

LA CROSSE COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT
Follow-up Report

16-19180 09/16/2016 08:06

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NARRATIVE:

SUMMARY:

On 09/16/2016 I was called to assist with a Traffic Accident that occurred on County Road M, near Bergum Coulee Rd. Barbara Kendhammer, a passenger in the vehicle, was struck with a pipe that fell off of a truck that was traveling in the opposite direction of the vehicle she was riding in. Her husband, Todd Kendhammer, was driving the vehicle.

I drove Todd from the accident scene to Gundersen Lutheran Hospital and during the trip interviewed him in regard to what had occurred. He was able to provide a vague description of the vehicle that the pipe had fallen off of.

INTERVIEW WITH TODD KENDHAMMER:

I interviewed Todd Kendhammer as I drove him from the scene. He advised that he would like a ride to the hospital. He rode in the front passenger seat of my car. The conversation with him was audio recorded.

Todd told me that he was driving his vehicle and his wife, Barbara, was the passenger. They were traveling from their home to a house in Holmen to pick up a truck so that he could replace the windshield in it. He told me he does this as a side job. He said that they left their home between 7:30 and 7:45 that morning and the two of them, while traveling, were just drinking water and "██████████". He said that he was just south of Bergum Coulee Rd., traveling north on County Road M, when a pipe came off of a truck traveling southbound on County Road M. I asked him to describe the truck and he said that it was a pick-up style cab and guessed it was a ¾ ton and that it had a "makeshift" steel flatbed on it with stake pocket sides. He said it had 18 inch to 2 foot high metal sides on the truck and believed it to be around a 2000 model although he was unable to describe who might be the manufacturer. He said it was dark in color; he believed it to be either dark blue or dark green, but possibly black. He said it had no remarkable damage or signage on it and he could not describe the driver at all, not even if it was a male or female.

Todd said as they approached Bergum Coulee Rd. the pipe came straight off the back of the truck, did not strike the ground, and passed through the windshield, hitting his wife. He said he did not know what to do. She immediately began flailing around. He told me that initially it was just an object which he thought was a bird flying at the vehicle and as it got to the side, realized it was pipe. He said that he reached out, not really thinking of what he was doing, and struck the windshield in an attempt to prevent the pipe from hitting his wife. He said that he then

turned onto Bergum Coulee Rd. while trying to pull the pipe from her. He said that at some point he must have hit the gear shifter and put the vehicle in reverse which caused him to go off of the road. He said that he went around to the passenger side of the vehicle and that he pulled the pipe out of the car from outside of his car, through the windshield. This was consistent with the damage that I saw in the windshield in that the edge around the hole was protruding from the inside to the outside, as though the pipe had been pulled out of the windshield from outside of the car.

Todd then said that he took his wife out of the vehicle and because he is trained in CPR and AED at work he began CPR on her first before calling 911. He estimated it was between 3 and 5 minutes that had passed between the time the pipe had come through the window and the time he called 911. He said he was not sure whether CPR was the right thing to do but that the Dispatcher told him to continue.

Todd said that he and his wife, Barb, were just talking. He did not really recall what they were talking about but they had not been arguing. He said that they seldom do and said that they just had their 25 year wedding anniversary.

Upon walking Todd through the scenario again he was not able to provide any further description except to say that he did not notice what else was on the vehicle and he did not think the operator knew that it had come off of the truck. He said that during the entire time he did not notice that anyone else had come by and did not think anybody had witnessed what had occurred.

Todd said that he was going to replace the windshield in Holmen for a guy by the name of Justin Heim and that the keys for that vehicle were supposed to be in the truck and he was just going to pick it up. He said he attempted to pick the same vehicle up the night before.

Todd was taken to the hospital where he joined his family.

No further information.

Inv. Sgt. Mark Yehle #1181

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