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# Platte coroner: Shooting death 'accidental suicide'

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WHEATLAND — Platte County Coroner Einer Mickelsen said Thursday he has determined that James Michael Roberts, 35, died Jan. 1 of an "accidental suicide."

Mickelson said Roberts died of a single gunshot wound from a 30-30 rifle. The coroner said the shooting took place after Roberts argued with another family member.

Law enforcement authorities meanwhile are releasing few details about the Dec. 31 shooting of Roberts.

Wyoming Division of Criminal Investigation Director Tom Pagel said his department's investigation centers on another person, but he declined to give any specific details.

The DCI investigation is nearly complete, but investigators want more information and need to further consider part of the evidence, including the coroner's report, Pagel said. A final DCI report could be completed early next week, he said.

Once done, the DCI report will be turned over to Platte County Attorney John Robinson for a determination of whether to file any charges, Pagel said. Robinson said Thursday he won't comment on the shooting until after he receives the DCI report.

"We are reporting to (Robinson) and we will not release something prior to him making a determination," Pagel said.

Roberts, died Jan. 1 at Platte County Memorial Hospital of a gunshot wound. Wheatland police officials said the shooting was reported at 11:35 p.m. on Dec. 31.

Pagel said the DCI investigation is a review of the man's death and focuses on another person's story. The investigation is being handled as a homicide as is standard practice for the DCI when looking into any "questionable death," Pagel said.

DCI became involved in the case at the request of the Wheatland Police Department. Pagel said it is not unusual for the state DCI to assist local agencies in such investigations.