

Military-style manhunt in Pennsylvania after fatal shooting by Iraq War vet

Samuel Davidson
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A massive military-style manhunt was launched in Pennsylvania over the past two days in order to track down a man who is believed to have shot and killed his ex-wife and five of her family members Monday morning.

The manhunt was called off late Tuesday afternoon after the suspect, Bradley Stone, a 35 year-old Iraq War veteran, was found dead in the woods near his home in eastern Pennsylvania, midway between Philadelphia and Allentown.

Stone is suspected of killing his ex-wife, Nicole Stone, along with five of her relatives in three separate shootings in the early morning hours of December 15. Another relative was critically wounded and remains in a Philadelphia hospital.

A neighbor of Bradley Stone reported that he dropped their two young daughters off at her house around 5:00 am Monday morning, after the shootings occurred. The two daughters were unharmed. That is the last time Stone was seen alive.

Thousands of local, state and federal officers were mobilized, armed with military-grade equipment, including armored personnel carriers, automatic rifles and grenade launchers. Helicopters conducted surveillance, including at least one equipped with thermal-imaging technology.

On Monday, frightened school students were placed in lockdown, and parents were prevented from picking them up. Several area schools were closed on Tuesday. Some residents were ordered to stay inside their homes and others ordered to evacuate, as police surrounded homes in which they thought the suspect might be hiding.

In one community, police ordered everyone to stay inside their homes and not to open the door to anyone other than police officers as they conducted house-to-

house warrantless searches.

In another case, police surrounded a home where they believed that Stone may have been. Around 11:30 am Monday, the police stormed the home after setting off some type of explosive device. Neighbors report seeing police rushing someone to the hospital, but it was not Stone, and they have not identified the victim. It is not clear from police statements and press reports if that was the 17-year-old son who was injured by Stone or someone who was injured during the police raid.

The massive deployment of police forces is becoming standard operating procedure in the US. Police forces are making use of the military equipment that they have received from the federal government as part of programs expanded under the Obama administration.

The aim is to both provide officers with training in using this equipment on the local population, and to accustom the public to the use of military-style equipment in their neighborhoods.

In cases like this week's shootings, these deployments can be justified as necessary for protecting citizens. To this end, the media plays a critical role in doing what it can to create an atmosphere of fear and panic.

The manhunt directed at Stone follows the deployment of police in September and October of this year in operations targeting Eric Frein, accused of killing a Pennsylvania State trooper and hiding in the Pocono Mountains. Again, reported sightings of Frein were used to close schools and issue shelter-in-place orders, while police conducted door-to-door searches.

Similar operations were carried out in April 2013 following the Boston Marathon bombings, this past October in Canada, and over the past two days in Australia, as police mounted a massive operation against a man holding hostages in a Sydney cafe.

No motive for the Stone shootings is yet known. However, the military veteran reportedly suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Stone was in the Marines from 2002 to 2008 and deployed to Iraq. He was discharged from the armed forces in 2011.

A neighbor, Lisa Andrey, told the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that the couple had a great marriage until he returned from serving in Iraq, when the relationship became “very volatile.”

“He was a great guy and an excellent father,” when the pair first got together, Andrey told the *Inquirer*. “And then he went away to Iraq and came back and was a completely different man.”

The couple filed for divorce in 2009, but they were still battling over the custody of their two daughters. Earlier this month Stone filed court papers for custody.

Nicole Stone had told authorities that she was afraid that he was going to kill her and that he suffered from PTSD. No action was taken, however.

Reflecting the militarist and violent culture promoted in the military, Stone’s Facebook page lists one of his favorite sayings as, “Be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everyone you meet,” a quote from Marine Corps General James Mattis.



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