

Special prosecutor to investigate Owensville shooting

By BOB WATSON
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Bill Tackett, a Cole County assistant prosecutor, has been named a special prosecutor to investigate last month's shooting of an Owensville man by a Gasconade County sheriff's deputy.

Associate Circuit Judge John Berkemeyer made the appointment last week, after the Gasconade County prosecutor, Ada Brehe-Kreuger, cited a potential for a conflict of interest if her office investigated the case.

Brehe-Kreuger's letter to the judge wasn't more specific about the possible conflict, although prosecutors and sheriff's deputies in each county work together constantly on local law enforcement issues.

Tackett declined to discuss specifics of the Owensville case.

"Out of fairness to everyone, let's wait until we've had a chance to look at all the facts," he said. "It's inappropriate to comment on an ongoing criminal investigation, particularly one of this sensitive a nature."

Christopher M. Carter, 21, died late May 4 at the University of Missouri-Columbia hospital, after he was shot outside the Owensville Mill Tavern.

Initial reports said the deputy, who hasn't been named, shot Carter twice after Carter first fired one shot over Sheriff Glenn Ebker's head and then aimed his shotgun at the sheriff.

Owensville police said they began looking for Carter after his mother called them, saying Carter was in a suicidal condition and looking for his girlfriend.

The police and sheriff's departments arrived at the bar's parking lot shortly after Carter arrived, officials reported.

He fired a single shot over their heads and the officers sought cover, said Chris Ricks of the Highway Patrol's information office.

"He started walking back and forth across the parking lot," Ricks said last month. "He was carrying the shotgun, pointing it at them and pointing it at himself at different times."

After Ebker reached the scene, Ricks reported

last month, Carter again began speaking with police. But, about an hour later, he fired the gun "just over" Ebker's head.

Tackett said he has received a copy of the Highway Patrol investigation, but neither he nor the Patrol have released the report.

Tackett said law enforcement's role in the case doesn't make it any harder than other cases he investigates as a prosecutor.

Judge Berkemeyer's office said it hasn't set any deadline for Tackett's work.

"Having done these over the last 10 years," Tackett said, "I can honestly tell you, there's no way to put a time frame on something like this. Obviously, you want to make sure you do a thorough job."

Among Tackett's previous special prosecutor assignments are the investigation of a bomb planted in a Linn woman's car, the reported embezzlement of city funds by an Owensville clerk and the drunk driving charges against several men who left a Hermann bar and collided head-on with an oncoming car.