

# The Star-Ledger

## Video shows Voorhees cops struggling with N.J. man who died an hour later

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New Jersey officials released footage Tuesday of police struggling with a man who said he'd used methamphetamine and who died later that day.

Voorhees cops arrested Richard Belline, 37, of Evesham in early September. Belline died at a hospital about an hour later, and state law requires the attorney general's office investigate all police custody-related deaths.

A grand jury will eventually review the case to decide if officers did anything wrong, but the pandemic has largely stalled juries.

Officials also sent copies of a 911 call and footage from four body worn cameras to Belline's family.

Calls to a number listed for one of Belline's relatives were not immediately answered. Voorhees Police Chief Louis Bordi declined comment, citing the ongoing investigation.

At some point on Sept. 6, Belline called 911 while driving.

"I'm being pursued by a gang, and they're trying to kill me," he told the dispatcher, according to an audio recording.

When the dispatcher asked if he knew his pursuers, Belline swore and said, "Are you part of the gang, are you part of them too?"

He spoke quickly and nervously during the 93-second call. Belline said he couldn't describe his pursuer's vehicle and he hadn't seen any weapons.

"I think I'm just crazy and I need help, mentally," Belline said.

After the dispatcher asked for Belline's location, the line disconnected.

It is unclear how long Belline stayed on the road, but he damaged his car around 2:54 p.m., according to a press release.

An officer saw Belline "doin' a hundred miles" near the Voorhees Town Center, before he hit a curb and blew a tire, according to one of the videos.

Belline stopped a gray, four-door sedan in the middle of the center's parking lot.

Officer Thomas Bordi walked up as Belline stepped out of the driver's seat, wearing jeans, a gray T-shirt, a hat and sunglasses.

Belline started to run when he saw the cop.

Bordi grabbed Belline's left arm, pushed him to the ground and straddled his back.

Belline yelled for help and tried to push back up. Bordi's camera was knocked off in the struggle.

Officer Michael Marchitto arrived soon after.

Marchitto parked, attached a leash to a K9 in the backseat and approached Belline and Bordi struggling on the asphalt.

"You're gonna get bit by this dog if you don't show your hands" Marchitto said.

Belline's left hand appears to be pinned behind his back, and his right hand was visible on the asphalt in front of him.

The dog pulled at the leash, barking a few feet from Belline's face.

Belline would get bit in "three seconds" if he didn't comply, Marchitto said.

Belline continued to yell for help.

After a few moments, Marchitto put the dog back in his vehicle and helped the other officer handcuff Belline by hand. The video does not show the dog biting Belline at any point.

Over the next several minutes, the officers' tones softened as Belline weakened. Belline continually slumped to his side or fell to his knees, his long hair plastered on his face.

More cops arrived.

"Please don't, I won't tell anybody," Belline yelled at one point.

"What is goin' on?" Marchitto asked him.

"He's high," officer Kenneth Fowlkes said.

Belline said he didn't feel good.

"What did you use, you're not gonna get in trouble" one officer asked.

"Drugs," Belline said.

“What kind,” Marchitto asked.

“Meth,” Belline said quietly, head down.

“Ok, relax, we’re gettin’ you help,” Marchitto said, poking Belline in the shoulder with a gloved hand.

As the cops called for an ambulance, energy seemed to drain out of Belline. Officers laid him gently on the asphalt, and Belline briefly stopped talking as an ambulance pulled up.

Fowlkes yelled for Narcan, a spray that can reverse drug overdoses, but a paramedic said it couldn’t be used as long as Belline was conscious.

By this point, Belline’s jeans had fallen off and he lay on his back in red Adidas shorts. Part of his right arm was rubbed raw, and he appeared to have a cut on his right cheek.

Officers told him he was going to be ok.

“I didn’t realize who were you were,” Belline mumbled, eyes closed. “I know you’re trying to help me.”

Cops walked him to a gurney. Belline struggled and yelled again.

He was loaded into the ambulance about ten minutes after he was first tackled.

Belline was pronounced dead at 3:45 p.m. at Jefferson Stratford Hospital, officials said. A bag with “suspected methamphetamine” was found in his car, according to the news release.