

KEY WEST POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Protecting Paradise

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KWPD mourns Miami officer's death

KEY WEST — Officers with the Key West Police Department showed up in force to publicly mourn the slaying of a Miami-Dade officer who was shot last week in the line of duty.

Officer Jose Somohano was killed during a burglary surveillance operation after he and three of his colleagues stopped a man for driving a car erratically.

The suspect, later identified as Shawn LaBeet, then opened fire, wounding the other officers involved and killing Ofc. Somohano.

Ofc. Somohano was 37 years old, and had been with the Miami-Dade Police Department since 2003. He

leaves behind a wife and two children.

"It is always a sad day when a fellow officer dies in the line of duty," said Key West Lt. Jim Benkoczy, who coordinated the department's presence at Ofc.



Ofc. Jose Somohano



Shawn LaBeet

Somohano's funeral in Miami. "But this was just senseless violence, which makes it that much harder."

Somohano was the second



Photo by Stephen Mitchell

This photo taken by Key West Officer Stephen Mitchell shows the magnitude of Ofc. Somohano's funeral procession.

South Florida officer in the past two months to be killed in the line of duty.

"The last few months have been extremely deadly for South Florida law enforcement," Lt. Benkoczy said. "These incidents remind us and reemphasize that we live in a very dangerous world and we can't let our guard down."

Lt. Benkoczy and other Key West Police officers recently graduated from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Street Awareness and Survival Training course, a hands-on tactical class meant to teach officers how to protect themselves in the field.

"Thankfully we usually don't see the violence that Miami has down here," Lt. Benkoczy said. "But should any of our officers ever be in that

sort of situation, I know that the training we had last week will prove invaluable."

Over 20 Key West Police officers made the trip up to Miami on September 18 for the Mass and burial of Ofc. Somohano.

The group formed a caravan that left the police department at 6:30 a.m. and made the long drive up the Keys a sort of memorial procession in and of itself.

"I'm very grateful to everyone who went up to the funeral," said Chief Bill Mauldin, who had previous obligations that kept him in town that day. "It's always so moving to see how law enforcement officers come together to support each other, in the good times and in the bad times.

"This was a very sad day for

South Florida law enforcement, and I'm just so proud of our officers who made the trip to support the Miami-Dade Police Department in this time of need."

Ofc. Somohano's killer had an arrest record including trespassing and disorderly intoxication. When he was stopped in Miami, he had an active warrant out of Broward County for aggravated assault.

LaBeet was shot and killed hours after he ran from the original scene of the shoot out. He was found near midnight in an apartment in Pembroke Pines.

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 54 officers have been shot and killed this year throughout the nation as compared to 34 who had been killed by this time last year. □



Photo by Christie Phillips

Members of the Key West Police Department gathered with their Fire Department counterparts for a moment of silence to mark the anniversary of September 11. At far right, Emergency Management Coordinator Craig Marston led the brief ceremony, and Mayor Morgan McPherson and Police Chief Bill Mauldin, second and third from right, respectively, shared thoughts on the day and thanked the emergency responders present for their bravery, dedication and service to the City of Key West.

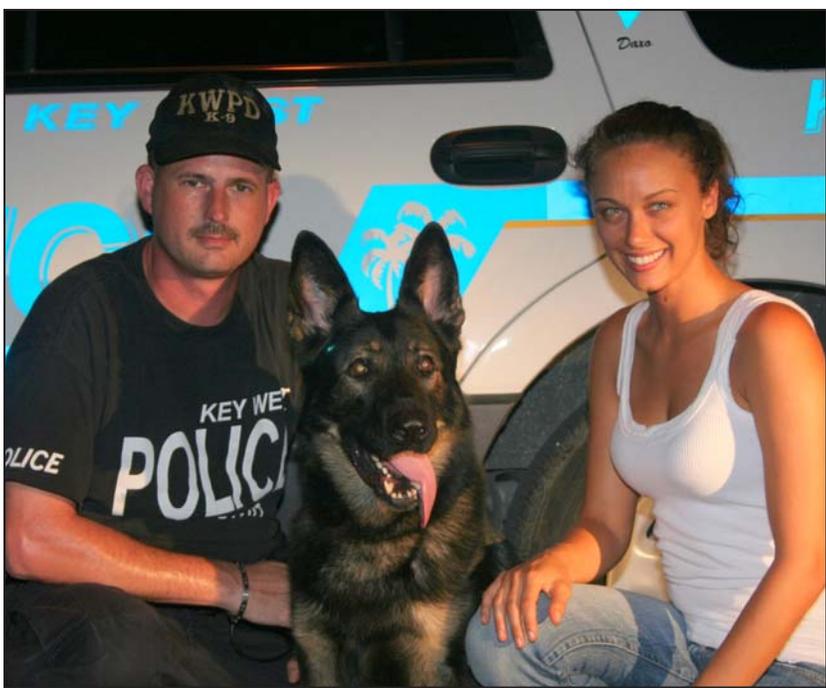


Photo courtesy of Sean Brandenburg

Actress (and sister of K-9 trainer Colby Gwen-Williams) Deanna Russo took time out of her busy schedule to visit KWPDT K-9 training last month. Deanna currently plays Logan Armstrong on *The Young and the Restless*, and stars in an AXE body spray "Bow Chica Wah Wah" ad. She has also been on *CSI* and *CSI: NY*. At K-9 training, Deanna got hands-on with the dogs and learned how they respond to their handlers' commands. KWPDT K-9s are used to search for drugs and in the apprehension of dangerous suspects. Deanna is pictured here with K-9 Sergeant Sean Brandenburg and his dog Wind.



Photo by Christie Phillips

Professional Standards Lieutenant Jim Benkoczy was named Police Officer of the 3rd Quarter by the Key West Chamber of Commerce. He was recognized for this honor at a Chamber luncheon.

Rapist arrested 90 minutes after attack

KEY WEST — Key West Police officers arrested a man for sexual battery a mere hour and a half after he allegedly held a woman at knife-point in her own house and raped her for two hours.

Leroy Lord, 43, was charged with sexual battery, kidnapping, armed burglary, grand theft and burglary for the assault and for an incident the day before involving the same victim.

Officers were first dispatched to the 200 block of Amelia Street at 6 o'clock on September 2 after the victim called to report the assault.

Once on scene, the woman told officers that a man had kicked down her door and made her have sex with him for over two hours.

The victim said that around 4 a.m. she woke up to a loud noise, but that she didn't get out of bed to check it out.

Moments later, she saw a flash-light shine into her room, and she saw a black male standing



Leroy Lord

“Shut up or I will kill you then I will kill your children.”

The victim's children were sleeping in a room across the hallway.

The victim said that the man had what appeared to be a shirt over his head, so she did not get a good look at him.

“He had a knife to me and I just lay there,” the victim told officers. “He held my face down so I could only look away from him.”

“I asked him to please wear a condom, but he said ‘No, I want to get you pregnant.’”

At the scene, officers noted that the front door to the residence was broken, as if kicked

over her in bed. in, and the victim's bedroom was in disarray.

“I said who are you and what do you want,” the victim told police. “He said

“Shut up or I will kill you then I will kill your children.”

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The victim said she didn't recognize the suspect, but told officers that a man who had been staying with her neighbor had been following her and harassing her over the past few days.

She said the man, later identified as Lord, had approached her while she was hanging clothes out in her backyard and told her that he wanted her to be his wife.

The next day, Lord knocked on the victim's door and told her she needed to move her car since it was occupying two parking spaces.

The victim obliged, but became scared when Lord stood next to her car staring at her. She said she locked her car doors and waited for him to leave before going inside and locking her apartment door.

With this information, officers canvassed the area and found a witness who had seen Lord leaving the victim's resi-

dence.

Officers found Lord walking on Emma Street at 7:30 a.m. and detained him for questioning.

Upon questioning, Lord confessed to breaking into the victim's apartment and having sex with her, but denied it was rape.

Lord was arrested for the sexual battery and kidnapping. He racked up the charges for grand theft and burglary from an incident the day before in which he allegedly broke into the victim's house and stole a camera from the residence.

“This was a great arrest on the part of our officers,” said Police Chief Bill Mauldin. “They worked quickly and efficiently on the scene and in the neighborhood to solve this crime less than two hours after it was committed.

“And with the help of watchful and concerned neighbors, we were able to get a violent man off the streets in a very short period of time.” □

STAR night deters DUIs

KEY WEST — The department conducted a Strategic Traffic Accident Reduction Night on Saturday, September 1, from 2 p.m. until midnight.

In that time, officers issued 62 traffic citations and gave out 50 warnings, both verbal and written. Three arrests were made for traffic-related crimes such as fleeing and eluding police and driving with a suspended license.

Thankfully, drivers seemed to be cognizant of the increased police presence, and took steps to ensure their compliance with the law as no Driving Under the Influence arrests were made.

Throughout the night, one motor unit, one DUI unit, two road patrol units and one sergeant were stationed throughout town running radar to monitor speeds and enforcing all other traffic violations. □



Photo courtesy of Jim Benkoczy

Ofc. Tommy Anglin receives his Love Fund check from Love Fund President Jim Benkoczy, left, and Ofc. Steve Torrence, right. The Love Fund, in conjunction with the department, previously held a fundraiser at Boondocks to raise money for Ofc. Anglin, who has been battling cancer since January, his second brush with the disease.