with a 3.5" blade and a fixed knife in a sheath with a 5.5" blade
  - ammunition recovered
    - 9mm bullets – 16 in duffel bag & 21 in clothing
    - .22 caliber bullets – 132 in duffel bag & 36 in his clothing
- The suspicious duffel bag/back pack
  - X-ray, detonation and school swept by bomb squad

# Considerations

- Sam rode the bus to school on the morning of November 29, 2010, attended classes and ate lunch with friends. Nothing about his demeanor was characterized as unusual by his closest friends and family.

# Lessons Learned

November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010, a “Hot-wash” was facilitated by the Marinette County Emergency Management Director. All agencies were invited to attend.

- Mutual Aid coordinated, organized and operational objectives were implemented smoothly.
- Staging area with check in/check out was established.
- Established and secured perimeters quickly -- inner, outer, and hot zone.
- School Liaison Officer utilized as liaison between law enforcement and school district.
- Established off-site facility for parents and family of victims.
- Intelligence on suspect and hostages was obtained quickly.
- Established contact with classroom early into event.
- Utilized Fire Department for outer perimeter security.
- Local law enforcement resources were exhausted quickly leaving day-to-day patrol short until mutual aid partners arrived.
- Opportunists must not be discounted.
- Utilized mutual aid partners to cover day to day patrol operations.
- Some mutual aid officers were assigned day-to-day patrol and were reassigned to perimeter security.
- Coordination and communication with Department of Criminal Investigation and Federal Bureau of Investigation was excellent.
- Mutual Aid tactical teams pose communication challenges with local negotiator and command post
- Need to maintain incident management system through entire event; not closing after tactical operations conclude.

# Back to School December 1, 2010



# PSLO: Days after Incident

Assist Investigators, including FBI and Department of Criminal Investigation with follow up, interviews

- Review video footage from Security cameras
- Meetings with MHS crisis team

# School: Days after Incident

- Emotional, Powerful Return to School
- Numerous Resources Available
- Project Linus 12/17
- Safe Room for Students
- Crisis Response Team Meetings
- HS Student Service Team Meetings



# PSLO: New Areas of Focus

- Knowledge of school computer system
- Folder in my office with maps, blueprints, school crisis plan, emergency numbers for all schools
- Improve map (outside doors, windows added)

# New Ideas and Areas of Focus

- Administrative Assistants' Presence would have been beneficial
- Working knowledge of Student Management Software
- Necessary Contacts in Cellular Phones
- Communication will always be key – put it in good hands!
- Teacher Accountability for all students @ all times
- You are never visible enough
- Implementations List

# Worth Repeating

- Staff Accountability for Students at All Times
- A Crisis Plan to be Utilized & Frequently Reviewed
- A Working Knowledge of Student Management System
- Local P.D.'s Comfort Level with Your Building
- Importance of All Adults building Positive Relationships with All Students