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January 15, 2026



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**Iowa Attorney General's Review  
of Officer-Involved Death**

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Incident of November 16, 2025  
Black Hawk County, Iowa

Grundy County Sheriff's Office Deputy Israel Ruiz and Deputy  
Carson Lutterman  
Iowa State Patrol Trooper Trevor Ambrose

Subject Involved: Benjamin Harold Sink

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## **Executive Summary**

On November 16, 2025, law enforcement was requested to do a welfare check on Benjamin Harold Sink due to comments he had made indicating that he was homicidal, suicidal, and had expressed that he wanted law enforcement to end his life. The initial caller indicated that Sink may also have a handgun. Sink was later located travelling eastbound on Highway 20 in Grundy County by Deputy Israel Ruiz.

Deputy Ruiz followed Sink as he continued eastbound and coordinated with additional law enforcement to provide support for the stop. When Deputy Ruiz initiated the stop, Sink pulled over but did not comply with commands and drove off from the stop. Stop sticks were employed and Sink came to a stop just into Black Hawk County. Sink immediately exited his car with a handgun and fired on the officers. Deputies Israel Ruiz and Carson Lutterman, as well as Iowa State Patrol Trooper Trevor Ambrose, fired on Sink. Sink died from his injuries.

## **Detailed Factual Summary**

At approximately 9:10 p.m. November 16, 2025, Iowa State Patrol dispatch notified Grundy County dispatch that they were attempting to locate Benjamin Harold Sink, who was believed to be driving a dark Toyota Rav4. Last known data indicated that Sink was travelling eastbound on Highway 20 through Hardin County,

toward Grundy County. It was reported that Sink was homicidal, suicidal, and had expressed a desire for law enforcement to kill him. The initial caller also indicated Sink may have a handgun. This information was broadcast to all law enforcement officers on duty in or near Grundy County. Responding officers were also made aware that Sink had an active warrant for his arrest.

Grundy County Deputy Israel Ruiz was on patrol and took up a position in the median of Highway 20 to watch for the vehicle. At approximately 9:17 p.m. Deputy Ruiz observed Sink travelling eastbound at mile marker 188. He pulled in behind Sink and began to follow him, confirming that the driver was the only person in the car. Grundy County Deputy Carson Lutterman and Iowa State Patrol Trooper Trevor Ambrose, as well as other troopers and Hardin County deputies, also made their way toward Deputy Ruiz to assist.

The officers had to strategically consider the safest location to initiate a traffic stop. They were aware that Sink was armed and concerned that he may hurt himself or others, may begin a chase on the highway, or that he may flee on foot once stopped. Initially, Deputy Ruiz determined that he would not initiate the traffic stop until after passing the Highway 14 exit. This would prevent any pursuit from going into the populated areas of Parkersburg to the North or Grundy Center to the south. The next exit east of Highway

14 was the Dike/New Hartford exit at mile marker 216. Officers decided to initiate the stop just past this exit knowing that additional law enforcement were waiting even further east at the Grundy/Black Hawk County line and were equipped with stop sticks to prevent any pursuit from getting to the Cedar Falls/Waterloo area.

Once past the Dike/New Hartford exit, Deputy Ruiz activated his emergency lights to initiate the traffic stop. Initially, Sink did pull over to the south shoulder of the road, with Deputies Ruiz and Lutterman stopped side by side behind him and other agencies further to the rear. Deputies Ruiz and Lutterman immediately exited their vehicles but remained at their positions for officer safety. They had their weapons drawn and ordered Sink to put his hands out of the window. Despite multiple repetitions of this directive, Sink did not make any attempt to comply and did not communicate with the deputies. Sink stayed inside the vehicle, yelling and gesturing wildly with his arms. Deputies then got on to the public address speaker and indicated they were there to help Sink, but to do so, he needed to first roll down his window and show his hands. They advised that they did not want the situation to escalate and wanted to resolve the situation safely. Sink still did not comply.

Sink then drove away from the stop and continued eastbound on Highway 20 with numerous officers following in pursuit. Black Hawk County deputies had set up stop sticks at the county line and waited. Sink continued the pursuit at approximately 90 miles per hour. At this time dispatch informed all officers that Sink had just called a family member and said his goodbyes, indicating that he was doing “suicide by cop.”

Sink drove over the stop sticks which were effective as some of the tires on Sink’s vehicle began to deflate. Sink then pulled the vehicle over on the south shoulder of the road. Deputy Ruiz and Trooper Ambrose were the closest and stopped their vehicles side by side behind Sink. Before either officer was even out of their patrol vehicles, Sink had emerged from his SUV, pulling a pink handgun from his waistband.



Trooper Ambrose saw the weapon, announced “gun, gun, gun” and immediately moved to take position on the passenger side of his vehicle, closest to the ditch. As Tropper Ambrose was moving, Sink racked the slide of the handgun and pointed it at Deputy Ruiz.



Deputy Ruiz saw the flash of the muzzle on Sink's handgun and returned fire. As Trooper Ambrose got to the passenger side of his vehicle, he heard the gunshots between Sink and Deputy Ruiz and fired on Sink. Deputy Lutterman, who had pulled in behind Ruiz and Ambrose, also fired from his rifle. Trooper Ambrose notified dispatch that shots had been fired and to send medical assistance. The time between when Sink exited the vehicle until when he fired at officers was two seconds.

Sink fell to the ground with the gun still in his right hand and all officers ceased fire. As Sink lay on the ground, he continued to move slightly with his left hand moving toward the gun. Deputy Ruiz directed Sink to throw the gun, but Sink did not comply. Deputy Ruiz repeated this command, letting Sink know they wanted to help him and get him medical treatment, but he had to get rid of the gun. Deputy Ruiz continued to repeat this, trying to ensure officer safety. Sink did not comply and did not relinquish control of the gun.

Once movement appeared to stop, multiple officers made a cautious approach. Deputy Ruiz stepped on Sink's gun for officer safety and Trooper Ambrose removed it from the area. Multiple officers then secured Sink and began lifesaving measures. The Hudson Ambulance transported Sink to the hospital where he died from his injuries.

### **Subsequent Investigation**

The weapon recovered from Sink was a pink 9mm handgun. Aside from the discharged round, the gun was fully loaded. There was an additional box of 25 rounds located in the driver's side door pocket of Sinks' vehicle. The round Sink fired at law enforcement was recovered under Deputy Ruiz's vehicle. Damage was noted to the skid plate of the deputy's vehicle and the concrete underneath. None of the officers were hit by gunfire.

The warrants for Sink's arrest at the time of the shooting were for stalking and multiple violations involving four no contact orders. A review of previous law enforcement contacts involving Sink showed that law enforcement had responded to an incident in May 2025 in which Sink was suicidal. At that time a handgun was seized, and Sink was taken for mental health treatment. Subsequently, a civil no contact order was issued preventing Sink from contacting a female acquaintance. Sink was arrested multiple times in June 2025 for violating that order and, additionally, he was charged with invasion of privacy against the same victim. Another no contact order was issued. Sink bonded out of jail June 24<sup>th</sup> and was placed on intensive supervision. Due to the no contact orders and mental health issues, Sink was prohibited from having firearms and his family indicated that they took possession of his known firearms.



On July 6, 2025, officers attempted to arrest Sink at his home in Waterloo, Iowa for multiple violations of the no contact orders. Sink was determined to be in his home but refused to come out. Law enforcement made contact with Sink, who indicated he had a shotgun in the home and was “not afraid to use it.” He attempted to get law enforcement to come into the home to meet him, which they refused. Sink eventually exited the home and was arrested without further incident. Officers seized a shotgun from the home at that time. Officers also found methamphetamine, marijuana and prescription medications.

On July 9, 2025 Sink was charged with multiple counts of harassment and violations of the no contact orders and additional no contact orders were issued. On the same day he was found in contempt for ten no contact order violations in the civil matter and ordered to serve a ninety day jail term.

On October 8, 2025, Sink was released from custody. The invasion of privacy case and harassment cases remained open, and the no contact orders were still in effect. On November 4, 2025, Sink was arrested for violations of those orders and bonded out of jail on November 6th. Additional violations occurred on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. Throughout the violations Sink continually blamed the protected party for his actions and his consequences. Sink acknowledged in some of his messages that he was aware

there were warrants for his arrest. On November 15, 2025, arrest warrants had been issued for the additional violations. That same day an arrest warrant for stalking was also issued and officers were made aware that Sink had told people that he had bought a gun.

On the evening of November 16, 2025, Sink left the protected party to the no contact order a voicemail saying that he was about to be “killed by a cop” in a few minutes because they were about to pull him over. Sink indicated that is what he wanted and that it was her fault. Subsequent to his death, family confirmed that Sink had called them that night as well and indicated that he was going out by “suicide by cop.”

Toxicology testing done during the autopsy showed that Sink was positive for methamphetamine at the time of his death.

### **Process and Authority**

The Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) investigated the incident, and its investigation is complete. DCI interviewed the officers involved and reviewed the officers’ body camera recordings and car camera recordings. DCI reviewed evidence and reports from additional law enforcement personnel from the Hardin County Sheriff’s Office, Grundy County Sheriff’s Office, Black Hawk County Sheriff’s Office, Hudson Police Department, Waterloo Police

Department and the Iowa State Patrol. DCI also reviewed evidence and reports from the Iowa Office of the State Medical Examiner.

The Attorney General's Office has authority under Iowa Code § 13.12 to assess any officer-involved death to determine whether criminal charges are warranted. The office has had a full opportunity to review the findings of the investigation and discuss the investigation with the assigned agent. All law enforcement reports, including audio or video recordings, will be returned to the custodial agency when this report is issued.

### **Applicable Law**

To be justified, the force an officer uses must be reasonable. Force is reasonable if a reasonable person, in like circumstances, would judge the force to be necessary to prevent an injury or loss. It can include deadly force if (1) it is reasonable to believe that such force is necessary to avoid injury or risk to the person's or another person's life or safety, and (2) it is reasonable to believe that such force is necessary to resist a like force or threat. Iowa Code §§ 704.1, 704.2, and 704.3.

In *Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386 (1989), the United States Supreme Court held that the use of deadly force by a police officer must be evaluated from the perspective of a reasonable police officer on the scene and in the same circumstances. Under *Graham*,

reasonableness of police use of force cannot be evaluated from the perspective of a civilian or the perspective afforded by 20/20 hindsight. The Court further stated that the fact that law enforcement officers are often required to react quickly in tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving situations are factors that must be considered in determining reasonableness.

### **Analysis**

Grundy County Deputies Ruiz and Lutterman and Iowa State Patrol Trooper Trevor Ambrose were justified in the fatal shooting of Benjamin Sink. All officers who responded to this incident were aware that Sink had made statements threatening to harm himself and others, had a weapon and knew there was a warrant for his arrest. They proceeded to stop his vehicle in a way that minimized the risk to the public, to the officers and to Sink himself.

At the initial stop, officers made it clear that they did not want a violent encounter and wanted to help Sink. They observed him acting erratically in the car and he did not comply with any commands to roll down his window and show his hands. He did not make any effort to communicate with them. Instead, he defied law enforcement and began to lead them in a pursuit down a primary highway toward more densely populated areas.

Once law enforcement disabled Sink's vehicle and it came to a stop, he immediately exited his vehicle firing at Deputy Ruiz. Deputy Ruiz responded with lethal force to the lethal threat against him. Deputy Lutterman and Trooper Ambrose fired their weapons to protect the life of Deputy Ruiz, themselves and the public. Benjamin Sink had clearly indicated to civilians that he was going to take action that would require law enforcement to act with lethal force to end his life. By drawing a weapon on these officers, he left them no choice but to fire their weapons and end the threat.

### **Conclusion**

The Iowa Attorney General's Office concludes that the law enforcement officers' actions in this incident were legally justified and that criminal charges are unwarranted. It considers the criminal investigation into this incident to be closed.