During the early morning hours of March 9, 2020, Danielle Bower drove to the entrance of the St. Charles emergency room in her minivan. She entered the emergency department with blood on her face, shirt, and hands. St. Charles Security Officer Papadakis asked her if she was okay. She did not respond, but waved him outside to her minivan. She then opened the passenger rear door, showing them the empty child car seats in the second and third rows of the van. When asked what was wrong, she responded, “My family left me. They jumped out. They left me.” She then walked to the driver’s side of the minivan and got into the driver’s seat. The security guard stood in the open door frame, preventing Ms. Bower from closing the door while Bend Police Officers were summoned.

When Bend Police Officer Tiago Oliveira approached the minivan, Ms. Bower closed the minivan door and put her vehicle in drive. Officer Oliveira told her not to drive away and yelled “stop!” and “don’t do it!” Security Officer Papadakis reached into the minivan to attempt to grab the keys from the ignition. Ms. Bower failed to comply and drove her minivan between a parked car and a bike rack and up onto a grassy berm. (This incident is captured in Counts 4 and 5). Ms. Bower continued over a curb and into the parking lot and drove west on the hospital’s internal loop on the north side of the hospital.

Bend Police Sgt. Tommy Russell heard the radio call and responded to the scene. He entered the loop road on St. Charles property and saw Ms. Bower driving toward him. As the two cars approached each other, Ms. Bower swerved into Sgt. Russell’s lane of travelling. Sgt. Russell was forced to take a quick, evasive maneuver to avoid being struck. He steered hard to his right, driving off of the roadway into a grassy area off of the loop road. Sgt. Russell narrowly avoided the minivan, then got back on the roadway, executed a U-turn, and started his pursuit on the loop road. (This incident is captured in count 6).

The pursuit then went off of St. Charles property, past Costco, then on HW 20 toward downtown, then past the courthouse, then onto the parkway.

As the pursuit approached Powers Road, due to the danger to the public, a PIT maneuver was attempted. Ms. Bower’s minivan was struck by a deputy’s car, but she was able to continue fleeing on the Parkway before exiting at Pinebrook and then turning north on Third Street.

This pursuit involved numerous officers and the running of numerous lights and stop signs. At the roundabout at 15th street, Ms. Bower exited heading north on 15th then turned right on HW 20. After crossing 27th street Ms. Bower increased her speed to in excess of 70 miles per hour at times.

Numerous officers had jointed the pursuit with Sgt. Russell, and Sgt. Russell was working with dispatch to find the contact name and number for the registered owner of the minivan so he could call her and try to convince her to stop.

The pursuit was now far east of Bend on HW 20. At mile post 15, Ms. Bower swerved into the oncoming lane of travel in front of an oncoming car before swerving back into her lane at the last second. (This incident is captured in count 8 of the Information.)

At mile post 24, Ms. Bower swerved off the roadway but was able to steer back on the road and continue to flee.

Ms. Bower then again crossed the center line and drove head on into the path of an oncoming vehicle. This time the vehicle was a tractor trailer. At the last second the driver of the tractor trailer jerked his rig to the right, onto the shoulder, and Ms. Bower jerked her car to the right, narrowly avoiding a collision. (This incident is captured in Count 9 of the Information).

Dispatch then radioed that the name of the likely driver of the minivan was Danielle Bower. Sgt. Russell immediately directed officers to go to her house.

At milepost 34, Ms. Bower swerved repeatedly across the east and west bound lanes of travel. And she again drove in the path of an oncoming tractor trailer, causing the driver of the tractor trailer to have to drive onto the shoulder to avoid a collision. (This is count 10 of the Information.)

Officer Oliveira made contact with Ms. Bower’s fiancé at her house and then called Ms. Bower from her fiancé’s phone. Ms. Bower did not answer. It turns out that her phone was still at her house.

Ms. Bower’s minivan then went off of the southbound side of HWY 20 into a ditch, but she was able to drive the car back onto the roadway and continue to flee.

Shortly thereafter, Ms. Bower drove off the northbound side of HWY 20, down a small embankment, and her minivan came to rest upright, on a soft dirt surface. Sgt. Russell then drove slightly ahead of Ms. Bower’s car and he noted the front wheels of her front-wheel drive minivan spinning in the dirt. Sgt. Russell radioed that she appeared stuck.

Sgt. Russell stopped his car, lit up Ms. Bower’s minivan with his spotlight, and exited his patrol car. Officer Williams, stopped his patrol car behind Sgt. Russell’s car, and Officer Umnitz stopped his car behind Officer Williams. All three walked toward Ms. Bower’s minivan: Sgt. Russell approached from the front of the minivan, Officer Williams approached from the passenger side of the minivan, and Officer Umnitz and his K-9 approached from the driver’s side rear of the minivan.

Officers Williams and Sgt. Russell saw Ms. Bower put her hand on the column shifter and move it to the left, into the “reverse” position. When she did this, Sgt. Russell drew his pistol and yelled “stop!” at her. Officer Williams already had his rifle deployed as he approached the minivan. Sgt. Russell and Officer Williams then saw the minivan quickly accelerate backwards in the direction of Officer Umnitz and his K-9.

When the minivan accelerated backwards, Sgt. Russell and Officer Williams shot their guns in the direction of Ms. Bower. Sgt. Russell shot eight rounds. Officer Williams shot six rounds. Ms. Bower was struck by four-five bullets as well as shrapnel from shattered bullets and windshield and side window glass. When interviewed, Sgt. Russell and Officer Williams said they discharged their weapons to prevent Ms. Bower from striking Officer Umnitz with her minivan. (This incident is captured in count 7 of the Information).

Once Ms. Bower’s minivan stopped moving, Sgt. Russell and Officer Williams stopped firing their weapons, radioed for the Airlife helicopter to be sent to the scene for Ms. Bower, and ran to render aid to her.

Sgt. Russell used a knife to cut off Ms. Bower’s seatbelt and then removed her from the minivan. He then applied a tourniquet to her bleeding arm. At this point dispatch announced that due to adverse weather conditions, Airlife declined the mission. Sgt. Russell then decided that Ms. Bower could not wait as long as it would take for a ground ambulance to reach the scene so he and Officer Williams loaded her into the back seat of Officer Williams’ patrol car.

Officer Williams sat in the back with Ms. Bower and rendered medical aid to her while Sgt. Russell drove code 3 west on HWY 20 back toward the city limits of Bend. During the drive Officer Williams practiced breathing with Ms. Bower and continually told her to hang on. Ms. Bower was telling him she wanted to see her kids again.

17 miles into this race to the hospital Sgt. Russell met up with the ground ambulance that had been dispatched to the scene. On the side of the road, Ms. Bower was transferred from the patrol car to the ambulance and was then transported to St. Charles Hospital in Bend. Officer Williams rode in the ambulance with Ms. Bower and held her IV bag along the way.

This pursuit started at St. Charles Hospital at 2:47 AM and ended with shots fired at 4:01 AM.

**WHY?**

How did it come to be that Ms. Bower was outside her minivan at the entrance to St. Charles Hospital, covered in blood, and acting erratically? Why did she flee when contacted by officers at the hospital?

Detectives and I worked hard to answer these questions. Here’s what we know: Back at Ms. Bower’s house, what police found was unusual. When officers arrived at her house at 3:30 a.m., they found two adult males, Ms. Bower’s fiancé, Stephen Horne and another adult male, Joshua Mondragon, as well as two small children ages 6 and 2.

The officers saw blood on the ground in the living room and droplets of blood, and smeared blood, throughout the house. Mr. Horne had been drinking, was highly intoxicated and had dried blood on his lips and hands. Mr. Mondragon had blood on his face, hands and body and was highly intoxicated, to the point of near-incoherence.

Horne and Mondragon described drinking for hours at the house with Ms. Bower. Horne described a fight that occurred between he and Mondragon. Because of the intoxicated states of Horne and Mondragon I do not rely on their representation about the facts of this alleged fight, but it’s clear some sort of an altercation occurred involving two or more of the three people in that room and that after the altercation, Ms. Bower drove herself to the hospital.

Ms. Bower’s blood alcohol level at the hospital was tested three hours after she left her house. The result was: .277. There is no evidence Ms. Bower drank alcohol after she left her home, so her blood alcohol level was likely even higher when she was at home.

Additionally, Ms. Bower’s nose was broken, and there is no evidence this injury was sustained during her encounter with law enforcement officers.

But why did Ms. Bower flee from the officers outside the emergency room at the hospital? One possibility is that she knew she had committed the crime of driving while under the influence of intoxicants and did not want to be arrested for that.

Another possibility is that she sustained a head injury during the incident at her house and this, coupled with her excessive alcohol consumption, resulted in her acting irrationally. This latter theory is supported by medical records that indicate Ms. Bower sustained a subarachnoid hemorrhage that evening that may have been the result of an assault at her house. A subarachnoid hemorrhage is bleeding in the space between the brain and the tissue covering the brain.

Because there is medical evidence that indicates Ms. Bower sustained a brain injury in an assault, because she has no prior record, and because she has suffered public embarrassment, loss of her employment, 4-5 bullet wounds, and the intervention of the Department of Human Services to ensure her children are safe in her care, I extended to her a plea offer that provides her the opportunity to avoid jail if she takes the steps necessary to turn her life around.

Danielle Bower, her fiancé, and their friend got together to enjoy some cocktails and to catch up. What should have been an enjoyable evening among friends turned into a dangerous and near deadly incident that put the lives of numerous law enforcement officers, drivers on our roads, security guards, and Ms. Bower, at risk, all because of the abuse of alcohol.

I encourage Ms. Bower to take advantage of this opportunity to get well, and to raise her children as they deserve to be raised. Long gone are the days our community viewed those who seek help for an addiction as somehow “weak.” If Ms. Bower is committed to success in her recovery, she will be embraced by our community. If she sluffs off this incident, doesn’t work on her recovery, and we see her in court again, the State will seek a much harsher sentence.

Ms. Bower, I wish you well.

Thank you for your attention and consideration your honor.