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RENATTA SIGNORINI

Six firearms, about 400 rounds of ammunition and \$659 in counterfeit money were among the items seized from a pickup truck used by two suspects who led state police on a chase on Sept. 27 through Fayette County.

In the Ford Raptor, state police also found a knife with a 6-inch blade, brass knuckles, a pink stun gun, handcuffs, steel sling-shot balls and an air gun — all taken as evidence in the chase that ended when the truck crashed into a North Union home and a man fled into a nearby residence and eventually killed himself inside.

Police are investigating whether the late Donald Ray Brown, 53, the truck's owner, and Jessica Lynn Phillips, 28, both of West Virginia, were producing methamphetamine out of the truck and a black utility trailer along the Youghiogheny River in Dunbar Township.

Phillips is being held in the Fayette County Prison on attempted homicide and related charges stemming from the chase. Five shots allegedly were fired from the truck window at a trooper in pursuit.

Trooper Stefani Plume said items seized from the truck and its bed are being analyzed. State police have not returned inventories for searches of the trailer and the home where Brown committed suicide as police asked him to come outside.

Westmoreland County Detective Tony Marcocci said other items seized from the pickup seem to be typical of tools used in burglaries or safe-cutting. Marcocci is not involved in the investigation.

Oxygen and acetylene tanks, along with a cutting torch, a chipping hammer and welding equipment, were found in the truck.

Marcocci said items such as beakers and cold medicine could indicate methamphetamine production.

Jennifer McQuerrey Rhyne of Affordable Cleanup LLC in West Virginia said some of the items, such as tubing and a clear liquid found in a glass jar, could point to a possible meth operation.

"There's so many different ways to make it," said McQuerrey Rhyne, a managing member and clandestine drug laboratory remediation technician with the company.

A Department of Conservation and Natural Resources ranger was suspicious on Sept. 27 that the two were manufacturing meth at a campsite along the river, near the Yough River Trail, according to a police affidavit. The pair told the ranger they were homeless, didn't have weapons and had been living at the site all week.

They fled when they heard police were on the way, setting in motion a chase where a trooper escaped death from five shotgun blasts fired from the pickup, which crashed into a North Gallatin Avenue home. Brown then broke into a nearby Center Avenue home, setting off a nine-hour standoff with a state police Special Emergency Response Team. At 9 p.m., Brown was found dead of a gunshot wound, police said.

Phillips surrendered shortly after the crash.

Other items taken from the pickup truck include grinders, a notebook, multiple syringes, plastic bags containing a white powder, a digital scale, a roll of plastic bags, two cameras, rice inside a yellow pill container, \$110 worth of pennies, receipts and personal items belonging to the suspects and to other people.

Phillips is charged with attempted homicide, conspiracy, escape, prohibited offensive weapon, resisting arrest, burglary, criminal mischief, fleeing or attempting to elude police, four counts of aggravated assault and three counts of reckless endangerment. A Nov. 20 preliminary hearing is scheduled before District Judge Wendy Dennis.

Phillips' attorney could not be reached for comment.

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