

Spokane Police officer charged in shooting

by Cheryl McDermott

Officer-Involved Shooting Investigation Ends With Arrests

A warrant charging a Spokane Police officer with assault and reckless endangerment was issued Friday afternoon in connection with a February 26 incident where officer James Jay Olsen, 43, fired five shots at a fleeing man whom he believed stole his own pickup, striking the man in the head.

The Spokane County Prosecutor's Office performed the review of the officer-involved shooting of Shonto K. Pete, 27, who was also charged with taking a motor vehicle without the owner's permission, a felony.

According to a news release issued by the Spokane County Sheriff's Office, Olsen and a female friend were sitting in the friend's car after leaving Dempsey's Brass Rail in downtown Spokane about 2:30 a.m., and the officer's pickup was left with the keys in it, running to warm the engine.

Detectives believe Pete stole the truck and was followed by Olsen and the woman, in her car. They found the abandoned vehicle west of Monroe on Riverside Avenue, deputies said, and Olsen chased the suspect over an embankment leading to Peaceful Valley.

The officer fired five shots, one which struck Pete in the head.

Olsen was charged with first-degree assault, based on shooting and wounding Pete. The two counts of

reckless endangerment stem from his firing in the direction of occupied homes, and hitting one residence.

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