

OFFICERS OF THE YEAR

GARDEN CITY POLICE SGT. CHARLIE BROOKS; GARDEN CITY POLICE OFFICERS RONALD KOZLOFF AND BRUCE SHIPPE

Broken romances provide fertile ground for Hollywood. Last Dec. 7 in Garden City, however, thwarted love turned into a *truly* fatal attraction for a jilted boyfriend.

At 12:36 a.m., Garden City Police responded to an "intruder" call. A frightened woman reported that her ex-boyfriend, whom she described as "crazed," had come to her home to confront her about her new boyfriend. He was sitting in his car parked in her driveway.

Sgt. Charlie Brooks and his fellow officer Bruce Shippe promptly responded, but the ex-boyfriend had already driven away.

Fearing the man might circle the block and return to harass the woman, the officers checked the immediate area for the man's vehicle. The search proved futile.

But as they drove back toward the ex-girlfriend's home, the man pulled back into her driveway and parked near her detached garage.

Using their police car to block the suspect's vehicle in the driveway, they focused their patrol car spotlights on the ex-boyfriend, who remained in the driver's seat.

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Officer Shippe walked over to the driver's door to talk to the man. Sgt. Brooks, also on foot, positioned himself on the passenger side of the suspect's vehicle where he could watch the suspect's actions and scan the vehicle's interior.

Despite Shippe's request that the ex-boyfriend roll his window all the way down, he cracked his window no more than an inch. When Shippe asked for his driver's license, the man produced only a Michigan I.D. card. He unleashed a string of obscenities and demanded to know why the officers were hassling him.

At this point, Shippe observed what appeared to be a firearm grip protruding under the driver's seat and called out a warning to his partner.

As he did so, the suspect lowered his hand to the weapon, gripped it and began to raise it. Shippe and Brooks immediately drew their weapons and pointed them at the suspect.

"I gotta gun!" threatened the suspect. But, rather than pointing it at the officers, he placed the gun in his lap.

For several tense minutes, Brooks and Shippe attempted to negotiate with the suspect, who sat in the locked vehicle with his firearm in his lap.

Continually updating the situation with dispatch, Shippe periodically ordered the suspect to leave his weapon alone and to put his hands on the steering wheel. Each time, the suspect gave the same response, "No!"

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Meanwhile Garden City Police Officer Ronald Kozloff, who had arrived as backup, joined Brooks on the passenger side of the suspect's locked vehicle.

Suddenly the suspect turned and faced Brooks and Kozloff with his back to Shippe. Officer Shippe, anticipating a potential crossfire situation, moved to his left toward the front of the car.

As he did this, the suspect raised his gun toward Brooks and Kozloff. Fearing for their lives, Brooks fired several rounds from his department sidearm. Kozloff fired several rounds from his tactical team-issued submachine gun.

The suspect slumped over dead — still clutching his weapon. It was a Tec-9 with a loaded chamber and a loaded 32-round inserted magazine.

During this entire stressful and dangerous incident, Officer Shippe maintained a calm demeanor that was evident as he relayed information to dispatch. He used his training, experience and instincts to make the correct tactical decision in removing himself from a potential line of fire.

Sgt. Brooks and Officer Kozloff both displayed bravery in advancing to their positions and then placing themselves in mortal danger to protect their fellow officer, the suspect's ex-girlfriend and the community at large.

All three officers showed Herculean restraint and made every effort to peacefully resolve the confrontation. Unfortunately, the suspect forced their decision with a clear act of aggression that ultimately ended his life.

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Garden City Sgt. Charlie Brooks, Officer Bruce Shippe and Officer Ronald Kozloff, we honor your cool thinking and matchless professionalism by presenting you with the 2012 Police Officer of the Year Award.

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